

SYLVA, N.C. — Winter doesn't have to be for hibernating with the abundance of outdoor fun and festive events offered in Jackson County, North Carolina. The mountain towns of Sylva, Dillsboro, Cashiers and Cherokee offer welcoming winter warmth for visitors and locals throughout each community with holiday traditions, active adventures, seasonal cheer and much more. Read on to find out how to celebrate the winter season in Jackson County, and visit www.DiscoverJacksonNC.com to learn even more.

Get Away with a Snow Day

Hit the slopes at Sapphire Valley Resort with skiing and snowboarding on the 1,600-foot main run with a vertical drop of 200 feet. Ideal for a day of family fun, take a lesson from the mountain's professional instructors, and save money with rentals included in lift ticket prices. Sapphire Valley Resort also features Frozen Falls Tube Park, where tubers can slide down the 500-foot run with a vertical drop of 60 feet, and the moving sidewalk makes it easy to get to the top for another ride down. Snow-seekers can also enjoy full-service amenities now offered at Sapphire Valley Resort, making it even simpler to plan a day on the slopes. Visit <https://www.DiscoverJacksonNC.com/attractions/recreational-rental-services/sapphire-valley-resort/> to learn more.

Walk in a Waterfall Wonderland

For the perfect way to warm up from winter temperatures, bundle up and get your adrenaline pumping with a hike to one of Jackson County's many waterfalls. Hikers will be rewarded at the end of their journey with views that can't be seen any other time of the year as the waterfalls sparkle with icicles. One of the most notable is Whitewater Falls, one of the highest waterfalls east of the Rockies at nearly 400 feet. Choose from more than two dozen waterfalls in the area here: <https://www.DiscoverJacksonNC.com/outdoors/waterfalls/>.

Sit Back for a Scenic Excursion

Looking to discover picturesque winter views right outside the window? The Great Smoky Mountains Railroad runs Tuckasegee River Excursions throughout the winter months with a four-hour, 32-mile trip from Bryson City with an hour and a half layover in the quaint town of Dillsboro, home to shops, restaurants and mountain charm. Powered by steam, this train journey is filled with nostalgia for enthusiasts of all ages, and movie buffs will appreciate a pass by the famous set of the Harrison Ford film *The Fugitive*. See the countryside in the glow of winter with excursions taking place throughout the month of November and in the week between Christmas and New Year's. Visit <http://www.gsmr.com/train-excursion/Tuckasegee> to see the full train schedule and ticket options.

Choose the Perfect Tree

Participate in a nostalgic holiday tradition, and choose and cut a tree from one of the many farms throughout Jackson County to bring home. Due to the county's location, range of elevations, excellent soil and rainfall, Jackson County is home to the southern-most natural stand of Fraser fir in the world. In fact, researchers have discovered that the genetics recovered from this southern stand produce some of the fastest growing, most aesthetically pleasing Christmas trees. Some farms celebrate the season with additional festive events and offerings, such as horse and carriage rides. Tom Sawyer Tree Farm even has an Elf Village where kids can create crafts, write and mail letters to

Santa, roast s'mores, and much more. For a full list of tree farms in the area, visit <https://www.DiscoverJacksonNC.com/put-new-spin-holiday-traditions-jackson-county/>.

Celebrate the Season of Giving

Find the perfect gift for everyone on your list at local shops throughout the county selling handmade and artisan goods that can't be found anywhere else. The town of Dillsboro is a hub for finding homemade treasures with shops lining the downtown area that sell pottery, home furnishings, sweet treats and more. Be sure to stop into Nancy Tut's Christmas Shop, open since 1969, for an incredible selection of holiday ornaments, décor and more. Visit

<https://www.DiscoverJacksonNC.com/attractions/shopping/> to learn more about unique shopping in the area.

Cabin Accommodations

After a long day out exploring, settle into one of Jackson County's many cabins available for rent, completing a picturesque winter getaway. Cozy up next to a crackling fire or prepare a homecooked meal in a full cabin kitchen. Cabin rentals offer room for the whole group to have space and enjoy quality time together, and visitors will find lower lodging prices during the winter season. Hotels, inns, cottages and other options are also available throughout the county based on each visitor's getaway preferences. To learn about all the lodging options in Jackson County, visit

<https://www.DiscoverJacksonNC.com/lodging/>.

Events to Make the Season Bright

- **30th Annual Mountain Artisans Hard Candy Christmas (November 24-25, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.):** Celebrating its 30th year, the Mountain Artisans Hard Candy Christmas returns with incredible collections of handmade goods from local and regional basket makers, leather craftsmen, master jewelers and many more. <https://www.DiscoverJacksonNC.com/event/hard-candy-christmas/>
- **Festival of Lights and Luminaries (December 1-2 and 8-9, 5 - 9 p.m.):** See Dillsboro transformed into a winter wonderland with 2,500 luminaries lighting up the town for visitors. The shops stay open later, and other special offerings include horse and buggy rides, live music, holiday goodies, carolers, and a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus. <https://www.DiscoverJacksonNC.com/event/festival-of-lights-and-luminaries/all/>
- **Outhouse Races (February 17, 2018, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.):** This famously unusual event returns to Sapphire Valley Resort to provide thrills for both participants and spectators. Attendees cheer on teams as two people push homemade outhouses secured to a set of skis down the race track while a third team member holds on for the wild ride. Teams with outhouses both simple and elaborate are welcome to enter, as long as they follow a short list of rules for the competitive event. <https://www.DiscoverJacksonNC.com/event/outhouse-races/>

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About Jackson County, NC:

Cashiers, Cherokee, Dillsboro, Sylva, Balsam, Cullowhee, Glenville and Sapphire are the distinct locales that make up Western North Carolina's Jackson County. Each of these Blue Ridge Mountain towns provide natural beauty that invites visitors to experience the North Carolina Mountains. Jackson County is also home to the nation's first and only fly fishing trail, The Western North Carolina Fly Fishing Trail. The majestic mountains harbor miles of hiking trails and waterfalls while charming downtowns are known for shopping, dining, culture, and hometown atmosphere. For more information, visit www.DiscoverJacksonNC.com.

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<https://media.visitnc.com/Explore-the-Winter-Wonder-of-Western-North-Carolina>