

## Four Great Winter Festivals

If your idea for a winter vacation is white sand, turquoise water, drinks with little umbrellas and fun in the sun, then this article might not be for you. When we say winter vacation, we're talking about winter: snow, ice, and Winter Festivals.

Whether you want to travel near or far, you have many choices for a winter festival. Teams come from all over the world to participate in ice carving and snow sculpture competitions. You'll find dog sledding, cultural events, skating, skiing, light shows and torchlight parades.

If you love winter fun, here are four great Winter Festivals among many.

**Saint Paul Winter Carnival** This festival is known as 'the coolest celebration on earth'. This annual St Paul, Minnesota event is held in Harriet Island Regional Park on the banks of the mighty Mississippi. Play on the snow slide, get lost in the ice maze and take in the masterpieces before they melt.

**Quebec City Winter Carnival** This Canadian winter festival began 50 years ago and its most spectacular feature is the Ice Palace, built every year out of tonnes of ice blocks. For the brave of heart try the snow bath wearing only a bathing suit. Oo, brrrr. Or watch fifty teams representing thirty countries go head to head in the International Snow Sculpting Event.

**Sapporo Snow and Ice Festival** This Japanese Festival started very spontaneously in 1950 when six high school students built six snow sculptures in Odori Park. Some of the sculptures created for the current festivals are as high as buildings and are spectacularly lit at night. Try the giant snow tube slide, snow rafting, a snow maze and even snow golf.

**The Antarctic Mid Winter Festival** This winter solstice celebration is held (you guessed it) in the Antarctic. It features a solstice party with music and fire, the polar pathways walking tours, the longest night film festival, Ice Cold Words writer's festival, and the ubiquitous ice sculpture competitions. Just one small detail to remember: the winter solstice in the Antarctic is in June.