

Adventure on the Downhill, Ski-Town U.S.A.

By Mira Temkin
Photos courtesy of ©Larry Pierce/Steamboat Ski Resort

Almost seven thousand feet up in the Northwest Colorado Rockies lies Steamboat Springs, a year-round, family-friendly destination that's destined to get your heart pumping as you slalom down the mountain or thrill-ride down on bikes. Once home to cattle ranchers and gold miners, Steamboat has been a popular ski destination since the early 1960's.

The area rose to greater prominence in 1970 when U.S. Olympic Skier Billy Kidd became the director of skiing for the Steamboat Ski and Resort Corporation. Today, Ski Town U.S.A. has produced more Winter Olympians than any other town in North America, which is why so many Olympic hopefuls come here to train on the Champagne Powder snow.

Throughout the year, Steamboat offers horseback riding, hiking, mountain biking, hot air ballooning, seven hot springs to relax in and a full summer of exciting rodeo events. Whenever you visit, you'll feel the "can do" spirit in the air in this welcoming community.

Where to hang your hat

Whether you're bringing family and friends, or going as a couple, there is a range of lodging options from hotel accommodations, condos, and townhouses to luxury homes. Many are close to Mount Werner, Steamboat's main ski venue. Moving Mountains offers luxury vacation home rentals with personal chef and private shuttle service such as One Steamboat Place, Slopeside at the Gondola.

The elegant Sheraton Steamboat lies at the base of the mountain with ski-in/ski-out access and offers suites and condo rentals. Guests can enjoy treatments at the Rocky Mountain Day Spa, right on the premises.

Steamboat Grand is the premier mountain hotel with condos, hotel rooms and 7th floor penthouse suites. Check out their ski packages that also include Ski Valet Service at base of the Gondola. For a more homelike stay, Mariposa Lodge is a comfortable B & B near downtown, with fresh, homemade breakfast each morning. →





Elevated Dining

Steamboat Springs offers many dining options that take advantage of their natural agricultural and ranching heritage. Laundry Kitchen & Cocktails is one of the top choices in downtown Steamboat, actually located in a former laundry. Today, diners enjoy small and large plates with an extensive cocktail collection. Tasty authentic Colorado Angus Beef rules the roost with locally-sourced sides like Brussel sprouts hash and fried green tomatoes that complement the meal. Leave room for the chocolate espresso pudding. Laundry is the brainchild of creative chef/entrepreneur Rex Brice who also owns several other fine eateries in the area.

Ore House at the Pine Grove combines the best of Steamboat cattle ranching history with Certified Angus Beef. We started out with their salad bar, big as the all outdoors, and their famous sweet cinnamon rolls. Our host recommended the prime rib, which was juicy and succulent. The Mountain Mud Pie was like an ice-cream slope that more than lived up to its name. For dining a la fresco, try the many restaurants that line the Yampa River for several blocks and more are being built.

Home, Sweet Home

There are ranches, and then there are ranches. Since 1986, The

Home Ranch in Clark has earned membership in the famed Relais & Chateaux small hotel association and is now considered one of the best dude ranches in the world. This all-inclusive, year round, authentic ranch experience includes chef-inspired, locally-sourced meals and all activities. Fishing, horseback riding, hay rides, campfires, cross country-skiing and sleigh rides will make your kids actually unplug from their iPods, and connect with family as well as new friends.

Historic Downtown Steamboat

Walk down the streets of Steamboat and you may wonder why they're so wide. It's because they used to drive cattle down the street. Today, you'll find restaurants, cafes, shops, art galleries and spas. For the history of the town, check out The Treads of Pioneers Museum which offers walking tours and newly expanded exhibits.

For over 100 years, F.M. Light & Sons, has been selling authentic Western-wear: Stetson hats, boots, jackets and accessories. You may see their famous yellow billboards along the roads. One sign advertises a cowboy hat for \$4.99. They must keep the advertised hat in stock, although the current price is \$6.99... still a great deal for a good-looking cowboy hat! The store is now under management by the fifth generation, Lindsay Dillenbeck and her husband Chris.

"Boots continue to be our biggest seller because we provide the best customer service to ensure a perfect fit," said Lindsay.

Celebrate the Winter Chill

Think skiers in cowboy hats because it really does happen at the 42nd Annual Bud Light Cowboy Downhill on January 18, 2016. Watch as more than 100 professional rodeo cowboys compete in the most unique ski rodeo in the country.

The annual 2016 Winter Carnival runs Wed. Feb. 3 - Sun. Feb. 7 when the entire town is taken over by racing, ski jumping and a parade featuring Steamboat's skiing high school band (the only one in the United States). Other favorite events are kids on skies being pulled by horses. Oh yes, and the Kids Donkey Jumping Competition is great fun. At night, Steamboat lights up the sky with a spectacular night show featuring the legendary Lighted Man & fireworks display.

steamboatwintercarnival.com

The Best Value – Buy Your Ski Vacation Package Here

Go to www.steamboat.com, or call Steamboat Central Reservations at 800-922-2722 to buy your air, hotel accommodations and lift tickets at the lowest rates. Purchase single or multi-day lift tickets

at least seven days in advance and save up to 15% on the window rate. Kids ski free with each 5-day adult ticket purchased. During ski season, skiers and snowboarders can join Kidd for a daily free, on-mountain clinic and learn about what it's like to ski in the Olympics.

Don't miss the BOAT this season. Make your plans to ski Steamboat and take in the fresh, mountain air that surrounds this lovely Colorado town - that's good for everyone!

IF YOU GO

During ski season, there are direct flights from Newark to the Steamboat/Hayden airport. Other cities also offer direct flights. Many of the resorts offer complimentary shuttle service.

Editors Note:

Mira Temkin has a passion for writing and sharing her adventures across the globe. She covers everything from destinations to tours to cruises in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Central America, Caribbean and Europe. Her work has appeared in *The Chicago Tribune*, *USA Today*, *Lakeland Boating*, *thevacationgals.com*, *businesstraveldestinations.com* and *Connect magazine*. She can be reached at miratemkin@gmail.com.