

Destinations

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SLEIGH BELLS

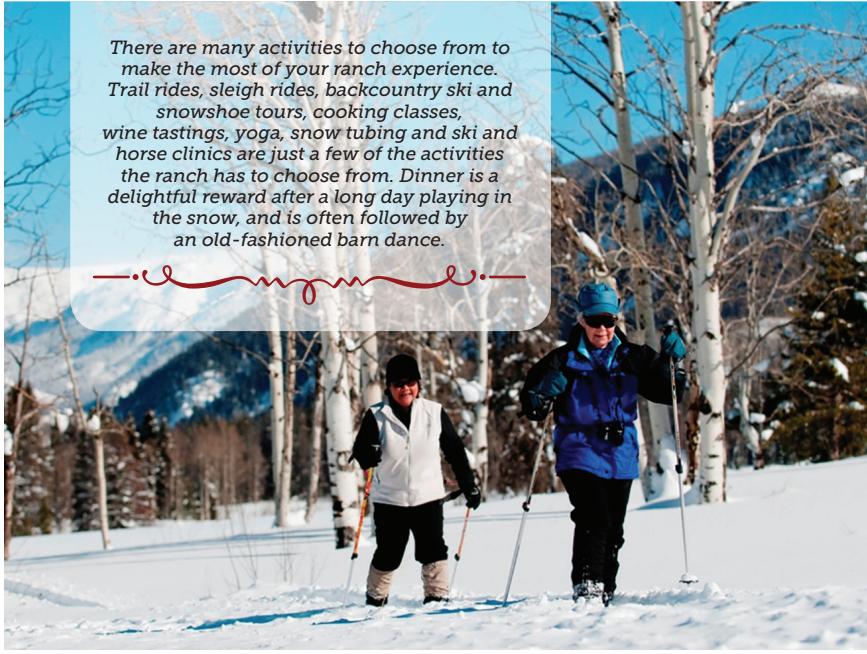
Ring

AT VISTA VERDE RANCH

HAVE YOU EVER DREAMED OF GLIDING THROUGH THE SNOW in a one-horse open sleigh? Well, the folks at Vista Verde Ranch in Steamboat Springs, Colo., provide this dreamy experience and many other fun-filled activities for a spectacular winter escape. The welcoming staff at the ranch have thought of everything to make your stay a memory never to be forgotten.

Many Vista Verde Ranch guests return every year to make new memories and visit old friends. Vista Verde Ranch provides an all-inclusive resort experience that includes delectable gourmet meals served in the lodge, daily indoor and outdoor activities and cozy log cabins with a stocked fridge, coffee and a fruit/snack basket. Views of snowy mountains, beautiful horses waiting to take you on a trail or sleigh ride and snow-laden evergreens and white aspens dotting the landscape are but a glimpse of what this winter paradise has to offer.

The friendly, attentive staff at Vista Verde Ranch go beyond the ordinary to make your stay extraordinary. Each day begins with a beautiful sunrise that glistens against



PHOTOS COURTESY OF VISTA VERDE RANCH; MELISSA HERNDON

the fallen snow. Breakfast in the lodge prepares you for the day with a few favorites, such as pancakes, French toast and omelettes, along with potatoes, fresh fruit and pastries, all homemade. Make a note to grab a couple of fresh-baked cookies from the cookie jar to snack on later. Each day brings a different flavor.

There are many activities to choose from to make the most of your ranch experience. Trail rides, sleigh rides, back-country ski and snowshoe tours, cooking classes, wine tastings, yoga, snow tubing and ski and horse clinics are but a few suggestions to get your day started. After a hearty breakfast, bundle up and embark on a cross-country guided ski tour or be your own guide and explore the exquisite vistas of the ranch.

Lunch is always a welcome respite as it provides the opportunity to rejuvenate and regroup with others while eating a delicious fortifying meal before heading out for your next afternoon adventure. Opportunities to explore the ranch further can start with a cooking class in the kitchen, where the chef will welcome you with a glass of wine while explaining how it will pair with the dish that will be created. Learning how to make homemade pasta and a spicy ragù sauce, and all the teaching, demonstrating and sampling that goes into that process, is an engaging collaboration between chef and students. Another option may be to go on a guided horse trail ride along with other guests in order to explore areas farther out from the ranch and perhaps see eagles or a moose. After your afternoon activities, return to your cabin to enjoy the privacy of your own hot tub on the front porch. Relax your

mind, body and spirit while sipping a glass of wine and basking in the warmth and beauty of the moment.

Evenings are always eventful and begin with happy half-hour, where we all meet in the lodge and enjoy drinks and appetizers while getting to know each other and relating the experiences of our day. Dinner is a delightful reward after a long day playing in the snow. After dinner, join the staff for an old-fashioned barn dance, including lessons, if needed. Everyone has a great time moving to the music and enjoying time together. Other after-dinner options include socializing and playing board/card games by the fire in the main lodge or just meandering back to your cabin to enjoy reading a good book.

Snowmobiling through the mountains is one of Vista Verde's most incredible activities and provides exquisite views of the continental divide. Spiraling up a mountain on a narrow packed trail will challenge the most adventurous outdoors enthusiast. Another great challenging experience is dog sledding. You may choose to sit back and enjoy the ride or help drive the team with the help of your guide.

Vista Verde Ranch offers seasonal activities throughout the year and welcomes families, couples and old friends who want to reconnect in a natural, relaxing atmosphere. Getting there is easy as Delta offers direct flights from Atlanta to Steamboat Springs twice daily and Vista Verde has a shuttle waiting to pick you up upon arrival and take you back upon departure.

To learn more, please visit Vista Verde Ranch at www.vistaverde.com or call 800-526-7433 or 970-879-3858. ~

OATMEAL COOKIES

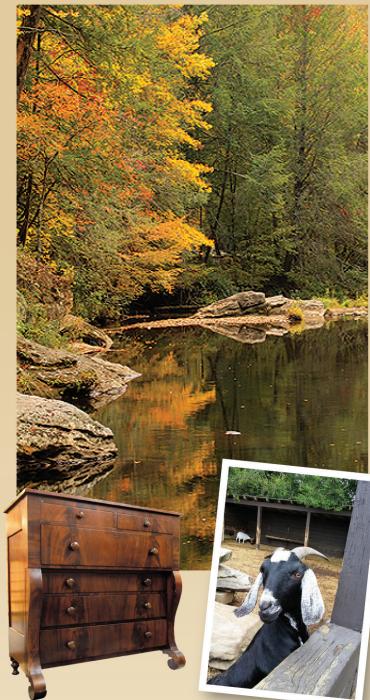
Makes 5 dozen cookies

1 pound unsalted butter	1 teaspoon baking powder
2 cups brown sugar	1 teaspoon salt
2 cups granulated sugar	½ teaspoon nutmeg
4 eggs	1½ teaspoons cinnamon
1½ teaspoons vanilla extract	6 cups old-fashioned rolled oats
3 cups all-purpose flour	2 cups raisins (or Craisins)

Heat the oven to 350 F. In a bowl, cream the butter and sugars with a mixer or by hand until smooth. Do not overmix. Add the eggs and vanilla extract and scrape down the bowl. Mix until incorporated but do not overmix. In another bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, salt, nutmeg and cinnamon and then add them to the first bowl and mix until just combined. Mix in the oats and raisins. Drop onto a cookie sheet and bake at 350 degrees until done, about 10 minutes. Adjust the time as needed for your oven. The cookies should be just golden around the edges. Enjoy!

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