

Hobo Pool

Saratoga is known for its hot springs, including the waters at the Saratoga Resort & Spa — but you have to be a guest to enjoy them.

That's OK: The Hobo Pool, owned and maintained by the town, is free and never closes. It even has a bathhouse.

The colder and snowier the weather, the better for enjoying a soak in the Hobo Pool, where the water averages between 106 and 119 degrees Fahrenheit.

The hottest water bubbles in from a separate portion of the pool called the Lobster Pot. Half the fun of visiting the Hobo Pool is watching brave souls attempt a dip in the Lobster Pot.

A recent remodeling added a not-so-hot pool, where the temperature averages just 100 Fahrenheit.

Details: www.saratoga-chamber.info.

Medicine Bow National Forest

This woody playground has hundreds of miles of trails. The most scenic is just 3.2 miles round trip, but it's not for the faint of heart. It gains 1,300 feet of elevation to the summit of 12,014-foot Medicine Bow Peak, the highest in southern Wyoming.

The trail begins amid alpine lakes and wildflowers and zigzags up the treeless mountainside to panoramic views of a wide swath of the Rocky Mountains.

Later in the year, try the Encampment River Trail, which begins in a sagebrush-and-cottonwood canyon a few miles outside Encampment, population 450, at the south end of the North Platte Valley.

The trail follows the pristine Encampment River upstream to the Encampment River Wil-

derness, where it enters dense spruce and fir and steepens as it traces the roaring river toward its source.

Day hikers have plenty of opportunity to turn back. The full 16 miles of this trail are better covered on a multiday backpacking trip.

Details: www.fs.usda.gov/mbr.

Winter trails

Snowmobiling is popular in southeast Wyoming, but your own legs can provide a much cheaper and infinitely more Zen experience.

Mazes of trails off-limits to snowmobiles are groomed near the points where each highway over the Medicine Bow and Sierra Madre mountains have closed for the winter.

Dress in layers and prepare to shed a couple. This can be a workout if a foot or two of light powder fell on the path and the groomer is nowhere in sight yet.

What better way to earn a visit to the Hobo Pool?