

Explore New England

Cold adventures

Upward bound and indifferent to the elements, winter hikers trek the Whites

By Jeffrey Romano
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Each year, the White Mountains are transformed into a winter wonderland of tranquil forests, snow-draped ridges, and icy summits.

NEW HAMPSHIRE Occasionally home to extreme and dangerous weather, the Whites present the well-equipped traveler a world of endless adventure and exceptional beauty.

Take advantage of the region's breadth of trails. Begin modestly and slowly gain the experience to tackle New England's highest summits. You will be amazed at what you encounter, every step of the way.

Before hitting the trail it is critical to be adequately prepared. Stay warm with ample layers of waterproof clothing and well-insulated boots. Be sure to bring plenty of food and water. Snowshoes, often overlooked, are a

must for all winter hikes. Some destinations, especially those that rise above tree line, also require crampons or other gear to assist with icy surfaces. Lastly, remember that winter conditions are unpredictable. Storms can render parking areas temporarily unavailable and trails difficult to follow. To help plan your next winter White Mountain adventure visit www.hikesafe.com and www.visitwhitemountains.com.

Mount Avalon

From Mount Avalon (3,442 feet) one is rewarded with breathtaking views of scenic Crawford Notch and the snow-draped ridges of the Presidential Range.

Hike: To complete this moderate 3.8-mile

HIKES, Page M6

High above Franconia Notch, approaching Mount Liberty's summit in the Whites.



JEFFREY ROMANO FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE



FROM LEFT: BURDICK'S; MIRABELLE'S CAFE; ARAM BOGHOSIAN FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Hot rewards

Tolerating the cold this season? Stop and smell the coffee and South African rooibos tea

By Necee Regis
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

In the midst of winter's chill, nothing beats warming up in a cozy spot with a steaming mug of coffee, tea, or hot chocolate. Neighborhood coffee shops provide more than caffeinated delights, they offer a sense of community where people peruse bulletin boards, read the paper, trade gossip, eavesdrop, and perhaps write a bestselling novel. Here are 10 favorites.

Dottie's Coffee Lounge, Pittsfield

Plush furniture, sage green walls, well-worn wooden floors, and peacock feather decor — plus excellent coffee — make this storefront shop on busy North Street a popular destination. Most everything here is locally produced, including milk from area farms for steamed hot chocolate with house-made chocolate sauce. Barrington Coffee roasts Dottie's beans, and tea drinkers can choose from over 20 se-

lections. Dottie's makes breakfast sandwiches, soups, and has a build-your-own-bagel bar, though true coffee-and-sweets aficionados will gravitate to the pastry case for whoopee pies, peanut butter bars, cupcakes, muffins, scones, brownies, and other treats provided daily by Bake Me Pretty in Lenox. For entertainment, there's a piano that anyone is welcome to play. 444 North St., 413-443-1792, www.dottiescoffee.com

Rock City Books & Coffee, Rockland, Maine

Great books and terrific coffee are a combo that can't be beat, and one you'll find in the historic downtown of the small coastal community of Rockland. Rock City roasts its coffee in small batches, using high-quality beans that

HOT DRINKS, Page M7

From left: Hot chocolate at Burdick's; pastry at Mirabelle's; Kim Chaurrette at Diesel Cafe.

Downshift into a warm spot with a hot drink

► HOT DRINKS

Continued from Page M5

favor sustainable and organic farms. More than 40 loose-leaf teas are offered by the cup or pot. Simple lunches are available, as well as freshly baked carrot "cakelettes," chocolate chip cookies, and other pastries made daily in the kitchen. Pick up a new or used book, and settle in a seat near the enormous windows to read, daydream, or watch the snow fall. 328 Main St., 207-594-4123, www.rockcitycoffee.com

Pastiche, Providence

This 40-seat cafe on historic Federal Hill feels more like Tuscany or Provence than Rhode Island. In addition to the mural of the Italian countryside and a welcoming fireplace, there's a dazzling array of cakes and pastries lined up like jewels in the pristine display cases. The desserts-only menu might break your New Year's diet resolutions but the treats are worth the splurge. This winter's temptations include Italian Mascarpone torte, dark chocolate bundt cake, banana cream pie, cranberry raspberry tart, carrot cake, pumpkin praline tart, to name a small selection, as well as muffins, scones, cookies, and cannoli. A cup of tea or cappuccino will complete the illusion you've traveled overseas — without the jet lag. 92 Spruce St., 401-861-5190, www.pastichefinedesserts.com

Hot Chocolate Sparrow, Orleans

Get your chocolate buzz on at this local institution in the crook of the elbow of Old Cape Cod. People flock here for the hand-dipped chocolates, fudge, decadent desserts, and steaming hot espresso drinks. "We make our own hot fudge milk from our hot fudge sauce to use in our hot



With your cappuccino at Mirabelle's Cafe in Burlington, Vt., and for dessert after your lunch at Pie in the Sky in Woods Hole.

chocolate and mocha drinks," said John Lowery, manager. The most popular winter beverages are the pepper-minty "Holly Jolly Mocha" with whipped cream, hot fudge drizzle, and peppermint sprinkles, and the "Gingerbread Hot Mocha," with white chocolate, gingerbread syrup, and whipped cream. Oh, and double shots of espresso in both. Don't like it hot? Try frozen hot chocolate made with blended fudge milk ice cubes. Soup and sandwiches are also available. 5 Old Colony Way, 508-240-2230, www.hotchocolatesparrow.com

Burdick's, Walpole, N.H.

Burdick's is a hot-chocoloholic's Shangri-la. Oh, sure, they also serve cappuccino, espresso, and mocha, and over 20 black, green, and herbal teas in the New Hampshire flagship cafe. For true fanatics, it's worth the trip (away from the often-crowded Cambridge location) to this white clapboard building on Main Street where chocolate descriptions read like a wine list: single origin hot chocolate from the is-

WINTER WARM-UPS

Browse for a spot to drink a treat at www.boston.com/travel.

land of Grenada ("hints of lychee, nutmeg and banana"), Venezuela ("subtle nutty flavor"), Dominican Republic ("sublime acidity"), Bolivia ("notes of grapefruit"), Madagascar ("hints of citrus and vanilla"), and Ecuador ("masculine, full-body"). Cakes, tarts, and croissants are available, as well as a brasserie menu with items such as pate, local cheeses, duck confit, steamed mussels, steak frites and wine. 47 Main St., 603-756-2882, www.burdickchocolate.com/stores-and-cafes-walpole.asp

Shelburne Falls Coffee Roasters, Shelburne Falls

The parking lot is often full at this popular spot along the Mohawk Trail. This original location (there are now five) is a convenient stop for skiers en route to Vermont, and for residents who tape their frequent-buyer cards up on the wall. The place is full of cozy comforts: house-roasted or-



MIRABELLE'S CAFE (LEFT); PIE IN THE SKY

ganic coffee, local antique furnishings, and freshly baked-from-scratch scones, muffins, coffee cakes, brownies, and oven-melted sandwiches. "It's a welcoming country atmosphere," said owner Curtis Rich. Hot chocolate variations include spicy Mexican and vanilla, or try a latte with the shop's own naturally blended flavorings such as hazelnut and mocha. 1207 Mohawk Trail, Route 2, 413-625-2123, www.ibuycoffee.com

Diesel Cafe, Somerville

This spot is more industrial-chic than cozy-warm, as might be expected in the urban enclave of Davis Square. From the street, its size is deceiving. Seven small tables are squeezed near the oversized windows, but beyond the giant menu board (offering sandwiches, salads, pastry, and coffee) it opens to cavernous proportions, enough to accommodate red Naugahyde booths, tables for community dining, and two pool tables. The farther back you venture, the quieter it gets with more people earnestly hunched over

iBooks than you'll find at the Apple Store. Diesel is the only retailer in Boston regularly offering Intelligentia beans, Stumptown beans, and Counter Culture beans, strong enough to power you through your next novel or blog post. 257 Elm St., 617-629-8717, www.diesel-cafe.com

Pie in the Sky, Woods Hole

Artists, fishermen, and marine scientists all rub elbows at this snug waterfront establishment located near the ferryboat to Martha's Vineyard. Owner Erik Gura has a coffee roaster in his garage, and "roasts every bean" they serve. In addition to the usual selection of organic, fair-trade lattes, cappuccinos, espressos, plus hot chocolate and teas, the place is known for its homemade everything: soups, salads, sandwiches, pastries, and breads. "A rolling pin is the most advanced piece of equipment we have," said Gura. Winter favorites include popovers and bread pudding with black rum hard sauce. 10 Water St., 508-540-5475, www.woodshole.com/pie/

Zumi's, Ipswich

This bright and cheerful cafe on Market Street is the place to go for free-trade coffees from Dean's Beans out of Amherst. The winter specialty menu includes peppermint mocha, white Nutella mocha, gingersnap white mocha, caramel apple cider, and whipped cream topped hot chocolate made with Ghirardelli syrup. Daily sweets such as croissants, scones, coffee cake, blueberry muffins, and bagels are available, and ice cream from Bliss Farms in Attleboro. On weekend afternoons, the cafe's six tables fill with happily caffeinated customers listening to live jazz and folk tunes. 40 Market St., 978-356-1988, www.zumis.com

Mirabelles Cafe, Burlington, Vt.

The fine art of cafe lounging reaches its apogee at Mirabelles, where handcrafted pastries and hot beverages induce a happy winter coma. "We make our hot chocolate French style, not too sweet, using Callebaut chocolate," said Alison Lane, pastry chef and owner. They also whip up a full selection of coffee delights, house-made chai, and many teas, including the red South African rooibos tea. Cardamom hot chocolate goes well with the four-layer crème brûlée cake, chocolate peanut butter mousse cake, and the triple chocolate mocha cake. Now in its 20th year, Mirabelles also offers savory breakfast items and lunchtime soups, salads, and panini made from local products. 198 Main St., 802-658-3074, www.mirabellecafe.com

Necce Regis can be reached at necceeregis@gmail.com.

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