**Fernie**

**Categories**

**Good For**

Beginners

Intermediates

Experts

Snowboarders

Families

Snow reliability

**Data**

**Beginner Runs**

25

**Intermediate Runs**

46

**Advanced Runs**

71

**Total Runs**

142

**Lifts**

10

**Chairs**

7

**Drags**

3

**Gondola Cable Cars**

0

**Parks**

1

**Pipes**

0

**Weather**

**Annual Snowfall**

11m (36ft).

**Overview**

Fernie ski resort boasts an impressive snow record and has built a worldwide reputation as one of the planet's best spots for ‘steep and deep' terrain. This resort is a good bet for those looking for powder and small-town Canadian charm with friendly locals.

Set within the Lizard Range of the craggy Rocky Mountains, the skiing in the area is based a few kilometres from Fernie – a small, characterful former coal mining town in the Elk Valley – and the purpose-built slopeside base of Fernie Alpine Resort, which has grown up over the past decade and boasts a handful of hotels, cafés and shops.

Visitors here can base themselves in either area depending on their preference. For example, the town has more character, but staying in Fernie Alpine Resort avoids the daily short drive up to the mountain.

**Location**

Fernie is located in the southeastern corner of the western Canadian province of British Columbia. The town lies in the Elk Valley, in the Lizard Range of the Rocky Mountains. Fernie is around 60km (37 miles) from the Alberta and the USA border, and a three-and-a-half-hour drive from Calgary.

**Website**

http://www.skifernie.com

http://www.fernietourism.com

**Piste Map**

http://www.skifernie.com/the-mountain/trail-maps.aspx

**Hit The Slopes**

Skiing in Fernie is spread across five bowls (Currie, Lizard, Cedar, Timber and Siberia), which often contain the deepest snow in the Canadian Rockies – on average over 11m (36ft) in total each winter. These areas are served by are a couple of high-speed chairlifts, including a recent addition at the Currie Bowl; but travel on slower lifts is necessary to reach much of the terrain.

Most beginner runs are on the lower half of the mountain and are wide and well groomed. Fernie Winter Sports School offers private and group skiing and snowboarding lessons, and there are also several specialist camps. Those without ski equipment will find it can be hired conveniently at the base.

On the frequent powder days, Fernie's bowls open up an array of opportunities for intermediate level skiers and above, with widely spaced trees through which to weave. There are only a few groomed runs from the top, however, so unless you are a fan of moguls, skiing becomes more limited when conditions are icy or hard-packed.

For experts, there's no shortage of gnarly steeps and chutes spilling off the ridges separating the bowls. In fact, around half of all trails here are rated black; with more than 20 added recently with the Polar Peak expansion. Parts of the resort’s terrain are so steep that it would not be allowed to be developed for skiing if it were proposed today.

But the domain is not just suitable for downhill skiers. Snowboarders or freestyle skiers of varying levels can ride the Rail Park under the Bear Chair, as the park features three lines for separate abilities; and there’s also a ski cross course to enjoy.

Due to its good snowfall record, the relatively long ski season in Fernie runs from mid-December to mid-April.

**Fernie**

**Resort**

1068

**Base**

1068

**Top**

2134

**General**

**Beyond The Slopes**

Aside from skiing and boarding, Fernie offers most of the usual winter resort activities, including 14km (9 miles) of cross-country skiing tracks, sleigh rides, dog sledding, snowshoe safaris and snowmobile tours. Visitors can also try the Canadian pursuit of ice fishing, which is always a very sociable affair.

Culture vultures have more than usual to enjoy at this ski resort, including the Fernie Arts Station (601 1st Avenue; tel: (250) 423 4842; [www.theartsstation.com](http://www.theartsstation.com)) with its events and exhibitions, Fernie Museum (363b 2nd Avenue; tel: (250) 423 7016) showing local history, and the art collective Fernie Arts Co-op (572 2nd Avenue; tel: (250) 423 7044; [www.fernieartscoop.com](http://www.fernieartscoop.com)),

Those who wish to be pampered after a day on the slopes can head to one of the resort’s handful of spas, while the more energetic can try curling, ice skating or climbing.

Day trips are possible to the nearby Bavarian-themed ski resort of Kimberley, featuring over 728 hectares (1,800 acres) of terrain and the largest area of glade skiing (thinly wooded slopes) in Canada. Alternatively, head across the border to Whitefish (formerly Big Mountain) in the USA.

**Family Fun**

A nanny service is provided throughout the ski season by the resort’s Childcare Centre in the Cornerstone Lodge (tel: (250) 423 2430; [www.cornerstonelodge.ca](http://www.cornerstonelodge.ca)). Child care and ski lesson combination programmes are available for children aged three and older through the Winter Sports School (tel: (250) 423 2406).

The resort organises a range of evening activities for kids, from film nights on Wednesdays and craft nights on Fridays to various themed events on Saturdays. These free activities take place at the Slopeside Coffee Shop or Childcare Centre in the resort.

**Retail Therapy**

Fernie could hardly be described as a shopper's paradise, but the town's main drag, 2nd Avenue, has a few interesting options. Among the shops in Fernie is the slopeside Sports Alpine Ski and Snowboard Boutique, which specialises in designer ski and snowboard gear and accessories. In town, the Edge of the World Board Shop (421B 2nd Avenue) is a trendy snow and skate store.

Options for self-caterers include the Mountain Pantry, which stocks convenience items in the town; while the Slopeside Deli offers soups, salads, wraps and sandwiches for lunchtime supplies.

**Splashing Out**

Stay in a luxury wilderness lodge at Island Lake Resort (tel: 1 888 422 8754; [www.islandlakecatskiing.com](http://www.islandlakecatskiing.com)), a short drive west of Fernie. Here, you can and indulge in some of Canada's best snowcat skiing, experiencing 10 to 15 runs each day before settling down to a relaxing massage or alpine foot and leg treatment in the lodge's spa.

**Apres Ski**

At the foot of the slopes, Griz Bar (tel: (250) 423 2407) is the place to go for a drink at the end of the ski day, with live music during afternoons at the weekend. In-town options for lively après-ski in Fernie include the Park Place Lodge Pub (742 7th Avenue; tel: (250) 423 6871; [www.parkplacelodge.com](http://www.parkplacelodge.com)), a popular haunt for locals and tourists alike, with its pool tables, table football and TVs showing live sport.

**Eating Out**

There's a reasonable selection of eateries both at the resort and in town. Next to the slopes, Kelsey's Bar and Grill (tel: (250) 423 2444; [www.kelseys.ca](http://www.kelseys.ca)) serves pasta, pizza and American fare, while the Lizard Creek Dining Room (5346 Highline Drive; tel: (250) 423 2057; [www.lizardcreek.com](http://www.lizardcreek.com)) offers gourmet dining.

In the town, the Brickhouse (401 2nd Ave; tel: (250) 423 0009; [www.thebrickhousefernie.com](http://www.thebrickhousefernie.com)) dishes up delicious American fare in lively surrounds. Elsewhere, a variety of other restaurants can be found in Fernie serving everything from sushi to Indian cuisine.

**Transport**

**Getting There**

Nearest airports: Canadian Rockies International Airport (YXC); Calgary International Airport (YYC).

Distance to resort: 105km (65 miles); 337km (209 miles).

Driving time: 1 hour 15 minutes; 3 hours 30 minutes.

**Getting Around**

A ski bus travels regularly between the town and the slopes (for a charge) during the day. A free evening shuttle bus also operates between the resort and the town. A shuttle links to Kimberley ski resort on Tuesdays.

**Hotels**

Fernie has some great slopeside accommodation as well as plenty of places to stay in the town itself. Among these options is a good range of hotels to suit all budgets, catered chalets offering luxury standards, and a number of self-catering options.

**Fernie Slopeside Lodge**

Fernie Slopeside Lodge is conveniently located right at the base of the resort and offers ski-in/ski-out hotel-style accommodation with family rooms available. The lodge has two indoor hot tubs and lockers for skis and boards.

**Category**

Cheap

**Thoroughfare**

5339 Fernie Ski Hill Road

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Fernie

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Canada

**Telephone**

(250) 423 2423.

**Website**

http://www.fernieslopesidelodge.com

**Lizard Creek Lodge**

Relax after a day on the slopes in Lizard Creek Lodge’s spa, heated outdoor pool or hot tubs. This slopeside hotel in Fernie Alpine Resort offers convenient ski-in/ski-out suites and condos.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

5346 Highline Drive

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Fernie

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Canada

**Telephone**

(250) 423 2057.

**Website**

http://www.lizardcreek.com

**Fernie Stanford Resort**

Located at the edge of town near the turn-off for the ski slopes, this hotel has several room types, including family rooms. Among the amenities is a spa, outdoor hot tubs and a pool with a 51m-long (166ft) water slide.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

100 Riverside Way

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Fernie

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Canada

**Telephone**

(250) 423 5000.

**Website**

http://www.ferniestanfordresort.com