

# SundayTravel

WITH: NEW ENGLAND DESTINATIONS

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CITIES IN THE STATES | SAVANNAH, GA.

## History, arts, and cuisine to charm you all

By Necee Regis  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

*Eighth in a series highlighting cities to which you can fly nonstop from Boston.*

With its tree-filled squares and parks, well-preserved architecture, historic sites, cultural attractions, and residents oozing Southern charm, Savannah is an easy city to love. From the wide and lazy Savannah River to cemeteries on the outskirts of town, there is plenty for visitors to see and do. More than 40 companies offer guided tours on themes including architecture, African-American heritage, gardens, military history, food, ghosts, nature, and more. Students at Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) add a vibrant layer of enthusiasm to the community, as do the many restaurants, cafes, and boutique shops. Georgia's first planned city may be rich with history but it is not stuck in the past.



NECEE REGIS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

The Jepson Center, a Telfair museum.

### DAY 1

**Noon.** Start your visit with Historic Savannah Carriage Tours and get acquainted with the 2.5-square-mile Landmark Historic District. Public tours depart from the Hyatt Regency Hotel and last about 50 minutes. Adult \$20, children ages 5-11 \$9, under 5 free. (912-443-9333, [www.savannahcarriage.com](http://www.savannahcarriage.com))

**1 p.m.** Enjoy lunch at the Jepson Cafe on the second floor of the Jepson Center — one of three Telfair museums in town (912-790-8800, [www.telfair.org](http://www.telfair.org)). The contemporary spot serves wraps, panini, salads, and small plates (207 West York St., \$7-\$13).

**2 p.m.** Depending on your pace, explore one, two, or all three of the Telfair Museums. The Jepson Center, designed by architect Moshe Safdie, hosts traveling exhibitions of contemporary art, and ArtZeum, a hands-on gallery for kids. Telfair Academy, site of the former royal governor's residence, houses 19th- and 20th-century American and European art (121 Barnard St.). The 1816 Owens-

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KARI BODNARCHUK FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

### MONTANA

## DOG DAYS TO DIE FOR

Mountain adventure camp frosted with luxury: cabins, food, treatments, fun

BY KARI BODNARCHUK | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

**D** ARBY — Miles of snow-covered hills rippled across the Montana landscape, backed by the jagged peaks of the Bitterroot Mountains. I could hear the blades of my dogsled shushing along the trail and the rhythmic pitter-patter of paws as my huskies pulled me along. The trail descended as it traversed the side of a hill and then made a tight U-turn and wound back up another mountain.

"Good job," our guide, Jessie Royer, yelled to a musher behind us, a Vancouver woman who had never been dogsledding. "I usually lose about half my guests on that turn," she joked.

We covered another dozen miles with no major mishaps, but our inexperience with the terrain and climate surfaced in other ways. We burrowed beneath our many layers: thermal underwear, ski pants, wooly hats, and winter jackets — and stuffed our pockets with hand warmers that could reach 135 degrees.

"I don't even have my winter clothes out yet," said Royer, 37, who wore a baseball hat, jeans under her ski pants, and a mid-weight jacket. "I won't pull them out until I get to Alaska."

Royer, a wrangler and musher, competes in Alaska's famous 1,000-mile Iditarod Great Sled Race each year. She also runs dogsled tours for Triple Creek Ranch, a high-end, luxurious, 625-acre property in the Bitterroots, about a 90-minute drive south of Missoula. Here, at this all-inclusive adventure camp for adults, guests can experience award-winning fine cuisine, plush accommodations in cozy log cabins, and plenty of outdoor activities with a Western twist.

My friend Sarah and I decided it was the perfect place to celebrate her 40th birthday. We left husbands at home and visited for five days last month. The ranch has 23 high-end log cabins and a main lodge that nestle under the pine trees in the shadow of arrowhead-shaped Trapper Peak, the tallest mountain in western Montana. Craig Barrett, the former CEO of Intel, and his

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The author, front, and her friend Sarah Heckles of Portland, Ore., go tubing, pulled by an ATV. At top, Jessie Royer (standing) guides a dogsledding adventure.



NEW ENGLAND

Dear hearts race Plenty to love  
up and down in inside-out in  
Woodstock, Vt. Lincoln, N.H.

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# A couple's idea of a high oasis of luxury

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wife, Barbara, a trained astronaut and former ambassador to Finland, bought the property in 1993 and began creating the luxury oasis (it became a Relais & Châteaux property in 1995).

The cabins have original paintings by renowned Western artists — all part of the Barretts' personal collection — stone fireplaces, outdoor hot tubs, open wet bars, and log post beds with thick down comforters. The main lodge has an airy restaurant with tall windows, a fireplace, and a selection of stuffed animal heads and a full-size mountain lion mounted on the walls. Sommelier Jeremy White helps with wine choices and executive chef Jacob Leatherman prepares mouthwatering dishes using the finest ingredients often flown in by helicopter to ensure freshness.

Downstairs, at the activities center, you can coordinate your adventures, including one of the most popular winter sports: dogsledding. We spent two days with Royer, helping her train her dogs as she prepared for her March race, and exploring the Bitterroot Range. Royer showed us how to harness the dogs and attach them to our sled's gang line. Then she gave us tips on how to maneuver around corners, maintain control, and handle a spill.

"If you fall, hold on because the dogs won't stop," she said. "They run because they want to, not because we ask them to, so they won't care whether we're on there or not."

Each morning we covered 15 miles by dogsled. We crossed cattle guards, spotted moose scrambling up hillsides, and eventually reached more exposed high ground that gave us stunning views. When we stopped for cookies, hot chocolate, and cider, Royer told us how she got her start.

"I used to put a horse halter on my border collie and hook it up to my billy goat," she said. The following year, at 15, Royer got her first sled dog and has been racing for 22 years. She ranks in the top 20 (one of just three women), and has come in as high as 8th place in the Iditarod.

Royer appeared calm and relaxed when we met her, even though in the upcoming week she had to complete hundreds of miles of training runs, prepare 2,000 pounds of dog food,



PHOTOS BY KARI BODNARCHUK FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE



precook and package her own food, and gather all clothing, veterinary, and other race supplies to ship to Alaska. (The race starts March 1 in Anchorage.)

Sarah and I were more stressed just deciding what to do at the ranch each day. Our options included nature and bird-watching tours, ice fishing, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, archery, and more.

We tried skijoring one afternoon, when we took turns being pulled around a field by a galloping horse while holding onto a rope and balancing on cross-country skis. Later, we flopped on inner tubes, held onto a rope, and went slip-sliding around the field while being pulled by an all-terrain vehicle.

"It just never gets old," said Sarah, after more than a dozen times shooting down the hill on her tube.

**From the top: Guests at Triple Creek Ranch stay in one of 23 individual log cabins, each full of amenities and decorated with original artworks. Among a guest's many daily choices are a guided horseback adventure, dogsledding, or learning how to dogsled, with Jessie Royer, here with two of her 70 dogs. In March, Royer is off to Alaska for the famed Iditarod race.**



Another day we went downhill skiing and snowboarding at Lost Trail Powder Mountain, a no-frills, off-the-grid ski area located on the Continental Divide along the Montana-Idaho border. It's a 20-minute drive from the ranch up Highway 93 to Lost Trail, passing ranches, and historic Lewis and Clark sites along the way. Lost Trail, in fact, is named after the explorers' misguided attempt to cross the Rocky Mountains, when they lost their way along the Nez Perce Trail.

The family-run ski area sits in the Bitterroot National Forest, so you won't find any other development here. It has five two-person chairlifts (without bars), three rope tows, and a small lodge, all operated by diesel generators. Owners Scott Grasser and his sister Judy have no interest in adding high-speed quads or other fancy

equipment because "we don't want to raise our ticket prices," said Scott.

Here, a full-day adult lift ticket costs \$39, rentals go for \$20. The mountain gets 300 inches of powder a year, but the busiest-ever day drew just 1,500 people.

Our favorite runs off Chair 5 took us from the open summit of Saddle Mountain at 8,200 feet down the Hollywood Bowl. Sarah and her snowboard glided over five inches of fresh untracked powder, while I carved my way down the groomed Sacagawea run before winding through an open forest to join her. On our last series of runs en route back to the lodge, we still found multiple untouched powder stashes.

"That's our claim to fame," said Scott Grasser. "It can snow one day and you still have fresh powder the next week."

## IF YOU GO . . .

### Triple Creek Ranch

Darby, Mont.  
406-821-4600  
www.triplecreekranch.com  
Rates from \$950 per couple, including airport transfers and all meals, snacks, drinks, on-ranch activities, Wi-Fi, photos of your adventures, pampering, and more. Special four-night package for two through May: \$4,500 for a luxury cabin, double occupancy. Dogsledding free in January; normally \$325-\$425.

### Lost Trail Powder Mountain

406-821-3211  
www.losttrail.com  
Open Thu-Sun, early December to mid-April.

At night we hung out in the hot tub on our cabin's deck, drinking Groomer beer and catching up; sank into the leather couches in the main lodge and watched a slide show of the day's adventures; or pretended to work on intricate hand-carved Stave puzzles in the upper lounge, where there was an impressive wine cellar and a cozy gathering place for guests.

Occasionally, we called home via Facetime (we had no cell reception here) and tried to persuade our husbands we weren't having any fun. Then we would head out for a moonlight snowshoe hike or wander over to the fire pit, where we found a basket with all the fix-ins for s'mores. The staff's attention to detail was amazing.

After ordering my favorite avocado BLT for lunch one day, our waitress overheard me say, "That pizza sounds great too." Lunch arrived with my BLT sandwich and four small slices of the pizza.

We fit in one final adventure before our airport shuttle whisked us away: a horseback ride around the ranch, wearing rawhide chaps and cowgirl hats. We wandered off-trail through open pine tree forests on a true blue-sky Montana day. Mycha Smith, our guide, pointed out elk tracks in the snow. At one point, two of our horses leapt sideways and quickly backed up, obviously spooked.

"They smell the mountain lion," said Smith, pointing to the ground. "Those are fresh tracks."

And with that, we made our way back to the ranch. We resolved we would soon be back, maybe to go on a cattle drive with Royer come summertime. Meanwhile, we plan to track Royer in a few weeks as she makes her way across the Alaskan wilderness, bundled up in her winter gear.

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