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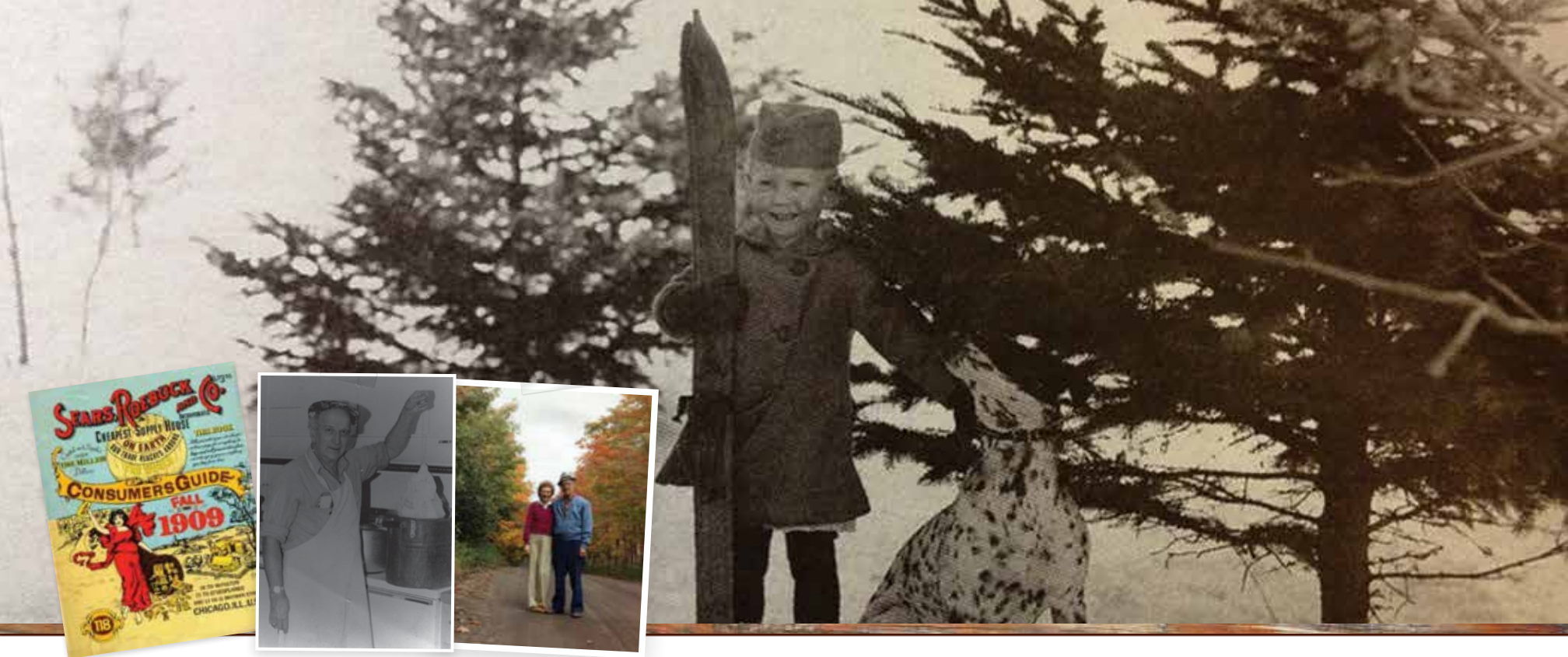
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Remembering the North Shore's holiday traditions of days gone by

By Orton Tofte Sr.

In the old days on the North Shore, Christmas planning started early. Mothers would order wool yarn, linen, yard goods, thread and buttons in early fall. Presents of fancy mittens and gloves, wool socks, scarves, and caps were made. When the Sears Roebuck and Montgomery Ward winter catalogues arrived, prices were compared and lists were made.

As the success of the fall herring run determined a family's plans, orders changed to reflect good and bad times. As money came in and the holidays approached, the pace quickened. More orders were sent, and when the mail arrived packages were quickly picked up and taken home to be hidden.

Meanwhile, the winter food supply also had to be ordered and stored. Flour, sugar, salted meat, dried fruits, crackers, and other staples would be acquired. In mid-November the food preparation started. Fruitcakes were baked and stored to age properly. Next came the dry lefsa. Several women would gather and spend a day or more rolling, frying and storing the many large disks that would be needed for the season.

Dried lutefisk was soaked in a solution of wood ashes and water. From the first sample of fish until after the holidays, the silverware would change from silver to light blue then dark blue and finally black from the lye solution. It was an almost impossible task to keep the silverware bright, so no polishing was done until just before Christmas Eve.

Plans were made as to how to get the most perishable items at the last possible minute. Fresh apples, oranges, nuts, candy and oysters were the last ordered and the most anticipated. Boats were often delayed or unable to get through and last minute railroad trips were taken, requiring several days of travel.

Born and raised in Tofte, MN, Orton Tofte Sr. (1919-1990) was a lifelong member of the North Shore community, war veteran, husband, father of nine and, following in the footsteps of his mother, skilled lutefisk and lefse chef. He was also a lifelong supporter of Bluefin Bay.

While the adults worked, the young people also prepared. They examined catalogues for Christmas presents: a sled, some new skates, shoes, possibly even a new .22 rifle. They planned presents for parents and friends, earning money by trapping weasel. After the fur buyers came in early December, present orders were finally placed. After a few days, sack after sack of 4th class mail would arrive at the post office and the postmaster was treated with special respect in the hope that he would give you your package first.

The annual school and church Christmas programs signaled the start of holiday vacation. It was also the time of work. Floors need to be scrubbed, rugs beaten, linens ironed, wood split and stoves cleaned. Stories were told of the elves who were watching for good boys and girls.

At last, the big meal was served on Christmas Eve. Tables groaned with breads, rolls, lefsa, home-canned vegetables and a variety of homemade pickles from cucumber to pear. The family that was fortunate enough to have roast goose was envied. Later, fruitcakes, cookies, candies and fresh fruits were served.

On Christmas Day young people would visit friends to compare presents and sample treats. The round of parties started. The younger folks would usually meet in the afternoon to play games. Later in the evening teenagers would gather to play cards and visit. Families would invite friends and neighbors for an evening of fun and sharing the news and experiences of the season. ■



Margaret & Orton Tofte Sr.



SEND CABIN FEVER PACKING WITH A BLUEFIN BAY GETAWAY

Dear Guests,

This year, Bluefin Bay celebrates 30 years of creating traditions and helping guests form lasting vacation memories. What a wonderful gift!

As we celebrate this milestone, it seems fitting to look back at what the holidays in Tofte were like in the early years. We turned to Orton Tofte Sr. (1919-1990), a lifelong member of the North Shore community and avid supporter of Bluefin Bay. Special thanks to Brian Tofte, Orton Sr.'s son, for sharing this retrospect. We hope you enjoy it as much as we did.

It has been our pleasure to welcome you to Bluefin Bay for 30 years – and now to our sister resorts Surfside and Temperance Landing on Lake Superior. Please enjoy your complimentary 20th Annual Bluefin Bay Calendar as a token of our appreciation and a celebration of the majestic beauty of Lake Superior's North Shore.

From the Bluefin Bay family to yours, we wish you the happiest of holiday seasons and all the best in the New Year.

Dennis Rysdahl
Owner & General Manager
Bluefin Bay Family of Resorts

Your Guide to the Best Winter Yet

With endless pristine cross-country ski-able trails, the Midwest's greatest downhill skiing, and serene snow-covered state parks ripe for exploration, winter is one of the best times to visit the North Shore. And at the Bluefin Bay Family of Resorts, you're at the center of it all—a lakeside retreat with the state's best snow and biggest winter fun right outside your door.

Hit the Trails

Home to more than 400km of impeccably groomed cross-country ski trails, Cook County is a skinny skier's dream. Six major systems make up the bulk of our county's trails, including the Upper Gunflint Trail System, Banadad, Central Guflint, Pincushion and Norpine.

Right in the backyard of the Bluefin Bay Family of Resorts, the Sugarbush Ski System gives skiers of all abilities some of the best cross-country skiing in the Midwest. With trails situated an average of 1,000 feet above sea level, the system provides skiers beautiful Lake Superior views and an unsurpassed variety of terrain from beginner-friendly to expert-challenging.

Ready to head out? Grab a pair of our complimentary rental skis, hop on a free shuttle to a nearby trailhead and set off on your own or join one of our regularly scheduled guided tours of the area.

Take a Ski Day...or two

There's no doubt that Lutsen Mountains is the biggest, tallest and best downhill ski resort in the Midwest. Boasting 1,000 skiable acres spread across four mountains, Lutsen's 95 different runs offer breathtaking views of Lake Superior and the Superior National Forest. Four Progression Parks offer snowboarders jumps, jibs and the longest slopestyle run in Mid-America. And it just keeps getting better.

In the past ten years, Lutsen has invested \$20 million to match the resort's facilities with the world-class scenery and terrain. New lifts (including the Caribou Express high-speed lift), upgraded snowmaking technology, improved chalets and base area renovations all complement Lutsen Mountain's best features to add up to one incredible resort.

Just a four-hour drive from the Twin Cities, Lutsen Mountains offers a true mountain ski vacation – without the airfare, travel time or hassle of a western ski vacation. And with Bluefin Bay's Ski & Stay packages, complimentary resort-to-mountain shuttles and Sawtooth Outfitters equipment rental service right on-site, it's easier and more affordable than ever to hit the slopes.

Choose Your Own (Winter) Adventure

Not every winter-weather lover is a pro on powder, and even expert skiers sometimes need a day off. Luckily, there's a whole lot of wintry pursuits to love right here at Bluefin Bay and on our wintry North Shore.

Explore untouched backcountry terrain on a dog sled. Strap on some snowshoes and head off-trail to spy on a frozen waterfall. Lace up some complimentary rental ice skates and try a triple toe loop on our ice skating rink, or challenge another family to a friendly hockey game. Gas up your sled and set out on the 67-mile Lutsen-Tofte Snowmobile Trail System. And at the end of it all, warm up with a s'more (on the house) in the glow of our evening campfire. Or come inside and listen to some live music at the Grille.

Interested in setting out on your own winter adventure? Contact Guest Services for more information on our complimentary winter equipment rental, trailhead shuttles, trail maps and conditions, and booking dog sledding experiences. ■



Winter Warm-Up

Toasty spa treatments that scrub, soak, and massage the winter chill right out of your bones

Here's a great way to rid yourself of the winter chills: Have your body slathered in a warming, mineral-rich masque and wrapped from head to toe in thermal blankets.

The result is pure, blissful, cozy warmth. And silky smooth skin – all in the dead of winter.

This is just one example of the luxurious warming winter treatments Waves of Superior Spa offers to help shake off the winter blues (and dry skin). From a relaxing mani/pedi to a full body hot stone massage or reiki therapy session, Waves of Superior Spa's full menu of services melt away tensions and relieve stress in fatigued muscles, restoring energy for your next winter adventure.

Designed to exfoliate, nourish and hydrate parched winter skin, our Pumpkin Cream Body Wrap begins with a gentle Cranberry Pomegranate Sugar Scrub exfoliation. A luscious layer of Pumpkin Cream Body Treatment is then applied, followed by a luxuriously hydrating Honeydew Body Lotion.

After a day on the slopes or the trails, melt away muscle aches and tension with a restorative Hot Stone Massage, available in 60 and 90-minute sessions. Then pamper yourself with this season's most indulgent treat, the Warm Mud Pack, available as an add-on to any massage for just \$20.

We know you want to get outside and enjoy that beautiful snow as much as possible. So go ahead, play all day. Then head indoors to the Waves of Superior Spa and thaw out in luxury and pure relaxation. ■



Sounds of the Season

In a winter wonderland like this, it's easy to spend an entire vacation outdoors. But one of the area's best-kept secrets is indoors – live music from local artists at Bluefin Grille!

Beginning on January 2, join us at the Bluefin Grille for live music by our talented local musicians. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8-10pm, you'll be treated to the soulful acoustic tunes of local singer-songwriters. On Sundays, unwind to the sounds of soothing classical music from 6-8pm.

And on New Year's Eve, be sure to join us for a fun and festive celebration from 9:30pm to 12:30am! Be sure to check www.bluefinbay.com for a continually updated schedule of artists. ■

A Holly, Jolly Bluefin

There's no place like home for the holidays – unless you're at the Bluefin Bay Family of Resorts. We're decking the halls this season with festive decorations, fun family events, live music and more sure to make your spirits bright.

Celebrate the holidays with our Christmas Extravaganza when the Tofte Room will be bustling with holiday crafts, cookie decorating, festive decorations, music and more.

On Christmas Day morning, we'll be handing out stockings filled with treats for all the good girls and boys at the front desk from 8am to 12pm. Later that day, the Bluefin Grille (closed Christmas Eve) will offer a traditional Christmas Day dinner special and live music by the fireplace from 8-10pm. Coho Café will be open on Christmas Eve (closed Christmas Day).

The holiday spirit continues later in the week with the introduction of Bluefin Grille's new winter menu, live music on December 29 from 8-10pm and a New Year's Eve bash with a live band on December 31 from 9:30pm-12:30am. ■



Celebrate Snow

With more than 120 inches of snow each year on average and more glittering, frosty beauty than you can shake a ski at, winters on the North Shore are really something pretty special. That's why Cook County is home to two of the best – and snowiest – celebrations of the winter season.

North Shore Holiday

Beginning November 21 and running through December 21, celebrate the holidays with family friendly activities and one-of-a-kind shopping during five themed weekends featuring live music, sleigh rides, skiing, art, holiday teas, handmade gifts and more.

For more details and a calendar of specific weekend events, visit www.visitcookcounty.com.

Winter Tracks

Join us Jan. 30-Feb. 8 for the 2015 Winter Tracks Festival, a 10-day celebration of the best snow and snow-bound fun in the state. The county-wide festival is bursting with activities for the whole family, including downhill skiing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, sleigh rides, dog sledding, snow sculptures, snowmobiling, ice fishing, ice skating, arts, crafts and "snow" much more!

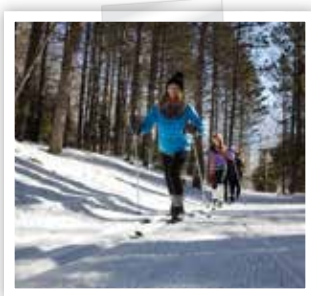
For more details and a full calendar of Winter Tracks events, visit Bluefin Bay's calendar of events at www.bluefinbay.com or www.visitcookcounty.com. ■





The Way We See It

The Bluefin Bay Family of Resorts and the surrounding area are bursting with winter adventure and breathtaking sights. Here are some favorite activities and times from those in the know – the Bluefin Bay team. For more details on these suggestions or additional activities, our knowledgeable Guest Services staff will be happy to help.



Favorite Cross-Country Ski Trail for Beginners: Onion River Road

Located near Oberg Mountain, this trail winds through a picturesque winter scene of evergreens and tranquil forest and offers the option to go out-and-back on the same beginner-friendly trail or, if you're feeling confident on your skinny skis, take on an intermediate section for the return trip.

Recommended by Scott Herly
Activities



Favorite Snowshoe: Caribou River

From December through March, much of Caribou River is frozen and covered in thick snow, making it an ideal natural trail for snowshoeing. Walking on the river itself provides a unique perspective of the river and especially the waterfall, which is usually frozen over with water running beneath the icy shell. Bonus: Signs of wildlife abound on this seldom-trod section.

Recommended by Jeremy Matthys
Marketing & Event Manager



Favorite Winter Spa Service: 60 Minute Hot Stone Massage

After being out in the snow and cold air, the warm, smooth stones and tension-relieving pressure are such a treat. Tensions melt away instantly!

Recommended by Nadya Maravigli
Food & Beverage Director

Great Waves, *Great People*

We're thrilled to provide our guests with warm and friendly hospitality, something we couldn't do without an exceptional staff. Here are some of the faces behind the great service at the Bluefin Bay Family of Resorts.

Michele Scudieri,

Guest Services Manager, joined Bluefin Bay Family of Resorts October 2014

Hometown:

Chicago (Bridgeport), Illinois

What brought you to the North Shore?

I have an extensive family history in International Falls, Virginia and other towns throughout MN. I also have a son in Duluth and a daughter in Silver Bay who just had a baby in August.



My favorite part about working at Bluefin Bay is...

I am very proud to be working for such a high quality resort that is so focused on delivering excellent accommodations and services.

My favorite thing to do when I'm not working is...

Photography & fishing. On my days off, if I am not with family, I am out exploring somewhere in the deep woods looking for that perfect fishing spot or photograph.

I want readers to know...

I have been in the Hospitality Industry for over 20 years and come from a background of Management in Hotels & Private Country Clubs.

Kevin Henda

Executive Chef, Bluefin Grille, joined Bluefin Bay Family of Resorts August 2014

Hometown:

Duluth, MN

What brought you to the North Shore?

I came up to the shore 17 years ago to live in Lofte and cook at Bluefin. I was young and wanted a new adventure and to learn how to cook. Years later I moved back to Duluth. It wasn't till last spring when I was the Guest Chef for Food and Wine Lover's Weekend that I toyed with the idea of coming back.



My favorite thing about working at Bluefin Bay is...

Working with so many different great people from so many walks of life. There is always something to learn here at Bluefin.

My favorite thing to do when I'm not working is...

Going out and exploring the trails and skiing.

I want readers to know...

That I have always loved this resort, it has been close to my heart and I will continue to work hard to make it close to your heart was well.



Give the gift of Bluefin Bay

This holiday give a gift that will keep on giving long after it is unwrapped — the gift of a lakeside vacation getaway to the Bluefin Bay Family of Resorts. Gift cards can be purchased in any dollar amount and used for lodging, restaurants, gift shops and the Waves of Superior Spa. Gift cards are mailed within a few days of placing your order and each card comes in special packaging with a place for a personal message — all making your job of giving even easier.

Call 1-800-BLUEFIN (258-3346) or 218-663-7296 locally to order your gift cards today.



Get to Know a North Shore Winter

How much do you know about winter on the North Shore? Test your cold-weather knowledge with this quiz about the cooler months in the Bluefin Bay neighborhood.

- 1. In 2014, Lake Superior froze over for the first time since what year?**

 - a. 2005
 - b. 1956
 - c. 1979
- 2. In a typical year, what percent of the Great Lakes are covered in ice?**

 - a. 30 to 40 percent
 - b. 50 to 60 percent
 - c. 70 to 80 percent
- 3. On average, how many inches of snow fall annually on the North Shore?**

 - a. 80 inches
 - b. 120 inches
 - c. 150 inches
- 4. What is the average high in January in Lutsen-Tofte?**

 - a. 2 degrees
 - b. 22 degrees
 - c. 42 degrees
- 5. Lutsen Mountains' The Plunge is Mid-America's steepest groomed run. How tall is it?**

 - a. 857 feet
 - b. 1,352 feet
 - c. 1,088 feet
- 6. Cook County is home to how many miles of snowmobile trails?**

 - a. 270 miles
 - b. 450 miles
 - c. 680 miles
- 7. Tofte's Sugarbush Trail System claims how many kilometers of groomed cross-country ski trails?**

 - a. 81 km
 - b. 24 km
 - c. 126 km

Answers: 1) c, 2) a, 3) b, 4) b, 5) c, 6) b, 7) a

OUR WAVES, OUR DAYS

Featuring happenings in and around Bluefin Bay and our North Shore neighborhood

Internet Service Upgrade

Get ready to stream. Our new and improved broadband service has arrived! Long awaited by guests and staff, our upgraded wifi access is better and faster than ever before. Now all of our guests at Bluefin Bay, Surfside and Temperance Landing can easily stream movies, access the Internet and connect frustration-free with the information they need while staying in the remote beauty of the North Shore.

Mobile Phone Coverage

We can hear you now! Thanks to a new Verizon cell tower that became operational in Summer 2014, guests now have improved mobile and data services throughout the North Shore area. With this recent coverage expansion by Verizon, we anticipate additional carriers will be added to the tower in the near future.

Welcome New Staff!

We're proud of our excellent staff and thrilled to bring our guests some of the best service in Minnesota. That's why we couldn't be happier to introduce two new staff members: Michele Scudieri and Kevin Ilenda. Michele joined us in October 2014 as our new Guest Services Manager, bringing with her nearly two decades of experience with high end Chicago hotels. In August 2014, we happily welcomed Chef Kevin Ilenda as Bluefin Grille's Executive Chef. Learn more about these two great folks in our Great Waves, Great People feature column. ■



Ruth and Tom King inspired our contest by sharing this photo (pre-Bluefin) celebrating their honeymoon in June of 1962 at Olson's Motel. They now return to Bluefin Bay every year to celebrate their anniversary.

Show Us Your Bluefin Bay

Share your favorite Bluefin photos & win

For three decades, Bluefin Bay has been the backdrop for thousands of incredible moments – marriages, baby moons, family reunions, girlfriend getaways, weekend retreats, even unforgettable sunsets and storms. Now as we turn 30, we'd love to see those moments and share the best with our guests!

You're invited to share your favorite memories of Bluefin Bay with photos taken throughout the past three decades – 1984 to the present. Winners will have their photos appear in the Summer 2015 Fishwrapper and in social media and one grand prize winner will take home a \$250 Bluefin Bay gift card.

To enter, just post your photos (maximum of 2 photos per person) on Twitter or Instagram using the hashtag #30YearsofBluefin and indicating when and where photo was taken in the description or tweet. Photos must be submitted by March 15, 2015. Good luck! ■

White Hot Winter Deals

North Shore Holiday Special

Valid Nov 30 – Dec 24, 2014

Kick off your holiday season at the Bluefin Bay Family of Resorts and enjoy 20% off two night stays during the North Shore Holiday celebration.

Extended Stay Package

Valid all year

With this progressive savings deal, stays of five nights receive 10% off, six nights receive 15% off and seven nights receive 20% off! Cannot be combined with other offers.

March Weekends at Midweek Rates

Valid March 12-31, 2015

Stay three nights over a March weekend and receive all nights at our lower midweek rates.

January 3 for 2 & February 4 for 3

January 3 for 2 is valid from Jan 1 - Feb 12. Feb 4 for 3 is valid Feb 13 - Feb 28th.

Stay three nights in January or four nights in February and get one of thosenights completely free!

Ski & Stay Packages

For those who love to ski and stay at the Bluefin Bay Family of Resorts, we offer packages combining discounted lodging and lift tickets to Lutsen Mountains ski resort. Visit bluefinbay.com and click on Ski & Stay Packages, or call and ask your reservationist for details.

800.BLUEFIN (258-3346)

Romance and Honeymoon Packages

Crashing waves, a moonlit lake, romantic suites: no wonder Bluefin Bay is consistently named Minnesota's "Most Romantic Resort." For the ultimate romantic winter getaway, we've created new Honeymoon and Romantic Retreat packages. Visit bluefinbay.com and click on Packages, or call and ask your reservationist for details.

Spa Packages

It doesn't get much better than combining a stay at the Bluefin Bay Family of Resorts with the relaxation of Waves of Superior Spa. Our Couples Spa package includes two or more nights in a Grand Superior Master Suite, a 60-minute side-by-side massage and endless winter romance. Visit bluefinbay.com and click on Packages, or call and ask your reservationist for details.

Internet Savings Deal

Book your stay at bluefinbay.com and receive discounted lodging rates on stays of two nights or longer. Good for online reservations only. Some date restrictions apply. Cannot be combined with other offers.



Connect with us for more on Bluefin Bay events and specials check us out on:

