**Kicking Horse**

**Categories**

**Good For**

Intermediates

Experts

Snowboarders

Snow reliability

**Data**

**Beginner Runs**

17

**Intermediate Runs**

17

**Advanced Runs**

95

**Total Runs**

129

**Lifts**

4

**Chairs**

3

**Drags**

0

**Gondola Cable Cars**

1

**Parks**

1

**Pipes**

0

**Weather**

**Annual Snowfall**

7m (23ft).

**Overview**

Kicking Horse Mountain Resort, to give its full name, is one of the world’s youngest ski resorts, having been established for the 2000/1 season. This Canadian ski resort, which is one of the six largest in North America, quickly built a reputation for its big vertical drops and abundant steep terrain that can be accessed from the resort’s impressive Golden Eagle gondola.

In fact, Kicking Horse isn’t an entirely new ski area, as the small domain of Whitetooth was here before it providing slopes for the mining town of Golden below, which continues to provide a range of services. However, the resort base has gradually expanded over the past decade to offer lodging, restaurants, shopping and activities that are adequate for most guests during a week’s stay.

In 2011, Kicking Horse ski resort was acquired by the Resorts of the Canadian Rockies group, which also operates neighbouring resorts Kimberley and Fernie.

**Location**

Kicking Horse ski resort is located above the town of Golden, two and a half hours west of Calgary. It is nestled between the Purcell and Rocky Mountains in the heart of Western Canada’s British Columbia province.

**Website**

http://www.kickinghorseresort.com

**Piste Map**

http://kickinghorseresort.com/information/information/trail-maps/trail-maps-static/

**Hit The Slopes**

Kicking Horse ski resort benefits from the abundance of natural snowfall that amounts to an average of 7m (23ft) of light, fluffy snow each season. The ski resort normally opens in early December and closes four months later, in early April.

Although there’s terrain for all ability levels, it’s undoubtedly the case that Kicking Horse’s top attraction is for advanced to expert skiers, to whom 60% of terrain is dedicated.

The resort likes to boast that it has more patrolled steep off-piste skiing than any other North American resort and, for its tenth anniversary season in 2010/11, it added a further 15 or so ‘chutes’ and its fourth bowl to its huge quota of ‘steep and deep’ terrain – bringing its tally to a record 85 chutes. Heli-skiing is also available for advanced skiers.

Beginners might feel daunted by all this steep stuff, but in reality much of the challenging terrain is well away from the main pistes. Two of the chairlifts serve the easy runs at the bottom of the mountain, so are of limited interest to experienced skiers. There’s also a wonderful, long gentle trail winding down the mountain from the top of the gondola, affording spectacular views at every turn, which most beginners will easily be able to try after a few days of learning.

With predominantly steep or gentle terrain, intermediate cruisers are more of a rarity here than at most internationally significant resorts; but nonetheless most regular recreational skiers will find enough to entertain them by tackling some of the steeper blues and gentler black diamond runs. Some of the bowl skiing and even the less intimidating of the chutes can be enjoyed by confident intermediates too – ideally with the guidance of the ski school.

In addition to the variety of runs, there’s a terrain park for freestylers and a number of cross-country trails in the area.

**Kicking Horse**

**Resort**

1190

**Base**

1190

**Top**

2450

**General**

**Beyond The Slopes**

There’s a small ice rink and a full-scale snow tubing operation at each end of the resort’s base. Snowshoeing equipment can be rented on-site and there are also snowmobiling tours operating from the base area.

For the more adventurous, climbing is popular in the wider region and there’s an excellent indoor climbing centre, The Dogtooth Climbing Gym (9th Street North; tel: (250) 344 6444; [www.dogtoothgym.com](http://www.dogtoothgym.com/)) in Golden. Ice climbing is offered at a major centre at nearby Raven’s Call to the east of the resort.

**Family Fun**

Kicking Horse has increased its efforts in attracting families in recent years, by adding a number of activities such as tubing and ice skating.

There’s a non-ski day care centre for youngsters aged from 18 months to five years old, and a ski school is available from age three in specially tailored classes. For the youngest children, semi-private classes (with a maximum of three children per instructor) are offered. There’s also a valet service from the main resort accommodations that collects children in the morning and returns them at the end of the ski day. ‘Kids Night Out’ (tel: 1 866 754 5425) provides evening childcare and activities to enable parents to have a little breather.

On the slopes, despite its fearsome reputation for tricky terrain, there are wonderful long top-to-bottom runs with lovely, gentle and gladed runs to enjoy as a family.

**Retail Therapy**

There are limited shops in Kicking Horse ski resort, but the resort’s general store is an excellent emporium that manages to stock gourmet items, British favourites and souvenirs in addition to grocery essentials and other goodies. There’s also a good ski shop and several souvenir outlets selling Kicking Horse signature items. For a wider selection of several dozen shops, head down to Golden.

**Splashing Out**

Heli-skiing is an option in Kicking Horse with Purcell Helicopter Skiing (tel: 1 877 435 4754; [www.purcellhelicopterskiing.com](http://www.purcellhelicopterskiing.com/)). A variety of choices are available, including full holidays with ski-in/ski-out accommodation, lift tickets and daily heli-ski trips from the nearby Purcell Helipad in Golden.

**Apres Ski**

The après-ski scene in Kicking Horse is generally quiet, but there are a few establishments for some evening relaxation.

The rustic Local Hero pub in Winston Lodge (tel: (250) 344 7272; [winstonlodge.com](http://winstonlodge.com/)) is the main spot for après-ski in Kicking Horse later in the evening. A short walk from the base of the slopes, it offers draught Canadian beers, an excellent selection of Scottish malt whiskies and regional wines. Back at the base of the slopes, Corks bar (tel: (250) 344 6201; [copperhorselodge.com](http://copperhorselodge.com/)) has a reputation for great cocktails.

**Eating Out**

There are half a dozen places to eat around Kicking Horse’s base and slopes, and these manage a surprisingly good choice of dishes. Further options can be found in Golden.

Among the local options is Eagle's Eye, (tel: 250) 439 5413), Canada's highest restaurant, located at the gondola's top station. This eatery offers high-quality food made primarily from local ingredients, including salmon, buffalo and caribou.

Down at the base, Corks in the Copper Horse Lodge is great for a filling pasta dish, while Winston Lodge is a good option for Scottish-Canadian fusion cuisine.

**Transport**

**Getting There**

Nearest airport: Calgary International Airport (YYC).

Distance to resort: 166km (104 miles).

Driving time: 2 hours 30 minutes.

**Getting Around**

Kicking Horse has a relatively compact base that stretches no more than a few hundred metres from end to end, so there’s no need for a shuttle bus service. However, one does operate down to the nearby town of Golden (20 minutes away) for guests staying in the town.

**Hotels**

Kicking Horse offers a selection of largely high-quality lodging, most of it slopeside at the base of the resort. There are more options in the wider area surrounding the Golden Valley.

**Ponderosa Motor Inn**

A large and comfortable motel on the Trans-Canada Highway, 20 minutes from the slopes.

**Category**

Cheap

**Thoroughfare**

1206 Trans-Canada Highway

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Golden

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Canada

**Telephone**

(250) 344 2205.

**Website**

http://www.ponderosamotorinn.bc.ca

**Copper Horse Lodge**

This boutique 10-room lodge is located a mere 100 paces from the gondola base, and houses the popular Corks restaurant and bar.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

2 Cache Close

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Golden

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Canada

**Telephone**

(250) 344 7644.

**Website**

http://www.copperhorselodge.com

**Eagle's Eye Suites**

Accessed by the gondola and perched high on a rugged summit overlooking the Rocky, Purcell and Selkirk Mountains, these two luxury suites have 24-hour butler service.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

1500 Kicking Horse Trail

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Golden

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Canada

**Telephone**

(250) 439 5425.

**Website**

http://www.kickinghorseresort.com