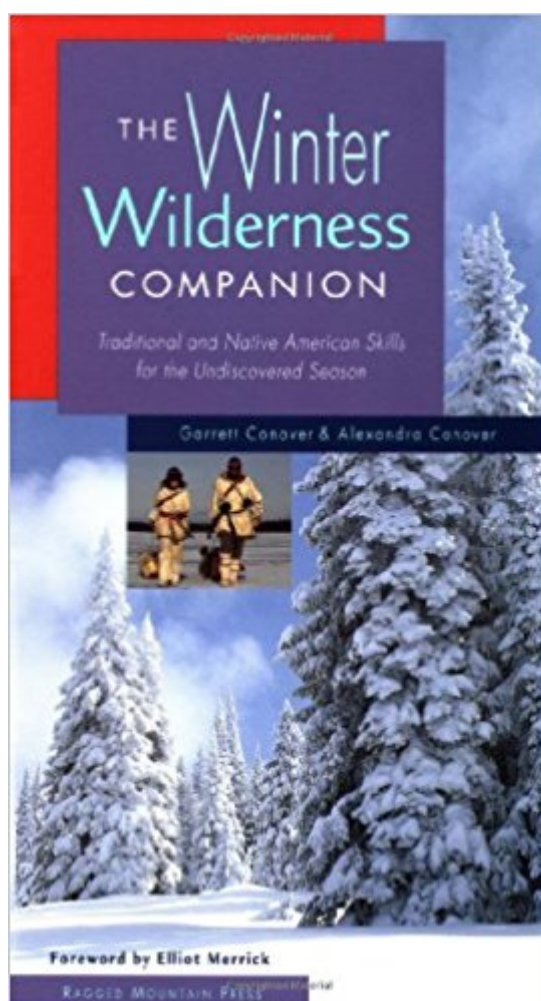


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The Winter Wilderness Companion: Traditional And Native American Skills For The Undiscovered Season



Synopsis

The Winter Wilderness Companion is a unique and inspirational guide to outdoor skills from authors named to Outside magazine's exclusive list of 12 "Twentieth Century Heroes for a New Millennium." This revised edition unlocks the winter wilderness in all its invigorating beauty. It includes step-by-step instructions for making and using snowshoes, toboggans, tents, and clothing.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"...provides readers with everything they need to know to live and travel safely and comfortably in winter." -- Sierra Atlantic
"Anybody interested in winter travel, extended or weekend, get this book." -- New York Outdoors
"This is in all respects a well-written, entertaining, and enthralling work." -- Bushwhacker

"The trips richest in profound experience are based in joy in being at the mercy of a natural order that is at once part of you and greater than you. The important things you seek are not to be found where the trail takes you, but rather in each step you take along the way." Imagine snowshoeing through an unspoiled northern forest, with just the pristine snow, breathtaking scenery, and the occasional deer or fox for company. Your gear glides behind you on a toboggan, and at night, you relax in your wood-heated canvas tent after a delicious, hot meal. Garrett and Alexandra Conover, named to Outside magazine's exclusive list of "20th-Century Heroes for a New Millennium," show you how to celebrate winter, not just endure it. With plans and detailed instructions for making clothing, tents, toboggans, and snowshoes, this is the complete guide to enjoying the winter

wilderness using traditional skills, equipment, and philosophies. The Conovers write beautifully, sensitively, and comprehensively of wild northern places, inviting you to experience the rare wonders of the winter trail. Praise for the First Edition "The Conovers propose a spiritual kinship with winter, this most extreme, yet mystical, season. . . . The book is a timely reminder that what might be viewed as an old-fashioned, even archaic, approach also needs to be considered as a viable, rewarding method, not merely as a fringe pursuit for purists. . . . It delves deeply into the spiritual aspects of the winter experience. This is in all respects a well-written, entertaining, and enthralling work."--Bushwhacker

Interesting book but unfortunately I've not had the chance to put the techniques into practice. Hopefully some day after the kids are out of the house and I have my life back, I can actually go out into the woods again.

One reviewer says he didn't like this book's subhead. To me, it's the part of the title that really describes the book. The subhead tells you it's not a typical winter book, but a unique one that shows how wilderness travel is really done up in the northwoods...using methods that have been passed down thru generations. However, their materials adapt to the times whenever that seems best. Thus they're happy to use roll-up plastic sleds, in a "traditional" way. Note that the subhead doesn't say "re-enactment" or "historic" travel. Traditional travel in their sense means how local northwoods people camp today. That seems to be their drift, anyway. As a result, I appreciate the coverage of both snowmobiles and snowshoes. They go together. Now, canvas tents might not be right for everyone, but I appreciate them for long, cold, group outings. I think that for such use, they're best. Trust these folks and their local, ethnic sources. I liked the realistic, inclusive style of this book. This is not pricey vacation resort travel. This is do-it-yourself make-do homebrew travel. I notice that there wasn't much emphasis on the fancy new snowshoes, but instead on the wide variety of traditional models that are still available if you know where to look (not in the yuppie shops that you find far from the boonies). In deep offtrail open area snow, if you plan to travel, you need some nice long, narrow Alaskans. I find the modern shoes to be suitable for crust, gullies, trails...conditions I don't shoe in. Or hardly anyone I know. The recent takeover by hightech shoes is silly. I also appreciate seeing the lady author with her string of gunshot grouse...not a common image in today's backpacking books. But a common one in traditional northwoods living. This is a one of a kind book. No other contemporary book is as practical or personable. This book has character...ever rarer in publishing.

When I first looked at the Conover's book, I admit I put it back on the store shelf and went on to other things. My wife had just given me my third pair of backcountry skis, and I wasn't too hot on plodding around on snowshoes. A few minutes later, I picked the book up again, and flipped through it some more. I sat down in a chair by the fireplace (really nice store!) and started reading snippets, and knew I had to buy it. I ski and I camp in the winter. Not the way the Conovers describe, but now I am looking forward to trying their "traditional" methods. My circa 1981 snowshoes have seen much more use since reading this book. My wife and I have invested in mukluks, because, as the book states, they really do keep your feet warm in really cold weather! This little book is just crammed with useful information for anyone who ventures out in the winter cold and snow, whether it's for a hike or for the night. Snowshoes are enjoying a resurgence in popularity right now, and "The Winter Wilderness Companion" can help new snowshoers get more out of their gear. But the book's true worth lies in the possibilities it opens for getting beyond the local park and forest, and using traditional (some may say "old-fashioned") gear and skills to stay warm and survive with style in the winter backcountry. Imagine hiking through a -40 degree forest, setting up camp, and having a +60 degree tent to retreat into for the night! "The Winter Wilderness Companion" can open your eyes, and open your mind to a whole new way of enjoying a whole new season of outdoor fun in a grand, old way. It's compact size makes it convenient to carry with you, too! In 30 years as a ranger, ski patroller and search and rescue volunteer, I feel it is one of the very best books on winter travel and camping I have ever had the pleasure of reading.

Snow camping can be at once beautiful, uplifting and unforgiving. As a Scoutmaster in the northwest, I've enjoyed passing on skills to both youngsters and their parents. The Conovers do an excellent job in this book on several counts. They pass on their appreciation for the wilderness, particularly when it's mantled with snow. At times their writing is lyrical in describing the beauty of the winter wilderness, and their satisfaction in living a simple life in such a setting. In an era when success is defined by how many possessions one has accumulated and how far they've separated themselves from the natural world, the Conovers offer a compelling vision. But this work also offers excellent strategies for not only surviving an outing in the snow-covered wilderness, but making it thoroughly enjoyable-even for the novice. Step by step, they offer excellent tips and strategies for handling everything from food selection and cooking, campsite and clothing selection to travel methods. They explore the advantages of adapting native techniques, and provide readers with contacts and practical directions. It is important to recognize at the outset that this work is based on

winter travel in the northeast. Winter campers based in more mountainous regions will find only parts of the book applicable to their environment; the Conovers are straight-forward in pointing that out. Using toboggans and carrying large tents simply isn't practical in areas of larger elevation changes; it could be inviting a hernia! There isn't any discussion of snow cave or igloo construction, important to mountaineers. Good references for these areas would include the Scout handbook entitled Okpik. But overall, a worthwhile book with much to offer; readers may be left wanting to join the Conovers on one of their guided trips!

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