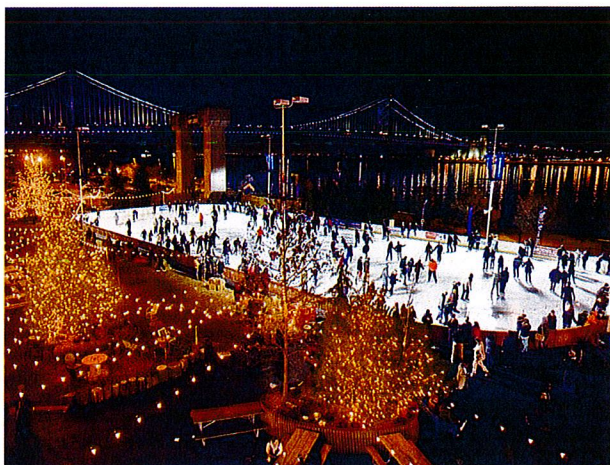


TRAVEL



A silver lining to winter: Outdoor ice skating rinks

by Susan B. Barnes, Special for USA TODAY | Published on January 13, 2015



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Triple axel. Double Salchow. Spirals. If these terms mean anything to you – and even if they don't – you'll be delighted to know you can practice all of them and more on outdoor ice skating rinks throughout the USA. Let's take a look at where you can perfect your moves – or simply stay upright:

Northeast

The country's – and the world's, for that matter – most popular outdoor ice skating rink could easily be the [Rink at Rockefeller Center](#) in New York City. For nearly 80 years, people have laced up their skates to glide across, just as a quarter of a million skaters do annually. This season, the rink is open through April.

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In New York's capitol of Albany, the [Empire State Plaza Ice Skating Rink](#) is back for the fourth year, and is scheduled to be open through early-March. Free skating here, with skate rentals, open skate and clinics available. Take a look at a time lapse of the rink's preparation for skating [here](#).

The Provident Bank Park in Pomona, N.Y., home of the Rockland Boulders, has been transformed for the winter into the [Town of Ramapo Ice Rink](#) (through February 1). Not only does the 50-foot by 70-foot rink host ice skating, but Friday night movie nights, too!

Skate in the tracks of Olympians at [Lake Placid](#), where Eric Heiden won an unprecedented five gold medals at a single Olympic Games in 1980 on the oval track. In addition to the Oval, a plowed track around the perimeter of Mirror Lake is scheduled to open again in the next few weeks.

Additional rinks in New York State include the [Clinton Square Ice Rink](#) in Syracuse (through March 11); [Windham Mountain's Adventure Park](#) about an hour outside of Albany; [Bear Mountain State Park](#), about five miles from West Point (through early-March); [Mohonk Mountain House](#) in Upstate (through early-April); [The Rinx](#) in Port Jefferson on Long Island Sound (through mid-March); and [Rotary Rink](#) at Fountain Plaza and [Canal Side Rink](#) in downtown Buffalo (through March 15).

There's plenty of room for skating rings around your friends at the 2,900 square foot Rink at [The Charles Hotel](#) in Cambridge, Mass. The rink is open through April (weather permitting), and open to hotel guests as well as the public, complete with skate rental and lessons available.

The longest outdoor skating trail in the U.S.A. is partially maintained by the [Lake More Resort](#) in Fairlee, Vermont. The 4.5-mile loop trail circles 600-acre Lake Morey, and is a terrific winter workout, not to mention a perfect spot for pick-up pond hockey games.

In Connecticut a number of outdoor ice skating rinks, including the [Winterfest Outdoor Ice Rink](#) in Hartford (through February 1), and the [Foxwoods Outdoor Skating Rink](#) in Mashantucket (through March 8).

After two years of planning and permitting, the [Labrie Family Skate Puddle Dock Pond](#) at Strawberry Banke Museum in Portsmouth, N.H. debuted this season and is open through February. Two-thirds the size of a traditional rink, Puddle Dock Pond features a unique double-circle pond shape, with a gas fire pit in the middle of the smaller circle. In Concord, the [5th Annual 1883 Black Ice Pond Hockey Tournament](#) is scheduled for January 23–25, so you don't have to skate, but can watch the naturals!

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[The Providence Rink](#) in Alex and Ani City Center in downtown Providence, R.I. is touted as twice the size as the rink in Rockefeller Center, and is filled with fun (open through mid-March).

Jersey City, N.J. boasts [Newport Skates](#), a 7,000 square foot skating rink just 15 minutes from Manhattan, overlooking the Hudson River waterfront and unobstructed views of the New York City skyline.

The City of Brotherly Love has developed a love of ice skating, too, evident by its outdoor rinks in downtown Philadelphia. Part of Waterfront Winterfest is its alfresco [Blue Cross RiverRink](#), which first opened more than 20 years ago, and this season is open through March 3, with views of the Ben Franklin bridge and fire pits nearby for warming up. Also in Philadelphia is the [Rothman Ice Rink](#) in Dilworth Park, on the west side of City Hall and amidst the city's towering skyscrapers. The rink is scheduled to be open through February 22.

New in Baltimore this year is the [Waterfront Partnership Ice Rink](#) in the city's Inner Harbor (through January 19).

South

The tennis courts at [Massanutten Resort](#) in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley have been transformed into a 50-foot by 85-foot ice skating rink, which is open through the first week of March. In addition to free skate, lessons are available for Parents and Tots, Children's Group Skate and clinics; private lessons are also available.

The [Omni Homestead Resort](#) in the Allegheny Mountains of western Virginia transformed one of its pools into an ice skating rink, surrounded by twinkling lights and stars.

In Chattanooga, Tenn., [Ice on the Landing](#) has taken shape on the Chattanooga Green on the Landing. The 50-foot by 70-foot rink is scheduled to be open through February 1, and is perfect for skaters of all levels.

Midwest

The [NHL All-Star Game](#) is set to be played in Columbus, Ohio this month, and as part of the celebration and activities, the city is building an NHL-size outdoor skating rink downtown for everyone to enjoy January 16–25. Elsewhere in Ohio, the state's largest rink – 10,000 square feet – is Lock 3 in Akron (open through February 16); [Ice Rink at Falls River Square](#) in Cuyahoga Falls (open through February 28); the [Rink at Wade Oval](#) in Cleveland's University Circle neighborhood (open through March 8); and Cincinnati's U.S. Bank Ice Rink in Fountain Square (open through February 15).

Along the Principal Riverwalk in Des Moines, the [Brenton Skating Plaza](#) spans 120 feet in length and 60 feet in width, and up to 220 skaters can be on the ice at one time. Opened in 2006, the multi-use plaza was the first of its kind in the entire state of Iowa. Just over two hours away in West Bend, the pond at the [Grotto of Redemption](#), which was hand-dug by Father Paul Dobberstein last century, is turned to an ice skating rink each winter. Both rinks are scheduled to be open into March, weather permitting.

The city of [Jeffersonville, Ind.](#) turns its public parking facility into an ice skating rink each winter (through January 25), and is open weekends when school is in session.

In Illinois, Galena's [Eagle Ridge Resort & Spa](#) features a 1.5-acre natural pond ice rink, just three hours from Chicago.

Just beyond the [Myriad Botanical Gardens & Conservatory](#) in downtown Oklahoma City lies the [Devon Ice Rink](#), in its fourth season. Scheduled to be open through Feb. 1, the outdoor rink has day and night skating in the shadows of the high rise buildings not far beyond.

The new 4,000 square foot rink at [The Edgewater](#) in Madison, Wisc. is the hotel's newest, coolest amenity. Even more alluring than the stunning views of its surrounds may just be that the rink offers Family Skate Night on Wednesdays and Date Night Thursdays.

Also in Madison, two land rinks and the Vilas Lagoon are ready for skating at the city's [Vilas Park](#). In addition to Groove and Glide parties – skating under the lights with music and games – the [Mad City Pond Hockey Championships](#) will be held January 23–25.

For more than 50 years, winter enthusiasts have enjoyed circling the rink at the [Abbey Resort](#) on Lake Geneva in Wisconsin. Fireside s'mores, hot chocolate and cider are at the ready to warm you back up!

Speaking of hockey, the [US Pond Hockey Championships](#) will be held January 15–18 on Lake Nokomis in Minneapolis. You can be a part of the fun, too – just lace up your skates and take to any one of the 20 rinks waiting for you, just as more than 250,000 hockey enthusiasts have done to date!

Up in South Dakota, the [Main Street Square Ice Skating Rink](#) in downtown Rapid City is in its fourth year of operation and features fun events such as Lights on the Ice Teen Night and Rodeo Skate Day; the Last Day to Skate Beach Party will be held February 28, or closing day.

West

In Telluride, the rink at the [Madeline Hotel and Residences](#) isn't only open to novices and those who already know how to skate to take a turn, but offers professional ice skating demonstrations as well. Maybe you'll see our next Olympic skaters on the ice!

The five-acre [Keystone Lake](#) at Colorado's [Keystone Resort](#), as well as a smaller rink at [Dercum Square](#) in the heart of River Run Village, host a number of special skating events throughout the season (through March), including Glowbug Mondays, Free Figure Skating Clinic with Angie Miske and Kidtopia Cookie Hour, to name a few.

The [Silver Circle Rink](#) sits right at the base of Aspen Mountain in Colorado (open through March, weather permitting), and provides stunning views of the picture-perfect backdrop just beyond.

There are few year-round outdoor ice skating rinks in the USA, but one can be found in the [Sun Valley Outdoor Ice Rink](#), which first opened amidst majestic mountains at [Sun Valley Resort](#), Idaho in 1937. Not only is the public invited to take a twirl, but the rink is popular with Olympic and world-class athletes.

The [Stanley Ice Rink](#) in central Idaho not only provides fun ice skating opportunities, but stunning views of the Sawtooth Mountains beyond. And, in addition to skating, hockey and curling are popular activities here.

The NHL regulation size ice rink in [Los Alamos, N.M.](#) was built in 1936 by and for the scientists and their families who lived in the area. Today, the rink is enjoyed by residents and visitors alike (open through February).

Just outside the gates of [Bryce Canyon National Park](#) in Utah is [Ruby's Inn](#), and its ice skating rink. Take to the ice amidst the grandeur of Bryce – simply stunning!

Overlooking Lake Tahoe and the High Sierra at an elevation of 8,200 feet, the Olympic Ice Pavilion at [Squaw Valley/Alpine Meadows](#) opened to the public in 1991 and is accessible via the Aerial Tram. Though the pavilion is named Olympic Ice, it's not where the 1960 Olympic Games took place.

Imagine skating amidst some of the most spectacular scenery in [Yosemite National Park](#). Well, you can do just that at the [Curry Village Outdoor Ice Rink](#), which was first opened in the heart of Yosemite Valley in 1928 with incredible views of Half Dome and Glacier Point, and open through early-March. The [Tenaya Ice Skating Pavilion](#) at Tenaya Lodge, also in Yosemite, spans 80 feet by 40 feet and is open through the first of April.

San Francisco's [Holiday Ice Rink](#) is in its seventh season, which runs through January 19. The rink, found in Union Square, is set amidst one of the city's most popular shopping destinations.

One of Kristi Yamaguchi's favorite outdoor rinks can be found in Spokane, Wash. at the [Ice Palace](#), which first opened in the heart of Riverfront Park after the 1974 World's Fair (scheduled to be open through March 1). The Pavilion under which the skating rink is set is quite amazing itself – made of 4.5 miles of cable, weighing in at 200 tons.

Under the Sun and Palm Trees

Though it's cold in many parts of the USA, there's plenty of sunshine and warmth to be found at these ice skating rinks under the sun and palm trees overhead.

Don your t-shirts and lace up your skates at [Main Street ICE at Boyd Plaza](#) in Columbia, S.C., but hurry – the rink closes Jan. 19!

Though it does cool off in the Arizona desert, the sun is sure to shine at the Desert Ice Skating Rink at [Fairmont Scottsdale Princess](#) (open through February 1). After your skate, take a seat rink-side at a fire pit tables and make s'mores to warm back up.

Southern California's largest outdoor ice skating rink at 7,000 square feet is [Woodland Hills Ice](#), scheduled to be open through Jan. 25, weather permitting, of course! The rink, in its sixth season, is open seven days a week and offers classes and private lessons. And in Orange County, [Skate Spectrum](#) is open through Feb. 16 for open skate, lessons and much more.

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