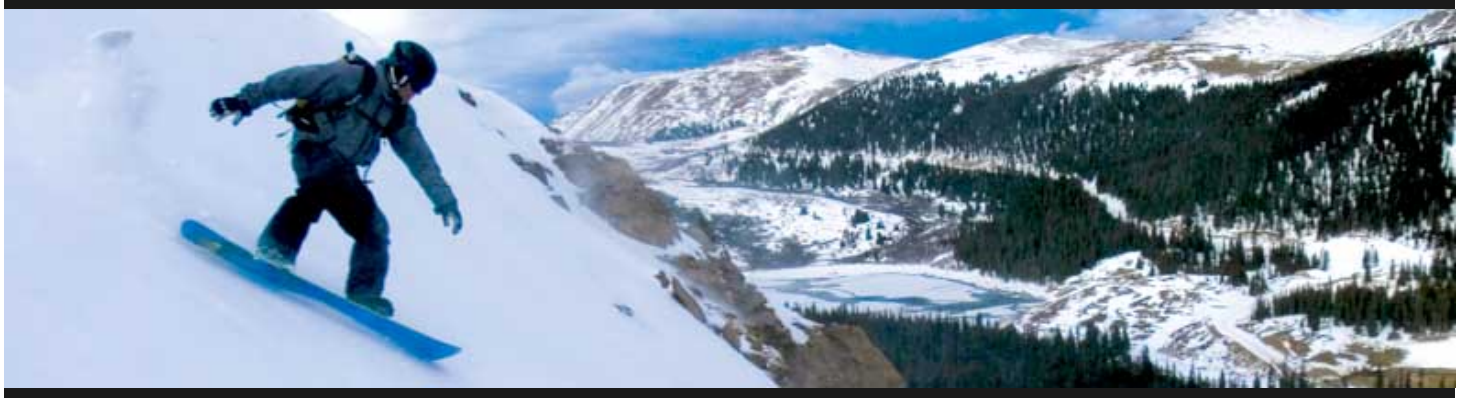
nileGUIDE
ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



Bike Day in Vail

Vail, 1 Day

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Guide Description

AUTHOR NOTE: Vail Pass offers a variety of options for bikers who want an intimate look at the beautiful Gore Range mountains that surround Vail. If you're looking for a casual day, local bike shops offer shuttles that make your trip all downhill. If you want a longer, tougher day go for the 32 mile ride over the pass to the nearby town of Frisco--return back to Vail for a 64 mile biking adventure!

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Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - Vail

DAY NOTE: The paved bike path that climbs up Vail Pass and into the town of Frisco from Vail offers countless postcard views of Colorado's amazing mountain scenery. Riders of all abilities can enjoy the day at their own pace thanks to several shuttle services that guarantee an all downhill ride into town. Those looking for a longer day can ride 14 miles to the summit of Vail Pass then drop down into the town of Frisco for a 32 mile one-way adventure. After a lunch break in town, ambitious cyclists can complete the full "Tour de Vail Pass" by reversing their trip for a 64 mile adventure. No matter what your agenda, an early start is important; Colorado's high country is notorious for thunderstorms that roll in after noon on most summer days. Vail has a few great places for an early morning breakfast. One of our favorites is DJ's Classic Diner for lots of carb-rich grub to power your ride. If you want something quicker (and lighter) than diner food, Blizzard's Mountain Deli in Vail Village has great sandwiches and healthy options for a morning meal. The next order of business is deciding the length of your ride. If you haven't brought your own bike never fear--there are several bike shops in Vail. The Double Diamond Ski shop is one of the rental shops that can help you get the perfect ride. Many of these also offer shuttle services for more casual riders. Vans will bring you to the top of the pass and you will ride 14 miles downhill into town. Most also provides maps and directions for getting back to your final destination once you are in town. A few companies that offer this service include Alpine Sports Rentals and Vail Bike Tech. If you are planning your own trip, a great place to start your adventure is the terminus of the bike path in West Vail near the Deluge Lake Trailhead. To get to the trailhead from I-70 take exit 180 (your first Vail exit on the right if you are traveling I-70 westbound) and turn left and go under I-70 and take an immediate left, taking your to the southeast. Take this road past housing developments 2.1 miles southeast where it goes under I-70 again. Follow this road another 0.2 miles to its end just past the Deluge Lake Trailhead and the start of the paved bike path. From here, the day is yours to plan. It is 14 miles and roughly 2,100 vertical feet to Vail Pass. A trip to the pass and back is a nice day if you have time constraints, since the return trip is fast thanks to being all downhill. If you choose to go up and over the pass, the descent into the town of Frisco makes for a 32 mile one-way trip. A good idea is to enjoy lunch in Frisco and then return to Vail. The 64 mile out-and-back is helped by the fact the elevation gain from Frisco to Vail Pass is only around 1,500 ft. Once you've completed your biking and the day is done, head to the Red Lion Inn for an après ski type environment (even in the summer) or hang out with the other sweaty bikers, hikers and kayakers down the road a bit at the tonge-in-cheek Wolcott Yacht Club Grill. And if you still have energy, a fun way to end the night is at the fully furnished Back Bowl, a bowling alley and bar that is fully furnished with couches, carpeted floors and has decent food and drinks to boot!

Blizzard's Mountain Deli
Brunch time

D.J.'s Classic Diner
A favorite among locals

Wolcott Yacht Club Grill
Burgers for passing kayakers

The Red Lion
Popular bar for locals and tourists

Double Diamond Ski Shop
Sales and rentals

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Day 1 - Vail

QUICK NOTE

DAY NOTE: The paved bike path that climbs up Vail Pass and into the town of Frisco from Vail offers countless postcard views of Colorado's amazing mountain scenery. Riders of all abilities can enjoy the day at their own pace thanks to several shuttle services that guarantee an all downhill ride into town. Those looking for a longer day can ride 14 miles to the summit of Vail Pass then drop down into the town of Frisco for a 32 mile one-way adventure. After a lunch break in town, ambitious cyclists can complete the full "Tour de Vail Pass" by reversing their trip for a 64 mile adventure. No matter what your agenda, an early start is important; Colorado's high country is notorious for thunderstorms that roll in after noon on most summer days. Vail has a few great places for an early morning breakfast. One of our favorites is DJ's Classic Diner for lots of carb-rich grub to power your ride. If you want something quicker (and lighter) than diner food, Blizzard's Mountain Deli in Vail Village has great sandwiches and healthy options for a morning meal. The next order of business is deciding the length of your ride. If you haven't brought your own bike never fear--there are several bike shops in Vail. The Double Diamond Ski shop is one of the rental shops that can help you get the perfect ride. Many of these also offer shuttle services for more casual riders. Vans will bring you to the top of the pass and you will ride 14 miles downhill into town. Most also provides maps and directions for getting back to your final destination once you are in town. A few companies that offer this service include Alpine Sports Rentals and Vail Bike Tech. If you are planning your own trip, a great place to start your adventure is the terminus of the bike path in West Vail near the Deluge Lake Trailhead. To get to the trailhead from I-70 take exit 180 (your first Vail exit on the right if you are traveling I-70 westbound) and turn left and go under I-70 and take an immediate left, taking your to the southeast. Take this road past housing developments 2.1 miles southeast where it goes under I-70 again. Follow this road another 0.2 miles to its end just past the Deluge Lake Trailhead and the start of the paved bike path. From here, the day is yours to plan. It is 14 miles and roughly 2,100 vertical feet to Vail Pass. A trip to the pass and back is a nice day if you have time constraints, since the return trip is fast thanks to being all downhill. If you choose to go up and over the pass, the descent into the town of Frisco makes for a 32 mile one-way trip. A good idea is to enjoy lunch in Frisco and then return to Vail. The 64 mile out-and-back is helped by the fact the elevation gain from Frisco to Vail Pass is only around 1,500 ft. Once you've completed your biking and the day is done, head to the Red Lion Inn for an après ski type environment (even in the summer) or hang out with the other sweaty bikers, hikers and kayakers down the road a bit at the tonge-in-cheek Wolcott Yacht Club Grill. And if you still have energy, a fun way to end the night is at the fully furnished Back Bowl, a bowling alley and bar that is fully furnished with couches, carpeted floors and has decent food and drinks to boot!

contact:
tel: 970 476 1755

location:
304 Hanson Ranch Road
Vail CO 81657

hours:
Daily 9a-5p

1 Blizzard's Mountain Deli

DESCRIPTION: Situated at the top of Bridge Street in Vail Village, Blizzard's Mountain Deli is a nice place to have breakfast and lunch. Check out their famous breakfast sandwiches, fresh salad and fruit smoothies. Homemade pastries and cookies can be found in abundance at this friendly restaurant. 'Boar's head big sandwich' is the specialty here and a must-try! An affordable place to enjoy a quiet and healthy meal. © wcities.com

contact:
tel: 970 476 2336

location:
616 West Lionshead Circle
Vail CO 81657

hours:

2 D.J.'s Classic Diner

DESCRIPTION: D.J's Classic Diner is one of the best restaurants in Vail for breakfast, brunch or lunch. The menu offers eggs, omelettes, breakfast burritos, crepes and more. A favorite among the locals, this place is usually crowded. So consider yourself lucky if you get a place to sit. With a good list of meals to choose from, you can enjoy a simple but tasty food with rates that go easy on your pocket. © wcities.com

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Daily 7a-1p

contact:
tel: 970 926 3444
http://www.wolcottyachtclub.com

location:
27190 Highway 6, Wolcott
Vail CO 81657

hours:
Mo to Su from 07:00 AM to 07:30 PM

3 Wolcott Yacht Club Grill

DESCRIPTION: Located directly alongside the Eagle River, the Wolcott Yacht Club Grill is a favorite among passing kayakers and rafters who need to stop in and refuel. Whether that means a few ice-cold beers or their wickedly delicious burgers and fish tacos, you'll leave the Wolcott Yacht Club feeling replenished. If you're not passing by on the river, and you're just looking for a great time out, then the Wolcott can provide just that with live music seasonally and a large bar with fast moving bartenders making sure you'll never have to wait to long for a drink. Open seven days a week, Wolcott Yacht Club Grill serves breakfast a little longer on Sundays. © wcities.com

contact:
tel: 970-476-7676
http://www.theredlion.com

location:
304 Bridge St
Vail CO 81657

4 The Red Lion

DESCRIPTION: The Red Lion features classic Vail charm with incredible live music, excellent food and the perfect atmosphere any time of the year.

contact:
tel: 970 476 5500
fax: 970 476 9176
http://www.doublediamondvail.com

location:
520 East Lionshead Circle
Vail CO 81657

5 Double Diamond Ski Shop

DESCRIPTION: There are plenty of outdoor equipment rental shops, but pick this one for the best selection of ski, bike and board rentals; ski, summer and foot wear, plus have access to an optical center and custom boot fitting. The staff at Double Diamond are trained to rent or sell the equipment best suited for you. © wcities.com

wcities

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Vail Snapshot

Local Info

Long before"Dancing with the Stars," there was skiing with the stars in Vail. The resort town set in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado has always boasted of a very high celebrity population. Aside from Hollywood stars, Texas millionaires and sophisticated ladies in ultra-expensive mink coats make their way among the town streets and occasionally hit the slopes. Indeed, the alpine town has glitz and glamour that even Aspen cannot match. Yet, surprisingly, the atmosphere here is authentic, less pretentious and more genuine. Well, when the rich want to play, they certainly let their hair down. And regular mortals tend to follow suit.

Things to Do

Winter sports are, of course, the main attraction in town. With 193 trails, Vail Mountain is one of the nation's premier skiing spots. Lift-ticket prices are on the high end, so make sure you bring enough dough. If you're bringing the kids, the ski school can teach skiers as young as 3 year olds. Alternatively, you can take the children to Adventure Ridge, which features a ski-bike and a snowmobile track. Vail does not close in the summer. Take a hike on Gore Creek Trail, which leads to Gore Lake and the Eagle's Nest Wilderness Area. Rafting the Eagle River in the Vail Valley is another popular summer activity, while cycling the Vail-to-Breckenridge bike path is a good way to get your heart pumping at high altitude. Golfing at Vail Golf Club and, for the more adventurous, paragliding above the Rocky Mountains with Vail Valley Paragliding are also cool summer activities.

Dining

Dining, after skiing, is Vail's favorite sport. The town has more than 100 restaurants, bars and cafes. Lionshead Village has a fair share of restaurants, bistros and cafes. Vail Village also has a number of dining establishments. If you want to escape the hustle of the resort, you can always head to the towns of Minturn or Edwards about 10 to 20 minutes away from Vail.

Shopping

Whether you want souvenirs to bring home, jewelry, or arts and crafts or sporting goods, there are plenty of boutiques, gift shops and stores in Vail Village and Lionshead Village. Bag and Pack supplies what you need for multiday treks, while Buzz's Ski Shop and the American Ski Exchange have some of the best ski equipment available. If you fancy handcrafted Stetson hats and Lucchese boots, head to Kemo Sabe. Golden Bear is a one-of-a-kind shop that has a line of jewelry featuring the golden bear(the city symbol). Other stores worth checking out are Charm School Boutique, Laughing Monkey and W. Couture.
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History

In the heart of the Rocky Mountains sits Vail, Colorado. Now a bustling winter wonderland filled with lavish chalets and world-class resorts, it is hard to imagine that this city was ever anything other than the country's top ski destination. However, Vail was once home to the Ute Native American tribe, who spent the summer months in the Vail Valley. Gold was discovered in the area in 1859, and soon miners and merchants came pouring in, hoping for a bonanza. By the end of the 19th century, the Ute Indians were displaced, and the land remained in the hands of ranchers and pioneers.

Colorado was declared a U.S. territory two years later in 1861, and as the population grew, the inhabitants of fledgling mountain towns recognized the need for a more centralized authority. Local governments were created to protect property rights and maintain order in the towns, and after an 18-year battle, Colorado gained its statehood in 1876.

The ski tradition has long been present in Colorado, and in the Vail area especially. The first trans-Alpine skiers were mail carriers who traveled to small frontier towns bringing news and letters from the outside world. By 1880, the state had upwards of 50 skiing mail carriers. These men would travel with only simple equipment, and trekked more than 40 miles at a time to reach their destinations. Soon they became folk-heroes of sorts, and some, like Al Johnson and Father Dryer, are still renowned today for their trekking abilities. The rich competitive future of the area was foreshadowed in an 1886 race, when 25 of these skiers took to the slopes above Crested Butte.

The area remained in this state of relative isolation until 1940, when the Colorado Highway Department completed State Highway 6(today Interstate 70) from Denver. The Valley was then named after the chief engineer of the project, Charles Vail. During World War II, the U.S. Army's 10th Mountain Division used the area Southeast of Vail, called Camp Hale, for survival training. Some of the men in this elite team recognized the potential this pristine location had to become a world-class ski area. Pete Siebert and Earl Eaton, veterans of the 10th Mountain Division, were the first to begin plans to turn No-Name Mountain, a series of peaks nearby Vail Pass, into ski runs. After returning from the war, they pioneered the creation of Colorado's winter-sport industry. They saw that the very same characteristics that had made Vail a great training ground for the Army would prove to be ideal qualities for a top ski resort.

In 1962 the first resort opened for business and soon large numbers of visitors were flocking to the area, drawn by the soft snow and gentle slopes that set Vail apart from other nearby mountains. Four years later the Town of Vail was incorporated, and construction began to make the downtown as much of an attraction as the ski runs. By the 1970s, it was becoming the most popular ski resort in the country, gaining fame for its sunny slopes, miles of expansive tracks, and its famous vacationers such as President Gerald Ford.

Since that time, the industry has boomed, making Vail the country's top destination for leisure skiers, snowboarders, and Olympic hopefuls alike. The Alpine World Championships were held here in 1989 and 1999, putting the city of Vail on the map for its world-class restaurants, hotels, and spas. In 1996, Vail Resorts Inc. was formed through a series of mergers, allowing skiers to access all of the area's resorts on one

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ticket. In addition, new runs were opened in 2000, completing the original dream of the valley's ski industry pioneers, Pete Siebert and Earl Eaton.

Photograph provided by Jack Affleck ©

Hotel Insights

Chalet-chic is the style of choice in this alpine town. You may have a hard time finding many accommodations that won't empty your wallet, but with so much luxury extant, it's hardly surprising. After all, what better way to relax after a long day on the slopes than by a warm fireplace to call your own?

Vail

The busy downtown section of Vail Village is home to many shops and restaurants, as well as a bevy of accommodations for those in search of a central location. For a quality stay that has the stamp of time to recommend it, check out The Lodge at Vail, which has retained its pioneering spirit while still modernizing itself for new waves of visitors. Only a short walk away from the major ski lifts, The Sitzmark Lodge offers all of the amenities of a full-service hotel, including its own restaurant, complimentary wine, and full breakfast. If your tastes run to smaller and more private establishments, you'll find a haven at the Savory Inn and Cooking School. Small and intimate, it has an open kitchen that allows guests to chat with the chef and learn some tricks de cuisine before meals. To get away from the flurry of activity in the Village, book a private condo at one of the many hotels out of town, such as the Evergreen Lodge at Vail. The Evergreen Lodge also has its own free shuttle running into town, so you don't have to worry about missing out on Vail's hustle and bustle.

Lionshead

This walkabout neighborhood is full of many high-class dining and shopping options, as well as the only gondola on Vail Mountain. If you want to be within a few steps of the Eagle Bahn Gondola, check out the Vail Marriott Mountain Resort, a charming resort that fits right in to the fashionable neighborhood. Antlers at Vail is a top location for full service condominiums, with a resort that includes a fitness center, business facilities, and saunas.

Avon

Ideally situated on the outskirts of Beaver Creek Resort, this town has a variety of options for visitors. If you enjoy having the complete package available from your doorstep, then the Ritz-Carlton Bachelor Gulch is right up your alley. This resort has the best deals on all sorts of outdoor fun for both the winter and summer seasons. Take a few steps outside in January and hop on the Beaver Creek resort's premiere ski lifts, or try out your swing in July on the area's top-rated golf courses. In the heart of Avon is Nottingham Lake, and the Falcon Point Resort has a variety of condominiums located by its shore. A free shuttle will take you from the comfort of your condo to the ski lifts nearby.

Beaver Creek

This homey neighborhood is a great place to go for a family-oriented trip, and the accommodations here are designed for it as well. The Beaver Creek Lodge is centrally situated and offers rooms for large parties, with full-service suites, a fitness center, and pool. For those who are in search of some leisure time, look no further than Creekside at Beaver Creek which has a fitness area, steam rooms, and outdoor grilling area. The suites also have private kitchens and fireplaces for greater privacy. East West Resorts has a full selection of one to four bedroom houses and town homes that are ideal for catching all the activities Beaver Creek has to offer, as well as being adjacent to major golf courses, white-water rafting depots, and ski runs.

Edwards

Just past Avon and Vail sits Edwards, a town with a great hideaway location for high-end resorts and spas. Luxury is the name of the game at The Lodge& Spa at Cordillera. This complete retreat is a year-round attraction, featuring a world-class golf course, privately owned ski runs, and an opulent spa package that includes pools, saunas, and whirlpool baths.

Eagle

For those who like to experience the outdoors in private, Eagle's Sweetwater Lake is a top choice in greater Vail. There are many open-air activities to experience around Sweetwater Lake, and A.J. Brink Outfitters Sweetwater Lake Resort is your one-stop outfitter for adventures in horseback riding, hiking, fishing, and boating. They also have a variety of rustic cabins that bring the charm of the old West to modern Colorado.

Photograph provided by Jack Affleck ©

Restaurants Insights

Vail's outdoor offerings span its seasons and geography, from chilly mountains to snow-covered peaks and cool valley springs. Take confidence that in the middle of your adventures, whether you're mountain biking in June or downhill skiing in January, you'll never be too far from a quick bite, an elegant dinner, or a simple drink.

Vail

If you've tried too many fusion or"modern" restaurants and are longing for some traditional American cuisine, you will find a few juicy morsels here in Vail. Cucina Rustica at The Lodge at Vail and Kelly Liken are top-notch restaurants that pride themselves in using fresh, local, and seasonal ingredients to create some of the most spectacular appetizers, entrées and desserts. Another sure bet is Bully Ranch, or if you're in the mood for a picnic make sure you stop at Crossroads Market before you head off on your adventure.

Eager for a romantic night after a long day? You'll find the French food and atmosphere of La Tour quite pleasing. Campo de Fiori is a great place for gourmet Italian cuisine with a warm and inviting environment. Larkspur Restaurant, which is only open during the winter season, will offer you wonderful dishes with great wine and an enchanting view.

For a family-friendly lunch or dinner Chap's Grill& Chophouse is a fun, lighthearted spot with food for everyone. Chili Willy's, is a bit different with its Tex-Mex menu, but nevertheless it makes for a satisfied stomach. If you are looking for something warm during the day then Covered Bridge Coffee will have it for you, along with mid-day pastries, hot chocolate, and of course, coffee.

Lionshead

Despite being totally landlocked, you can still reel in a fresh meal at Montauk Seafood Grill. The menu changes daily to ensure that the best and freshest seafood products

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are at your disposal. If hearty soul food is more your style, mosey on down to Moe's Original BBQ. With all your favorites like pulled pork sandwiches and ribs, Moe's serves up some of the great down home cooking. The Flying Burrito takes you farther down – south of the border, that is. Here, wrap your hands around these massive meals, filled with all your Mexican favorites.

Avon

Dine alfresco in the summer or by candlelight in the winter with Bivans a great place for the whole family or an intimate night for two. Grouse Mountain Grill offers rustic meals with traditional Colorado surroundings, fresh fish and meat are masterfully grilled and can be served with your choice of wine, providing a great end to a long day in the mountains.

Foods of Vail Home Catering gives you the choice of where you want to eat with its variety of take out options. Or if you're in the mood for high-class, stop in at the Ritz-Carlton Bachelor Gulch and choose from its restaurant, deli or lounge for a lunch break, dinner date or evening cocktail.

Beaver Creek

Atmosphere and food can only be exceeded by the view. Choose Allie's Cabin for stunning views of the mountains and trees while dining with loved ones. Or for a restaurant accessible by sleigh try Beano's Cabin where you'll find spectacular wine, food and décor. The Blue Moose is the perfect place for quick bite, where pies, pizza and a range of Italian favorites make this stop a local favorite. For all those hearty eaters, The Golden Eagle Inn definitely hits the spot. Large portions of steak, seafood, and even some wild game are served, quick, hot, and without the fuss.

Eagle

For some of the best burgers around, check out the Broadway Bar& Grill where big-mouthed Angus creations are standard. Eagle's Grand Avenue Grill is a longstanding favorite offering a variety of comforting creations. For a more sophisticated option, La Scala, presents authentic Italian cuisine, hinted with English favorites in a decadent atmosphere. However, The Wolcott Yacht Club, despite its name, isn't just for the well to do. Here, sample some of the finest breakfast options in the area, but be sure to check out the hearty fish tacos as well.

4 Eagle Ranch dominates lunchtime for those coming off the slopes. Located in an authentic 19th century cabin, visitors have the choice of taking in the excellent view on the front porch after their hearty meal.

Edwards

Edwards is the place to be for all your Mexican cravings. Fiesta's Cafe& Cantina reserves only the freshest and finest ingredients, creating an array of enchiladas, tacos, and various vegetarian options as well. For a taste of pop culture, visit Moe's Southwest Grill. Despite the gigantic bowls of guacamole and sizzling fajitas, all of the wall decorations are references to movie cult classics. Maybe you're just in the area for a drink and a snack. If so, Gore Range Brewery and its famous microbrewery have a huge list of pub-style fair with not much flair.

The wine list at Charrapal is sure to please even the most selective of consumers. Located in the Cordillera Lodge& Spa, its full of a vast array of regional menu options cradled by natural architecture.

Photograph provided by Jack Affleck ©

Nightlife Insights

Vail is an outdoor enthusiasts' dreamland. If you were to doze off and have visions of a place where skiing, fishing and hiking were daily priorities, you would have a picture of Vail in your head. The mountain village is absolutely overflowing with fresh air activities that will have you gleefully gasping for another breath.

Skiing and Snowboarding

During the winter months there is no comparison to the dry powder that the Ski gods bestow upon the Vail mountaintops. And for those months when the weather is frosty, there is no skier-friendly place you'd rather be than the Vail Valley.

Normally towards the end of November and beginning of December, you'll start to see the lift lines forming as the mountains of the Vail Valley come alive with skiers and snowboarders carving down the slopes. The numerous ski resorts that surround the mountain town, such as the Vail Marriott Mountain Resort, begin to fill up during the snow season, and for good reason. Along with the fantastic slope conditions comes the ski contests and mountain competitions.

The American Ski Classic takes place every March and turns the Vail mountains into celebrity slopes. Don't be surprised if you see such skiing legends as Billy Kid and Franz Klamer, or if you bump into some ski-enthused stars like Kelsey Grammer and Gloria Estefan.

If you're a snowboarder who isn't really excited by"two-planking" festivities, then you should check out The Session, a snowboard competition and party on the mountain. Today's top riders busting out high-flying tricks mixed among live music and good times make this one of those must-see Vail mountain events.

Music& Film Festivals

One of the ways that the Vail Valley kicks off its winter ski season is to throw a party that gives everyone an idea of what kind of town Vail is. This pre-season get-down is known as Snow Daze, and has been bringing headlining musicians, street parties, on-snow events, great food, good times and a festive atmosphere to the mountain.

Despite Vail being synonymous with skiing and snow, it also has a cultured art side to it as well. Each year, visitors and locals alike take part in the many festivals that celebrate music, dance and film. After hitting the world-class slopes, warm up with some sizzling tunes at the Vail Jazz Festival. Classical music lovers will also have their musical heart strings plucked when the Bravo! Music Festival rolls into Vail for six weeks of open-air concerts.

What's music without dancing? Every year the Vail International Dance Festival twirls its way into the area for several weeks of classic and contemporary performances by well-known dance ensembles, such as the Paris Opera Ballet and Dance Cuba!

Need to give your ears and legs a rest after all that skiing, live music and dancing? Well, sit back and relax at the Vail Film Festival. This four-day event incorporates feature films, shorts, documentaries, and student films. Don't worry about missing any slope-time either. The screenings are planned for the late afternoon and evenings so that you won't miss a second of the snow.

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If you planned your trip to Vail around the month of October, you'll be there for the right month to drink, sing and be merry, as Vail hosts their own Oktoberfest extravaganza.

Art Galleries& Museums

The Vail Village has some great little galleries and museums to entertain its visitors when they are not on the ski slopes. The Cogswell Gallery offers artwork that truly reflects the nature of Colorado, with wildlife sculptures and rustic antique furnishings. You'll find nature inspired hand-made jewelry at the J. Cotter Gallery where just about every piece of jewelry will remind you of Vail's beauty.

Vail is a ski town, and therefore what better place to find the Colorado Ski Museum. Take a walk through the hallways of this museum and see how the Vail Valley transformed from its mere beginnings as a sheep farm to the ski Mecca it is today.

Other Outdoor Activities

Don't think that because this region of Colorado was blessed with perfect ski conditions that there is only wintertime fun in Vail. Even when the snow melts in Vail, the smiles don't, and the warm sunny days bring out some of the best, with activities ranging from river-rafting to golf. There are plenty of things to see and do around Vail, as it is truly a four-season town.

There are a number of skilled tour guides in Vail that can show you the true meaning of the great outdoors. No matter what your skill level or experience, Lakota River Guides will take you on a river rafting trip that will meet your desired level of adrenaline pumping excitement. If you're looking for more than just a rafting adventure, make a stop at Nova Guides. The guides at Nova will take you on some unforgettable excursions that can include dog sledding, snowmobiling, river fishing, Jeeping or tearing up some terrain on an ATV.

Vail is also home to world-class golf links that include the Cotton Ranch Golf Club, and the Eagle Ranch Golf Club.

When the snow starts to melt in the spring, the rivers around Vail begin to rise in water height and the fly-fishing is at its best. Pack your waders and head out to the many local streams and rivers that are full of those elusive trout that you"almost caught".

Photograph provided by Jack Affleck ©

Things to Do Insights

The winter months see the most excitement in this bustling ski town. Many visitors head directly to the slopes as soon as they reach Vail, as its resorts boast some of the best runs in the country. But before hitting the powder covered trails, stop and spend a bit of time wandering some of the city's districts.

Colorado Ski Museum In downtown Vail, visit the Cogswell Gallery and the Colorado Ski Museum. Nearby is the Gerald R. Ford Amphitheater and the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens. Dine at the contemporary French restaurant Left Bank.

Nottingham Lake Have breakfast at Loaded Joe's, then get close to nature at the Gore Range Nature Discovery Center and Nottingham Lake. Finish the day with a divine meal at Allie's Cabin.

Vail Recreation District Also in Vail is the Vail Symposium, which focuses on community education. Grab lunch at Cucina Rustica. The Vail Recreation District contains the Vail Golf Club, the Vail Nature Center and the Vail Tennis Center, if you're looking to relax.

Vail Nordic Center A trip to Adventure Ridge is popular among families with children. Browse the collection at the Claggett/Rey Gallery or Pismo Gallery, then grab a bite to eat at the Wildflower. Ski afficionados will love the Vail Nordic Center.

Imagination Station Browse the displays at the J. Cotter Gallery, then go to the Imagination Station, which offers hands-on learning experiences. Do some skating at the Dobson Ice Arena, then dine at the Bully Ranch or the Larkspur Restaurant.

There are many ways to see Vail, from riding in a balloon to white water rafting.

Balloon Tours Balloon America(+1 970 468 2473/http://www.balloonridesusa.com/) Camelot Balloons(+1 800 785 4743/http://www.camelotballoons.com/)

Adventure Tours Arkansas Valley Adventure(+1 800 370 0581/http://www.coloradorafting.net/) Beaver Divers(+1 970 949 1012/http://www.beaverdivers.com/)

Rafting Tours Colorado River Guides, Inc.(+1 800 938 7238/http://www.raftcolorado.com/) Lakota River Guides(+1 970 845 7238/http://www.lakotariver.com/) Piney River Adventures(+1 970 477 1171/http://www.pineyriverranch.com/)

Fishing Tours Gorsuch Outfitters Fly Fishing(+1 970 926 0900/http://www.gorsuch-outfitters.com/)

Cemetary Tours Evergreen Cemetery Tour(+1 970 486 3900) ©

Travel Tips

Getting There

By Air

Vail/Eagle County Airport(http://snow.com/flyvail/) is a small hub located about 35 miles West of Vail. The Vail/Eagle County Airport has different schedule for winter and summer, with select major carriers that include:

Continental(+1 800 523 3273/ http://www.continental.com)

Delta(+1 800 221 1212/ http://www.delta.com) American Airlines(+1 800 433 7300/ http://www.aa.com) Northwest(+1 800 225 2525/ http://www.nwa.com) United Airlines(+1 800 864 8331/ http://www.ual.com)

Taxi& Other Ground Transportation

Vail Valley Transportation(+1 877 829 8294) Airlink Shuttle(+1 800 554 8245) Vail Valley Taxi(+1 877 829 8294/ +1 970 476 8294) Vail Coach(+1 877 554 7433/ http://www.vailcoach.com) Colorado Mountain Express(+1 800 525 6363/+1 970 926 9800/ http://www.ridecme.com/) Vail Transportation Service(+1 800 480 9104/ http://www.vailtransportation.com)

Denver International Airport(DIA)(+1 303 342 2000/ http://www.flydenver.com/) is one of the largest and busiest airports in the world. The Denver International Airport is located 110 miles East of Vail. Airline providers include:

Frontier(+1 800 432 1359/ http://www.frontierairlines.com) Continental(+1 800 523 3273/ http://www.continental.com)

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jetBlue(+1 800 538 2583/ http://www.jetblue.com) US Airways(+1 800 428 4322/ http://www.usairways.com) Delta(+1 800 221 1212/ http://www.delta.com) American Airlines(+1 800 433 7300/ http://www.aa.com) United Airlines(+1 800 864 8331/ http://www.ual.com) Northwest/KLM(+1 800 225 2525/ http://www.nwa.com) Air Canada(+1 888 247 2262/ http://www.aircanada.com) British Airways(+1 800 403 0882/ http://www.britishairways.com) Lufthansa(+1 800 645 3880/ http://cms.lufthansa.com)

Taxi& Other Ground Transportation

Shuttle Services include:

Super Shuttle(+1 800 525 3177/ +1 303 370 1300/ http://www.supershuttledenver.com)

BlueSky(+1 303 300 2626/ http://www.blueskyshuttle.net)

Colorado Mountain Express(+1 800 525 6363/ +1 970 926 9800/ http://www.ridecme.com/)

Taxis are readily available outside of the airport.

By Car

Vail is centrally located in the Rocky Mountains and easily accessible by car. The city of Vail is just 35 miles East of Eagle, and 100 miles West of Denver. Besides being the major road you would take into Vail from Denver and other surrounding cities, I-70(with the help of the Colorado countryside) is an extremely beautiful drive. Once in Vail, there will be signs for the major exits leading to lodging and other accommodations.

Getting Around Vail

You would have an easier time finding a snowball in July than you would a parking spot in Vail. Much of the city is self-contained making parking almost impossible and very expensive if you do find it. There is however, a very reliable and free bus system that provides service throughout east and west Vail Valley(+1 970 479 2358).

The Eagle Bahn Gondola(+1 970 476 9090) is one of the most comfortable and convenient ways to make your way up Vail Mountain. It is open both winter and summer, and takes you directly to some of the best ski areas and summer hiking trails.

If traveling overseas, take the safety precaution of registering your trip athttps://travelregistration.state.gov and for helpful, practical advice about traveling technicalities and safety standards check outhttp://travel.state.gov/.
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Fun Facts

Vail

State: Colorado

Country: United States

Vail by the Numbers

Population: 4531

Elevation: 8150 ft

Average Annual Rainfall: 10 inches/ 84 centimeters

Average January Temperature: 45 degrees F/ 7 degrees C

Average July Temperature: 75 degrees F/ 25 degrees C

Quick Facts:

Major Industries: Tourism, Outdoor Recreation

Ethnicity: 94.13% White, 0.29% African American, 0.49% Native American, 1.66%Asian, 6.2% Hispanic, 0.09% Pacific Islander, 1.43% Other

Electricity: 220 volts AC, 50 Hz, standard two or three pin plugs

Time Zone: GMT-6

Country Dialing Code:+1

Area Code: 970

Did You Know?

The mountains surrounding the valley are not owned privately, but rather are public land rented to the ski resorts.

Orientation: Situated in Eagle County, CO, Vail is bisected by Gore Creek, and is surrounded by the White River National Forest.
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