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BEST TRIPS IN 2019

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Winter

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Pocatello,
Idaho

FROM *Alpenglow* TO ANTIQUE ROW

WHEN YOU GO

Pocatello:
visitpocatello.com

Pebble Creek Ski Area:
pebblecreekskiarea.com

Fort Hall Replica:
forthall.net

Idaho Museum of
Natural History: [isu.edu/
imnh](http://isu.edu/imnh)

Museum of Clean:
museumofclean.com

Black Swan Inn:
blackswaninn.com

Portneuf Range Yurt
System: [www2.isu.edu/
outdoor/yurts.shtm](http://www2.isu.edu/outdoor/yurts.shtm)

BY HEATHER LARSON

Those passionate about snow sports will love this mountain town in the Rockies. So will birders, ice-fishing buffs, hikers and antique enthusiasts. Pocatello (affectionately known as Poky) welcomes winter vacationers with activities for all penchants imaginable. From the young to the young-at-heart, and from the energetic to the more laid-back, you'll find an assortment of interests to pursue in this under-the-radar city.

SNOW AND ICE DEVOTEES

Pocatello averages 55 inches of snow each year, making most winter days ideal for experiencing alpenglow, that pinkish light that shines on mountains at sunrise and sunset. You might find that phenomena before or after a day of skiing or boarding at Pebble Creek Ski Area, just 9 miles south of town.

For cross-country skiing, snow-shoe trails and a sledding hill, your best bet is the East Fork Mink Creek Nordic Center. From beginning to the expert trails, each has been groomed for classic and skate skiing. Equipment rentals are available onsite. Catch your breath in the warming hut or book a night in the yurt.

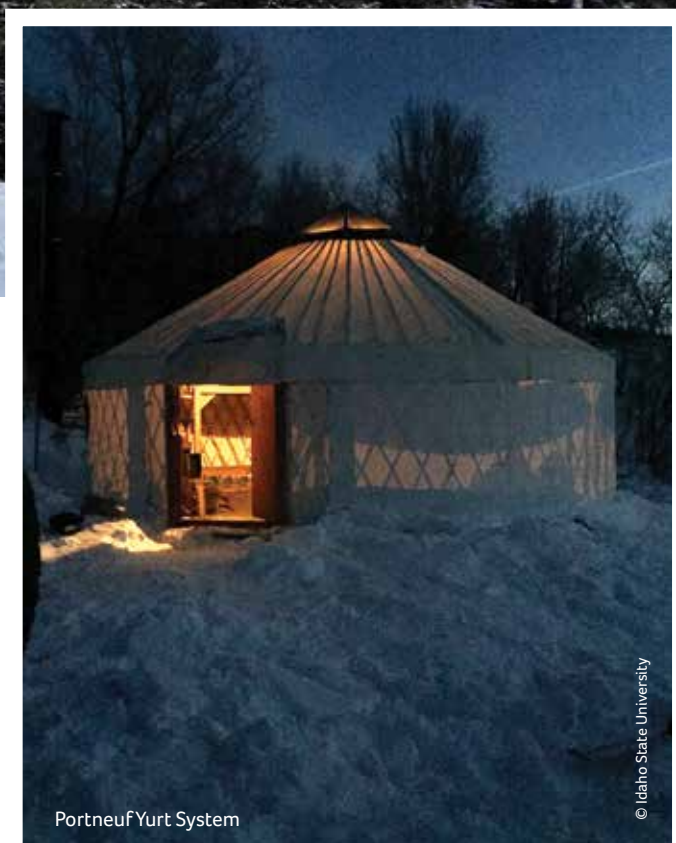


© Pebble Creek Ski Area

Whether you pride yourself as a backcountry skier or you're a beginner in cross country, you can easily reach one of the Mongolian-style yurts in the Portneuf Range Yurt System. Each one is furnished with bunk beds, a wood burning stove, a gas cooking stove, a lantern, pots, an axe and firewood. Beginner-to-intermediate routes lead to Catamount and Skyline yurts, while the more veteran skiers can make their way to Inman or Johnson Creek yurts.

When snow prevents golfing, the two Pocatello golf courses groom their grounds for skiing—an easy and free option.

If fishing is your jam, try your hand at ice fishing at one of several reservoirs outside of Pocky. When the conditions are safe, settle in with your bait,



Portneuf Yurt System

© Idaho State University

jigs or flies at American Falls Reservoir, about a half hour from town. On the Portneuf River near Lava Hot Springs, you can take a healing dip after your ice fishing expedition there. Hot, natural mineral-water pools are open year-round—five of them. And it's only 35 miles outside of town.

Those Michelle Kwan wannabes can practice their double axels and camel spins on nearby Chubbock's ice skating rink.

HIKING AND BIRDING BUFFS

Because not everyone likes to slip and slide in ice and snow, other outdoor recreation exists in Southeastern Idaho. Namely, hiking and birding.

For some easy to moderate hikes, the City Creek Trail System, right off Lincoln Avenue, offers a network of 52 miles of trails. The main City Creek Trail shadows City Creek and gains more than 900 feet in elevation, or for more intensity try the 1.55-mile Switchback or the 3.77-mile Over the Top. Mountain biking is allowed on these trails, as well.

For slower walkers, Pocatello's Portneuf Greenway hosts nature trails, more than 13 miles in all. Bike, hike, jog or rollerblade along these paths.

Birders will discover a variety of year-round habitats prime for viewing in this area. The Pocatello Greenway accommodates raptors, songbirds and waterfowl, while trumpeter swans are the winter feature at Alexander Reservoir in Soda Springs. For the most diversity, a trip to American Falls is in order. There, winter brings out water birds, the common loon, Wilson's warbler, bald eagles and white-throated sparrows.

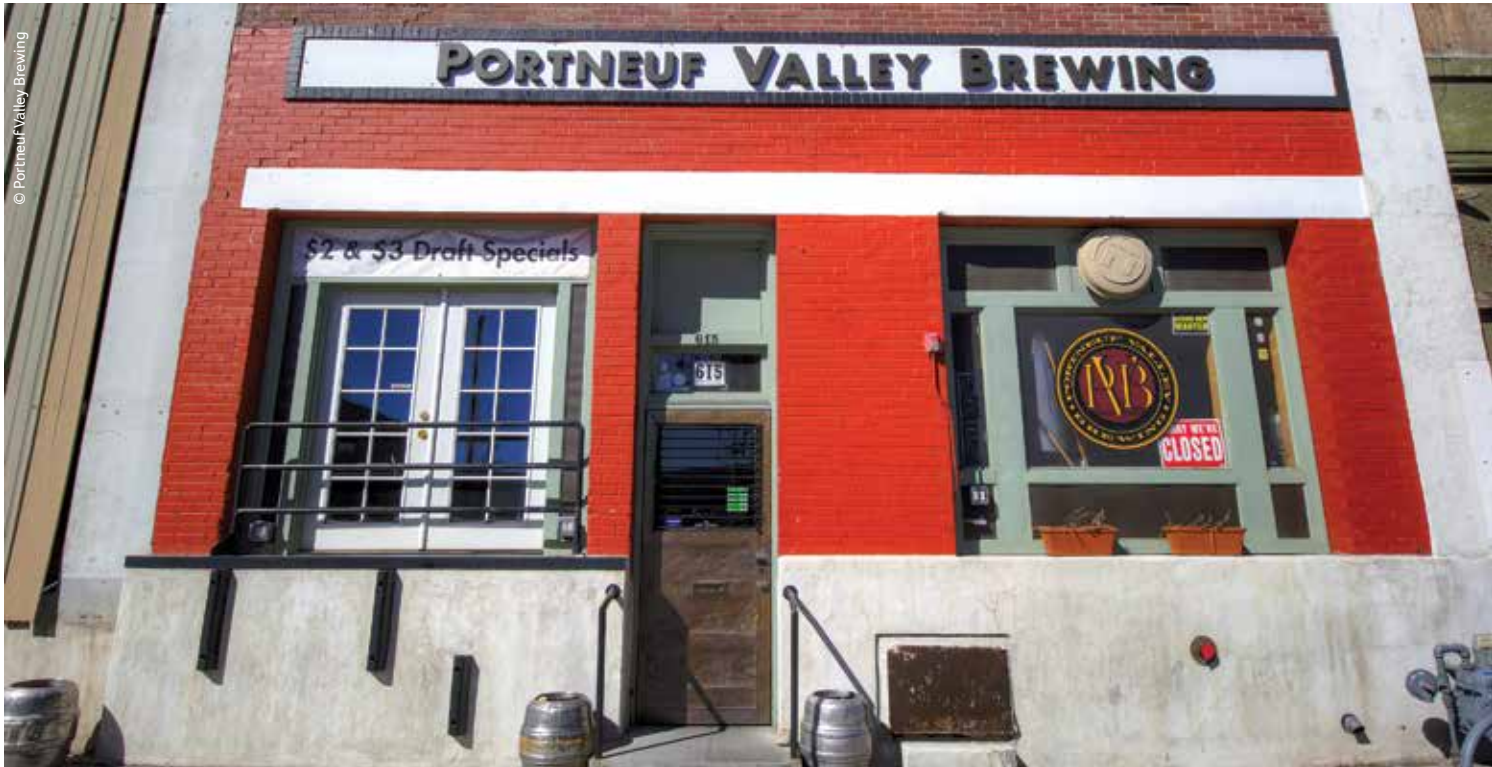
Ready to spend some time indoors?



© ID Museum of Natural History



© Pebble Creek Ski Area



MUSEUM EXPLORERS

Some days history and culture win out over the livelier endeavors. At those times Poky has you covered, because its museums are open year-round.

A stop at the Fort Hall Replica shows you what the 19th century was like for explorers, trappers, fur traders, Native Americans, pioneers and the optimists looking for gold. Exhibits reveal life in the era through mountain-man artifacts, a blacksmith shop, a teepee and a wagon.

On the Idaho State University campus, the Idaho Museum of Natural History is worth a visit. Ironically, this land-locked locale is home to the largest collection of *Helicoprion* sharks. You might see some dinosaurs, too. Note Idaho's part in the journeys of Lewis & Clark and the Oregon Trail through various exhibits.

Hands down, the best hands-on displays welcome you at the Museum of Clean. Here you'll discover the world's largest collection of vacuum devices, past, present and future. One is a rocking-chair vacuum. Yet you'll not find dust here as founder Don Aslett promotes the value of clean, sometimes in a quirky fashion.

ANTIQUE ENTHUSIASTS

The sheer volume of antique shops within a one-mile radius of Old Town often makes headlines. At times the number has soared to 13. Her Alibi Antiques and Treasures stocks antiques and collectibles including trunks, teacarts, lamps, salt dips and pottery.

Fairly new to town, Vintage Vinyl and Antiques focuses on the vinyl revival with records available in almost every genre. Farm House Furniture, as the name implies, showcases hand-painted distressed furnishings and more.

FOR EVERYONE

Staying at the Black Swan Inn will leave you with memories for a lifetime. Choose from one of the 14-themed suites, including Arabian Nights, Pirates, Tropical Paradise and the Wild West. Some accommodations have an aquarium, others a waterfall, and the Cave comes with a champagne-bubbler tub. Every suite is furnished with museum-quality art, a two-person jetted tub and a gas fireplace for romantic lounging after a day on the slopes.

Travelers need sustenance both before and after an action-packed day. For hearty appetites that crave steaks and burgers, try Jakers Bar and Grill. The chef at the Taste of India and Nepal prepares curries, butter chicken and other Indian and Nepalese dishes. For Mexican comfort food like tacos and enchiladas, grab a table at El Herradero.

Not quite ready to retreat to your room yet? Sample the ales, IPAs and lagers at one of two local craft breweries, Jim Dandy Brewing or Portneuf Valley Brewing.

If you still have free time to fill, you're only two and a half hours from Yellowstone National Park. 🍷