



Snowmass Isn't Just for Winter

Hiking Travel Trip Reports

By

Kühl Editor

Ski resorts during the off-season months are meccas for outdoor adventure when visitors can explore the terrain without worrying about snow or freezing temperatures. Memories of our extraordinary [2020 Snowmass ski getaway](#) opened the door to planning a summer stop on our way to [Telluride for our youngest son's wedding](#). Surprisingly, the pandemic did not deter Coloradoans or out-of-state adventure seekers. The state's highways

were filled with cars. Reasonably priced accommodations in the High Country were a rare find and popular restaurants required reservations to ensure a spot in their limited pandemic seating arrangements.

As Colorado residents, we took advantage of a special rate at the [Limelight Hotel Snowmass](#). Our positive experience earlier in the year put this hotel high on our list. Added bonuses included a convenient location and complimentary breakfast in the onsite restaurant. After checking in, we were reminded of the impeccable service offered by a well-trained staff that met the needs of a pandemic clientele.

Child-friendly programs and activities attracted families from near and far. Families outnumbered couples and individuals. After following pandemic restrictions for months, many parents were eager to strut freely with their offspring and to partake in a variety of mountain pursuits. It was uplifting to watch children laughing and scampering around the resort. On the mountain, we saw individuals and families riding in alpine luge-like cars set on a twisting track; people engaged on one of the five Treeline Trial Challenge Course experiences; climbers tackling a steep rock wall; and fishermen standing patiently near a pond. Signage reminded visitors that people over 16 required a Colorado fishing license. We also passed by the Lost Forest where young children under 10 explored an enclosed climbing area.



Families enjoy summer activities in Snowmass, Colorado

With less than 24 hours at the resort, our hiking plans were limited. To maximize our time, we chose to take the gondola and then trek back to the base area where our hotel was located. Our downhill journey was a bit helter-skelter since we had not created a plan, and in our haste, we forgot to pick up a trail map. Usually, we prepare for longer treks. In this case, we knew our destination could be reached by simply walking downhill and were not

fearful of getting lost.



Start with a gondola ride to enjoy a one-way, downhill hike in Snowmass.

However, it would have been helpful to know in advance that some of the trails would be filled with speeding bicyclists who were focused on the thrill of the mountain bike experience rather than pedestrians blocking their path. Zigzagging between trails was necessary to avoid a mishap. A couple of times, it would have been helpful to glance at a map. Our cell phone batteries were low, so we chose not to check an online map.



Sandy on hiking trails at Snowmass. Pictured in [KÜHL Women's Hiking pants, shirt and hat](#)

Initially, we wandered through a wooded area filled with mature trees and chirping birds. Water rushing through a nearby stream added a peaceful note. Eventually, the trail led into an open area where bright sunshine beat down on our bodies and we could see the resort in the distance. Dirt trails were the norm but occasionally we found

ourselves traversing on wide service roads.



Hiking below the gondolas in Snowmass, Colorado

As we walked down easy and intermediate ski slopes, our senses were ignited as we captured the finer details of Mother Nature's craftsmanship. From running streams to wildflowers to distant mountain peaks, we embraced our surroundings. Like so many other beautiful places in the world, we frequently stopped to take pictures so that we could be reminded at a later date of our afternoon.

We welcomed this opportunity to adapt to a slower pace. Enjoying our journey became more important than completing the hike in record time. Near the end of our adventure, we had the good fortune of seeing a deer grazing in an adjacent field. Had we been in a rush, we may have missed this added bonus of encountering wildlife not fazed by our presence.

To complete our perfect afternoon trekking down Snowmass Mountain, we had an early sushi dinner at [Sake in Snowmass Village](#). We were seated a safe distance from other diners as we tasted a selection of Pan Asian cuisine and handcrafted sushi.



Handcrafted sushi at Sake, Snowmass Village

Taking a leisurely stroll down a ski mountain stands in stark contrast to an exhilarating day filled with carved turns and a desire to ski as much as possible. Walking on that summer afternoon opened our eyes to the finer details of the mountain while winter skiing offered panoramic views of adjacent magnificent terrain. Any season, Snowmass is a wonderful Colorado destination.

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.



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