

Best Ski Locations- Park City, Utah

Written by Written by Hayley Mitchell

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For those who truly love to ski, there's a trio of requirements that are most important when choosing a downhill destination: convenience, variety and conditions. Park City, Utah, scores top grades on all three, and offers luxury accommodations to boot.



More often than not, the best ski locations are hard to get to. They require a long flight, and then usually a car rental and a two-hour drive to finally access the mountain. But not Park City. From Phoenix, a 120-minute direct flight will whisk you up to Salt Lake City and then convenient shuttles take you the remaining half-hour drive to Park City. Once in town, there is really no need for a vehicle because the city transit buses are skier-friendly and the hotels always have a shuttle to the lifts. Plus, taxis are cheap and plentiful in this ski town. Not having a car rid's you of having to find a spot in busy ski-resort parking lots, and also allows for a little more après-ski Champagne, if you get my drift.

With easy mountain access as one of Park City's selling points, the next thing (and probably the best thing going) is the ski town's variety of ski resorts, suitable for every level of skier. There are three full mountain parks within five miles (Park City Mountain Resort, Deer Valley Resort and The Canyons), offering visitors the chance to tackle a different mountain every day. For a serious snow bunny, being able to cover a large variety of terrain is the ultimate goal. But for beginners, the many choices of runs means that there is always a place to learn.



Park City Mountain Resort might be the best known of the three, due to the fact that it hosted the 2002 Winter Olympics. With 108 runs (both ski- and snowboard-friendly) across 3,300 acres, extreme powder hounds will love the four terrain parks and the nine snow bowls, while newbies can join a variety of classes, from private lessons to specialty programs. If you want to see the majority of the resort in just one day, guests can hire a private mountain guide who will head out with you and your family and show you the best spots to suit your needs.

Deer Valley Resort has a no-snowboard policy and exudes more of a classic vibe, making it the most traditional of the three resorts. It continues to be named No. 1 ski resort by SKI Magazine, and it's easy to see why. There are 100 runs and 11 high-speed chair lifts and some of the best ski-resort dining on earth. The Skier's Buffet at the Glitretind restaurant in the Stein Eriksen Lodge is one of the finest on-mountain meals a person can enjoy. No soggy ski chalet French fries—we're talking about prime rib, crab legs, Champagne and everything else of this caliber.



The Canyons is the largest ski resort in all of Utah, boasting 3,700 skiable acres, 17 lifts and 163 trails. It's also one of the five largest parks in the country, and because of this grandiose amount of space, skiers and snowboarders often feel that they have the place to themselves. Even at capacity, it's rare to find large lift lines or crowded runs. Besides the gorgeous views of Aspen treetops, The Canyons visitors get to downhill it through a stunning on-mountain neighborhood, The Colony, which features the biggest ski-in, ski-out home sites in North America.

Though all three aforementioned ski slopes are just five minutes from Park City proper, the 100-room, all suites, Hotel Park City is right in the heart of town. Enter the hotel's grand lobby and you are faced with wood beams, a stone fireplace and leather seating—it's what a quintessential ski lodge should look and feel like. Every room is equipped with a small kitchen (big enough to cook a hot pre-ski breakfast), a gas fireplace, an oversize tub, a supercomfy king bed and a pull-out sleeper, as well. Of course there are larger suites (like the 1,800-sq.-ft. penthouse) for bigger parties, but even the smallest suite can easily host a family of four. With a Ruth's Chris Steakhouse and a spa downstairs, Hotel Park City provides all the comforts and requirements for a great ski vacation. New this season, The Dakota Mountain Lodge and the St. Regis Deer Crest Resort are also luxury options.

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Lastly, snow lovers come to Park City to see its greatest asset: the Utah white gold (a.k.a. fresh powder). Averaging around 360 inches of snowfall each year on the Wasatch Mountains, the elevation makes Park City known for its dry, fluffy flakes. Combine that with Utah's usually clear skies and you have yourself the ideal day on the slopes.