

*Take me back to the sweet times,
The hot nights,
Everything is gonna be alright
In the summertime,
Baby in the summertime!*

Bet you're all thinking Bondi Beach, lifeguards, ice creams, and having a good time to mid-2000's rock right? Well that's one way to spend the summertime. Another way is by chucking a u-ey on the whole beach, sand, surf idea and instead going to the Snowy Mountains - which is exactly what I did in December! I had a great time, and I'm here to plead the case for why you should consider the Snowy's in the summer!

The sand:person ratio is getting dangerously low in this stock image, but this is most metro beaches come any day above 25 degrees Celsius!

The Snowy Mountains are the main piece of action in the Great Dividing Range, and help create the Australian Alps with the Victorian High Country (south of the border). In winter, the ski resorts of Thredbo, Perisher, Charlotte Pass, and little old Selwyn are humming with people. Car parking at Perisher can sometimes be so hectic that they close the road, and people with pockets of money, arms, and legs to pay for their skiing are turned away! The 'Snowy's' in wintertime are essentially bonkers.

Neatly positioned halfway between Melbourne and Sydney... meaning you're as far away from one as you are the other.

The view from the Guthega car park in winter. Behind me was a horde of Guthegarians(?) I swear!

In summertime, it's much more pleasant, which matches the climate as well. Maybe they should be called the 'Sunny' Mountains in Summer?

OK, it was cloudy during my race... but usually it's sunny!

I travelled over as part of the UTMB's Ultra Trail Kosciuszko trail running event in the first week of December, and stayed within Thredbo for a week. Pre-race, I soaked up the atmosphere down in Bullocks flat and was impressed by the fairytale-like walking paths. In winter, these are generally frosted over and you're too frozen out of your mind after skiing all day to go for a gentle walk!

The wombat-manicured grasses and well-groomed paths right next to the Thredbo river are a real treat. As I checked out more of the Thredbo River, I ventured up to Dead Horse Gap and the snow gums, where track infrastructure (bridges you'd expect trolls to live under) continued to delight.

The runner behind me was from Finland and the look on his face just says 'you're telling me, people go to the beach in the summer instead of checking out these trails?'

Sure, you can walk around and check out these sights at the bottom. Or, like most of the other Thredbo-ites (Thredboians? Thredders?), the mountain biking trails at the resort itself are worth checking out. At one stage, the lift to take riders and their bikes up to the top of the mountain had a line as long as ski lifts I've seen at Perisher and Thredbo, though it was only for a short second.

During the actual race I was a part of, I experienced some of the same trails in a bit of blur. Passing the top of Thredbo at Eagles Nest twice in the race allowed me to better appreciate just how cool the Snowy's are (in summer, there is still a chairlift that provides access at Thredbo if you're not a hiker). Post race though, I was really able to soak in what a trip to the Snowy's in summer means. I soaked my legs in the Thredbo river and wandered over to the pub (affectionately called The Local Pub) for a chicken parm and a beer. In winter, this'd be an affair with icy roads, jackets, maybe rain, and a massive crowd. In summer, even while an event is on, it was cruisy as – which is what you want for a summer holiday, right? Kick back, relax, and *enjoy* sitting outside in the sun with a nice cold drink.



Thredbo, chairlift, sun.

Post-post race, I took a drive up to Perisher and Guthega to visit more of the terrain. Leading out from Charlottes Pass, where the 100km and 100-mile courses went, are five of the tallest mountains in Australia, including Mt.Kosciuszko. My legs didn't have it in me to venture out there, but I did follow part of the Snowy's Alpine Walk from Guthega. With almost \$30 million of funding from state and federal governments, these trails are very much like the ones below. Except, the terrain you're rolling through makes you want to bust out like Julie Andrews (*'the hills are alive'*).



Me: 'I've got a race to win, let me pass please'.

Everyone else: 'Yeah that's cool buddy, I'm just gonna walk a bit and soak up the scenery, pretty good isn't it?'.

Me: '...touche'.

If walking isn't your thing, maybe you can't be bothered riding or even driving up to visit the top of the Snowy's, or perhaps your appetite for water activities in summertime is too insatiable, you might think the Snowy's isn't for you.

Wrong.

Down in Jindabyne, your one-stop shop for supplies that has a nice mix of quaint and expensive real estate. There's this massive lake – and I don't know if you've heard, but between the 1950's-1970's they had over 100,000 people (mostly Europeans) come over and take the Snowy River *through* the Snowys, build some dams, and that's how we got the Snowy Mountains Scheme. The dam to construct Lake Jindabyne flooded the original site of Jindabyne, but it did lead to improved access to the ski resort areas (which I am very grateful for). Of course too, it has resulted in this massive lake now suitable for sailing, water skiing, and other generally frivolous activities!



Lake Jindabyne and all its glory.

Reflecting on my whole week in early December, I am only sad about one thing: that I was only there for a week, and I was focused on my race (in which I finished 5th, by the way []). Having spent two ski seasons at Perisher, I can attest to how good the area is in wintertime. Having spent a week there in December 2023, as well as New Year's celebrations in 2017/18, I can confirm it is the same in the summer. I just wish it wasn't so far away from my home base!

To even out my sad reflection, the most positive thing about the Snowy's is that if you want to be around people in the summer, there are plenty of places to do that in Thredbo and Jindabyne. However, if you want some summer solitude and can't find it at the beach, a walk

along any of the trails emanating from Thredbo, Dead Horse Gap, Perisher, Guthega, or Charlotte's Pass will drop you into an area of beauty that most Australians will never appreciate exists on this strange, wide, mostly brown, and dry continent. Yep, you don't need to visit Europe to see the Alps – you just need to get yourself to the Snowy's, and maybe you'll see me there too.

The rusty brown metal road (i.e. not yellow and not brick either) leading through the top of the Snowy's.

And even if I have to wait 'til next year,

I don't care,

All I know is that I'll meet you there,

In the summertime.

Baby, in the summertime,

That is where I'll be!

*(*makes inaudible guitar noises with big smile on face*)*

Boy I'm glad the race is done, because now I can relax in the Snowy's.

Ever seen the Snowy Mountains in the summer? If not, would you consider spending part of the warmer seasons there?