

DRAYTON VALLEY CROSS-COUNTRY SKI AREA

The Essentials

Name of Area	Pembina Nordic Trails, Drayton Valley
Location	150 km south west of Edmonton
Km trails	15 km
Km classic	15 km
Km skate	15 km
Trail Rating	Easy to intermediate
Signage	Very good - maps at all major trail junctions
Grooming	Very good to excellent. Usually done over weekends.
Facilities	Cozy ski chalet at with wood fire & outside washrooms
Trail Fees	None
Access Points	From ski chalet. If gate to access road locked can park on secondary road in two spots, where trails come next to road.
Other facts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trails managed by Pembina Nordic Club • Ski chalet open over weekends when trails are used by local skiers. When someone has lit the wood stove, it is a good spot to take a lunch break
Loppet	Eagle Point classic & freestyle over a weekend in mid January
Description of trails	<p>All trails are set with a classic track & a skating lane. They undulate through aspen & birch forest along the side of the N Saskatchewan River. To the west, there is an easy 4km trail called the Ridge Loop, which is ideal for beginners. Off this loop is a 1.5km advanced side loop that descends a steep windy hill. This trail can easily be bypassed & should be avoided by beginners or when icy.</p> <p>The trails to the north & east traverse more undulating terrain & are great for some intermediate classic or skate skiing. There is a perimeter trail with a series of shortcuts and side loops. There are a few steeper sections but the trails are wide enough for all but the very novice skier to negotiate.</p>
Trail map	Can print off web-site
Website	pembinanordic.org
Trail conditions & more information	Nthn Alberta ski area report linked to ENSC website. Also Pembina Nordic Facebook page
Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceed west from Edmonton on Hwy 16 for about 100km. • Turn south onto Hwy 22 near Enthwhistle • After about 50km turn left (east) onto Range Rd 494 just north of Drayton Valley, (at the south end of the DV golf course). • Continue east on RR 494 for 5km. Note after 3km it becomes a gravel road. • Turn right opposite the County gravel pit & drive into the chalet parking lot. • If you miss the 494 turn off & end up in DV, just turn around @ Boston Pizza, head north on 22, & you will find RR 494 about 1 mile north of BP's (it's the first right after BP's). • Travelling time is about 1hr 30m from centre of city. • Note: Those people living in the far south of Edmonton may prefer to get there by going south on Hwy 2 to Leduc then heading west to Drayton Valley & turn north onto Hwy 22 to reach RR 494.

Mike's Two Skis Worth

This is another one of those hidden gems of ski areas that I discovered quite a few years ago after seeing a notice in one of Edmonton's ski shops. The trails are rarely busy and looked after by a small but very friendly bunch of dedicated local skiers. Grooming is done regularly throughout the season as conditions dictate and usually they are well prepared for the weekends.

The ski chalet is much more hospitable than the bare bone shelters out at Blackfoot and with the woodstove going, it's a nice cozy spot to take a break.

If I want a nice easy warm up ski, I take the Ridge Loop on the west side of the chalet. I normally bypass the steep West Hill Loop if the conditions are slick or icy. The trail back above the river has some lovely views across the Pembina Valley. For a more energetic ski I go out on the Evergreen & North Loop trails, either direction is good. If you ski all the perimeter trails it is about 11km. For novice skiers there are also a couple of short easy loops close to the chalet.

Further along the same side of the Valley is a small downhill ski area and I understand that there are plans to link

- the areas up with a cross-country trail
- up with some ski trails nearer the town.

I have found it useful before going to check the Pembina Nordic website or Facebook page for an update on current conditions & grooming.

If you want to contribute to the trail grooming and upkeep consider like me joining the Pembina Nordic Ski Club. You can register on-line via Zone4 and if you are a member of an existing affiliated nordic ski club like Edmonton Nordic you get a discount on the membership rate. You also receive the code for the entry gate to the trail system so that you can drive right up to the chalet.