

Spokane Weekend • Warm Wear • Winter Trails

# Washington TRAILS

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## Northwest Exposure!



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# Winter

*Just because the days are shorter and the temperature plummets doesn't mean you need to hole up and hibernate through winter. Just bundle up and get outside.*

*Some of the latest offerings in winter outerwear will keep you warm and cozy on your favorite snowy trails, from casual snowshoe strolls to more challenging winter hikes—and even zipping down the ski slopes.*

### **STAYING WARM ON THE TRAIL:**

**Bundle up**—but not too much. It's best to start hiking a little cold, as you'll warm up once you get moving.

**Wear a hat and gloves.** Your body heat escapes through your head, hands and feet. Cover up and keep that heat in.

**Choose synthetic,** sweat-wicking baselayers to stay dry underneath. Wet cotton doesn't dry in the cold.

**Pack a hot drink or soup** in an insulated bottle, and warm yourself up from the inside out when taking breaks.

### **SHOPPING FOR INSULATION WEAR:**

**Shop off-season.** Look for great winter wear deals in the spring or summer and be ready for next winter.

**Take advantage of outlets** and websites that often sell similar previous-season items with big discounts.

**Buy only what you need** for your activity. If you're going snowshoeing, you don't need a mountaineering parka.



Columbia's 890 TurboDown Jacket (left) and Sierra Designs' DriDown Hoody (right) employ hydrophobic down to resist harsh weather and temperatures.

## Down Power

*When it comes to winter warmth-to-weight ratio, nothing beats down. And with many items employing hydrophobic down, these can be effective winter warming layers here in the Northwest. Here are some of our favorites.*

### **RELIABLE:** Sierra Designs DriDown Hoody

This lightweight, no-frills down jacket became a quick favorite with our tester for its exceptional warmth and classic fit (good for layering up on extra-cold outings). A sweet feature is the innovative hood design, that turns into an insulating neck gaiter when the hood is not in use. Plus, the price point makes it an attractive selection for a hydrophobic down jacket. M/W \$199

### **VERSATILE:** Bergans Slingsbyttind Jacket

Sleek, lightweight, windproof and water-repellent, the Slingsbyttind (pronounced "sh-lings-beh-tinned") will keep you warm and toasty from the snowshoe trails to the upper slopes. When you heat up and need to stash it, it compresses nicely into an integrated stuff-sack pocket. Designed for high-exertion activities, the fit is trim, so size up if you wear extra layers. M/W \$250

### **FASHIONABLE:** Big Agnes Pyramid DownTek Jacket

For the ultimate in trail warmth, look no further than the women's Pyramid Jacket. (Sorry guys, this one is for the ladies.) Its ultra-warmth comes from 850-fill hydrophobic down under a wind- and water-resistant shell specially designed to keep insulation in place. Our tester especially liked the flattering trail-to-town style (though trim, so perhaps size up) and pretty color options. W \$400

# Warm Wear



Bergans Slingsbyind Jacket (left) and Big Agnes' Pyramid Jacket (center) offer athletic cuts for maximum winter performance and versatility.



The North Face's Plasma ThermoBall Jacket (right) insulates and keeps you dry on the trails and the slopes.

## Insulation Alternatives

For alternatives to down, there are numerous options that employ combinations of materials or synthetic fibers. For these, item weight goes up a little, but price usually comes down. Here are some top picks.

### **INNOVATIVE:** Columbia 890 TurboDown Jacket

For reliable warmth both dry and wet, this model outshined all the competition. This is thanks to its combination of Omni-Heat and hydrophobic down insulation, in addition to its heat-reflective inner liner. The TurboDown took top marks with our tester, including bonus points for its flattering fit (women's)—something not generally associated with puffy jackets. M/W \$325

### **CROSSOVER:** SmartWool PhD SmartLoft Hoody

Here's what you get when you cross a puffy jacket with activewear: an insulated shell for perfect temperature regulation during high-output activities. Under the wind- and water-repellent shell is a layer of wool insulation that keeps you warm and purring, even when wet. And the unique, form-fitting design puts more insulation where you need it most and less where you don't. W \$240

### **BOMBPROOF:** The North Face Plasma ThermoBall

A midweight winter coat, the Plasma ThermoBall will keep you just as warm on your favorite snowshoe routes as it will shredding fresh powder down the sickest steps. The breathable, waterproof exterior stands up admirably to harsh elements—our tester even used it as a rain jacket around town—while the PrimaLoft insulation keeps you warm and dry. M/W \$280

## Choosing an Insulated Jacket

When selecting winter insulation wear, consider the following factors to help you determine what will be the best item for you.

- ▶ Type of activity: high-output vs. low-output
- ▶ Weather and temperature conditions, rain
- ▶ Item fit, ability to layer up/down if needed

Things to consider when shopping for insulating trail wear.

	DOWN	HYDROPHOBIC DOWN	WOOL	SYNTHETIC
Warmth	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆	◆◆
Weight	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆	◆◆
Compressibility	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆	◆◆
Durability	◆◆	◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆
Performance When Wet	◆	◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆
Drying Time	◆	◆◆	◆◆	◆◆◆
Price	◆◆	◆	◆◆	◆◆◆

◆◆◆ = Best ◆◆ = Good ◆ = Poor



For winter outdoors, start with breathable baselayers from ColdPruf and Icebreaker. And make sure the extremities—head, hands and feet—are covered as well to keep you insulated from the elements.

## The Base-ics

Keeping warm is not just about what you wear on the outside but also what you wear underneath. A good set of baselayers—top and bottom—will wick away sweat to help keep you warm. And don't forget your hat and gloves.

### UPPER: ColdPruf Premium Performance Crew

Lightweight and comfortable, this poly-spandex baselayer was a top pick for keeping our tester dry during high-output activities. Flatlock seams ensure there's no rubbing under pack straps, and extra length keeps it tucked in. M/W \$26

### LOWER: Icebreaker Everyday Leggings

This affordable baselayer will keep your lower half warm and dry on any winter outing. Moisture wicking, odor-resistant merino wool ensures things stay comfy down there without overheating during intense activities. M/W \$60

### HEAD: Ibex Zepher Earflap Beanie

Soft and comfy, this merino wool beanie keeps the head—and ears—toasty warm without being overly bulky. And it's so compact and light (1.1 ounces!) you can easily stash it in a pocket when you, or the days, warm up. \$40

### HANDS: SmartWool NTS Mid 250 Gloves

The most useful gloves we tested, these were perfect for warmth on their own or when used as a liner under heavier winter gauntlets. Finger pads on the thumb and index finger let you use your touch-screen tech without taking them off. \$35

### FEET: Lorpen Midweight Hiker Socks

Just as good in winter as they are in summer, these full-cushion merino wool socks incorporate a mesh instep for added temperature control and breathability. Plus, the flat-knit toe seam eliminates rubbing and irritation when active. \$20

## Heat On Demand

If you're especially prone to being cold on winter trails, here are a few more items you might want to consider. They may seem a bit frivolous, but when it comes to staying warm and comfortable on winter trails, all's fair.

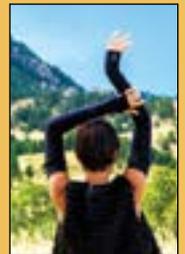
### Heat for the Feet

**ThermaCELL Heated Insoles** are the only insoles on the market with removable, rechargeable batteries and remote control operation. The insoles have three temperature settings that are perfect for adding warmth when you need it: turn it up on the chairlift or eating lunch at the summit; turn it down when hiking, skiing or snowshoeing. It's as easy as pressing the button on the included fob. If chronically frozen feet keep you from enjoying the winter outdoors, this may be your solution. We gave them a try and they were awesome. \$130-\$180



### Keep the Wings Warm

Sometimes you want a little extra without needing to take along a lot of extra. **Pavepara Arm Warmers** are a lightweight addition to the winter wardrobe that you'll love: a no-pinch cuff that stays in place, thumbholes for warmth while wearing gloves and, of course, easy on and off. We especially liked the flexibility they offered during high-intensity activities that let us turn a short-sleeve shirt into a long-sleeve shirt—without having to carry an extra shirt. \$40



### Add Warmth to Your Bag

Want to try winter camping but don't have a winter sleeping bag? Don't buy a new bag, just add a thermal liner. **Sea to Summit's ThermoLite Reactor Liners** add 15 to 25 degrees of warmth to your existing sleeping bag. The lightweight, specialized fabric breathes while it warms, ensuring that you stay nice and toasty without overheating. Available in regular, Plus and Extreme models. \$57-\$67

