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Skiing Green

Gemma Alexander November 13, 2018



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Skiing used to be considered the province of the elite, a hobby for people who use “summer” as a verb. But since the invention of snowboarding, snow sports have exploded in popularity. Skiers and boarders love being out in nature and their hobby depends on cold winters. But snow sports are gear-intensive and often involve traveling long distances, which can lead to a sizable carbon footprint. How can you have your snow and ride it too?

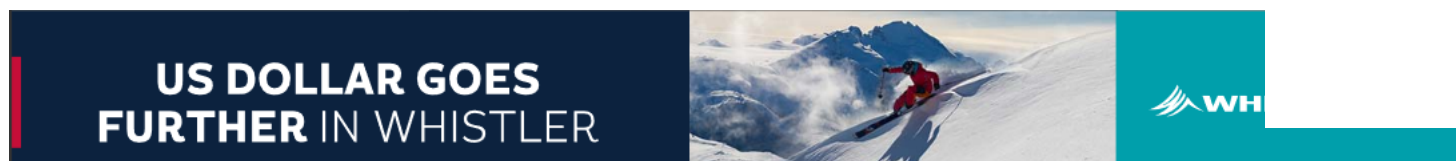
Reduce and Reuse

If you hit the mountain infrequently, consider renting gear instead of buying. Planning — and packing — ahead of time eliminates unnecessary purchases like replacing forgotten goggles. If you buy quality gear in the first place, you won’t need to replace it as often or buy disposable hand warmers when your fingers freeze inside cheap gloves.

Consider buying secondhand and try to sell or donate your old gear. North Face’s Clothes the Loop program accepts used apparel and footwear (any condition, any brand) for recycling. You can upcycle your old skis and snowboards (or donate to a repurposer like SkiArtistry in Seattle or Colorado Ski Chairs). True recycling programs are rare; check with your local ski resort or shop to see if they can take your old sticks for recycling.

Sustainable Gear

When you buy new gear, look for brands that are committed to sustainability. Protect Our Winters, a nonprofit of snow sports enthusiasts working against climate change, has identified six of the most sustainable outerwear brands.



CAPiTA built the world’s first zero-emissions, 100 percent hydro-powered snowboard factory in Austria. Lib Tech’s “World’s Greenest Snowboard” uses biopolymer top material, sustainably harvested wood core materials, zero hazardous waste, and no toxic solvents. Amer Sports produces Atomic and Salomon skis in an efficient, 100 percent renewable energy facility. [Grown Skis](#) uses recycled and sustainably harvested materials. In 2018, they introduced a ski containing industrial hemp fibers with a 47 percent lower production footprint than conventional skis.

Getting There

A single flight to a ski vacation can wipe out all the carbon savings from your eco-gear. Whenever possible, stick to your home mountain. If you are lucky enough to live near a mountain served by public transportation, use it. Elsewhere, many resorts and some retail shops offer a ski bus. If there’s no shuttle to your mountain, try to set up your own rideshare.

Green Resorts

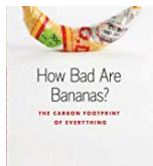
Many North American ski resorts are working to offer a more eco-friendly ski vacation. But Vail is the first mountain resort in the world to be certified Mountain IDEAL by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council. Wolf Creek in Colorado is the first ski resort in the world to rely completely on renewable energy.

Wherever you play, consider buying a SkiGreen Tag along with your lift ticket to offset your vacation’s carbon footprint. If you want to do more, take a look at Protect Our Winters’ Climate Activists’ Roadmap to find your own lever for change.

Feature image by rolfvandewal, Pixabay

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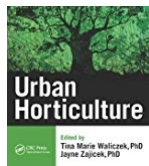




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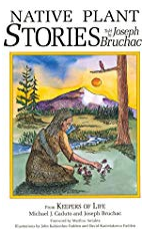
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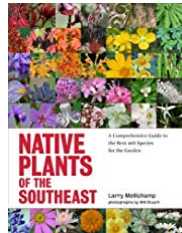
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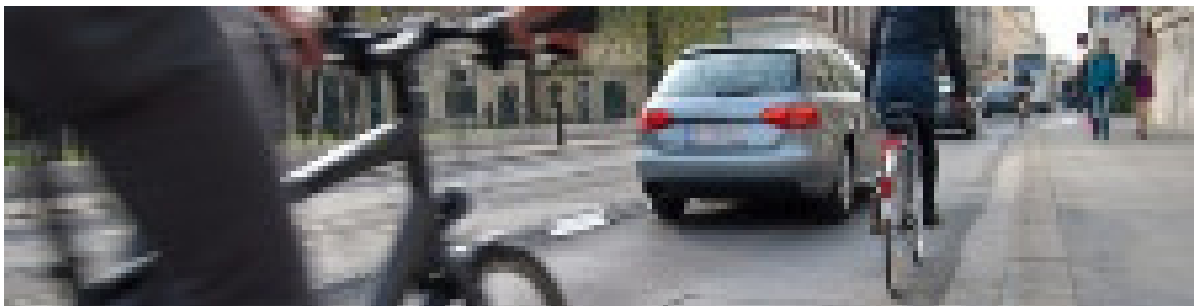
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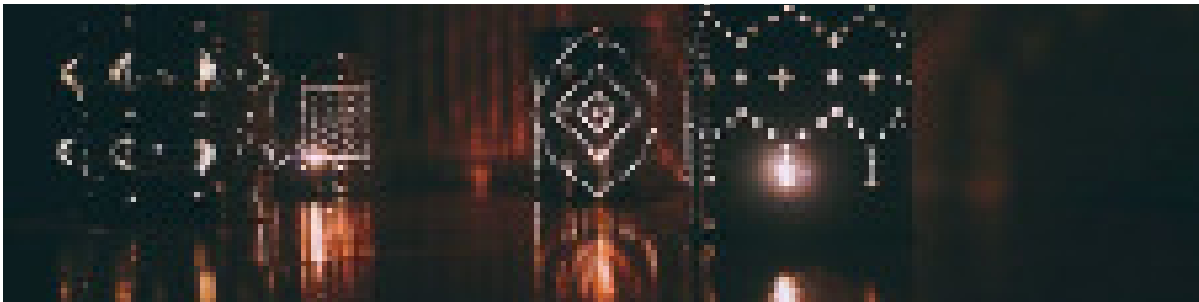
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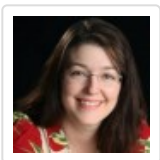
Skiing Green



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Gemma Alexander

Gemma Alexander has an M.S. in urban horticulture and a backyard filled with native plants. After working in a genetics laboratory and at a landfill, she now writes about the environment, the arts and family. See more of her writing [here](#).