

**Weekend Getaway** Brian E. Clark

# Minocqua quieter but cool in winter

In the summer, the population of Minocqua mushrooms to 60,000 souls who travel north to fish, swim, canoe, water-ski and pursue other warm-weather activities.

Come winter, however, the number of people in and around Minocqua stays closer to 5,000 — the number of permanent residents in this North Woods town. Which means you should be able to have the myriad lakes to yourself for ice fishing, cross-country skiing, skating and snowshoeing.

It can be busier on the snowmobile trails, however. But the sledgers can spread out on nearly 1,600 miles of groomed trails in Oneida and Vilas counties.

The town also hosts a plethora of winter activities, like the Feb. 4 Loop Around (1,380-acre) Lake Minocqua, a five-kilometer candlelight outing via Nordic skis, snowshoes and hiking boots for all ages and abilities.

And when you want to come in from the cold, the area has plenty of soup clubs for dining and pleasant lodges — many stay open through the winter — for simply relaxing in front of a fireplace.

## Things to do

The Minocqua Winter Park and Nordic Center, 12375 Scottishman Lake Road, has more than 75 kilometers of groomed track for cross-country skiers. It also has a tubing hill, snowshoeing terrain and a pond for ice skating in the fresh air. See [minocquawinterpark.org](http://minocquawinterpark.org).

Other spots for ice skating include the Lakeland Hawks Ice Arena, 7961 Highway 51 S., [lakelandhawks.org](http://lakelandhawks.org); Torpy Park, [bit.ly/vig0395](http://bit.ly/vig0395); a lighted outdoor public ice rink near downtown Minocqua; and Brandy Park, another lighted out-

door public ice rink, 326 Lemna Creek Road, Woodruff.

Snowmobilers can check with the Forest Riders Snowmobile Club, [minocquaforestriders.org](http://minocquaforestriders.org), about riding on its 190 miles of groomed trails that extend to the Willow Flowage and Price County.

The Cross Country Cruisers Snowmobile Club, [snowmobileclub.com](http://snowmobileclub.com), maintains 135 miles of Wisconsin's groomed trails in and out of Arbor Vitae, Woodruff and Minocqua. And the New-Ton Sno-Fleas Snowmobile Club of Lake Tomahawk, [new-tonsnofleas.com](http://new-tonsnofleas.com), has more than 120 miles of trails.

If you'd like to cut a hole through the ice and angle for panfish or walleye on one of the area's abundant lakes, contact Kurtis Island Sport & Guide Service, [bit.ly/22sr1d4](http://bit.ly/22sr1d4), for live bait, tackle, shanties, augers and ice fishing guide services; or Anglers Choice Guide Service, Presque Isle. [johndandrew.com/icefishing.html](http://johndandrew.com/icefishing.html).

## Places to stay

The Waters of Minocqua, 8116 Highway 51 S., [thewatersofminocqua.com](http://thewatersofminocqua.com), is popular with families because it is a resort with an indoor waterpark.

The Pointe Resort & Club, 8257 Highway 51 S., [pointeminocqua.com](http://pointeminocqua.com), is on the shores of Lake Minocqua and offers lakeside condos that sleep four or six. It also has snowmobile accommodations, plus a recreation center with an indoor swimming pool, whirlpool, sauna and weight room.

Silas Lakeshore Bed & Breakfast Resort, 1390 Lakeshore Drive, [silaslakeshore.com](http://silaslakeshore.com), is on Lake Minocqua, just steps from downtown or the Bearskin Trail.

The Fence Lake Cottage, [fencelakecottage.com](http://fencelakecottage.com), 1716



Most people think about biking in the Minocqua area in the warmer months, but some intrepid riders take their wheels out in the snow.



The Lakeland Loppet is among the oldest ski races in the state. The 37th annual event will be March 3 at Minocqua Winter Park.



There are plenty of trails to cross-country ski on in the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest and surrounding areas.

Thunderbird Lane, is a three-bedroom dwelling that sleeps six.

The Inn at Lindwood, 8377 Schroeder Road, [lindwood@aol.com](http://lindwood@aol.com), is a cozy home on Ink Pot Lake. It's three miles from Minocqua Winter Park and is in the middle of many snowmobile trails.

Bay View Inn on Lake Minocqua, 8555 Highway 51 N., [bayviewminocqua.com](http://bayviewminocqua.com), is a close walk to downtown. For other lodging options, see [bit.ly/yhmdZd](http://bit.ly/yhmdZd).

## Places to dine

Polecat & Lace Restaurant & Saloon, 427 Oneida St., [polecatandlace.com](http://polecatandlace.com), serves a full menu beginning at 11 a.m. daily. Closed Sunday.

The Rusty Putter, 10080 Highway 70 W., [rustyputterminocqua.com](http://rustyputterminocqua.com), is an upscale public restaurant adjacent to Wildwood Wildlife Park. Minocqua Brewing Company, 238 Lakeshore Drive, [minocquabrewingcompany.com](http://minocquabrewingcompany.com), produces seven kinds of ales and lagers. The brewery's restaurant offers an assortment of appetizers, sandwiches, soups and salads with a gourmet twist.

T. Murtaugh's Pub, 500 Oneida St., is a Minocqua tradition, serving deli-style, grilled sandwiches and drinks in a relaxed atmosphere.

The Norwood Pines Supper Club, 10171 Highway 70 W., [norwoodpines.com](http://norwoodpines.com), offers Northwest elegance in a relaxed setting.

Otto's Beer & Brat Garden, 509 Oneida St., is a European-style pub with Sheboygan brats, 80 beers on tap and live music. For other dining options, see [bit.ly/vx2249](http://bit.ly/vx2249).

## Upcoming events

**Jan. 21:** Northwoods annual tracking using radio telemetry at the North Lakeland Discovery Center in Manitowish Waters.

**Jan. 21:** Chili Rama, Trigg's

Mall & Minocqua Brewing Co.

**Jan. 22:** Winter Festival at the Lake Tomahawk Snowshoe Park with food, beverages and rides on a horse-drawn wagon.

**Jan. 25:** Snowshoe State-house Lake Trail, North Lakeland Discovery Center.

**Jan. 27-29:** Girls Gone Wild Snowmobile Ride.

**Feb. 3-4:** Wolf Track Rendezvous Ski Marathon, Minocqua Winter Park.

**Feb. 4:** Loop Around the Lake 5K by candlelight, including entertainment and food.

**Feb. 7:** Family cosmic full-moon campfire and hike, North Lakeland Discovery Center.

**Feb. 10-11:** Cruisefest two day snowmobile festival on Lake Minocqua.

**Feb. 11:** Wisconsin State High School Nordic Ski Championships.

**Feb. 11:** Snowshoeing State-house Lake Trail.

**Feb. 18:** Ride with the

Champs, sponsored by the Snowmobile Hall of Fame and Museum, St. Germain.

**Feb. 18-19:** Sani-sport of Wisconsin Lakeland Hawks Youth Pond Hockey Championships, Lake Minocqua.

**March 3:** Lakeland Loppet Ski Races, Minocqua Winter Park.

**March 10:** Porcupine den tour, North Lakeland Discovery Center.

**March 31:** Only Fools Run at Midnight 5K run and walk through the streets and trails of Minocqua.

## Getting there

Minocqua is 275 miles north of Milwaukee via I-94 and Highway 51.

**More info**  
Contact the Minocqua Area Chamber of Commerce, 8216 Highway 51, Minocqua, [minocqua.org](http://minocqua.org), or call (715) 356-6266.

Brian E. Clark is a Madison writer and photographer.