

on skiing

Get It Together, Girls

BY MEGAN BARBER

IT'S FEBRUARY AND THE SKI season so far has been lousy to barely tolerable. And the 10-day forecast doesn't look good. There's no fresh weekend snow predicted within an eight-hour drive of Denver and I'm aching for some powder.

I sit down at my home-office laptop and open my e-mail to find a video post from my husband, currently on a week-plus adventure with 10 of his best buddies. I'm increasingly irritated (I could use more-impolite adjectives) as I watch him drop into two feet of blower snow in the backcountry of Nozawa Onsen, Japan. (Curse you, social media!) There are icy beards, frozen smiles, pillow lines, and so much snow stoke it looks like the guys are weightless.

"Mama, I need a snack!" my three-year-old demands, snapping me back to reality—and the dry state of Colorado. As I head to the pantry, I want nothing more than to fall on the floor and throw a toddler-size tantrum.

Oh, how I hate the bros' trip.

Why the rage? It comes down to pure jealousy. From heli skiing in Revelstoke to tree skiing in Steamboat, for 10 years my husband has traveled with a semipermanent group of his pals on epic ski trips. They pack up mounds of gear, kiss their obligations (and wives and girlfriends) goodbye, and escape to distant peaks. See ya!

Well, I want in.

The number-one (and perhaps only) rule of the bros' trip is that partners aren't allowed. This has nothing to do with ability, as plenty of women are just



as good as, or better, than men. Instead it's about what happens when a crew of guys hits the hill. Over whiskey and testosterone-fueled tales of cliff drops and couloirs, my husband and his friends relax into a fraternity that can't be replicated in everyday life. With fewer distractions, less stress, and plenty of laughter, the men who go on bros' trips live more freely, if only for a few days.

At home, cleaning up toys for the 80th time that day, I can't help but wonder why women don't prioritize female ski trips in the same way. Sure, we manage to get together for a few turns or a night or two away, but a week extravaganza halfway across the world? Unlikely. Check that. Just about never.

We find so many reasons not to go. Whether it's because of kids, work, or pure female hubris, women think the world will fall apart if we check out for a bit. A girls' ski trip might be

enthusiastically discussed over a second bottle of wine, but it's often the first vacation to be sacrificed when life gets in the way—and life *always* gets in the way.

Shame on the sisterhood. Because there are thousands of gals who, like me, would benefit from an all-women ski adventure—when the snow comes first, and we ski until last chair. A trip where we rip just as hard as the guys and then hit après wearing everything from Gore-Tex to goose-down skirts.

When women ski together, we are the best version of ourselves: feminine, tough, funny, strong, adventurous, physical, kind. The list goes on. There's no pretense of "keeping up with the guys" or taking care of anyone else. For once, your skiing gets to be about *you*.

So here's your rallying cry, women of the ski world. Let's take a break, stop playing the martyr, and embark on our own estrogen-filled ski escape. Call it a goddess retreat or chick trip, but get out there and do it.

Maybe the house will be a mess when you get back, and things might fall behind a little at work. But every so often, you deserve to push your boundaries with snow-addicted females who love skiing as much as you do. Forget Cabo, Napa Valley, and Vegas; girls' trips can (and should) happen on the mountain. Let the men have their bros' trip, but demand one for yourself too. It's our turn.

We may not want to admit it, but the world will be fine without us. ●

A lifelong skier, and snow-obsessed traveler, Megan Barber lives in Denver with her husband, two young children, and two mutts.

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