**Winter Park**

**Categories**

**Good For**

Beginners

Intermediates

Experts

Snowboarders

Families

Non-skiers

Après ski

Snow reliability

**Data**

**Beginner Runs**

35

**Intermediate Runs**

47

**Advanced Runs**

61

**Total Runs**

143

**Lifts**

25

**Chairs**

19

**Drags**

5

**Gondola Cable Cars**

1

**Parks**

6

**Pipes**

1

**Weather**

**Annual Snowfall**

9m (30ft).

**Overview**

Winter Park ski resort has something for everyone, with great skiing, shopping, dining and a laid-back atmosphere. This has contributed to its long-standing reputation as the resort of choice for Colorado residents.

Winter Park has always been laid-back and friendly but, in common with many other ski areas in North America, it has had an expensive makeover with new lifts on the mountain and a new resort village at the base. The redesign has been masterminded by Intrawest, the company originally behind Whistler Blackcomb and half a dozen other ventures.

Along with this new base area, named The Village, Winter Park ski resort as a whole has a real ‘ski town’ feel. It doesn't play on the region's cowboy heritage; instead visitors will feel as sense of gradual evolution rather than a forced recreation of a bygone era for the tourist trade.

The nearby towns of Winter Park and Fraser – both accessible via a free shuttle – were once home to the majority of lodging, shopping and nightlife. The new slopeside base at Winter Park, however, has changed this; particular when it comes to après-ski.

The skiable area from Winter Park is vast and is one of only a handful of the 500 or so ski resorts in the USA to operate 25 or more lifts.

**Location**

Winter Park Resort is the closest major ski resort to Denver, which is a 90-minute drive away to the southeast, in Colorado. The resort is nestled within the Vasquez Mountains, which form part of the Arapaho National Forest.

**Website**

http://www.winterparkresort.com

**Piste Map**

http://www.winterparkresort.com/media/trail-map.aspx

**Hit The Slopes**

Winter Park has plenty of terrain for all levels of skier, with its 1,248 hectares (3,060 acres) of terrain split between different areas. There are four main ski areas: Winter Park, Mary Jane, Vasquez Ridge and Parsenn Bowl. There is also a fifth, smaller area, Vasquez Cirque, which is suited to advanced skiers.

There is an unusually high percentage of runs rated ‘most difficult' for advanced skiers in Winter Park. In fact, there are a staggering 61 black trails; many of which are found on Mary Jane Mountain and the recently added Vasquez Cirque off-piste zone, home to the long moguled run, Outhouse.

Groswold's Discovery Park is a huge area (especially for first-timers) at the base of Winter Park’s slopes. Beginners can learn here without having the distraction and danger of more experienced skiers slaloming past. The Mary Jane area, in particular, is a haven for beginners looking to put their newly-found knowledge into practice on a number of green runs.

Intermediates have most of the area to enjoy, including the popular Parsenn Bowl and fast, long runs such as Mary Jane Trail. Many blues also lead from the Mary Jane and Winter Park ski area down to the base villages.

There are six terrain parks plus a superpipe for freestylers and snowboarders of all ability levels. Among these is Rail Park, which is home to the superpipe and a range of other features such as rails, jibs and boxes.

Snow reliability is good in Winter Park and there is snowmaking on a large percentage of the runs. As a consequence, the ski season is relatively long, running from late November to mid-April.

**Winter Park**

**Resort**

2743

**Base**

2743

**Top**

3676

**General**

**Beyond The Slopes**

Most non-ski attractions are located in the nearby towns rather than the slopeside resort. Besides swimming pools and hot tubs in the resort’s recreation centre, most activities are outdoors.

On-snow alternatives to downhill sliding include snowshoe tours, snowcat tours, tubing, ice skating (two rinks), sleigh rides and dog sledding.

Worthwhile trips away from the ski area include Denver (about two hours away), which boasts a zoo, cinemas, ice hockey matches, museums, galleries and shopping. There’s also the Hot Sulphur Springs Resort (40 minutes away), where natural hot-springs fill several pools with water ranging from pleasantly warm to uncomfortably hot.

**Family Fun**

The Kids' Ski and Ride School (tel: 1 800 420 8093) at the base of Winter Park provides nursery services for babies from two months old and ski school from age three. On the slopes, the Rendezvous Flats section of the Groswold's Discovery Park has fun, family-friendly features and easy terrain.

Off the slopes, the resort's friendly, relaxed atmosphere and affordable dining and accommodation is perfect for families. Daily free activities in The Village at Winter Park include mini rail jams, ‘Kids’ Night Out’ evening events and free ice skating lessons.

**Retail Therapy**

There is a good range of shops in Winter Park and its base areas, and a greater choice in the town of Fraser.

Among the shops in The Village is Shirt Off My Back (125 Parry Peak Way; tel: (970) 726 5581), which sells resort-branded clothes and ski gear. Other gifts and souvenirs can be purchased from Trail’s End Mercantile in the Zephyr Mountain Lodge.

Fraser is home to the Fraser Valley Center, which is a good place to hunt down gifts and souvenirs. As well as skiwear and souvenir shops in the town, there are half a dozen art retailers.

**Splashing Out**

Purchase a personalised trail map, which shows the particular routes skied during the day, how many miles, how much vertical and even how many calories have been burned. Just pick up a small GPS tracking unit from Guest Services in the Balcony House at the start of the day.

**Apres Ski**

As the ski day ends, listen out for the steam train whistle that announces Derailer Bar at Winter Park mountain base is ready to serve up après-ski beer and drink specials.

Five Mountain Tavern in the Vintage Hotel (100 Winter Park Drive; tel: 1 800 472 7017; [www.vintagehotel.com](http://www.vintagehotel.com)) at Winter Park mountain base features the Churchill Bar. Here, customers can even see where Winston Churchill burned the bar with his cigar. It serves cold beer, cocktails and hot toddies by the stone firepit on the patio and there's often live music.

**Eating Out**

There are more than 40 restaurants in Winter Park and the nearby town of Fraser, with eight choices on the mountain or at the base of the slopes alone.

The Club Car restaurant at Mary Jane's base is a local favourite. It serves the signature Mount Mary Jane sandwich, seafood chowder and other hearty lunchtime staples.

Further out, there are steakhouses, sushi, tapas, delis, Mexican and pizza options. But, for a taste of the Old West, go to Smokin' Moe's Ribhouse and Saloon (Cooper Creek Square; tel: (970) 726 4600; [smokinmoes.com](http://smokinmoes.com)). This eatery offers an Oklahoma-style barbecue and other traditional regional favourites.

**Transport**

**Getting There**

Nearest airport: Denver International Airport (DEN).

Distance to resort: 108km (68 miles).

Driving time: 2 hours.

**Getting Around**

Winter Park has a free shuttle service and a pedestrian walkway network, including a pedestrian bridge over the Fraser River between the car park and slopes.

**Hotels**

Most accommodation in Winter Park is in spacious apartments along the road that cuts through Winter Park; while more stylish lodgings sit at the foot of the slopes in a mini-resort known as The Village. There are very few chalets and hotels in Winter Park itself, but there is a larger choice is Fraser.

**Snow Mountain Ranch**

This YMCA of the Rockies complex has a lodge and cabins close to Winter Park and provides affordable accommodation with a friendly atmosphere.

**Category**

Cheap

**Thoroughfare**

1101 Country Road 53

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Granby

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

United States of America

**Telephone**

(970) 887 2152 or 1 800 777 9622.

**Website**

http://www.ymcarockies.org

**Zephyr Mountain Lodge**

Marketed as ‘the closest you can sleep to the ski lifts without sleeping outside', Zephyr Mountain Lodge offers luxury accommodation just 35m (110ft) from the base of the Zephyr Express chairlift.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

201 Zephyr Way

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Winter Park

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

United States of America

**Telephone**

(970) 726 8400.

**Website**

http://www.zephyrmountainlodge.com

**Wild Horse Inn**

This hand-hewn log lodge on the outskirts of Fraser has spectacular views, feather beds and hot tubs.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

1536 Country Road

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Fraser

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

United States of America

**Telephone**

(970) 726 0456.

**Website**

http://www.wildhorseinncolorado.com