

Guide to winter adventures in the Upper Valley

Snowshoes, microspikes, ice skates — we've got everything you need to get out and enjoy it. Winter camping, snowshoeing, skating, and more are all possible with the right gear. Here's what to grab from DOR.

Featured trips:

Short jaunt - Ice skating at Occom Pond in Hanover, NH. When the ice is thick enough, a large skating surface is maintained on the pond. The Dartmouth Outing Club house is open select days for Winter Fun Days offering ice skate rentals, light refreshments, and fire pits with s'mores!

Day trip - Ice skating Lake Morey in Fairlee, Vermont. Each year a 4.5 mile ice skating loop is maintained on Lake Morey, often touted as the longest outdoor skating track in the United States. [Check ice conditions before you go.](#)

Overnight - John Rand Cabin in Benton, NH. This Dartmouth Outing Club cabin is a perfect base for overnight winter adventures. On this moderate 2-mile hike/ski/snowshoe you'll pass the Moosilauke Ravine Lodge (closed in winter). Once at the cabin, get the woodstove going and you'll have a warm retreat from the winter weather. You can ski the Al Merrill Ski Loop, snowshoe around the cabin, or bring your full winter gear on a winter hike of Mt. Moosilauke. You'll have winter all to yourself. [Click here to learn more about John Rand Cabin.](#)

SNOW TRAVEL

Snowshoes — MSR Evo Ascent with heel riser — ideal for mountain terrain

Microspikes — for packed snow and icy trails

Trekking poles — collapsible, essential for snowshoeing

Ski goggles — eye protection against wind and blowing snow

Overboots — waterproof covers for stationary activities like ice fishing

Ankle gaiters — keeps snow out of your boots on the trail

ICE SKATING

Ice skates — recreational skates, sized at the rental window

LAYERING SYSTEM

Midlayer top — insulating layer worn between base and outer layer

Midlayer pant — insulating fleece pant, wear solo or under shell

Insulated jacket — for winter sports and cold weather activities

Rain jacket — doubles as a wind/shell layer over insulation

Rain pants — windproof outer layer, pairs with midlayer pant

Mittens — warmer than gloves for most winter activities

Balaclava/neck gaiter — covers head and neck, fits under a helmet

Hat — midweight

Insulated booties — keeps feet warm in your sleeping bag

WINTER OVERNIGHT - Stay in one of the DOC cabins rather than camping outside

60–70L Backpack — extra volume for bulky winter gear

0 degree sleeping bag — rated for 0°F and above — essential for winter camping

Sleeping pad — closed-cell foam provides critical insulation from the ground

Sleeping bag liner — every degree counts

Emergency bivvy — essential backup for cold weather emergencies

Headlamp — long winter nights mean you'll use it a lot

Portable charger — 10,000 mAh battery pack

HYDRATION & WARMTH

Water bottle insulator — prevents your water from freezing

Thermos — hot drinks make everything better in the cold

Trangia stove kit — reliable in cold conditions

TIPS FOR WINTER

- *Cold weather drains phones and batteries faster. Keep your portable charger and devices inside your jacket.*
- *Cotton kills in winter — never wear cotton as a base layer. Ask DOR staff if you need advice on layering.*
- *Snowshoes and microspikes are two different tools. Microspikes work on packed/icy trails; snowshoes are for deep snow.*
- *A sleeping pad is as important as a sleeping bag in winter — the ground pulls heat away fast.*
- *For cross-country ski gear, contact Oak Hill Outdoor Center. For downhill, reach out to Dartmouth Skiway.*
- *Always tell someone where you're going and when you expect to be back — especially in winter.*