



An Igloo

The Inuit, or Eskimos as they are more commonly known, are a group of aboriginal people that live in the Arctic areas of the world. Although it's not quite in the Arctic, it is possible to spend a night like the Inuit – here in Bavaria.

Work has already begun on an igloo village atop the Zugspitze, Germany's tallest mountain, towering above Garmisch at 9,724 ft. From December 25th to mid-April, anyone brave enough to fill their backpack with wool socks, long underwear, and extra sweatshirts can spend the night in an igloo.

Some may think it's crazy to pay money to spend the night in a building made of snow and ice when it's zero degrees outside, but for the adventuresome traveler, it is an experience that is well worth it.

Deemed "one of the world's wackiest hotels" by the UK's *The Sunday Times*, IGLU-DORF Ltd. (GmbH) began in 1996; since then, igloo villages have been built every winter on several mountaintops in Switzerland, and more recently, the Zugspitze. A night in the igloo gives visitors an opportunity to experience the Alps in a whole new way.

Although most skiers and other sightseers descend from the glacier around 1600, those who have made the reservation to stay in the igloo stay at the seemingly deserted mountaintop and meet the helpful and friendly guides, who all speak some English.

After receiving large thermal sleeping bags made for Arctic expeditions, everyone walks less than ten minutes to find the igloo: not the domed building shaped by ice bricks as usually pictured, but an ice maze built into a block of snow with several rooms coming off a hallway.

One of those rooms is a dining room with benches made of ice and covered with sheepskins, wooden tables, and a bar where visitors first enjoy a welcome drink of glühwein. Later, the tables are laden with large breadbaskets and everyone partakes in a fondue dinner made with rich Gruyère cheese (spaghetti is also available).

The sleeping rooms are actually caves carved into the snow with two candles for light, a thick pad and sheepskins. A "standard room" generally sleeps up to six people; so two different parties may need to share a room. Suites and romantic rooms are also available, which offer more privacy and include other extras, such as prosecco, but do cost more.

And, for those that are concerned, there is a special cave designated as the bathroom. Unfortunately, though, being in an igloo means that there isn't a sink with running water to wash up or a place to take a shower.

Activities for the evening include a guided hike to watch the sun set into the valley below, games in the dining room, or quiet time to reflect on the peacefulness that is found when you are in a winter wonderland high above the rest of the world.

A favorite evening activity of the igloo village involves jumping into the whirlpool hot tubs that are just outside the igloo. It is certainly a unique feeling to know that you are sitting in a hot tub on top of the tallest mountain in Germany, surrounded by snow, with a clear night sky full of twinkling stars shining down.



Igloo in the Bavarian Alps

Story by Jennifer L. Price
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Guests snuggle down for the night on top of their sheepskin-covered pads tightly wrapped in their sleeping bags with extra socks, scarves, and hats still on.

Instead of a wake-up call, guests awake in the morning to a warm cup of tea brought to their sleeping bag and step outside for a view of the sun rising above the Alps. The adventure ends with a trip down to the Zugspitze restaurant for a traditional German breakfast. It is also possible to get an early start to skiing the next day.



For your own unique adventuresome evening in an igloo, visit www.iglu-dorf.com for more information on available dates and prices.

