

TRAVEL + OUTDOORS

A Howling Fun Holiday Staycation



Holidays often are filled with obligatory in-law visits, molar endangering fruitcake, horrifying ugly sweater office parties, and apathetic mall Santa Claus clones. Break away from the harrowing holidays by skipping the festivities and opting instead for a winter staycation with the kiddos.

There are many locales to which one could escape with kids in tow, but we've got a favorite kid friendly hideaway which also happens to be packed with festive fun.

Less than a 90-minute drive from Bellevue, Great Wolf Lodge Grand Mound is not only a viable alternative to traditional holiday festivities, but — with its 56,000-square-foot, 84-degree indoor waterpark, which includes a wave pool, seven waterslides, and a 1,000-gallon tipping bucket — it also is a way to keep summer alive even as we descend into the months-long gray season.

When booking, guests can choose from among the lodge's 398 guest rooms, of which there are 12 different suite types. These consist of family style suites for four to six guests; themed suites like the KidKamp, KidCabin or Wolf Den; and premium suites decked out with large kitchens and individual bedrooms.

HERE ARE A FEW OTHER HOLIDAY RETREATS TO GET YOUR FAMILY IN THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT

Lakedale Resort at Three Lakes, San Juan Island

Nestled deep in the woods, and accessible by ferry or seaplane, lies Lakedale Resort at Three Lakes. Lakedale offers accommodations in its main lodge in the off-season (kids 16 and older are welcome), but its log cabins are the coziest accommodations. Each of Lakedale's cabins has two bedrooms; two bathrooms; a living room; a dining room; and a small kitchen with a full-size refrigerator, range, and oven. The kitchen comes stocked with all the dishes, silverware, bakeware, and accessories one could need. Don't forget to stop by the front desk and ask for a s'mores kit to take back to the cabin and enjoy with the kiddos.

Bavarian Ritz Hotel, Leavenworth

The magical town of Leavenworth is consistently lauded by the Travel Channel and innumerable other authorities as one of the top Christmas towns in the country. One look at this idyllic small town lit up at night anytime between Thanksgiving and Valentine's Day, and you'll swear you stumbled into a postcard. Stay at the Bavarian Ritz Hotel and stand on its patio as you watch the snow fall and sip hot cocoa, your cheeks becoming rosy from the cold. Or take the kids to the town sled hill, snack on chestnuts roasted over an open fire, harmonize with carolers, and count down to one of the town's many holiday lighting ceremonies.

Salish Lodge & Spa, Snoqualmie

OK, let's face it, sometimes mom and dad need to getaway sans children. Besides, visiting in-laws are at least good for babysitting, right? May we suggest Salish Lodge & Spa for your alone-time escape? Book the Holiday Breakfast in Bed package, which includes a one-night stay, a \$50 dining credit to order breakfast in bed, one in-room movie rental, and a \$20 Country Store voucher. Moms treat yourself to one of the Spa La La packages — like the Merry Arctic Berry Facial, the Jolly Feet Retreat, or the Holiday Pep-Me-Up treatment — while you're there.