

# HOW TO PLAN YOUR WINTER VACATION

Planning makes perfect. Check out rates, dates, and activities so that you make the best of your winter vacation, either with your spouse or family.

-By Aruna Rathod

A vacation has various purposes. It's not just to rejuvenate but develop deeper connections with your spouse or family or friends. Planning a great vacation shouldn't just be about getting away from work or seeing as many sights as possible. Vacations are a chance to open up to one another. Special moments help families to bond - cuddling by a warm fire in a scenic cold locale is magical, sharing meals with friends is bonding for those few days.



Winter has a charm of its own. Some destinations offer a stark white landscape, snow, winter vegetation and winter specialities making it a unique experience.

**Destination Plan**

Freeze on the destination – either Europe with snow-capped mountains, or beach destinations. Depending on the number of days, you could cover two or three cities to get an experience of all. If you have more than five days, you could squeeze in another country in Europe as the borders are open and easily accessible with train connections. \*If you are using trains/flights to do intercity/country, please book well in advance as there are amazing promotional offers. Do not wait for last minute bookings as these can get frightfully expensive as dates of flying come closer.

**Flight tickets**

Booking in advance is definitely a good choice as you can get extremely good rates on online bookings. Make sure you book tickets that can be cancelled though, in case someone drops out or you have some changes in your schedule. Refundable tickets are slightly expensive but worth the effort.

**Baggage allowances**

If you are travelling to cold countries, please ensure you buy the right overcoats/jackets/gloves/mufflers. Avoid heavy wool as these only add to the weight!

New materials that keep one warm, are light and longlasting are recommended. Invest in a good jacket, boots, and hood that can last you at least five trips.



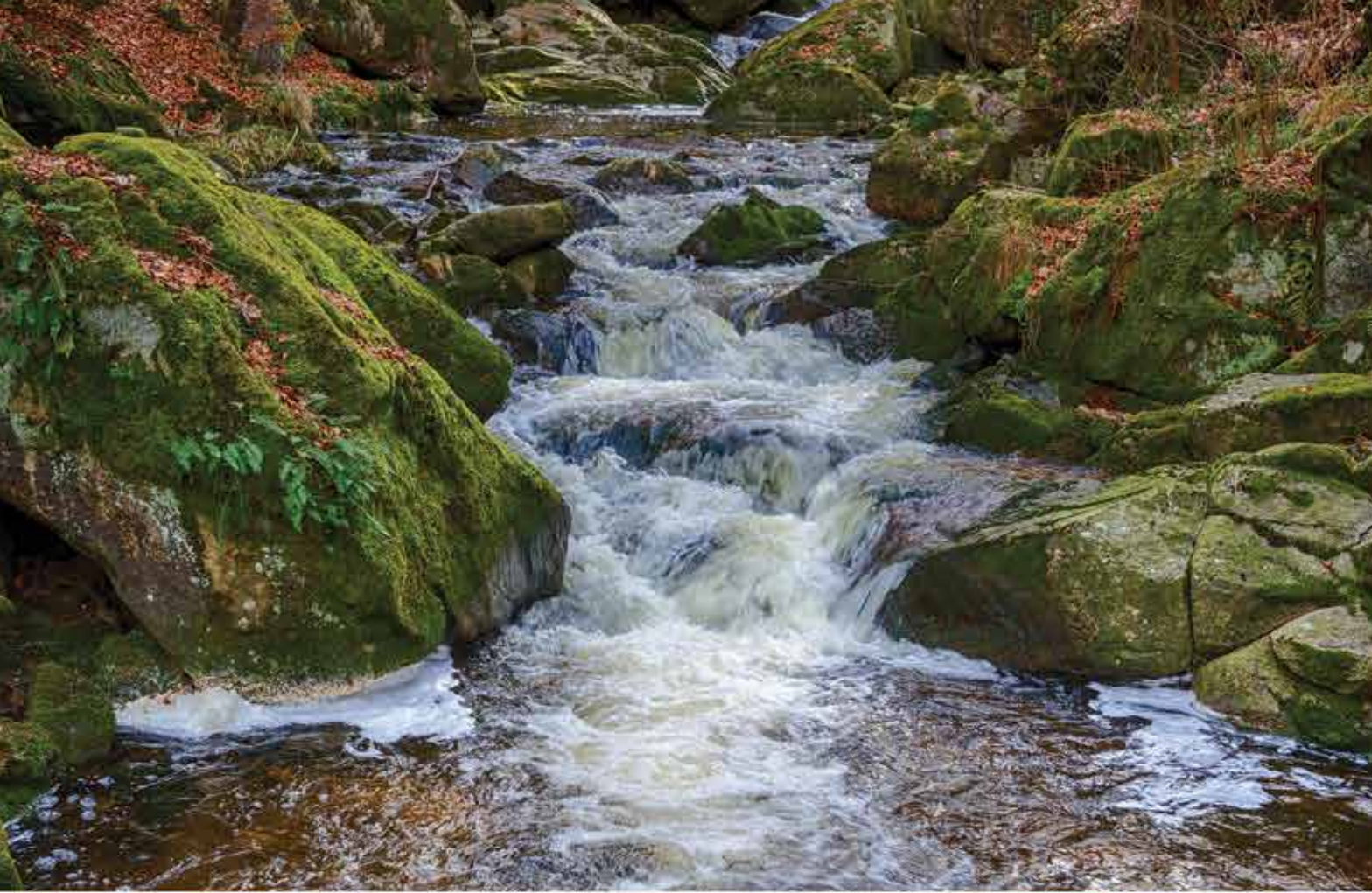
### Family holiday

If travelling with children make sure to keep your schedule full and include some variation in activities. Find out the activities offered, especially if you are visiting a snow destination. Present them with a list of things to do from which they can choose, and let them pick what they want to do first.

In case the weather allows, include a hike with your children, spotting wildlife together, or camping outside. Try and include mountainous regions, and areas near national parks where one can connect with nature. There are plenty of activities that can include the whole family.

Outdoor adventures like ice skating or even snowmobiling are entertaining (and can be educational) for both adults and children, and ultimately something the whole family can do together. Indulge in an optimum number of activities only, as too many can be tiring and reduce family bonding time.





#### Destinations for families in Europe

**Austria** – The NATIONAL PARK HOHE TAUERN Is a great way to spend the vacation. You can take the services of a park ranger to help you explore. During the year, within the framework of the weekly programmes, there are twenty guided hikes offered for the whole family. The spectrum reaches from the wild animal safaris in Habach Valley to a “Journey in the Arctic” straight through the climate zones to the ascent of a three-thousand meter mountain.

In the Tirol region, for winter, you can enrol for a free ski course for children in Tirol’s Silberregion Karwendel. The kids learn to ski in just one week in a family-friendly ski area where snow is guaranteed.

**Germany** – The Harz National Park is located within Germany’s most northerly mountain range. Together with the surrounding Harz Mountains Nature Park and Geopark, it is one of the most popular areas for walking and skiing in northern Germany. With sections in both Saxony-Anhalt and Lower Saxony, the park offers a mix of ancient legends and rugged scenery and is a popular tourist destination all year round.

A charming steam train takes you right into the Park and you can disembark at which station suits your choice of activities.

