**Aspen**

**Categories**

**Good For**

Intermediates

Experts

Snowboarders

Non-skiers

Après ski

Snow reliability

**Data**

**Beginner Runs**

40

**Intermediate Runs**

129

**Advanced Runs**

160

**Total Runs**

329

**Lifts**

45

**Chairs**

31

**Drags**

11

**Gondola Cable Cars**

3

**Parks**

10

**Pipes**

6

**Weather**

**Annual Snowfall**

7.6m (10ft).

**Overview**

Aspen is one of the world's best known ski resorts, boasting four ski areas, three separate resort developments and a glitzy reputation.

The famous ski town was once a busy 19th-century silver mining district and today visitors can stay in the original town of Aspen; at the ever-expanding Snowmass resort 20km (12 miles) away; or at the third and smallest resort, Aspen Highlands. Aspen’s fourth ski area, Buttermilk, currently has no accommodation. Officially, the overall resort is currently known by the name Aspen/Snowmass.

The main town of Aspen has several faces. In one, it has become synonymous with excess, being home to some of the world's most opulent and expensive properties, as well as a local airport full of private jets. In another, it has a reputation for liberal policies – the resort famously banned fur coats at one time, and currently the Aspen Skiing Company is a leading campaigner against climate change.

Snowmass, on the other hand, is very much like a ‘normal’ ski resort, and a very good one following the huge investment in improvements in recent years. It has by far the largest of Aspen’s four ski areas on its doorstep.

Most visitors have little interest in these issues however, and just enjoy the superb skiing and ski town culture that includes abundant cultural activities and an exciting après-ski scene.

**Location**

Aspen ski resort is located in Colorado's Rocky Mountains, in western USA.

**Website**

http://www.aspensnowmass.com

**Piste Map**

http://www.aspensnowmass.com/images/dyn/trailmaps/ajax.html

**Hit The Slopes**

Aspen's four ski areas have distinct characteristics. Aspen Mountain looks stunning as it rises above the resort town of Aspen in a style that’s familiar to the Alps, but unusual for the USA. Looks here don't deceive as the Silver Queen gondola accesses some of the most exciting terrain skiers will find anywhere, best suited to intermediate and advanced-level skiers and boarders.

Aspen-based beginners are encouraged towards the smallest of the four areas, Buttermilk; a five-minute (5km/3-mile) shuttle bus ride away. Long-time host of the Winter X Games, it's both a giant terrain park and a secluded beginners area.

Snowmass has the lion's share of the resort’s skiing and also boasts the Poma Cirque lift. This lift serves the Cirque powder bowl (one of several the resort offers), along with more than 90 runs for all ability levels covering nearly 240km (150 miles) of pistes.

The fourth ski area, Aspen Highlands, is another short shuttle ride from either Aspen or Snowmass, but it now also has a small base village of its own. Although some more mainstream ski slopes have been added in recent years, it has a reputation as the resort's wild child, with some of the most exciting on- and off-piste terrain, including in-bounds, off-piste hiking and amazing terrain on Highland Bowl.

The ski season in Aspen runs from late November until mid-April. Aspen Mountain (also nicknamed Ajax) and Snowmass have the longest seasons, while Buttermilk and Aspen Highlands open in early December and remain so until the start of April.

**Aspen Highlands**

**Resort**

2451

**Base**

2451

**Top**

3519

**Snowmass**

**Resort**

2473

**Base**

2473

**Top**

3813

**Buttermilk**

**Resort**

2399

**Base**

2399

**Top**

3018

**Aspen**

**Resort**

2422

**Base**

2422

**Top**

3417

**General**

**Beyond The Slopes**

There's arguably more to do at Aspen off the snow than in any other resort in North America, ranging from high-energy outdoor pursuits to more sedate cultural offerings.

The arts feature very highly with about 40 art galleries and museums, including the popular Aspen Art Museum (590 North Mill Street; tel: (970) 925 8050; [www.aspenartmuseum.org](http://www.aspenartmuseum.org)). The resort also has music and dance schools, several theatres, regular film festivals and even its own ballet company. Live music of all kinds is performed at numerous venues around the resort.

Various adventure sports are equally prominent; the list includes paragliding, ballooning, curling, ice skating, snowshoeing, dog sledding, rock and ice climbing and the more sedate fly fishing.

Being pampered is a must after a few days on the slopes, and there is a wide choice of spas and beauty parlours to enjoy. Among these is the lavish health centre in The Little Nell (tel: (970) 920 4600; [www.thelittlenell.com](http://www.thelittlenell.com)), which offers a range of treatments.

**Family Fun**

Aspen and Snowmass are both well-equipped to cater for families, although the latter has an advantage for younger families with its easier terrain right next to the village.

The Treehouse ski school (tel: (970) 923 1227) at Snowmass accepts children from eight weeks and offers specially tailored classes to suit the child’s age and ability. The Family Zone on Snowmass Mountain is home to adventurous and interactive kids' trails, children's race arena, picnic area, terrain park and a halfpipe. There's even a special kids' trail map with all the important details.

The recently opened central childcare centre is a world-class and state-of-the-art facility for young children, and there are also a large number of babysitting services for toddlers and young ones.

**Retail Therapy**

There are about 300 shops in Aspen, making it a veritable retail paradise unmatched by almost any other ski resort. Most of the world's best-known designer brands are here, including Christian Dior, Prada and Gucci along South Galena Street, but there are also plenty of regular shops and local retailers from grocery shops to pharmacies.

**Splashing Out**

Skiers who love powder should take a Powder Tour (tel: (970) 920 0720), which involves riding up in a luxury snowcat to prime untracked stashes on the backside of Aspen Mountain. After all that hard work, sit down to a gourmet lunch, which is included as part of the tour.

**Apres Ski**

The USA's number one ski party town has a huge choice of après-ski venues and, unlike most other ski resorts in the country, the majority are within walking distance of one another.

Recently expanded Eric's (315 East Hyman Avenue; tel: (970) 920 1488; [www.sucasaaspen.com](http://www.sucasaaspen.com)) is a very busy non-smoking bar with 14 beers on tap and more than 50 malt whiskies to try until 0200. Those who prefer tequila should opt for Jimmy's (205 South Mill Street; tel: (970) 925 6020; [www.jimmysaspen.com](http://www.jimmysaspen.com)), which stocks 80 varieties that can be sipped between bouts of salsa dancing on Saturday nights, starting at 2300.

**Eating Out**

There are about 100 places to eat in Aspen with cuisine served from the four corners of the earth: Chinese, French, Italian, Japanese, Middle Eastern, Savoyard and Thai styles are all represented, to name but a few.

As well as being a great après ski spot, Jimmy’s is also good for dining as one of several informal, atmospheric, moderately priced restaurants that are frequented by Aspen locals. Boogie's Diner (534 East Cooper Avenue; tel: (970) 925 6610) in Aspen village, which is inspired by the 1982 film *Diner*, is a good choice for traditional 1950s- and ‘60s-style American food at affordable prices, and is pure fun.

High quality establishments are to be found around every corner. Kenichi (533 E. Hopkins Ave; tel: (970) 920 2212; [www.kenichiaspen.com](http://www.kenichiaspen.com)) is a good choice for gourmet sushi, or try Piñons (105 S. Mill St; tel: (970) 920 2021) for contemporary Colorado cuisine.

**Transport**

**Getting There**

Nearest airports: Aspen-Pitkin County Airport (ASE); Denver International Airport (DEN).

Distances to resort: 6km (4 miles); 354 km (221 miles).

Driving times: 10 minutes; 4 hours.

**Getting Around**

Free shuttle buses operate from 0800 to 1630 between the four ski areas. There is also a free transportation service to virtually all condominium complexes and many outlying residential areas within Aspen and Snowmass Village.

**Hotels**

The characterful, attractive old mining town boasts a plethora of top-notch accommodation, including luxury hotels and extravagant chalets to suit its well-heeled clientele. There is also a wide choice of moderate hotels in Aspen, as well as inns, bed and breakfasts, lodges and apartments - with something to suit all budgets.

**Mountain Chalet**

An old time lodge that has been family-run for more than 40 years, Mountain Chalet is in a good location, just 220m (700ft) from the Silver Queen gondola. The cosy hotel serves a complimentary full breakfast and houses a year-round heated outdoor pool.

**Category**

Cheap

**Thoroughfare**

333 East Durant Avenue

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Colorado 81611

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

United States of America

**Telephone**

(970) 925 7797.

**Website**

http://www.mountainchaletaspen.com

**Limelight Hotel**

A central, affordable property with a generous buffer breakfast included in the rate, Limelight Hotel provides free transfers from the airport, a ski valet service and two days of guided skiing per week. Rooms here come complete with a kitchenette, enabling self-catering

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

355 South Monarch Street

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Colorado 81611

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

United States of America

**Telephone**

(970) 925 3025.

**Website**

http://www.limelighthotel.com

**The Little Nell**

One of the most prestigious addresses in world skiing, the best suites in this 5-star hotel are highly sought-after, particularly in the peak periods around Christmas and New Year. The hotel features a wellness area and a choice of chic places to eat and drink after a day on the slopes.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

675 E Durant Avenue

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Colorado 81611

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

United States of America

**Telephone**

(970) 920 4600.

**Website**

http://www.thelittlenell.com