

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD



HERE



PETER OGILVIE

MAINE INN BY THE SEA OFFERS COMFY QUARTERS
Cozy up to a fireplace with a good book and dine on lobster plucked from the Gulf of Maine during the Inn by the Sea's Winter Warmer Package, Jan. 2-March 31. Then bundle up and go for a brisk walk on mile-long Crescent Beach on Cape Elizabeth, just 15 minutes south of downtown Portland and half an hour from bustling Freeport. The package starts at \$565.58 per night, based on double occupancy and a minimum two-night stay, and includes a one-bedroom suite with a fireplace and ocean view, breakfast for two, a Maine Woolens Blanket, two 60-minute hot stone massages at the spa, and cheese fondue for two in the Fireplace Lounge. 800-888-4287, www.innbythesea.com

SANDWICH GLASS MUSEUM DISPLAYS DAZZLERS
See hundreds of glass ornaments created by locally and nationally known artists during the Sandwich Glass Museum's annual Glassblowers' Christmas event through Dec. 30. Works by David McDermott, Yukimi Matsumoto, Isabel Green, and Chris Belleau, among others, will decorate Christmas trees in the museum's contemporary gallery. A special exhibit, "In the Company of Angels," showcases unusual crèches to promote the study and understanding of art, culture, and religion. Glassblowing demonstrations given from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. daily. Adults \$6, ages 6-14 \$1.25.



includes general admission and entry to the exhibit. 508-888-0251, www.sandwichglassmuseum.org

THERE

WHERE TO SEE THE NEXT TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE
Only two places on earth will offer land-based views of the total solar eclipse on March 20, 2015: the Svalbard Islands in northern Norway and the Faroe Islands between Iceland and Norway. The Great Canadian Travel Co. will run a special solar eclipse tour to the Faroe Islands for this rare event. The islands have towering volcanic mountains, stunning views of the northern lights, waterfalls that plunge into the sea, and just 50,000 residents. Rates start at \$3,810 per person, double occupancy, for an islands-only tour, March 17-21, and \$7,110 per person for the islands and Iceland, March 17-27; includes Iceland domestic flights, most meals, guides, and all lodging, ground transportation, and sightseeing tours. 800-661-3830, www.greatcanadiantravel.com

EXPLORE ALASKA ON A KID-FRIENDLY CRUISE
Take your family on a new small-ship Alaskan cruise during which you can kayak, explore small villages, make native crafts, and learn about nautical navigation and the area's geology and wildlife. The nine-day True Alaska Family Cruise, run by native-owned Alaskan Dream Cruises (pictured above), sails round-trip from Sitka on July 19, and visits Hobart Bay, Tracy Arm Fjord, Juneau, and Icy Strait Point. Expedition leaders and cultural interpreters offer talks on the region's wildlife, glaciers, and local culture. Rates start at \$3,999, double occupancy; includes all planned shore excursions, meals that showcase local ingredients, Alaska-made products in the cabins, and 58 passengers, maximum. 855-747-8100, www.alaskandreamcruises.com

BOOK YOUR NEXT HOTEL USING TWITTER
Forget hotel bookings by phone, or fussing with the Internet to arrange a stay. Loews Hotels & Resorts has just launched Loews Hotels Social Reservations, which lets you book a stay at one of its 16 properties, except its Orlando hotels, using your Twitter account. Just use #BookLoews in a tweet to @Loews_Hotels and mention your desire to stay. You will get connected to a Loews Travel Planner, who can help you select your room, and then direct you to someone who will

process your personal and payment information in a secure digital environment. 800-235-6397, www.loewshotels.com

EVERYWHERE

LIGHT UP YOUR RUNNING ROUTE
Many runners take to the streets super early or after dark to fit workouts in around business and other travel commitments. GoMotion's new LiteBelt 100 helps boost your visibility and also light up your way. The wide belt fits around your waist and has a 100-lumen LED light up front that comes with three brightness settings and can be adjusted up or down to direct the beam. It also has a flashing red light on the back that switches on or off, as needed. Having a light around your waist makes it easier to see when it's foggy or rainy, and can help you maintain your night vision. \$59.95. 866-446-1069, www.gomotiongear.com



EARL HARPER

WATERPROOF DOWN JACKET HANDLES ANY WEATHER
Outdoor Research's new Floodlight jacket has become my top pick as the ultimate winter travel jacket. It fends off snow and rain while providing toasty insulation, and squishes to football size for easy packing. Rather than using chemically treated down, the Pacific Northwest company puts high-quality 800-fill goose down inside a fully waterproof and windproof yet breathable Pertex Shield fabric (Outdoor Research's answer to Gore-Tex). Even better, the lightweight jacket doesn't feel bulky. It has sizable pockets for warming hands or stuffing gloves, and an insulated and adjustable hood that fits over helmets. Comes in men's and women's sizes. \$375. 855-967-8197, www.outdoorresearch.com

KARI BODNARCHUK

THE TIP

A SAVIOR OF MOUTH-BLOWN GLASS ORNAMENTS

BASEL, Switzerland — Windows shimmering with festive eye candy lure shoppers into Johann Wanner's Christmas House. Inside the shop, light dances off ornament displays and bijou trees decorated in a perpetual state of holiday cheer. Wanner calls himself the "couturier of Christmas trees," and it's hard to argue with a man who trims trees with the same care a Paris designer dresses a runway model. But that's only part of the story.

"My life's work is to save the Christmas ornaments of my childhood," Wanner says, referring to the mouth-blown glass ornaments and Bohemian crystal baubles handmade in Eastern Europe. He began visiting the dwindling number of traditional glassblower workshops in the 1960s, buying not only the ornaments, but also the molds. He not only saved the ornaments from extinction, but also preserved their handcrafted production.

Now Wanner designs annual collections, and his creations — lustrous, luminous, and glittery balls; traditionally and frivolously themed ornaments; glossy glass birds; and ornate Fabergé-style eggs — grace Vatican, White House, royal palace, and Hollywood trees.

Wanner's Christmas House, in Basel's Old Town, is open year-round. The nearby Christmas Parlour shop, where visitors can peruse Wanner's Christmas magic while sipping coffee, tea, or champagne, is open only during Basel's traditional Christmas market season, from late October through early January. *Christmas House, Spalenberg 14 and Christmas Parlour, Schneidergasse 7, Basel, Switzerland. 011-41-061-261-48-26, www.johannwanner.ch*

HILARY NANGLE



HILARY NANGLE FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

THE TIP

PURPLE TOMATO MAKES A TASTY WINTER MEAL

LINCOLN, N.H. — If you're heading to the White Mountains, you'll want to stop by the Purple Tomato to pick up some tasty treats. Located minutes off Interstate 93, this newly opened mom-and-pop market has been preparing full takeout meals one night a week. Starting in mid-December, owners Susan and Jim Champagne will offer these meals every day. That's perfect for people who don't want to cook while they're renting cabins around the Loon, Cannon, and Waterville Valley ski areas. After a day outdoors enjoy a hearty meal such as pork with rice and sweet potatoes, pasta with crab or shrimp, or shepherd's pie. From \$6.95 per person, includes dessert. They also make sandwiches named after popular ski trails, such as Bear Claw Trail and Triple Trouble. 78 Main St., Linwood Plaza, Lincoln, N.H. 603-728-8356, <https://www.facebook.com/PurpleTomatoFarmersMarket>

NECEE REGIS



COURTESY BLUEBERRY HILL INN

GO PLAY

ROUGH IT TILL YOU GET TO BLUEBERRY'S COOKIES

GOSHEN, Vt. — Nestled in the Moosalamoo National Recreation Area, 12 miles down the road from Middlebury, is the classic Vermont inn and cross-country ski center, Blueberry Hill. On a winter day, you can grab your skis and snowshoes and head out onto 50 kilometers of trails, including the highest run in the state at an elevation over 3,000 feet, and gentler routes through the snowed-over pines. New this winter is that none of the trails will be groomed, offering a true wilderness experience in the Green Mountains. No trail fees will be charged and the ski center will be open to warm up with a bowl of soup and one of Blueberry Hill's signature chocolate chip cookies. If you prefer to ski on groomed trails, head to nearby Rikert Nordic Center, which offers 50 kilometers of groomed trails and now has snowmaking on 5 kilometers of trail. On the nights of Jan. 17 and Feb. 5, the two ski areas will combine to offer a Full Moon Ski and Dine, where you end at the cozy inn for a four-course meal. Cost is \$58 per person. Lodging at Blueberry Hill Inn starts at \$199 a night, including breakfast. 1307 Goshen Ripton Road, Goshen, Vt. 802-247-6735, www.blueberryhillinn.com

STEPHEN JERMANOK