

# Good garb is ice on the cake

**BARB MARTOWSKI**  
Sun Media

Season's lift passes are a great gift for anybody who loves to snowboard or ski, but what happens if you have a snow enthusiast who doesn't?

For those of us who spend our winters on the slopes, it's hard to believe, but there are plenty of outdoorsey folks who love playing in the snow – they just don't point themselves downhill.

Consider giving them a heli-snowshoe trip or a canyon ice walk to an area not accessible by vehicle. Would that not make them smile Christmas morning?

Icefield Helicopter Tours, an Alberta-based company offers year-round helicopter tours into some of Alberta's most beautiful backcountry in Banff National Park and Jasper National Park.

The Columbia Icefield and both the Cline and Wilson glaciers are the company's favourite spots to play.

The company offers scenic fly-by tours with a lunch landing, but if there is anybody on your list who is an adventurer or explorer at heart, the specialty tours are the perfect answer.

A heli-snowshoe trip takes you into the Cline Valley, where you land at a waterfall to begin your snowshoe tour. How long you go – one to three hours – is up to you. A gourmet lunch is included, along with maybe some wildlife sightings (you'll definitely see their tracks) and, of course, a scenic flight back.

Have you ever seen a frozen waterfall? Then another winter trip worth taking is the Cline Gallery Canyon Ice Walk.

The walk, which is four kilometres long, takes you down onto the frozen creek bed of the Cline Canyon floor. It is from this vantage point, especially on a sunny day, that you see the artistic side of Mother Nature – breathtaking sculptures created in ice that reflect and refract the sun's rays.

Icefield Helicopter Tours

offers a number of other winter tours, including heli-skiing. And if your outdoor enthusiast prefers summer over winter, there are a number of summer alternatives that take you into these same places.

For more information and to get your gift packaged up, visit [www.icefieldheli.com](http://www.icefieldheli.com) or call 1-888-844-3514 or 1-866-844-4484.

Another great option for those who like to play in the snow is great clothing that is going to keep them warm and toasty.

Whether it's outerwear, gloves or boots, there are three things to look for: breathability, water/wind proofing and insulation. Materials such as Gore-Tex or other water-repellent material, Thinsulate or goose down (personal preferences here) and a moisture-wicking inner lining are what you should be looking for.

Stitching should be taped and other features such as shockcord hems or drawcord closures are a must.

As for boots, long gone are the days of spending agonizing hours breaking in a good pair of boots. Many are sold with molded footbeds, but there are a few other things to



ICEFIELD HELICOPTER TOURS

Icefield Helicopter Tours operates both summer and winter tours. Here a group of clients enjoy a gourmet lunch while taking a break from their hike through Cline Canyon.

keep in mind: rust-proof hardware, removable linings that have been treated with some sort of anti-microbial treatment and solid grip outsoles.

One of the things I always check out first is the temperature rating of a product. As a life-long Albertan, I have yet to experience one of these so-called -40C days that I've heard a few people mention, but it's roughly around the rating I would go with first.

When it comes to underwear and base layers, there are people who won't wear anything but pure silk next to their skin. Alternately, superfine merino wool is another

great option.

Ultimately, whatever material you chose, make sure it provides warmth and has the ability to wick away moisture.

And let's not forget the noggins; just make sure that the hat or toque you select covers the ears.

Again, I can't say it enough – look for solid stitching with materials that are breathable and water/wind resistant. Not being a fan of rabbit fur (or any other fur) lining, my personal suggestion would be fleecy or merino wool – just make sure the banding is soft. There is nothing worse than itchy material; it can seriously

put a damper on a glorious sun-filled day in the snow.

My best advice – shop at a retailer who specializes in outdoor gear and clothing. You can be sure the staff is well-versed in the product they are selling.

Some good choices here in Edmonton include: Campers Village, Mountain Equipment Co op, Totem Outfitters and Wholesale Sports. If it's ski and snowboard gear you are after, consider Sundance Ski Shop, Fritz Ski Haus, Pacesetter Sports, Track 'n Trail or Skier's Sportshop.

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Light, warm and non-restrictive are the call words for outdoor enthusiasts, including MEC's new men's Fusion soft shell pants (left), 575 fill-power duck down Tremblant Vest (centre) and the high-performance soft shell Fusion Hoodie.

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