**Winter Park**

**Categories**

**Good For**

Beginners

Intermediates

Experts

Snowboarders

Families

Non-skiers

Après ski

Snow reliability

**Data**

**Beginner Runs**

12

**Intermediate Runs**

53

**Advanced Runs**

78

**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, all of which has contributed to its long-standing reputation as the resort of choice for Colorado residents.

This cordial charm has come under threat in recent years however, when, in common with many other ski areas in North America, the resort underwent an expensive makeover with new lifts on the mountain and a new resort village at the base. The redesign was the brainchild of Intrawest, the company originally behind Whistler Blackcomb and half a dozen other North American ventures.

Despite the heavy spending, the resort has managed to maintain its enticing ‘ski town’ feel. The new base area, named The Village, has smartly avoided playing on the region's cowboy heritage; instead visitors will feel a sense of gradual evolution rather than a touristic imitation of a bygone era.

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, which gave the resort a somewhat dispersed feel. However, the new slopeside base at Winter Park has changed this, creating a lively après-ski scene and helping the resort become a more complete package.

**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/c65f5ec1966940cca629a2ad39da9ef2.jpg

**Hit The Slopes**

Winter Park has plenty of terrain for all levels of skier, with 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 are an unusually high percentage of runs rated ‘most difficult' for advanced skiers in Winter Park. In fact, there are more than 60 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 at the base of Winter Park’s slopes. Beginners can learn here without having the distraction of more experienced skiers slaloming past. The Mary Jane area is another haven for beginners looking to put their newly-found knowledge into practice.

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.

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**

Winter Park has continued to add off-slope attractions and now has a moderate selection of non-ski alernatives, although many are located in the nearby towns rather than the slopeside resort. Besides swimming pools and hot tubs in the resort’s recreation centre, and a spa facility (tel: +1 970 726 2363; www.alpenglowmassage.com), most activities are outdoors.

On-snow alternatives to downhill sliding include snowshoe tours, snowcat tours, tubing, ice skating (two rinks – with ice discos staged on some evenings), sleigh rides, dog sledding and ski biking – riding on special bikes with skis instead of wheels. Most of these can be booked together via a central activities desk (tel: +1 970 726 1616).

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 visitors can relax in natural hot-springs.

**Family Fun**

Winter Park is one of the more relaxed and family-friendly resorts in Colorado.

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 a 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 a greater choice in the town of Fraser.

Among the shops in The Village is Shirt Off My Back (tel: +1 970 726 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. Other options in the town include skiwear and souvenir shops, and half a dozen art retailers.

**Splashing Out**

Purchase a personalised tracking device to digitally record your day’s skiing, including details of routes skied, 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 (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.

There are several good nightspots in Fraser, chief among them is the Crooked Creek Saloon (tel: +1 970 726 9250), which is open until 0200 each night and hosts great live bands.

**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 (tel: +1 970 726 4600; [www.smokinmoes.com](http://www.smokinmoes.com)); this eatery offers an Oklahoma-style barbecue and other traditional regional favourites.

In Fraser, Elevation Pizza (+1 970 726 0066; www.elevationpizzaco.com), which will deliver to your condo in Winter Park too, has a reputation as one of the best purveyors of pizza in the region.

**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 comes in the form of 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 in Fraser.

**Wild Horse Inn**

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

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

XXX

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

XXX

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

United States of America

**Telephone**

+1 970 726 0456

**Website**

www.wildhorseinncolorado.com

**Valley Hi Motel**

A well-run motel just down the road from the slopes, Valley Hi Motel offers large, spacious double rooms, complimentary Wi-Fi access and a hot tub.

**Category**

Cheap

**Thoroughfare**

XXX

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

XXX

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

United States of America

**Telephone**

+1 970 726 4171

**Website**

www.valley-hi-motel.com

**Winter Park Mountain Lodge**

This friendly roadside lodge, situated outside of the resort but next to the ski centre, offers affordable accommodation and houses an on-site restaurant, brew pub and ski shop.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

XXX

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

XXX

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

United States of America

**Telephone**

+1 970 726 8400

**Website**

www.winterparkhotel.com

**Olympia Lodge**

A family-owned motel in central Winter Park, Olympia Lodge offers rooms, condominium or apartment style accommodation and also features an indoor pool and hot tub. Wi-Fi access is provided in all rooms.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

78572 US Highway 40

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Fraser

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

CO 80402

**Country**

United States of America

**Telephone**

+1 970 726 8843

**Website**

www.olympialodge.com

**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**

CO 80402

**Country**

United States of America

**Telephone**

+1 970 887 2152

**Website**

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**

+1 970 726 8400

**Website**

www.zephyrmountainlodge.com