



Beaver Creek, Colo. »

- + They'll do everything but ski for you.
- Pricey. Not for late-night party-seekers.

IS BEAVER CREEK FOR REAL? FREE PARKING, quaint Bavarian village, escalators that make the typically chaotic, booted schlep to the chairlifts nearly effortless. A ski valet at your hotel who, after helping you into your heated boots, carries your skis to the chair. Swift, well-placed lifts that, in a brisk 15 minutes, deposit your mixed-ability brood at the summit, where you're comfortable sending the kids off to explore Powell, Mystic Maze and Jack Rabbit Alley while you fry your quads on Golden Eagle, the country's only FIS downhill course. Or the single lift ride required to rendezvous for lunch, followed by an afternoon lapping the all-levels-friendly Strawberry Park and Upper Beaver Creek lifts. It's real. All of it. Right down to the warm chocolate-chip cookies at day's end. The price tag? Unfortunately, that's real as well. —*D.W.*

What's New » The Rose Bowl triple was replaced with a high-speed quad that cuts the 10-minute ride in half, spelling quicker access to Stone Creek Chutes.

On-Hill Lunch » Settle into an outdoor table at Red Tail Camp for barbecue and live music during Deck Days, every Sunday from late February to early April.

Don't Miss » Create your own clinic. New this season, ski school will offer custom coaching to groups of four, max. Your wish (bumps, steeps, trees) is your instructor's command.

Steamboat, Colo. »

- + One of ski country's best towns. Trees!
- Slow-moving construction at the base.

LAID-BACK. GENUINE. FUN. THERE'S ARGUABLY no other resort that surpasses Steamboat's down-to-earth vibe, from Lincoln Avenue's cowboy cafés to the easy-smiling barista at Gondola Joe's. But don't mistake a mellow rep for a lack of ambition. Steamboat Unbridled, a \$20 million plan to revitalize the village with a pedestrian plaza, lodging and dining, is gaining traction. One Steamboat Place, a new slopeside property, and The Truffle Pig, its farm-to-table restaurant, elevate the resort and embody the direction it's heading. Until then, the "genuine Rocky Mountain town" of Steamboat will fill in the gaps, with Bistro C.V.'s Colorado seasonal fare and Winona's plate-size cinnamon rolls. On-slope, readers rave about "powder and trees. What more do you need?" Two Steamboat trademarks that never change. —*Samantha Berman*

On-Hill Lunch » At Ragnar's, midmountain, the Reuben, topped with house-made Austrian blaukraut and melted Jarlsberg, is divine.

Family Activity » The Western BBQ, weekend nights at the top of the gondola, boasts a live band, dancing and games. (Hokey-pokey, anyone?)

Off-the-Map Trail » Hit the Johnny Chutes, in Christmas Tree Bowl. Steep. Beautifully glazed. Lots of fresh because it's hard to find. Ask a patroller.