



What to Know Before You Go

Welcome to your Big Sky Backcountry Guides experience at Bell Lake Yurt! We always strive to provide the best experience possible, and the checklist below should help you plan and pack for success. If you have questions, don't hesitate to call.

Also, please sign a digital liability waiver prior to your trip at the following address: <https://waiver.smartwaiver.com/v/bsbgliability/>

You will not be permitted to ski without a signed waiver on file.

Pre-Trip Checklist

Do not attend any BSBG program if you are experiencing any symptoms of illness. This is common sense, and common decency.

Gear Rental:

- If you need to rent AT or splitboard gear, we recommend Uphill Pursuits in Bozeman, or Gallatin Alpine Sports in Big Sky.

List:

- 4x4/AWD vehicle for driving to the trailhead (if possible).
- Avalanche transceiver +batteries
- Shovel (metal).
- Probe
- Comfortable ski boots.
- Skis with AT/ telemark bindings, or a splitboard (**please no Alpine Trekkers or snowshoes**).
- Climbing skins
- Sleeping bag (20-30 degree recommended).
- Light overnight pack (big enough to hike in all your gear, small enough to use as a day pack during outings). We find that 35-45 liters is ideal. If necessary, strap your sleeping bag to the outside of your pack for the approach.
- Water bottle (Nalgene)
- Goggles, sunscreen.
- Headlamp+batteries.
- Warm down jacket for hanging out/lunch.

- Bring clothing that keeps you warm and dry. We recommend wicking base layers top and bottom, two or three pairs of socks, a fleece or midlayer, a down or synthetic jacket or sweater (in addition to a bigger puffy), GoreTex or similar pants and shell, and yurt loungewear. Don't bring too much clothing—the yurt stove will dry your gear.
- Indoor shoes—light booties, Crocs, or similar work well. There are large Muck boots at the yurt for venturing outside.
- Favorite snacks. You will be well fed, but bring a couple of bars or other favorite trail snacks to augment lunch sandwiches each day.
- Alcohol: you are welcome to bring your own booze if you choose (21+).
- Toiletries/Medications (TP and hand sanitizer are provided).

Getting There:

- We will meet in Harrison, MT at 8am on the first morning. There is an ATM kiosk on the east side of the highway between the train tracks and Harrison School—we will meet in the parking lot behind the kiosk. Can't miss it. Harrison is about 1 hour from Bozeman.
- **NOTE:** The last few miles of road are unpaved and can be slick and snowy, particularly during storms. A high-clearance AWD vehicle is highly recommended. If you have chains, bring them—just in case.
- On the last day of your trip, we will be back to highway by approximately 5:00pm.
- If you are flying in/out of Bozeman, please arrive the day before and leave the day after your trip—it's no fun stressing about making a flight!

The Hike:

- Total distance from the Potosi Campground parking lot to the yurt is roughly six miles.
- We will snowmobile you from the campground to the trailhead, which reduces our approach to 2.6 miles.

Meals:

- All your meals, tea, coffee and some snacks will be provided as part of your trip (and we love to eat!). Bring some of your your favorite trail snacks to augment lunch sandwiches each day. Please make any allergies, diabetes, or dietary needs known well in advance of your trip—**this** is part of completing your waiver.

Frequently Asked Questions:

How difficult is the approach?

- From the Bell Lake trailhead, it's roughly 2.6 miles and 1,600 vertical feet. The skintrack from the trailhead is moderately pitched, and takes between 2-4 hours for most groups, with average fitness and reasonable loads. We've had guests as young as 10 and as old as 70 make it comfortably to the yurt.

Who are my guides?

- All of our guides are very experienced, courteous, and knowledgeable. They are all members of the American Avalanche Association, medically trained as Wilderness First Responders or EMTs, and have Pro1/Pro 2/Level 3 avalanche forecasting certification. Lead guides also have American Mountain Guide Association (AMGA) training.

Should I tip my guides/instructors?

At BSBG, we strive for an exceptional guest experience, and tips are always greatly appreciated. BLY ski guides also act as your chefs, waitstaff, dishwashers, wood choppers, and entertainers. **Guide tips are customarily 18-25% of your trip's total cost.** These are simply guidelines—please tip what you feel is appropriate.

Thank you for choosing to ski with Big Sky Backcountry Guides! We hope you enjoy your time in our little slice of paradise. Give me a call at 406-581-5754 if you have any questions. And as always, think snow!

Drew Pogge, Big Sky Backcountry Guides