

# Winter in Canada: icy-hot holiday or seasonal nuisance?

'Tis the season for merriment, cheer and ripping downhill on GTs

The sooner the snow melts, the sooner I can quit shovelling



JOEL TIEDEMANN

down a mountain at Mach 3 is so intense that I'm usually counting down the days until the summer months are over. The sheer pleasure derived from skiing and snowboarding outweighs any potential headaches brought on during the icier season.

But let's step away for a moment from such intensive activities and reflect upon the intangible benefits provided by the winter months. Think about the sheer beauty of winter: a lone spruce tree blanketed in a coat of fresh snow reminds us of the stunning landscapes that can be found in Mother Nature. And opening presents on Christmas morning would be filled with emptiness if I wasn't able to



gaze out the window and see the world covered in pure, white, powdery snow.

Winter isn't so bad. Aside from all of the mushy, Christmassy feelings, we're also provided with many fringe benefits. During the frigid winter months, we no longer need a refrigerator too

keep our beer cold; the world is our beer fridge. Along with cold beer, winter

also provides us with respite from summertime annoyances such as mosquitoes. That's right: for seven wonderful months, there's no buzzing, no stinging and no itchy lumps. This winter thing just keeps on getting better and better.

In fact, winter rocks. So people who chose to live in a country known for its prolonged periods of frosty weather should embrace it, not complain about it. Perhaps those individuals who find it necessary to berate the Old Man should consider paying a visit to a more southern locale. For them, the frozen arctic tundra that is Canada may not be ideal. Although Canadians are not the igloo-bound individuals that we are sometimes perceived to be, we have adapted in ways that actually make the winter season pretty damn awesome.

Besides frigid temperatures, anarchy on the streets and having to shovel snow, winter is pretty damn cool. Let's face it; winter is Canadian like bathing in a tub full of maple syrup with a beaver while watching a hockey game in an igloo. With this in mind, Canadians and other snow-bound countries have developed several methods of effectively dealing with the winter months and making them quite enjoyable. This adaptation makes perfect sense: we live in a country that is covered in the pillowy white stuff for six or seven months out of the year, so we may as well embrace it.

For starters, let's consider tobogganing. As a child (and later as a drunk adolescent), I would bundle up, grab my GT Snow Racer or Crazy Carpet and spend hours sliding down snowy hills. For such a simple activity, sledding provided me with hours of free, exhilarating entertainment. I know that I'm not the only one who's enjoyed the thrills associated with tobogganing, as sliding down hills in a completely wild and out-of-control manner is a rite of passage for most Canadian children. Another perk of tobogganing: coming home to steaming cup of hot chocolate filled with marshmallows. This warms the cockles of the heart like nothing else.

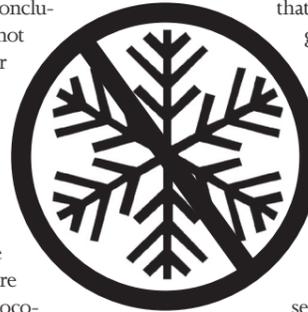
Two other awesome winter activities involving hills and sliding are skiing and snowboarding. Like many others, the rush I get from racing



CONAL PIERSE

moment to jump out under your wheels.

Now Joel, I'm willing to give you skiing as a legitimately rad thing you can do during winter, but in case you haven't noticed, unless you want to drive four hours or more, there's no decent outlet to do this. And fuck anyone who wants to say Rabbit Hill or Snow Valley. Waiting in line for half an hour just so you can go on a minute-long run (and that's if you're snow-plowing the entire way down) leaves you feeling like you've ejaculated prematurely. When you factor in the fact that you can't go five meters without overhearing some



homsps talking about how they'd "totally bone that broad in the pink" or how they are going to "get some mad wicked air that'll be totally fresh," sitting at home and playing Scrabble suddenly seems riveting.

The worst thing about winter is the macho bullshit attitude that being Canadian somehow makes you impervious to cold. It's fine if you don't want to complain about it, but don't act like sewing a Canadian flag to your back-

pack means you are a part of a superhuman race so hearty that they were breast-fed ice cream. Wearing shorts in -20C weather doesn't make you more of a man; in fact, if you were to check downstairs you'd get a picture reminiscent of how your package looked when you were eight.

In the end, all winter is really about is being cold and miserable. There's no silver lining to this cloud, and no matter how much you love your '80s ski wear, the end doesn't justify the means. When you look past all your fantasies about what winter meant for you as a kid, you'll realize that you were being ripped off by the old lady next door who paid you to shovel her walk. Two dollars to shovel your entire driveway, you cheap bitch? I'm eight, not retarded. I have a good mind to go ice your steps.

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