



A White Carpet Ride

Skis have been around for about 5,000 years. Hunters and trappers wore them during harsh winters, proven by pre-historic rock carvings rendered in Norway and 5,200-year-old skis discovered in Sweden. It wasn't long after the Wrights solved the mystery of powered flight in 1903 that pilots attached skis onto their planes for winter flying.

Today, several sizes and types of aviation skis, including board, wheel, and retractable, are available to cold-climate fliers. Preference generally is based on one's type of flying and aircraft, snow/ice conditions, and experience level. Most skis are made from wood, aluminum, or fiberglass. In some cases sheet metal or a thick piece of slick plastic is riveted to the bottom. Shock cords or coil springs with safety cables are used to keep them in place and provide necessary flexibility.

Resembling snowboards, this wide pair of wooden and sheet metal skis was used in the early 1930s on a three-place 1928 Curtiss Robin (reg. no. C-7507, construction no.18) by the aircraft's owner, Ray H. Olson. The aircraft no longer exists, but these solid skis could last for another 5,200 years preserved in EAA's Attic. —Kathleen L. Witman

PHOTO COMPOSITION BY JIM KOENICK