



DRIVE YOUR OWN SLEIGH

ALLEGRA FARM
EAST HADDAM, CT

Okay, back-sleigh driver—you take the reins. John Allegra will give you the horse, the sleigh, and the know-how to drive your own sled. His training course consists of five one-hour classes (\$75 each) that teach everything from harnessing the horse to steering and controlling the carriage. For the first couple of lessons you and Allegra will stay close to the farm (which is home, incidentally, to the Horse-Drawn Carriage and Sleigh Museum of New England), but once cleared for takeoff you'll have more than 500 acres to roam. Don't have room on your calendar for five trips to Connecticut this winter? Pencil in one visit to the farm, reserve a ride with Allegra on any of his 60 horse-drawn vehicles, and get a lesson as he drives. He'll also come to you: For an extra fee (depending on location), Allegra will haul horses and carriages as far north as Maine and as far south as Maryland. *Entrance at 69 Town Rd., Colchester, CT, 860-680-5149, allegrafarm.com.*



PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID DUTTON (SLEIGH); COURTESY OF ALLEGRA FARM (SLEIGH); COURTESY OF CAMDEN SNOW BOWL (TOboggan)



Sail Boston Harbor

Hard-core Hub sailors know the best time to hit the harbor is in winter, when the prevailing winds blow at a steady 10 to 15 knots and recreational traffic is at a minimum. The Boston Sailing Center launches its fleet of J-24s every Saturday afternoon from November through March, when teams compete in the Frostbite Racing Series. If you've got sailing experience and want to try the sport for a day, pay \$40 and the center will put you on a team. Just remember to wear warmer clothes than you think you'll need, and to say, "Aye, aye, captain." *The Riverboat at Lewis Wharf, Boston, 617-227-4198, bostonsailingcenter.com.*

QUICK URBAN ADVENTURES

When you don't have time for a trek

DOWNHILL SKIING Blue Hills Reservation

The longtime ski scene for Bostonians, Blue Hills has 60 acres of carvable terrain and four lifts serving all levels of runs, from the Green Monster bunny slope to the halfpipe-heavy freestyle terrain park. With day passes starting at \$18, this one's an easy out. *4001 Washington St., Canton, 781-828-5070, ski-bluehills.com.*

SKATING Larz Anderson Park

College-sports fanatics can get a thrill from skating on the same rink where the BC Eagles sometimes practice. For the nonfanatical, there's free parking, a heated pavilion, lessons for beginners, and the allure of an afternoon of fun for the price of a submarine sandwich. *Tickets \$7, skate rentals \$5; 23 Newton St., Brookline, 617-739-7518, brooklinema.gov.*

SLEDDING Arnold Arboretum

1. Set your sights on the summit of Peters Hill, the arboretum's tallest rise at 240 feet above street level. (Insider's tip: Take the back entrance, off Mendum Street in Roslindale, for an easier trek to the top.) 2. Pause to admire the Boston skyline. 3. Whiz your way to the bottom. *125 Arborway, Jamaica Plain, 617-524-1718, arboretum.harvard.edu.*

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING Weston Ski Track

With nine miles of trails, this local favorite promises great al fresco exercise for all types of skiers (and snowshoers), just 15 minutes outside the city and accessible via the Green Line. Night owls will appreciate the two-kilometer loop, illuminated by a newly upgraded lighting system. Hit the track on Tuesday evenings for weekly races sponsored by the Cambridge Sports Union. *200 Park Rd., Weston, 781-891-6575, skiboston.com.*

HOW TO...



MAKE A HOT TODDY

Alchemist Lounge bartender John Drew's signature recipe will warm you right up.

1. Start with 1 shot of rye whiskey in a tall glass.
2. Squeeze in half a fresh lemon.
3. Add 1 ounce of "runny honey" (2 parts clover honey mixed with 1 part boiling water).
4. Fill glass with hot water.
5. Serve with a clove-spiked lemon wedge on the rim.

*Do this step only if you're feeling sassy.

BEACHCOMB for TREASURE

PLUM ISLAND
NEWBURYPORT, MA

Summertime is for seashells, but an off-season shoreline yields rewards, too: serenity, for one, plus interesting marine bits turned up by winter storms. On this 11-mile-long barrier island 40 miles northeast of Boston, and at the beautiful Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, beachcombers can find mermaid purses, sea glass, wave-carved wood, and man-made flotsam such as lobster traps and old rope. Veteran beachcombers especially love the unusually large clam and mussel shells. Plum Island fan and beachcombing author Deacon Ritterbush keeps her favorite pieces of lavender, blue, and white sea glass in a shell she found here. "The thing I like most about beachcombing on Plum Island is the peacefulness," she says. "Half the treasure you find is spiritual; the other half is pocket treasure." *Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, 6 Plum Island Tpk., Newburyport, 978-465-5753, fws.gov/northeast/parkerriver.*

SHOOT the CHUTE CAMDEN SNOW BOWL

CAMDEN, ME

Name a national championship that will let you compete with zero experience. Stumped? Consider the two-man team from Tennessee that once placed second at the 2005 U.S. National Toboggan Championships without ever having seen snow. February marks the 20th anniversary of the contest, which draws 400-plus entrants to the legendary Camden Snow Bowl on the Maine coast. Awards go not only to the fastest but also to the best costume, the oldest team, and more. You don't have to be a player, though: Rent a toboggan and ride down Ragged Mountain on the two-foot-wide, 400-foot-long track (bring your own and it's free). And enjoy the view—the mountain shows off the rocky harbor of Camden. *U.S. National Toboggan Championships, 2/5-2/7; 20 Barnestown Rd., Camden, ME, 207-236-3438, camdensnowbowl.com.*

Have a Five-Dog Night

MAHOOSUC GUIDE SERVICE
NEWRY, ME

In a cool twist on camping, Mahoosuc Guide Service has turned the pleasures of dogsledding into overnight and weekend outings to pristine locations such as Maine's North Woods and Umbagog Lake, near the New Hampshire border. Guides cook a campfire lunch and teach students how to work the dogs. Afterward, there's the option to snowshoe or ski. Come nightfall, campers sleep in a fir-floored tent with canvas walls and a wood stove. Think silent night, unless the rare wolf happens to howl. *Packages start at \$265 per person; 1513 Bear River Rd., Newry, ME, 207-824-2073, mahoosuc.com.*



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► **FYI** The city of Boston offers text/e-mail alerts on snow-related parking bans and school closings. Register at cityofboston.gov/snow.