





THE INSIDER'S GUIDE TO PARK CITY

With more than 7,000 acres of skiable terrain, Park City Mountain is the largest ski resort in the United States.

BY JEREMY PUGH

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERIC SCHRAMM

Skis are on the roof. Johnny Cash is walking the line on the radio. There's hot coffee in the console. The drive to Park City's first entrance is 25 minutes from my garage door in Salt Lake City and today I'm counting every second. Last night, a monster winter storm passed through and left a 12-inch carpet of fluffy, dry Utah powder: the "Greatest Snow on Earth" as proclaimed by my license plates. And, like so many Wasatch storms, it quickly cleared out, polite as a preacher on Sunday. I'm racing to a perfect powder day under a bluebird sky.

I crank up the Cash, step on the gas, and Jennifer, my partner, and I start plotting our day like NYSE commodities traders before opening bell. It's essential to have a plan on a powder day at Park City, or any day really. It is, after all, the largest resort in the United States of America. With 7,300 acres of skiable terrain, its only rival on the continent is its Canadian cousin (by Vail Corporation marriage) Whistler-Blackcomb, which is 700 acres bigger. Park City has four base areas, one high-speed gondola connecting its two halves, and 41 lifts accessing more than 300 trails (and that's just counting the trails they label on the trail map).

"Town Lift," Jennifer says. "Today is made for Town Lift."

This is why I love this woman. Jennifer, a transplanted New Yorker, still thinks like she's moving upstream in midtown Manhattan at 4 p.m. on a Friday. Town Lift is a back-pocket trick we deploy sometimes, but it is a gamble. It's farther up the road—it's the last of four base areas as you travel to Park City Mountain from Interstate 80—and requires we ski a throwaway run to get to the good stuff, and it's a slow lift. Today, however, all these drawbacks mean nobody will think of it. It's like taking the G into Brooklyn while all the hipsters are packed onto the L train.

We blow past the hundreds of people lining up at the main base areas, Park City and Canyons Villages (holdover names from when the resort was two separate entities) and pull into a parking garage on Park City's Main Street that I'm not going to tell you about. (Sorry, a local must keep some secrets.) From here we walk onto the Town Lift right as it's opening. To reiterate: we don't walk to stand in a line (like the masses of skiers at the lower base areas), but onto the lift. And that pretty much sets the tone for the rest of the day. ➔



THE GREATEST SNOW ON EARTH

(This page) Laying tracks down one of Park City's signature groomed runs. (Opposite page) Jupiter Peak, McConkey's Lift, and Pioneer Lift.

MOUNTAIN IDYLL

(This page) Park City's Town Lift and Main Street. (Opposite page) A local enjoying Utah's dry powder on Jupiter Peak.

**SILVER TO SLOPES TOUR**

Scratching your head over the trail map? Twice daily (10 a.m. and 1 p.m.), both starting at the base area of Park City Mountain Village), guests can take the “Silver to Slopes Historic Mine Tour,” a free two-hour guided ski tour for intermediate-advanced skiers and snowboarders. It hits different areas around the resort, and guides generally throw in some of the area’s mining history. The best guides will share their favorite runs on the mountain.

Of course, not every day in Utah is a powder day. Amazingly, it’s when there isn’t a foot of fresh, dry snow that Park City really shines. The Greatest Snow on Earth falls at all 14 of Utah’s ski resorts, but it’s only Park City that has this much lift-served terrain, this much choice of terrain, and a historic mining town at its base. Other ski resorts have ski-in, ski-out access to homes and hotels. Park City’s *downtown* is ski-in, ski-out. Park City Mountain is the kind of sprawl—across four 9,000-plus-foot peaks—you want: the quantity and quality of the terrain means there’s always good snow somewhere. And if you get a little lost along the way? High West Distillery, which claims to be the world’s only ski-in, ski-out distillery and whose much-loved Rendezvous Rye and innovative bourbon-rye blends have won almost as many awards as Park City Mountain has runs, is 25 steps from the base of the Town Lift. (If you’d rather a glass of pinot, Old Town Cellars, a local blender, beckons from across the street, as does the whole of Park City’s central strolling, eating, and drinking district.)

Sadly, Park City’s awesomeness long ago ceased being a secret. Last season, the resort accounted for more than one-third of the lift tickets bought at all of Utah’s ski resorts combined. Just 35 minutes from Salt Lake International Airport, the town of Park City is a famed destination in

and of itself, having been part of the 2002 Olympic Games and also thanks to the annual star-studded Sundance Film Festival in February. Also, visitors love that Park City is an actual place where actual people live. Venturing beyond the resort confines and out of the well-trodden Main Street area will easily lead you to friendly pockets of mountain-town life. Stop into White Pine Touring and get some gear and advice to access Park City’s extensive Nordic skiing trail system. Meet the local ski moms (and dads) and drop into a class at Park City Yoga. Take the kids bowling at swanky Jupiter Bowl at Kimball Junction and finish with a slice of New York-style pizza at Maxwell’s.

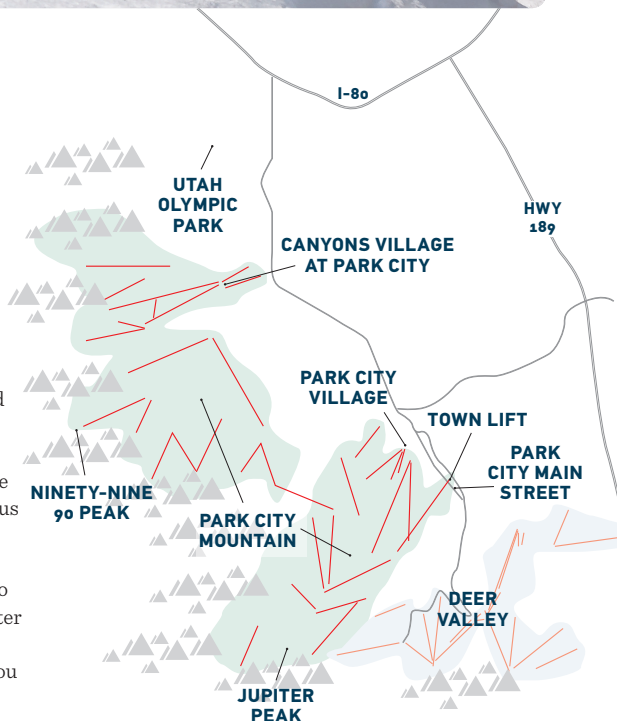
“I moved here because it’s a real town and a ski area grew up around it,” says 60-something Dottie Beck, a 28-year veteran ski instructor at Park City resort who skis year-round thanks to a “summer” job as an instructor in New Zealand. “Even in a lean year, you can find good snow. I grew up in Colorado but this is where I wanted to live.”

As an instructor, Beck likes that her students benefit from a diverse portfolio of terrain. At many resorts, learners are limited to one or two areas, but not at Park City. “I’ve got lots of options for every level and we’re not confined to one itty-bitty area, we can go all over,” she says, “That makes my job easier; it’s a great teaching mountain.”



But still, as many of Park City Mountain's terrain secrets you unlock, you want at least one of your days here to be a powder day. After our throwaway run—Treasure Hollow—from the top of the Town Lift, Jennifer is still in a New York state of mind: chomping to get up to the top of the resort, the big daddy peaks Jupiter Peak (9,998') and Ninety-Nine 90 (9,990'). Both of these summits reward hiking from their access lifts (McConkeys and the eponymous Ninety-Nine 90) with fresh lines in high alpine bowls. I talk her down though, and instead we opt to hang back and work the Crescent Lift, a high-speed four-pack that, on powder days, is almost as overlooked as the Town Lift. I learned this Crescent trick from Bagel Boy or, as some call him, Adam Fehr. Fehr is the 35-year-old proprietor of Park City Bread & Bagel (hence the nickname) whose townie status as the king of carbs allows him to average 100-plus days every season.

"On a powder day, it's important to have patience," Fehr once imparted to me. "Everybody is racing to get to Pioneer and McConkeys [the lifts that service the Jupiter Peak area]. But they'll just have to wait for those chairs to open while ski patrol clears things out. Meanwhile you can sneak in a few laps on Ski Team Ridge."



THE BIG BAG OF TRICKS

The Secret Lifts—The two main base villages at Park City—Canyons Village and Park City Village—are the dual centers of access, but locals know that there are other less-traveled ways to get onto the mountain: The Town and Silver Star Lifts. Parking at Silver Star is limited. Use Uber or the free Park City Town bus system.

The Motherlode—Motherlode Lift's earlier incarnation as a slow lift makes the now-high-speed quad an excellent alternative to some of the more congested lifts in the Miner's Camp Day Lodge Area.

The Epic Mix Hack—The Epic Mix smart phone app includes a function called "Epic Mix Time," which allows you to see wait times at lifts around the resort. At Park City, it's a game changer. You can use your phone to see, in real time, lift-line bottlenecks and head the opposite direction.

The Instagram Boost—Vail photographers hang around hot spots on the mountain and the photos they take are piped into the Epic Mix app. They're free to look at but you'll have to pay for downloads to post to your Insta feed. Each day the photographers have a secret theme like "angry faces" or "air guitar." Be sure to ask.

The Doughnut Detour—Cloud Dine is a popular on-mountain restaurant at the top of Dream Peak, where the Dreamscape and Dreamcatcher lifts both disgorge their passengers. Every morning, the kitchen crew here makes up a select few batches of fresh doughnuts for those in the know. They're usually gone before 11 a.m. but the chef sometimes holds a few back for the lunch rush, so be sure to ask.

The Day Break Dead-end—Looking at the trail map you might ignore the Day Break Lift. It seems like a short lift that dead-ends into a bunch of blue runs. It gets overlooked, and you'll find stashes of northwest-facing powder here, even days after a storm.

VIVE LA DEER VALLEY DIFFERENCE

Upon arrival at Deer Valley you'll be swarmed, whisked wherever you need, and without a doubt made comfortable by the thousand-strong army of staffers wearing the resort's signature forest-green livery. This service is the bedrock of a ski experience that has been named the best in North America a record eight times in *SKI* magazine's annual (and venerable) reader survey. Where neighboring Park City Resort is more of a y'all-come-on-over affair, Deer Valley is more, shall we say, choosy. For example, snowboarders are not on the list. DV is one of two holdout skier-only resorts in the U.S. and its devotees see no reason to change the rule. Snowboards, for their near universal acceptance, carve up the beautiful corduroy that Deer Valley is known for in an un-beautiful way. After the snowboarders are culled, DV caps its daily skier count at 7,500, which ensures plenty of elbow room. (DV has 2,025 acres of terrain.) With stellar service, skiers only, and grooming you can set your watch by, DV will be a singular ski day and also a fabulous day of dining. Food at Deer Valley is miles away from typical resort fare. When you break at Silver Lake Lodge, you'll find steaming bowls of pho. For dinner, sizzling haunches of lamb roast over a roaring fire and melting bobsled tracks of raclette flow at Empire Lodge.



Thanks, Bagel Boy. Crescent doesn't disappoint. While the sound of avalanche guns echo from higher up, we take laps on Silver King, Willy's Run, and Erika's Gold, steep black-diamond runs that we'd skip on a groomer day but are forgiving in the deep Utah powder. At the bottom of each lap, we practically ski right back onto Crescent. Maybe later we'll join the lines of skiers and boarders crawling around Jupiter and Ninety-Nine 90 peaks. Or not. Park City's immensity makes it easy to get pleasantly sidetracked and it's one of those blue-sky days where our best-laid plans dissipate like the smoky powder under our skis. Following Bagel Boy and Beck's best advice, our ramblings take us from boundary to boundary.

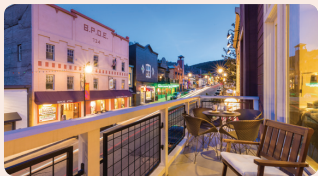
ENDLESS SKIING

View of The Canyons side of Park City Mountain from the Super Condor Express.

As we crest the run literally called Quit 'N Time, one of Beck's favorite underskied paths back into town, Jennifer asks, "Last run?" I remember one more fine bit of advice from Bagel Boy: Never call it the last run. It's a jinx. "Second-to-last run," I wink. ❖

Jeremy Pugh's writing also appears in SKI, Sunset, and Salt Lake magazines.

INSPIRATO RECOMMENDS



Park City

Inspirato Members vacationing in Park City will find a variety of accommodations to choose from in and around Deer Valley. Residences range from the two-bedroom Stargazer condo to Summit on Main

(pictured left) and the sprawling 4,700-square-foot Royal Lookout residence with four bedrooms and occupancy for 12. All Inspirato residences feature ski-in, ski-out access to Deer Valley's famous groomed slopes (sorry boarders, Deer Valley doesn't allow snowboarding). Inspirato partner Ski Butlers will fit your family with rental skis and boots in the residence. Overnight waxing and tunes are included as well.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT INSPIRATO RESIDENCES IN PARK CITY, GO TO INSPIRATO.COM/DESTINATIONS.



Mara Lund's picks
Inspirato On-Site Expert

MAIN STREET EATS

It's hard to go wrong dining on Park City's Main Street.

The ski-in **High West Distillery & Saloon** crafts award-winning whiskeys and has been a favorite of locals and repeat visitors since it opened.

Reserve a table at **Riverhorse**. Its contemporary American cuisine has earned it four Mobil Travel stars since it opened in 1997.

The signature margaritas and barbecue spareribs on

Chimayo's southwestern menu keep drawing crowds.

For Italian fare, head to **Grappa**. Be sure to try their signature grappa as well.

YURT SO GOOD

For a dinner to remember, book a seat for **The Viking Yurt**. A Snowcat-pulled sleigh takes diners up Park City Mountain to a yurt where a six-course meal comes with spectacular views of the mountains and valley.

DISTINCTIVE AND TIMELESS

Waldorf Astoria Park City is passionately committed to the finest ski and snow play. A dedicated ski school, just steps from the hotel's front door, will take you to Copper Village, the base of Park City Resort. Here, you'll find more than 7,000 acres of terrain, more than 300 trails, a 30-foot half-pipe, and 35-on-ice skating rinks. As a skier or snowboarder, you'll find your place here.



WALDORF ASTORIA
PARK CITY

300 S FROSTWOOD BOULEVARD PARK CITY, UT 84098
WALDORFASTORIA.PARKCITY.COM

