

NEAR OR FAR

Whether you're looking for great eats, a wild adventure or somewhere to simply chill out, we've got you covered with one option you can drive to and one escape by plane

BY AMBER GIBSON



Drive to: Cleveland, Ohio (5½-hour drive)

Get your adrenaline pumping this season at Cleveland Metroparks Chalet (\$12/day, 16200 Valley, Strongsville, Ohio), which boasts the tallest, fastest ice chutes in Ohio — toboggans can reach 50 miles per hour. For more of a workout, cross-country ski, snowshoe, fat-tire bike or ice fish in the sprawling Cuyahoga Valley National Park. After working up an appetite, adventurous carnivores can try Christmas Ale-flavored bacon and beef tongue at West Side Market (1979 W. 25th), the city's oldest public market. If you visit Feb. 10, Cleveland's Kurentovanje Parade & Festival, a Slovenian Mardi Gras celebration, is sure to be an adventure. Expect polka, pierogis and fuzzy Kurents (pictured above), a mythical Slovenian monster that scares winter away.



FOR ADVENTURERS

Fly to: Aspen, Colorado (flights start around \$425)

Four main peaks — Aspen Highlands, Aspen Mountain, Buttermilk and Snowmass — provide skiing terrain for all abilities. The most ambitious can spend the weekend skiing and snowshoeing between a system of 34 backcountry huts managed by the 10th Mountain Division Hut Association (starting at \$25/night; Huts.org). Try winter fly-fishing on the Roaring Fork River, then take a horse-drawn sleigh to an organic lunch at Pine Creek Cookhouse (12500 Castle Creek) at the base of the Elk Mountains. Stay at The Little Nell (starting at \$575/night, 675 E. Durant) to enjoy the new-this-year Snowcat Stargazing experience (\$300-\$350), and view constellations, planets and even meteor showers accompanied by sips and sweets from the hotel's culinary team.



Stay in: Chicago

A staycation can be the most relaxing option of all. Hang out in your bathrobe all day at the newly renovated Ritz-Carlton Chicago (starting at \$279/night, 160 E. Pearson) and wake up to breakfast in bed — try the Sicilian pistachio granola or baked eggs with salame and Parmesan hash browns from the hotel's new restaurant, Torali, Italian - Steak. For an ultra luxe getaway, the spa at Waldorf Astoria Chicago (starting at \$325/night, 11 E. Walton) offers an indulgent new 24 Karat Gold Silkpeel Facial (pictured below, \$375) for a radiant complexion. Don't have time for an overnight? Light a candle before settling in for the La Floralia facial at Lena Rose (\$225, 4668 N. Manor). Green beauty products by La Bella Figura, like a healing manuka honey mask, will leave you feeling like a goddess.



FOR TRANQUILITY SEEKERS

Fly to: Vancouver, British Columbia (flights start around \$332)

Proximity to nature and friendly locals make Vancouver one of the most easygoing big cities on the continent. Forest bathe — a Japanese practice of finding peace in the woods and the latest return-to-nature trend — in Stanley Park after stretching out in a yin yoga class at Moksha Yoga (appx. \$16/class, 2083 Alma). Meander for hours at the Vancouver Art Gallery (pictured above, 750 Hornby) or curl up with a good book at indie bookstore Tanglewood Books (2306 W. Broadway) after a zen sushi lunch on the hidden Japanese garden patio at Minami (1118 Mainland). CHI, The Spa at Shangri-La Hotel (starting at appx. \$255/night, 1128 W. Georgia) is an urban oasis for peace and serenity; the aroma vitality massage (starting at appx. \$150) blends shiatsu and lymphatic drainage techniques with therapeutic essential oils to lull you into a deep state of calm.



FOR FOODIES



Drive to: Indianapolis, Indiana (3-hour drive)

Indy is the Midwest's latest culinary mecca, with a new wave of top chefs snagging the city a slew of James Beard noms in recent years. Start your day with java at Coat Check Coffee (401 E. Michigan) or chicken gizzard beet hash at Love Handle (877 Mass). For a true farm-to-table experience, enjoy the rustic organic fare at The Loft at Trader's Point Creamery (pictured above, 9101 Moore, Zionsville) and for dinner, Chef Neal Brown has you covered: Try his Mediterranean small plates at Stella (611 East) or a high-end Japanese omakase at just-opened Ukiyo (4907 N. College). Another, more casual, new option is Crispy Bird (115 E. 49th), elevating fried chicken with heritage poultry and decadent plant-based sides. And, luckily for your waistline, Indy has a great bike-share program, making it easy to get around and work off calories between eating and drinking.

Fly to: Alexandria, Virginia (flights start around \$107)

History has long been Alexandria's claim to fame, but lately the food scene has ramped up dramatically. Chef Cathal Armstrong is the best-known chef in town, an Irish transplant with several local restaurants and a speakeasy; Hummingbird (pictured below, 220 S. Union) is his newest, with great seafood and waterfront views. Enjoy a sumptuous tasting menu feast at Restaurant Eve (110 S. Pitt) or Vermilion (1120 King). The softshell crab with sunchoke cream at the former and hand-rolled cavatelli with lamb Bolognese at the latter are musts. Save room for made-to-order liquid nitrogen ice cream at Nicecream (726 King) — flavors change daily — then fall into a food coma at the nearby Kimpton Lorien Hotel & Spa (starting at \$159/night, 1600 King).

