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First Timer's Guide to Park City Winter Getaway

SKIING

TRAVEL

By **Kühl Editor** on February 22, 2020

After enjoying winter outdoor activities in Colorado for decades, Park City invited us to see what Utah had to offer. Decades ago, when we first introduced our children to skiing, we entertained the idea of traveling to Utah. We weighed the advantages of less transportation hassles from Chicago versus the ability to visit our alma mater, the University of Colorado-Boulder. Our desire to rekindle college memories offset Utah's powdery conditions, and Colorado eventually became our permanent residence.

Until our recent visit to Park City, we had not skied outside our majestic state for decades. After our recent winter getaway, we're inclined to return. A two-day lift ticket was insufficient to explore the largest ski area in North America, boasting 7,300 skiable acres and dozens of lifts. Our handful of meals only scratched the surface of Park City's culinary scene. We made the most of our time in Park City by checking out a few attractions, skiing during the day, and eating in between our activities. Here's an overview of what we experienced and learned during our whirlwind stay.

Attractions

Woodward Park City

While our main focus was skiing, we also checked out a few places. As the first travel writer to visit the [Woodward Park City](#) since its opening in mid-December 2019, I could see how this kid-friendly, year-round facility caters to locals and visitors. Their Parkour and freerunning zone is the only such dedicated indoor facility in Utah.

Inside, kids jumped on oversize trampolines, skated, and rode bikes. Kids came up smiling after falling into a foam pit following flying off of ramps into the air on their bikes. On an adjacent slope, people were skiing and boarding. A separate lift took visitors to an apex where they could sled down in large round tubes.

Utah Olympic Park

During a brief stop at the Utah Olympic Park, we walked through the [Alf Engen Ski Museum](#) to admire bits and pieces of history. Highlights of the museum included local ski history and the 2002 Winter Olympic Games and Special Olympic Games exhibits. If you love skiing or history, I recommend adding this to your must-see list.



Inside the Alf Engen Ski Museum, Park City, Utah

Main Street and the Park City Museum

One night on our way to dinner, we took a leisurely walk along the Historic Main Street. We glanced into the windows of an assortment of shops and restaurants lining both sides of the roadway. We were pleasantly surprised to come upon the [Park City Museum](#) and were happy to take a respite from the dropping temperatures. Inside, we were drawn back in time to when mining was the main draw. The remnants of the Territorial Jail and artifacts from the 19th and the 20th century show how the area developed. One noteworthy exhibit of the world's first underground ski lift is from the 1960s.



Sandy and Ira enjoy evening stroll in Park City, Utah. Sandy pictured in [KÜHL SPYFIRE DOWN JACKET](#)

Sampling of Culinary Options

Hearth & Hill

Opening in late 2018, [Hearth & Hill](#) rocked the Park City culinary scene racking up numerous accolades from media outlets. Votes tallied for Park Record's annual Park City's Best 2019 Awards put the restaurant at the top of the list in more than one category. After joining Dan Howard, the Director of Communication for Park City for lunch at [Hearth & Hill](#), we would have to agree with the town's consensus. All three of us were thrilled with our diverse picks – one healthy and two not-as-healthy options. Dan's Banana Dutch Baby won my vote for the most photogenic of our meals.



Dutch baby at Hearth and Hill, Park City, Utah

Handle

The hotel shuttle dropped us near this popular eatery featuring small shareable plates. [Handle](#) was a great option for our first night in town. Our sampling included an assortment of hot and cold items topped off with a chocolate torte complimented with a glass of Graham's 20-year-old Tawny port.



Chocolate torte at Handle, Park City, Utah

Courchevel: A Talisker Club Bistro

A preset multi-course meal paired with some of the restaurant's fine wines made our last night in town extremely special. At [Courchevel](#), Chef Clement Gelas introduced us to some of his favorite dishes inspired from his youthful days in France. His healthy version of French cooking shies away from cream-based sauces and is filled with an array of vegetables. As an acknowledged carnivore, Ira devoured his beef burgundy while I was content with my pescatarian option, the Idaho trout bouillabais.

Ski Rental

It's easy to forget the disadvantages of renting boots and skis when you always ski on your own equipment. To minimize the inconvenience of lugging our equipment for a three-day visit, we chose to leave it at home. Park City arranged for [Ski Butlers](#) to bring everything to our hotel room, including helmets. I have to admit this was a great perk. The representative did his best to accommodate us with their rental level equipment.



Equipment delivery from Ski Butlers, Park City, Utah

On our first run, we learned an important lesson: if you own ski equipment catered to your ski ability, it's definitely worth the hassle of schlepping your stuff, especially boots, on an airplane.

Skiing and Mountain Dining

As a seasoned skier, I always dress in layers for my ski adventures. A [KÜHL Women's Spyfire down jacket](#) topped with [KÜHL Deflektr Hybrid Shell](#) protected me from Utah's alpine environment. Don't forget to visit KÜHL's Park City store on Main Street while you're in town.

While my [KÜHL apparel](#) kept me cozy and dry, I was unprepared to tackle a mega mountain resort. I looked at the ski trail map and had no clue where we should go. At the base area alone, we had several lift options. After hip replacement surgery a decade ago, I favor intermediate runs. Even though this decision may have lopped off half of the terrain, we still faced thousands of skiable acres. To narrow down our choices, we decided in advance where we wanted to eat as well as a tentative time for stopping. By focusing on a specific area of the mountain, the process of selecting trails and lifts was simplified.



Gondola ride, Park City, Utah

Our Sheraton hotel shuttle dropped us in the Mountain Village area. From there, we needed to trek up a series of steps to the base area. Since our first day would be the longest, we used the additional time to weave our way to the middle of the mountain. This plan required us to take the Quicksilver Gondola across a forested area where we had fantastic views of the surrounding mountain ranges. At the termination point, we could ski to chairlifts that fed into intermediate runs near the Cloud Dine restaurant.

The crowds dissipated as we moved higher up the mountain and more to the center. Our introduction to Utah's powder occurred on these narrower trails. Only a handful of other skiers and boarders shared these shady trails that gave bird's-eye views of spectacular mountain homes on premier property. A plowed road system connected these ski-in ski-out home sites.

A stop at Cloud Dine gave us healthy nourishment, hydration, and a chance to warm our hands and feet. It was great to see a small section devoted to healthy salads. The Stratocumulus was a delicious version of tuna niçoise.



Stratocumulus at Cloud Nine, Park City, Utah

Once again, I realized the importance of my own ski equipment which includes electronic foot warmers. Skiing without these devices made me appreciate the advantages warmers provide.

To figure out the most efficient way to return to the Mountain Village, we asked a Vail Resorts Guest Services representative for assistance. She offered suggestions for trails that matched our interest. A couple of hours later, we were back on the shuttle headed to our hotel.

With a late afternoon flight, our second day was abbreviated. We maximized our time on the slopes by taking express chairlifts above the Mountain Village. The more crowded runs on this part of the mountain were wider and devoid of powder. Even though we encountered more people, our wait time at the lifts was minimal. An early lunch at the Miners Camp offered other salad options. To be back in time for a prearranged late checkout, we couldn't dawdle after lunch.



Outside Miners Camp, Park City, Utah. Pictured in KÜHL Women's Deflekt Hybrid Shell

It was far too soon to end a glorious day of skiing at Park City, but our travel commitments dictated our departure. On the first day, we learned how easily it is to become confused on unfamiliar terrain. We paid close

attention to the signage to avoid trails that did not lead to the base area.

Transportation

Airport logistics make some destinations simpler to manage than others. While we didn't encounter any issues, we can only assume that the ease of traveling will improve when the current renovations are completed in September 2020. The new terminal will replace an obsolete structure built more than 50 years ago. The drive from the airport to Park City is considerably shorter than the drive from Denver International Airport to the closest ski resorts along the I-70 corridor. Visitors who do not rent a car can arrange private pickups using [Canyon Transportation](#), Uber, or other entities. Depending on where you stay, it's definitely possible to visit Park City without a car.

Accommodations

Park City hosted us at the [Sheraton Park City](#). This recently renovated building was rebranded a Sheraton during the hotel's remodeling. Our spacious room with two queen beds was clean and quiet. The hotel's onsite restaurant offered the option of either an a la carte breakfast menu or a set price buffet.

Most would agree that proximity to major attractions has its benefits. But when a hotel offers reliable shuttle service, the inconvenience of being offsite is mitigated. The dependable and efficient Sheraton shuttle gave us access to Park City Mountain, Main Street, and Deer Valley.



Cozy lobby of newly renovated Sheraton Park City

As first timers, we maximized our winter getaway experience by having a full schedule with little down time. On the slopes, we immediately realized why it is easier to return to the same ski resort year after year. Since the time our children were tykes, Summit County Colorado has been our go-to-place. By visiting Park City, we stepped outside our comfort zone to explore unknown slopes in a very different ecosystem filled with deciduous trees. Our senses were stimulated as we navigated our way in this new environment. We returned home revitalized by our first Park City winter getaway.

*When Sandy Bornstein isn't trekking in Colorado or writing, she's [traveling with her husband Ira](#). After living as an international teacher in Bangalore, India, Sandy published an award-winning book, *May This Be the Best Year of Your Life*, as a resource for people contemplating an expat lifestyle and living outside their comfort zone. Among other things, Sandy writes about family, intergenerational, and active midlife adventures highlighting land and water experiences.*

Park City hosted the Traveling Bornsteins for two nights at the Sheraton Park City. While in Park City, the Bornsteins received complimentary meals, admission to attractions, lift tickets, and rental ski equipment.



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