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WHAT IS A SKI BIKE? WHEN RIDING MEANS SLIDING

[Matt Heid](#)

November 14, 2016



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Ski bike on!

What happens when you fuse a bicycle and pair of skis into a single contraption? You get a ski bike (sometimes called a snow bike), an unusual hybrid approach for hitting the downhill slopes.

The idea is simple. Instead of putting wheels on a bike frame, you attach a pair of skis. For additional control, riders often also strap on a specialized pair of short skis, or “blades,” to their feet. The result is a fascinating mix of technologies and design.

One of the big advantages of ski biking is that it greatly reduces the amount of pressure and stress on riders’ knees—a plus for downhillers whose joints may have already taken a lifetime’s worth of pounding. The learning curve is also generally considered less than for regular downhill skis—a potentially less intimidating way for beginners to hit the slopes.

Ski bikes—and ski bike manufacturers—have been around for a number of years, mostly in Europe, but have been slow to arrive on U.S. slopes. Cost is certainly one reason—ski bikes easily run into the thousands of dollars, far more than all but the highest end ski set-ups, and that doesn't even include the price of the specialized short skis for riders' feet.

In the U.S., Colorado-based [Lenz Sport](#) offers [a line of made-in-the-USA ski bikes](#), with prices ranging from roughly \$2,000 to \$3,000, depending on the model. In Europe, [Breiter Snowbike](#) has been making ski bikes for decades. (For a complete run-down, check out the Skibike Shop's [list of ski bike manufacturers](#).)

Most ski areas allow ski bikes, though exact rules vary by location. In New England, you can try out a ski bike at [Pat's Peal in New Hampshire](#), where [ski bike rentals and lessons are available](#) (an all-day starter package runs \$89, including rental, lesson, and lift ticket).

Slide on!

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[From the Magazine](#) (307)

[View from AMC](#) (25)

[Currents](#) (45)

[Field Notes](#) (52)

[Get Out](#) (133)

[Equipped](#) (834)

[Learn How](#) (119)

[Great Kids, Great Outdoors](#) (459)

[Wild Wisdom](#) (51)

[Reflections](#) (15)

[Voices](#) (18)

[Flashback](#) (66)

[Blogs](#) (1,670)

[Running Wild](#) (11)

[Equipped](#) (806)

[Great Kids, Great Outdoors](#) (451)

[News](#) (53)

[Current Conditions](#) (67)

[Trails](#) (83)

[Nature Notes](#) (121)

[Conservation](#) (46)

[Outdoor Leadership](#) (15)

[Newsroom](#) (150)

[Appalachia Journal](#) (62)

By Issue

[2018](#) (98)

[Spring 2018](#) (41)

[Summer 2018](#) (28)

[January/February 2018](#) (29)

[2017](#) (168)

[November/December 2017](#) (25)

[May/June 2017](#) (25)

[September/October 2017](#) (26)

[July/August 2017](#) (29)

[March/April 2017](#) (28)

[January/February 2017](#) (31)

[2016](#) (172)

[November/December 2016](#) (31)

[September/October 2016](#) (30)

[July/August 2016](#) (27)

[May/June 2016](#) (27)

[March/April 2016](#) (30)

[January/February 2016](#) (27)

[2015](#) (188)

[November/December 2015](#) (31)

[September/October 2015](#) (29)

[July/August 2015](#) (30)

[May/June 2015](#) (30)

[March/April 2015](#) (35)

[January/February 2015](#) (33)

[2014](#) (184)

[November/December 2014](#) (30)

[September/October 2014](#) (28)

[July/August 2014](#) (32)

[May/June 2014](#) (31)

[March/April 2014](#) (32)

[January/February 2014](#) (31)

Archives

- [2013](#)
- [2012](#)
- [2011](#)
- [2010](#)
- [2009](#)
- [2008](#)
- [2007](#)
- [2006](#)
- [2005](#)
- [2004](#)
- [2003](#)
- [2002](#)
- [2001](#)
- [2000](#)
- [1999](#)

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View All Guided Trips

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Adults
Family Outings
20s & 30s
Adventure Travel
Volunteer Opportunities
Find a Local Chapter

By Activity

Hike
Bike
Paddle
Climb
Ski
Snowshoe
For Beginners
Search All Activities

RESOURCES & TRAINING

AMC Publications

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Books & Maps

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Trip Planning

Popular Trails

Trip Ideas & Tips

Gear Advice

Skills & Leadership

Volunteer Trail Crews

Leadership Training

Outdoor Skills

Volunteers

Mountain Leadership School

Youth Opportunities Program

CONSERVATION

Research & Advocacy

Hot Issues

Take Action

Where We Work

Climate & Energy

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Trail Stewardship

Volunteer Trail Crews

Professional Trail Crews

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