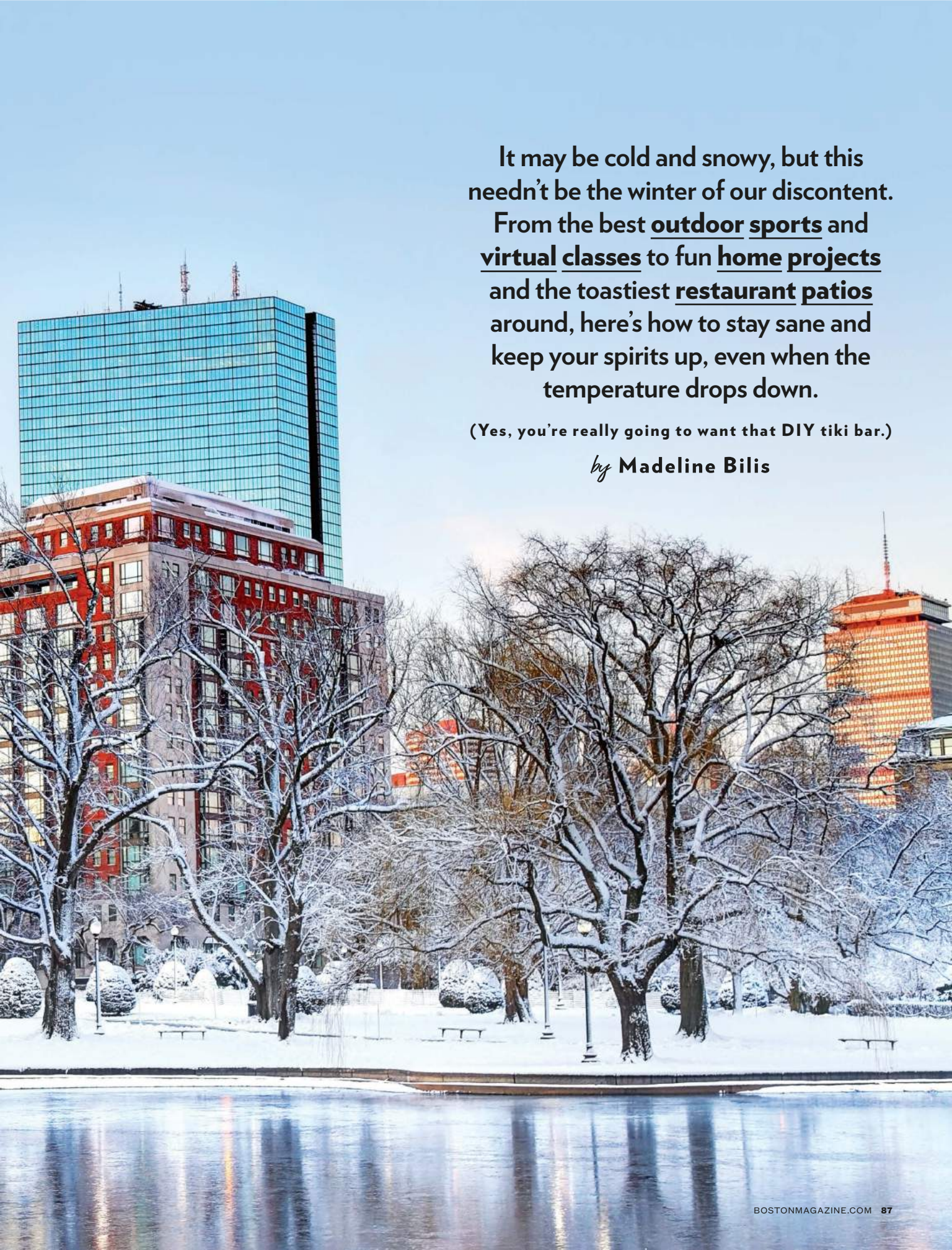


57

Things to Do This Winter



DENIS TANGNEY, JR./GETTY IMAGES



It may be cold and snowy, but this needn't be the winter of our discontent. From the best outdoor sports and virtual classes to fun home projects and the toastiest restaurant patios around, here's how to stay sane and keep your spirits up, even when the temperature drops down.

(Yes, you're really going to want that DIY tiki bar.)

by Madeline Bilis

TREAT YOUR INNER CULTURE VULTURE— WITHOUT LEAVING HOME

Five creative ways to get your arts fix this season.

This Is Who I Am, American Repertory Theatre

In collaboration with the Play Company and the Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, ART will present Amir Nizar Zuabi's *This Is Who I Am*, a virtual play performed in real time, in which an estranged father and his son reconnect over Zoom. The two work to cook an heirloom recipe during the video call, exploring the intricacies of family connections through physical and generational barriers. *November 29–December 27, americanrepertorytheater.org.*

Hanukkah at the MFA

In partnership with the Jewish Arts Collaborative and Combined Jewish Philanthropies, the Museum of Fine Art's seventh annual Hanukkah celebration will stream on YouTube and Facebook this year. The lineup includes performances by klezmer musician Hankus Netsky and Boston Dance Theater, as well as discussions hosted by the curator of the Judaica collection, Simona Di Nepi, with artists Moshe Zabari and Tamar Paley. *December 9, mfa.org.*

Bond...James Bond: Theme Songs, Berklee College of Music

To commemorate the release of the 25th Bond film, *No Time to Die*, musicians at Berklee are hosting a YouTube concert of the franchise's most famous theme songs. Vocalists and

instrumentalists will perform their renditions of anthems from the past 50 years, from Paul McCartney's "Live and Let Die" to Sam Smith's song for the 2015 film *Spectre*, all paying tribute to Great Britain's beloved OOT. *December 10, berkeley.edu/events.*

The Gift, Boston Ballet

Boston Ballet launched "bb@yourhome" this fall, a subscription-based series marking the company's first-ever virtual season (\$180 per household). To celebrate the holidays, on its website the organization will debut *The Gift*, in which dancers choreograph new works to the tune of Duke Ellington's jazzy *Nutcracker Suite*. The performance closes with the famed Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy from *The Nutcracker*. *December 17–27, bostonballet.org.*

Digital Holiday Pops Concert Series, Boston Symphony Orchestra

No need to get dressed up for the Holiday Pops this year: A digital concert series led by Keith Lockhart and taped inside Fenway Park will premiere December 10. In addition and continuing all the way through April 2021, a smaller ensemble from the BSO will gather at Symphony Hall to record performances for all to enjoy virtually. New music will be made available on a near-weekly basis. *bsa.org.*

PICK UP A NEW HOBBY (OR TWO)

Remote learning isn't just for kids. When you're ready to get your gray matter into a new groove, give one of these body-moving or mind-stimulating virtual classes a try.

If You Like...

Try...

Dabbling in Arts and Crafts



Taking an online knitting class from the South End yarn shop Third Piece, which welcomes virtual crafters of all levels starting at \$10 a session. You can try a lunch-break drop-in, where instructors help with projects for an informal 45 minutes, or opt for a lesson like "My First Sweater," a knit-a-long broken into two cozy sessions. *thirdpiece.com.*

Spontaneous WFH Dance Breaks



Learning the fundamentals of popping, locking, waving, and break dancing via Urbanity Dance's digital dance classes. The Harrison Avenue school offers a range of online courses—including a \$100 beginner hip-hop stream—that promise to boost strength and flexibility (not to mention your mood) over a period of 10 weeks. *urbanitydance.org.*

Admiring the Area's Architecture



Sitting down for a MasterClass with Frank Gehry, the designer of MIT's avant-garde Stata Center. The recorded session goes over the basics of creativity, inspiration, and design philosophy for budding architects and those who just want to pretend to be one for a day. *masterclass.com.*

Making Alexa Speak Italian



Getting ready for your next big trip with help from the Berlitz Language Center. The international chain's Boston office offers online courses for those interested in picking up Spanish, Italian, Mandarin, or French. *berlitz.com.*

Flexing Your Culinary Muscles



Booking a private virtual cooking class with a local chef through Boston-based Selfup. Just choose a date and time, round up your buddies, and follow along on your tablet as the Smoke Shop's Andy Husbands and other local toques prepare festive dishes and mix craft cocktails (did someone say Cuban daiquiri?). *selfup.com.*

Playing Angry Birds in Your Spare Time



Taking your gaming skills to the next level with Harvard's "Introduction to Game Development" class on edX. You'll delve into the designs of *Super Mario Bros.*, *Angry Birds*, *Pokémon*, and other favorites, learning about the development of both 2-D and 3-D games in the process. *edx.org.*

True-Crime Podcasts



Putting on your detective coat and logging into "Antiquities Trafficking and Art Crime," a free online course from the University of Glasgow in Scotland. It delves into what's described as "the seedy underbelly of the art world," with a module on one of the world's most famous unsolved heists: the 1990 theft of 13 works right here at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. *futurelearn.com.*



How I'll Make My Own Fun



MYECHIA MINTER-JORDAN
PRESIDENT AND CEO,
DENTAQUEST PARTNERSHIP
FOR ORAL HEALTH
ADVANCEMENT AND
CATALYST INSTITUTE

"During the early months of the pandemic, my husband decided to build a greenhouse in our backyard. It ended up being much larger than any of us anticipated—and now it also includes a small quail coop. That's right, I am the proud owner of three quails, who produce the most beautiful (and delicious) speckled eggs. As we head into the winter months, my youngest daughter, Sofia, will continue to work on her favorite ramen recipes, which will be topped with a delicious quail egg. I am also grateful that we'll continue to be able to cultivate our greenhouse bounty even as snow starts to fall."

How To...

Create Your Own Tiki Bar

Picture this: You've just finished shoveling the driveway. You head inside and there, waiting for you in the warmth, is a piña colada beneath a little thatched roof. This is the magic of an in-home tiki bar—the living room or basement addition just about everyone could use right now. All you need to make your own are a few basic carpentry tools and this tutorial from **Quentin Kelley**, a custom furniture designer with **Milton's Infusion Furniture**.



1.

MEASURE AND BUILD A BASE

Decide where you'll set up the bar, then determine how long and tall it'll be; the average height is 42 inches. Restaurant bars are typically framed out with two-by-fours, Kelley explains. Do the same for your piece, using wooden planks to create a base and frame.



2.

COVER IT UP

Give the structure a tropical feel by affixing bamboo mats or fences (easily found at a party-supply store) to the frame. For the bar top, materials like wood and laminate work well.



3.

LEND SOME SUPPORT

Affix bamboo stalks to both sides of the bar to prop up the awning. "Depending on how big it is, it could be just two posts, or four," Kelley says. Then install a triangular wooden frame atop the supports.



4.

TOP IT OFF

Now for that iconic thatched roof. "Go to a farm and get corn stalks and tie them into bundles," Kelley suggests, or spring for natural reed table skirts from a craft store. Lay them over the triangular frame and you'll feel one step closer to the tropics. infusionfurniture.com.



PLAY A LOCAL WORD GAME

Can't tear your little screen addicts away from their iPads? Just rip out this fill-in-the-blank adventure and their imaginations will be running wild in no time.

It was a chilly, _____ December morning when I awoke to the
smell of holiday _____ baking in _____. I dashed
down the stairs to see if I could _____ when I looked out of the
_____ and noticed a blanket of _____ snow as far as my eyes
could see. School, including remote learning, was canceled for the
_____. Hooray! I ran to the closet, grabbed my _____ and
my _____, and then went outside to find my sled in the _____.
“Don’t forget your _____,” Mom shouted as the door closed
behind me. Outside, I bumped into a _____ named
_____, and together we ran past _____ to the park, where
_____ were already _____ down the hill. Slipping and
sinking into the _____ snow, I carried my sled up to the very top
of the slope. To my left, someone who looked a lot like _____
was _____ his _____ as I gulped and stared down
to the bottom of the hill. Then I took off, flying down the _____
when suddenly I lost control, fell off my _____, and landed on my
_____. Undaunted, I climbed back up to the top and went down
again, this time _____ down like a pro. Afterward, I threw
my _____ over my shoulder and trudged home, where I was
_____ to see a warm _____ was roaring and a plate of
homemade _____ were waiting for me.



How I'll Make My Own Fun



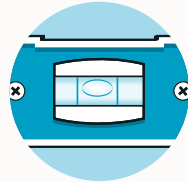
BETHANY VAN DELFT
COMEDIAN
AND PODCAST HOST

"I've been freaking out about winter since June! I have a junk pile of old boxes and packaging I've rebranded as a 'makerspace' to keep the kids busy. For me, I'll probably build a silo in the backyard to store all the flour I have hoarded and continue to hoard since March. That's fun, right? In the winter months, I also take advantage of the cold and make comfort food like traditional Puerto Rican dishes, which warm up the house and fill it with beautiful aromas. I like to try out new dishes, too. I cannot wait to share my culinary discoveries with my kids so they can spit it on the table and yell-cry, 'WHY DON'T YOU MAKE FOOD WE LIKE?'"



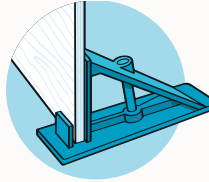
Ice-Skate in Your Own Backyard

No need to schlep the kids to the local ice rink when you have one at home. Just follow these instructions from Ted Renda, owner of the synthetic landscape company 360 SportsScapes in Beverly, and you'll be watching their swizzles from the kitchen window in no time.



1. DO A SITE CHECK

First, choose a nice flat area in the yard for your rink. "If you have too much of a pitch, then in low spots you'll have a foot or two of water, which is extremely heavy to support," Renda says. Then decide how big you'd like it to be. Renda says kiddie rinks are typically 10 by 10 feet, while standard backyard rinks stretch to 20 by 40 feet.



2. GET THE GOODS

Renda recommends buying a kit from a company called Nice Rink, which provides everything you need to get started, including boards, brackets, and a liner. If you're set on doing it the old-fashioned way, ask your local hardware store to cut up pressure-treated plywood and order a liner online. A tarp can be used in a pinch, but may not last the whole season.



3. SET IT UP

Map out your rink carefully, Renda says, marking a spot with chalk or paint for each bracket before placing it in the ground. Then form the perimeter by placing pieces of plywood into the brackets.



4. PUT DOWN THE LINER AND POUR

Set the liner inside your boards and secure it. Fill the rink with water at least 4 inches high at its lowest point, with either a hose or water delivered from a truck. Freeze and enjoy. 360sportsScapes.com.



Start Your Own Windowsill Garden



Got a case of the winter blues already? It helps to go green. Mark Richardson, the director of horticulture at Tower Hill Botanic Garden in Boylston, outlines the steps for sowing a mini garden from the centrally heated comfort of home.



1. DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Research which plants will thrive in the spot you're working with. "A lot of us don't have a good south-facing window with lots of sun," Richardson says, "so sometimes it's necessary to have a more shade-tolerant garden." Begonias and ZZ plants are good ornamental choices for beginners. Cilantro, meanwhile, is the way to go if you're looking for kitchen herbs.



2. CHOOSE WISELY

Select pots that fit with your décor. "I always like to go with a clay or terra cotta container," Richardson says. "It's just my aesthetic sensibility." More important, make sure the container has drainage holes, which are key for raising a healthy plant.



3. BUILD A STRONG FOUNDATION

Richardson stresses the importance of purchasing peat-free potting soil, as peat moss is a nonrenewable resource and takes millennia to regrow in bogs. He recommends buying a bag from the Organic Mechanics Soil Company, available at Whole Foods. "It's what we use at Tower Hill," he says.



4. KEEP UP WITH CARE

You've heard it before: *Don't overwater.* It's really that simple, according to Richardson. "With indoor plants especially, it's important to let them dry out. One of the easiest ways to kill a plant is by overwatering. A lot of people just getting started with houseplants don't understand that." towerhillbg.org.



How I'll Make My Own Fun



CHRISTOPHER KIMBALL
COFOUNDER OF
CHRISTOPHER KIMBALL'S
MILK STREET

"Winter for me is about rabbit hunting in Vermont with my friend Tom and his three beagles. It's an outdoor sport—which means it's COVID-appropriate! It's also my favorite time to spend cooking and baking in our Vermont farmhouse. The state currently has among the lowest infection rates in the country, so it's a good place to be. I guess that Vermonters have always been good at social distancing! That's why, come March and mud season, we all emerge from our houses with the thousand-yard stare, ready to see other people after being isolated since December."

FIND THE PERFECT HOLIDAY CARD BACKDROP

Forgot to book a family portrait session on the Common this fall? Don't sweat it—just pack up the brood for an impromptu shoot at one of these off-the-beaten-path wintry spots, recommended by local lifestyle photographer **Lyndsay McNiff**.



Ipswich Wildlife Sanctuary, Topsfield

The birds that live on this Audubon property have been trained to get up close and personal with visitors, explains McNiff, the owner of Lyndsay Hannah Photography: "I have all of these pictures of my kids from last winter...standing in a snow field with chickadees eating out of their hands."

Old Stone Church, West Boylston

Overlooking the Wachusett Reservoir, this open-air church built circa 1891 is extra magical after a fresh snowfall. "It almost looks like a castle," McNiff says—one that casts a royally handsome reflection on the icy waters below.

Mistletoe Tree Farm, Stow

"This is where my family always goes to get our tree," McNiff says, but the big red barn on the property also makes it a picture-perfect spot for portraits. "That red really pops against the white snow."

Minuteman National Park, Concord




"It's nearly impossible to get a shot on the North Bridge without a million other people there in the summer and fall," McNiff explains—but in winter, it'll be yours for the taking, with wide-open fields covered in snow as a backdrop.

Christopher Columbus Park, North End

When the arched trellis in this park on the waterfront is decked out in blue twinkle lights, it's truly a sight to behold. For McNiff, the beauty is kicked up a notch when the park is blanketed in white. "Anything with lights looks good in the snow," she says. lyndsayhannahphotography.com.

UPGRADE GAME NIGHT

That worn-out old Monopoly board just isn't going to cut it this year. Whether you're playing solo or with a crew, these brand-new games recommended by **David Leschinsky**, owner of Brookline's Eureka Puzzles, promise to bring the fun.

Players	Game	
	Shashibo \$19	"Shashibos are one of the most exciting things I found when I was at the Nuremberg Toy Fair," Leschinsky says. Using kaleidoscopic designs and magnets, the single-player brainteaser challenges participants to morph a shape-shifting puzzle into 70 different forms.
	Paris: La Cité de Lumière \$25	Set in the French capital during the 1899 Exposition Universelle, a world's fair celebrating the advent of electricity, this beautifully illustrated board game asks players to vie for spaces near street lamps to illuminate their buildings in the City of Lights. The player with the most gorgeously lit buildings wins. "This is a great game for folks who love Codenames and want to try something at that next level," Leschinsky says.
	The Crew \$15	In this space-themed card game, players are astronauts who must work together as a team to complete 50 missions through the solar system to discover a new planet. The only way to win, though, is if everyone successfully communicates—an important life lesson, no doubt. "You're working together to play the game. It's very cool," Leschinsky says. eurekapuzzles.com .

GET OUTSIDE!

The temperature may have dropped, but that doesn't mean there aren't still plenty of ways to get some fresh air close to home.

SNOWSHOEING

BOSTON NATURE CENTER, *Mattapan*. Not everything hibernates in the winter. This Mass Audubon property often hosts guided hikes, during which a naturalist will point out plant and animal species along the trails.

WESTON SKI TRACK, *Weston*. Take a walk in the white stuff no matter the weather thanks to this 9-mile course's snowmaker. Bonus points for lessons that cover ascending, descending, and crossing hills while wearing snowshoes.

GREAT BROOK SKI TOURING CENTER, *Carlisle*. Savor the beauty of farmland and forests under a blanket of snow along the Acorn Trail, one of many ungroomed areas for snowshoers at this park north of Boston, also known for its smooth cross-country ski trails.

SLEDDING

LARZ ANDERSON PARK, *Brookline*. This 64-acre park is packed with hills big and small—meaning it's perfect for kids of all ages. Parents, meanwhile, will breathe a sigh of relief knowing there are safety bumpers on trees that pose a hazard to sledders.

PETERS HILL, *Roslindale*. The best peak in the Arnold Arboretum to zip down? Peters Hill in Rozzie, no question. It offers a lovely view of the skyline, plus a slick slope for sliding.

MOUNT HOOD PARK, *Melrose*. There's a long history of sledding at this park on the Saugus-Melrose line—FDR's Works Progress Administration built several structures there in the 1930s, including a ski jump and a toboggan run. Both no longer exist, but the tradition remains.

SKIING

WACHUSETT MOUNTAIN, *Princeton*. With some 25 trails, eight lifts, and a 2,006-foot summit just an hour from Boston, this resort is the urban skier's dream. Bonus: During the season, the MBTA runs trains outfitted with ski and snowboard racks that service the newly installed Wachusett stop off the Fitchburg Line.

NASHOBA VALLEY SKI AREA, *Westford*. Hitting the slopes for the first time this winter? This ski and snowboard destination doesn't draw huge crowds, making it ideal for beginners still getting their bearings. More advanced skiers, meanwhile, will appreciate the five Black Diamond trails.

BLUE HILLS SKI AREA, *Canton*. Small but mighty are the 16 runs at Blue Hills, a ski area that's given South Shore residents a taste of winter fun since 1950. Glide down the western side of Great Blue Hill, which reaches a summit of 635 feet, morning, noon, and night.

TUBING

SKI WARD, *Shrewsbury*. Zoom up and down without waiting around at Ski Ward's "TubaSlide" area, where 200-plus tubes across 10 lanes keep the good times rolling.

NASHOBA VALLEY TUBING PARK, *Littleton*. Purchasing a two-hour ticket to this park gives you access to 18 lanes, not to mention four lifts to ferry you back up the hill. A set of lights means you can even tube at night.

PLANTERS HILL, *Hingham*. BYO tube to World's End Reservation, managed by the Trustees, where a 118-foot drumlin rising near the coastline makes for an excellent place to shove off.



ALEXD76/GETTY IMAGES





MASTER THE ART OF WEATHER-PROOF DINING

Because neither snow nor rain nor COVID gloom should stop you from getting a good restaurant meal this winter.

Trattoria il Panino

THE SETUP: A fully covered patio on Hanover Street in the North End, complete with a roof and heat lamps.

WHAT TO ORDER: Go for the warm bundles of starchy goodness, better known as gnocchi *alla sorrentina*, on a cold, starry night.

WHAT TO WEAR: Skip the puffy white ski jacket to avoid dreaded red-sauce stains. trattoriailpanino.com.

Harvest

THE SETUP: A sunny, fireplaced patio with a partial roof, as well as heat lamps and generously spaced-out tables.

WHAT TO ORDER: Make a week-end brunch reservation solely for Harvest's "French Toast'd Cider Donut," served with

caramelized apples.

WHAT TO WEAR: A tweed blazer layered over your thermal turtleneck will serve you well—the place is steps from Harvard, after all. harvestcambridge.com.

Talulla

THE SETUP: Five freestanding plastic greenhouses, each with seating for two. They'll be individually heated and lit, and reserved only once per night so they can be properly aerated and sanitized for the following evening.

WHAT TO ORDER: The miso-glazed cod is colorfully plated, thanks to a helping of beet purée. Top it off with warm, gooey brown butter cake, which comes drizzled with butterscotch.

WHAT TO WEAR: You'll be nice and toasty in your personal greenhouse, but it's worth donning a scarf to curb the draft from the door flaps. talullacambridge.com.

Dorchester Brewing Co.

THE SETUP: A huge all-seasons greenhouse on the brewery's rooftop (pictured), as well as a spacious roof deck.

WHAT TO ORDER: M&M BBQ is serving its smoked meats here seven days a week—sample some with a pilsner and an order of Dumpster Fries, loaded with meat, smoked cheese sauce, scallions, and barbecue-infused ketchup.

WHAT TO WEAR: Fingerless gloves if you're eating on the deck—those ribs can get messy. dorchesterbrewing.com.



How I'll Make My Own Fun



CHARLIE MOORE
HOST OF *CHARLIE MOORE: NO OFFENSE*
ON NBC SPORTS

"Most of the time during winter, I travel with a crew all over the world to film my TV shows. It's a lot of fun. But this year, I plan on doing way more snowmobiling and ice fishing than I normally would—I'll ride for two or three hours, then I'll come back to the lodge to pour a glass of wine and unwind. I also plan on doing some fun outdoor cooking. I know most people enjoy grilling during the warmer months, but I plan on putting some chickens and turkeys on the smoker as the New England snow flies. My number one activity, though, will definitely be smoking a cigar in my hot tub and waiting for the world to get back to normal."

How
To...

Break the Ice

Fishing in the freezing cold might require a bit more grit than casting a rod in summertime—but higher stakes yield higher rewards. Curtis Ludden, a lifelong recreational fisherman from central Massachusetts, offers up tips for beginners.



1.

GET YOUR FINS IN A ROW

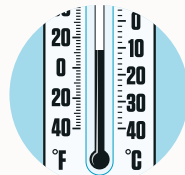
Before you head out, you'll need a fishing license, as well as familiarity with the species of fish you're allowed to catch and a solid understanding of ice safety. (MassWildlife can help with that.) Grab a medium-power ice-fishing rod, a bucket, your tackle box, and a tip-up (a device that holds the line for you)—and don't forget to buy or rent an ice auger for drilling.



2.

DRESS THE PART

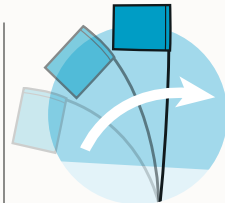
It's cold out there, so layer up in breathable fabrics and fleece: two pairs of socks, one pair of athletic gloves with wool mittens over them, and a warm cap. "Stay bundled and make sure you have hand warmers and coffee or a warm drink," Ludden says.



3.

PICK A SPOT

Look for a pond with a thick sheet of ice on a day that's 20 degrees or colder—but don't just assume that it's frozen solid. "I'll walk out and drill to see how thick the ice is," Ludden says. "If it's lower than 6 inches, I don't get on." Whitehall Reservoir in Hopkinton and Chebacco Lake in Hamilton and Essex are both stocked with abundant chain pickerel, yellow perch, and largemouth bass this time of year.



4.

DROP A LINE

When you're sure it's safe, carve some holes, rig your lines with the bait (Ludden suggests shiners or live worms), and, if you want, string them on your tip-up. Lower the lines to the bottom of the pond, reel them in a few strokes, then sit back and wait. "When the fish bite, the flag will shoot up [on the tip-up]," Ludden explains. "That's what makes ice fishing fun."