

Wintergreen Dogsled Camping Trips

How does the dogsledding experience differ between a lodge-based trip and a camping trip?

The dogsledding experience is similar on both trip options – you'll enjoy much of each day sledding a variety of trails & scenery. On camp trips, the sleds are larger to accommodate the extra gear & may require extra finesse to drive them depending upon trail conditions. On camp trips, the dogs are with you night & day – they bed down along your campsite where you can enjoy extra contact with them morning & evening. On lodge-based trips, the dogs sleep in a kennel.

How does the camping work?

On camp trips you'll spend your first & last nights in a lodge and your other days out camping. To 'ease into the experience,' our guides may opt to have you spend one or more nights at our wilderness base camp. It's nearby Wintergreen and has Yukon wall tents & a campfire circle with benches set up for season. Or, depending upon trail & weather conditions and group interest, your guides may opt to go 'mobile' which means your group may travel deeper into the wilderness where you'll set up your own field camp with our portable dome tents. We always camp near a lake where we can chisel a hole in the ice for a water supply and have a flat surface to set up tents and sleeping systems & enjoy the night sky.



How much personal gear can I bring?

During your trip orientation evening at our lodge, your guides will review your clothing & gear with you. They'll advise if you've got too much/too little, provide you with extra loaner items if needed and show you how pack it. Your items needed at camp will be stowed in a 'sled bag' & secured in a sled. Any items you'd like with you during the day can be stowed in a day pack that will readily accessible on top of your sled. Cameras are welcome!

Will I sleep warm?

Yes! Our sleeping systems include 5 components: two inner camping mattresses, an extra-thick Antarctic sleeping bag, a fleece or down liner bag for extra warmth, and a weather-proof outer shell that encloses the entire system (a 'bivvy sack,' its like a personal tent). During your first night at the lodge, the guides will review your sleeping system with you & what to wear to bed for optimal comfort & warmth while camping. With your sleeping systems, you can either sleep in tents or outside under the stars. Each night, our campfire routine includes filling Nalgene bottles with boiling that you can tuck inside your bag to pre-warm them.

How do camping meals work?

Breakfasts & dinners are prepared around the campfire, sometimes with the help of Coleman stoves. Our forest has ample firewood so we enjoy the luxury of large warm fires morning & evening and we craft a circle bench of snow or logs with an insulating cover for seating comfort. Our guides pride themselves in their creative campfire cookery and are keen to engage participants in the process. How do baked fruit roll-ups for breakfast and chicken fajitas for dinner sound? During the dogsledding day, you'll be provided with a variety of 'fingers foods' (cheese & sausage sticks, energy bars, dried fruit & nuts) for you to snack on during group rest & photo breaks with a variety of hot & cold beverage options. We're happy to accommodate any dietary concerns or restrictions, including celiac disease.



What about bathroom breaks?

Each sled is equipped with a toiletries kit: hand sanitizer, T.P., moistened towelettes, burnable tissue-collection bags. If 'nature calls' during the dogsledding day (whether on a lodge-based or a camping trip), you'll 'answer' by finding a private place just off the trail perhaps in a sheltered grove of trees. At our wilderness base camp, we have an outdoor privy (an open-air outhouse with seat). While 'mobile' camping, we'll designate a tree-sheltered private area a short distance from the campfire and post the toiletries bag at its entrance to indicate when it's in use. Some participants are understandably apprehensive about how toiletries work in the winter woods, but it always happens just fine -- no issues!

How do Beginning Camping Trips differ from Advanced Dogsled Camping & Ski Trips?

On our Beginning Camping Trips, all participants travel by dogsled each day -- generally on well-established trail systems near Wintergreen Lodge. Each sled is driven by two participants who stand side-by-side on the platform on the back of the sled. You're welcome to help the guides with harnessing, feeding, watering & caring for your dogteam as much as you choose throughout the trip. We camp in small groups which generally include up to 6 participants plus 2 guides.

Our Advanced Trips generally involve untracked routes deeper in the wilderness. Dogsleds haul gear & supplies while participants rotate each day between driving dogteams & following along on wide back-country skis (provided by Wintergreen). No technical skiing skills are required but participants need to be reasonably fit. The rotations are handled casually (every few hours). At any given time, half or more of the participants are traveling by dogteam. On their ski (or snowshoe) rotations some participants choose to be out front to assist the guides with trail-breaking, route finding & navigation to learn those skills. Others choose to ski along behind on the packed track left by the dogsleds which makes for easier skiing. When we negotiate



challenging portages between lakes, it's "all hands on desk." We strap the skis on the sleds so that, if needed, most everyone can assist the loads over rough terrain and through deep snow. Our goal on these advanced trips is to engage everyone in all elements of wilderness travel & camping so that it becomes a team adventure experience rather than a group of guides and clients.

Are dogsled camping trips safe?

In 40 years of operating Wintergreen, we've never had a significant safety issue on camping trips (just few bumps & bruises) and we've never had to evacuate any participants. Our guides are trained in wilderness first aid and bring expedition first aid kits. They also carry two-way radios and cell phones (and satellite phones if needed). Routes on our Beginning Camping Trips will allow us to transport a participant to a road-access trailhead within a few hours or less. On our advanced trip routes, accessing a trailhead by dogsled may require several hours or more. County search & rescue service is also available for emergencies, but has never been needed. Wintergreen has a sterling safety record.

