

Walking in a Winter Wonderland

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Photo by Sophia Dembling

I live in Texas and every now and then I get nostalgic for real winters. “I miss snow,” I’ll say to my husband, who grew up in Illinois and knows from snow.

And he always says the same thing: “That’s because you never had to shovel a driveway.”

Yes, OK. I grew up in a New York City apartment and now live where snow is here today, gone today. We do get it once or twice a year, but it rarely sticks more than a few hours. Snowmen in Dallas are a tragic sight, as much mud and leaves as snow. Still, hard as it may be to believe during this cold snap we’re having, I like traveling to where I can enjoy real snow. I’m no skier, but I like watching snow fall, walking in it, and sitting inside being warm on a snowy day. (I’m always game for an excuse to sit on a couch.)

My last blissful snow day was in the quintessentially flyover state of Ohio, in a region known as the [Hocking Hills](#), in the foothills of the Appalachians, about 50 miles southeast of Cleveland.

I made a winter visit to the area several years ago that lingers in my mind—and not only because I caught a stomach bug and projectile-vomited all over the car of a local tourism official. But I won’t dwell on that. No, I really remember the trip tenderly because before and after that untidy moment, it was a lovely visit, full of all-American cuteness, such as taking a basket-weaving class at [Hutchison’s Hilltop Haven](#) and visiting the nation’s last washboard factory, the [Columbus Washboard Company](#).

And the upside of my little bug is that it gave me a good excuse to hole up for a day in front of the gas fire in my cozy cabin at [The Inn & Spa at Cedar Falls](#), which is where this photo was taken. Looking at it makes me yearn to return. Can’t you just hear the hush?

The Hocking Hills region is a particularly great snow-appreciation location because it's home to nine state parks that are studded with waterfalls. Ever seen a frozen waterfall? Me, neither. I was too busy projectile-vomiting on that trip—oh, sorry, I wasn't going to dwell on that.

But if you happen to be in the area this Saturday, Jan. 17 (or the third Saturday of January any year), you can join some 5,000 hikers in the Hocking Hills State Park for the annual six-mile Winter Hike. Don't worry, you won't be hiking with 5,000 other people. Small groups are accompanied partway and then left to finish the hike at their own pace, and you'll get a ride back to the trailhead. The hike is free, but according to the [website](#), "donations for bean soup appreciated." And really, who wouldn't want to donate for bean soup on a snowy day?

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