

Weekend Sledding Destination

STORY BY
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Orillia

PHOTOS BY CRAIG NICHOLSON AND MARTIN LORTZ



Looking for a great destination for an easy weekend sledding getaway? Check out what Orillia has to offer...

More and more riders are looking for new weekend sledding destinations. Typically, locations within quick and easy trailering distance are most popular, ones that welcome snowmobilers with good amenities and enough groomed trails for two or three day rides where no saddle bagging is necessary. Orillia, Ontario certainly fits the bill...

Staging Location: Orillia (population: 30,000) is located on Highway 11, less than 90 minutes of

trailer north of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and the 401 Corridor.

Why Orillia?: Centrally located in Southern Ontario, Orillia is far enough north of the GTA to be in a reliable snowbelt without a long drive. Normally, its location also benefits from lake effect snow coming off Georgian Bay.

Area trails offer a good mix of open field and forest riding, including some at the southern edge of the Canadian Shield, with enough options to make your ride as long or short as you wish. The trails are well marked, maintained and mapped with sufficient fuel and food stops, and generally run through populated areas so you're never far from help and mostly within cell service.

Orillia itself offers most "big city" services and amenities, so everyone in the family can find something else to do, if they aren't up for snowmobiling every day. Nearby attractions include concerts and gaming at Casino Rama, downhill skiing at Horseshoe or Mount St Louis Moonstone, cross-country at Hardwood Hills, and ice fishing on Lake Couchiching. Bonus: In cooperation with the Orillia & District Snowmobile Club, Orillia has an excellent snowmobile corridor through town via TOP B112B.

Staging Hotel: Best Western Couchiching Inn, www.bestwesternorillia.com or (705) 325-6505. Full service hotel with hot tub and sauna offers a free hot breakfast at on site restaurant, on snow



Best Western Couchiching Inn



access to gas station and convenience store next door, and ample truck and trailer parking at the back.

- Road Access to Hotel – Trailer on Highway 12 to east side of town. Hotel is just west of the narrows between Lakes Simcoe and Couchiching.
- Sled Access to Hotel – Ride local trail from TOP B112B to its end.
- Access from Hotel to Trails – Ride either the trail corridor through town or staked lake trails across Lake Couchiching.

Restaurant Choices: Portage Bistro (Best Western Couchiching Inn); St Germain's Steakhouse (Casino Rama); The Grape & Olive (Best Western Mariposa Inn); Wild Wing (near hotel).

Local Dealers: McCauley Equipment Sales (Arctic Cat); Leatherdale Marine (Ski-Doo);

Byers Motorsports (Polaris); Orillia Motorsport (Yamaha).

Day Rides:

- West toward Midland, Penetanguishene, Wasaga & Collingwood (OFSC District 8 Trail Guide).
- North toward Gravenhurst, Bala & Port Severn (OFSC Districts 7 & 8 Trail Guides).
- Southwest toward Barrie, Alliston, Creemore & Stayner (OFSC Districts 4 & 8 Trail Guides).
- East toward Brechin, Fenelon Falls & Kinmount (OFSC Districts 2, 3 & 8 Trail Guides).

Get Info: Ontario's Lake Country Tourism (ontarioslakecountry.com); OFSC Inter-active Trail Guide (www.ofsc.on.ca); OFSC District 8 (www.most.on.ca); Orillia & District Snowmobile Club (www.sledorillia.com). GSOM

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