

FYI Travel: Ski for free

by Anne Gilbert

It might be hard to think about getting geared up for the winter ski season when the heat of the summer is still blistering, but if planning ahead meant skiing for free, you might be interested right? The beautiful mountainous region of Gunnison-Crested Butte in Colorado is encouraging visitors to try out their snowy slopes by offering free lift tickets from Nov. 25 - Dec. 15.

HEADWALL - Skiers and snowboarders on the Headwall, one of the ski/snowboard trails in Gunnison-Crested Butte, Colo. CNS Photo courtesy of Tom Stillo/Gunnison-Crested Butte Tourism Association. SLOPES GALORE - What a view of Mt. Crested Butte in Colorado with all its ski slopes. CNS Photo courtesy of Tom Stillo/Gunnison-Crested Butte Tourism Association. Gunnison-Crested Butte is surrounded by nearly two million acres of unspoiled wilderness in southwest Colorado. Winter sports lovers recognize the area for its world-class skiing and snowboarding at Crested Butte Mountain Resort. Snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and ice fishing are also popular in the area.

Although the winter has many claims to fame, if you'd like to visit before the snow sets in, outdoor activities include hiking, rock climbing, mountain biking, boating, whitewater rafting, kayaking, fly-fishing, camping and horseback riding. When it's time to rest from the days activities, there are many restaurants, shops and lodging options nearby to accommodate everyone's needs and desires.

In conjunction with the ski free promotion, resorts and hotels in the area are offering package deals for lodging. Call (877) 326-1467 to find out more information about the best lodging situation for you. Also, visit www.gunnisoncrestedbutte.com.

THE LUCK OF THE IRISH

Starting in November, CIE Tours International will be offering a fully escorted 8-day "Irish Spirit" tour priced at \$798. CIE stands for Coras Iompair Eireann, which in Irish means "Ireland's transport company." With airfare included in the price of this package, it is \$1,096 when you fly from New York or Boston, and \$1,132 from Chicago.

The trip is designed to cover the major highlights of Ireland. Activities include a tour of Dublin with a local guide and a tour of the Dublin's famous pub, Guinness Storehouse. Part of the cultural experience will include getting to kiss the Blarney Stone and taking a ferry ride on the Shannon River. Admissions to St. Patrick's Cathedral, Blarney Castle, Cliffs of Moher and a number of other destinations are already included in the price of the package.

First-class hotel accommodations and a full Irish breakfast served daily are just two of many benefits to this all-inclusive package. The details of local taxes, hotel service charges and baggage handling are already taken care of for you. Let someone else do the hard work for your vacation.

For more information about CIE Tours International, visit the Web site at www.cietours.com; e-mail at helpdesk@cietours.com; or call 800-CIE-TOUR (243-8687).

AUTUMN ON THE EAST COAST

Autumn is a beautiful time on Maryland's Eastern Shore, and this fall the Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay Resort will be offering special packages to encourage visitors to join in the fun. Overnight accommodations in this four-diamond resort are spacious and luxurious. The resort offers 400 rooms and suites, with the property neatly situated on vast acreage bordering the Choptank River.

For leisurely entertainment, guests can pay an extra fee to take a privately chartered fishing trip. If you catch something, you can arrange for the chef to cook it for you that evening. But, even if you happen to have a bad day with your rod and tackle, you certainly won't go hungry with all the dining choices to decide from. To burn off the calories, you may choose to play a round of golf on the resort's championship 18-hole golf course. Outdoor tennis and sand volleyball are available, as well. Other attractions at the resort include a large marina and an 18,000-foot spa. Indoor and outdoor pools, a child care center and a fitness facility are also available. Rates start at \$189 per night, and are based on double occupancy and subject to availability. This price does not include taxes or the resort fee.

For more information, call 800-633-7313 or visit www.chesapeakebay.hyatt.com.

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