

RALEIGH, N.C. (Nov. 28, 2023) — Snowsports lovers will find a fresh experience in [North Carolina](#) this season with the opening of [Hatley Pointe Mountain Resort](#), which restages the runs and amenities of Wolf Ridge Ski Resort in Mars Hill. With its boutique approach and rebranding, Hatley Pointe joins the state's five other ski areas with a range of activities on the slopes and terrain parks plus ice rinks, tubing features and more. In addition, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's winter outlook predicts more precipitation than normal in the Southeast the next few months as a result of developing weather pattern El Niño, which could bode well for skiers and snowboarders across North Carolina.

"From the High Country to the state's southern edge, the North Carolina mountains become a winter wonderland," said Wit Tuttell, executive director of Visit North Carolina. "Each of our six ski areas adds unique appeal for everyone from beginners to those ready for a double black diamond run. We're home to the country's oldest adaptive ski clinic, the Southeast's oldest and best-known ski school, and with Hatley Pointe the newest ski resort."

Sugar Mountain continues its tradition as an early-bird opener with a [morning announcement](#) that manmade powder covers six of its 20 trails as snowmaking continues to prime the remaining runs. Appalachian Ski Mtn. in Boone plans to open Thursday with Beech Mountain Resort joining the action Saturday. The season generally continues through March and the arrival of spring temperatures.

"The mountains of North Carolina have the highest elevations and the coldest climates in the South," Tuttell said. "To supplement an average snowfall of 60 inches, North Carolina ski areas' state-of-the-art snowmaking capabilities provide 100% slope coverage, making area's snowmaking capacity top-notch. Even if the forecast takes a turn for the warmer at the time of a planned ski trip, travelers can find plentiful rewards in mountain destinations. In the High Country, for instance, the Wilderness Run Alpine Coaster in Banner Elk goes a long way toward replacing the rush of a downhill run."

According to the N.C. Ski Areas Association, the industry has an annual [economic impact](#) of more than \$244.3 million in North Carolina in 2022-23. Here's a rundown of what's offered on and off the slopes. Find more details in the [downloadable brochure](#) from the N.C. Ski Areas Association.

[APPALACHIAN SKI MTN.](#)

Blowing Rock

The North Carolina High Country's first ski area, Appalachian Ski Mtn is known for teaching beginners, families and groups. It's the home of the French Swiss Ski College, the South's oldest and largest independent ski school, dating to 1969; Burton Learn to Ride Center; and SKIwee and other children's programs. The resort boasts four distinct freestyle terrains with up roughly 60 rails, boxes, tabletops and other features.

Skiable area: 27 acres.

Slopes: 13.

Peak elevation: 4,000 feet.

Vertical drop: 365 feet.

Longest run: 2,640 feet.

Lifts: 2 quads, 1 double, 1 surface, 2 conveyors.

Other activities: [Ice skating](#) on a Zamboni-groomed rink; private instruction is available.

Off the slopes: Lodge with restaurant, ski shop, gift shop and locker room.

Other: Jackets, bib pants gloves and goggles are available for rent.

Mark your calendar: Dec. 26-31 for [Holiday Midnight Blast Nights](#).

BEECH MOUNTAIN RESORT

Beech Mountain

At 5,506 feet, Beech Mountain is the highest ski area in the East. A central alpine village, the 5506' Skybar and a resident brewery further distinguish the resort. Beech offers the Ski & Ride School plus Traxx, Burton Learn to Ride and Snow Kamp for children. New for the season: RFID ticketing to make reloading a breeze.

Skiable area: 95 acres.

Slopes: 17 with two terrain parks.

Peak elevation: 5,506 feet.

Vertical drop: 830 feet.

Longest run: 1 mile.

Lifts: 4 quads, 2 doubles, 2 carpet conveyors

Other activities: Tubing.

Off the slopes: The resort's alpine village offers food and beverage including Beech Mountain Brewing Co., First Chair Coffee Shop, multiple fire pits, retail and equipment rental.

Other: Bibs and coats are available for rent.

Mark your calendar: Adaptive Ski Week takes place Jan. 15-19. In the first-of-its-kind program in the United States, the resort invites people with disabilities to experience the slopes with certified instructors experienced in monoski; biski; two-, three- and four-tracking; slider; and visually impaired instruction.

CATALOOCHEE SKI AREA

Maggie Valley

At the edge of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Cataloochee opened in 1961 to become North Carolina's first ski area. It features one of the region's longest seasons with help from its advanced snowmaking system. Cataloochee offers lessons at the Ski & Ride Center and CAT Trackers for kids. The ski area also partners with Catalyst Sports to offer an [adaptive program](#) to give youth and adults the opportunity to learn to ski or ride.

Skiable area: 50 acres.

Slopes: 18.

Peak elevation: 5,400 feet.

Vertical drop: 740 feet.

Longest run: 3,500 feet.

Lifts: 1 double, 1 triple, 1 quad, 3 conveyors.

Other activities: [Tube World](#) in Maggie Valley, which has a Wee Bowl Snowplay Area.

Off the slopes: Lodge with fireplace, cafeteria-style restaurant, lounge and on-mountain shop.

Other: Bibs and jackets are available for rent.

Mark your calendar: [NC Smokies Ice Fest Weekend](#) takes place Jan. 26-28 with a wintry mix of event at the ski area and nearby locations.

HATLEY POINTE

Mars Hill

Thirty miles north of Asheville off scenic Interstate 26, Hatley Pointe elevates excitement for snowsports lovers with its reworking of the former Wolf Ridge Ski Resort. From the shadow of Big Bald Mountain in Pisgah National Forest, Hatley Pointe aims for a boutique experience with its service, expanded lodge and dining. The Snow Sports School will offer group and private lessons.

Skiable area: 54 acres.

Slopes: 15.

Peak elevation: 4,700 feet.

Vertical drop: 700 feet.

Longest run: 3,700 feet.

Lifts: 1 quad, 1 double and 2 surface lifts.

Off the slopes: Base lodge fireplaces, Smoke + Timber (full-service restaurant and bar), café, grab-and-go food and a walk-up bar. Outside, Peaks & Pies food truck will serve pizza.

Other: Bibs, gloves and outerwear will be available for rent.

Watch for news: Check the website and [Facebook page](#) for updates on the opening.

SAPPHIRE VALLEY SKI AREA

Sapphire

Sapphire Valley Ski Area is part of a 5,700-acre, four-season resort. It's especially attractive to families and beginning skiers who can take lessons and master the runs. Target opening is Dec. 17.

Skiable area: 8 acres.

Slopes: 2.

Peak elevation: 3,400 feet.

Vertical drop: 200 feet.

Longest run: 1,600 feet.

Lifts: 1 quad, 2 carpet conveyors.

Other activities: [Frozen Falls Tube Park](#).

Off the slopes: Base lodge park and fire pit plus the Slopeside Tavern, Mica's Restaurant and Pub, The Fix Restaurant and Bar, The Library and the new Hidden Valley Tavern.

Mark your calendar: Feb. 17 brings the [Great Outhouse Races](#). Decorated outhouses will course down the slope with a "seated" passenger.

[SUGAR MOUNTAIN RESORT](#)

Sugar Mountain

North Carolina's largest winter resort is distinguished by the state's only double black diamond slope, sophisticated lift system and extensive off-the-slopes activities. For 2023-24, the resort has invested in a smoother and more convenient equipment rental process as well as adding new groomers and snow-making machines. Group and private lessons are available at the adult and children's Snowsports Schools.

Skiable acres: 125.

Slopes: 20.

Peak elevation: 5,300 feet.

Vertical drop: 1,200 feet.

Longest run: 1.5 miles.

Lifts: 1 fixed-grip quad, 2 doubles, 1 high-speed six-pack, 2 high-speed quads, 1 surface, 1 carpet conveyor.

Other activities: Skating, tubing and snowshoeing.

Off the slopes: Base lodge with two cafeterias, the Last Run Lounge with full-service bar, locker room and shop.

Other: Clothing rentals are available.

Mark your calendar: [SugarFest](#) enlivens Dec. 8-10 with demos, music, fireworks and more.

For more information to inspire a trip, stop by [VisitNC.com](#).

About Visit North Carolina:

Visit North Carolina is part of the [Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina](#).

Established in 2014, the EDPNC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation that oversees the state's efforts in business and job recruitment and retention, international trade, and tourism, film and sports development. The mission of Visit North Carolina is to unify and lead the state in developing North Carolina as a major destination for leisure travel, group tours, meetings and conventions, sports events and film production. For more information on North Carolina's destinations and travel assets, go to [VisitNC.com](#).

###

CONTACT:

Veda Gilbert and Suzanne Brown

media@VisitNC.com

<https://media.visitnc.com/NC-Winter-Sports-Season>Returns-With-a-Reimagined-Resort>