

The Legacy of the Birkebeiner



Covered in snow, north Wisconsin heats up in February, thanks to “Birkie Fever.” On February 21, around 10,000 skiers from more than 25 countries will participate in the American

Birkebeiner, a cross-country skiing marathon. At 53 kilometers, Wisconsin’s “Birkie” is the largest cross-country skiing race in North America. Of the numerous cross-country ski marathons worldwide, the American Birkie is considered one of the toughest. With temperatures hovering around zero degrees Celsius and an undulating course of hills and valleys, it’s no wonder the race has been dubbed the “Greatest Show on Snow,” where world-class athletes are tested to the limits of their endurance.

The origins of the Birkebeiner races date back to the early 1200s, commemorating an event that inspires much pride among those with Norwegian ancestry. All Birkebeiner races recall a heroic moment in Norway’s history. Historian Sigvart Sorensen told of how, on January 1, 1204, King Haakon III of Norway died suddenly, possibly by poisoning. After the king’s death, a civil war erupted, pitting the wealthy Bagler faction against the Birkebeiners.

A year later, it was decided that the king’s hitherto-unknown heir, an 18-month-old prince, would have to flee. This could be done only with the help of long-distance skiers. Two skiers from the Birkebeiner faction, Torstein Skjevla and Skjervald Skrukka, struck out on a 60-mile journey in the midst of a storm over treacherous mountains to deliver the babe to his mother, Queen Inga, in Trondheim.

The prince, whom we now know as King Haakon IV, would eventually unite Norway, all thanks to two brave Birkebeiners.

February Birthdays

In astrology, those born February 1–18 are Aquarian Water Bearers. Aquarians have attractive personalities, vivid imaginations, strong intuition, and a thirst for knowledge. They also share a strong desire to help humanity and create unity. Those born between February 19–29 are Pisces. These Fish are spiritual types who feel comfortable in their introspective natures. As passionate, romantic, creative dreamers, they are charitable helpers who go with the flow.

Tommy Smothers (comedian) – Feb. 2, 1937
 Hank Aaron (ballplayer) – Feb. 5, 1934
 Lana Turner (actress) – Feb. 8, 1921
 Susan B. Anthony (activist) – Feb. 15, 1820
 Sidney Poitier (actor) – Feb. 20, 1927
 Steve Jobs (tech guru) – Feb. 24, 1955
 Jimmy Dorsey (band leader) – Feb. 29, 1904
 Dinah Shore (singer) – Feb. 29, 1916

The Long Sleep



Karolina Olsson of Sweden became known as the “Sleeping Beauty of Oknö” when, on February 22, 1876, at age 14, she fell into a deep sleep and did not awake for 32 years. How did she survive? Legend has it that family members diligently spoon-fed her sweetened milk each day. Over the years, they sometimes observed her sleepwalking or crawling. Her family and much of her small remote village believed the girl bewitched. When Olsson finally awoke, she looked in the mirror and burst into tears. She hardly recognized herself. And yet, she seemed to have aged only to her mid-20s, when she should have been 46. Doctors examined her to find no lasting physical or mental damage, only that her mind was still that of a 14-year-old. Olsson had amazingly, inexplicably “hibernated,” though today’s doctors suggest she might have been in a state of catatonia.

Beach Creek Post-Acute

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Celebrating February

Groundhog Day
 February 2nd

Valentine’s Day
 February 14th

**Chinese New Year
 (Year of the Horse)**
 February 17th

Facility Events

Morning Social: Groundhog Day
 February 2nd

Friday Jams & Donuts
 February 6th & 20th

Valentine’s Day Party!
 February 14th

President’s Day Fun
 February 16th

The Crafty Corner: Mardi Gras
 February 17th

Resident Council Meeting
 February 26th

Birthday Bash
 February 27th

Chasing Winter Glory

The 2026 Winter Olympics are headed to the stunning landscapes of northern Italy, bringing together athletes and fans for a celebration of winter sports, culture, and camaraderie. Set across Milan and Cortina d’Ampezzo, the Games promise a picturesque backdrop of snow-capped Dolomite peaks, charming Alpine villages, and historic cities bursting with Italian flair. Visitors can expect not only thrilling competitions but also the chance to savor local traditions—from hearty mountain cheeses and cured meats to rich pastries and steaming bowls of polenta. Northern Italy’s cuisine, hospitality, and vibrant markets offer a unique flavor to the global event, making the Olympics more than just an athletic spectacle.

At the heart of the Games are the timeless Olympic values: teamwork, perseverance, and friendly rivalry. Whether athletes are coordinating flawless relay passes on the ice, supporting teammates in grueling downhill runs, or striving to shave precious seconds off their times, the Olympics showcase how dedication and collaboration turn individual effort into shared achievement. Even the competition itself, while intense, is framed by respect and admiration, highlighting the joy of challenging oneself and connecting with others from around the world.

For winter sports enthusiasts, the 2026 Olympics also carry a strong sense of nostalgia. Fans will relive the thrill of skiing down glittering slopes, the elegance of figure skating routines, and the exhilaration of sledding through icy tracks. From alpine skiing and snowboarding to speed skating and bobsled, the Games celebrate the full spectrum of winter sports, each steeped in history and tradition.

The Milan-Cortina Olympics offer a rare combination: breathtaking scenery, rich cultural experiences, and the universal language of sport. As nations gather to compete, cheer, and share in this global festival, the event promises to leave lasting memories for athletes and spectators alike. Whether you’re drawn by the chance to witness record-breaking performances or simply to enjoy the snowy landscapes and Italian charm, the 2026 Winter Olympics are shaping up to be a spectacular, heartwarming celebration of skill, spirit, and wintertime joy.

