

JUMP START YOUR NEW YEAR'S

# RESOLUTION

WITH A TRIP TO COLORADO'S HIGH COUNTRY



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New Year's Resolutions often begin with the intent of improving fitness. Unlike people who reside in communities with limited wintertime activities, Arvada residents can easily hop into their car and be at an incredible winter destination within a few hours. These mountain communities offer a wide range of outdoor activities catering to individuals and families seeking a healthier lifestyle. While downhill skiing and snowboarding tend to be the main draw, many people seek out places offering trails for snowshoeing, cross country skiing, snowmobiling, and horseback riding, as well as the opportunity to try dog sledding and tubing. After a retreat into the mountains, most travelers return energized and motivated to continue a regular exercise habit.

During our High-Country travels, we have sampled a cross-section of places catering to a range of preferences. While word count and page limitations prevent a comprehensive overview, I am spotlighting a select number of places that have been previously visited by The Traveling Bornsteins. My focus is on a range of budgets along with a variety of activities.

#### **BECOME ENERGIZED AT A WINTER DUDE RANCH EXPERIENCE**

##### **Vista Verde Ranch and Latigo Ranch**

While most dude ranches close in the fall and reopen in the spring, a smaller number remain open so guests can enjoy the winter season. Travelers who enjoy all-inclusive resorts usually gravitate to this similar experience. The onsite chefs address the guests' dietary needs and meals are usually served family style. Ranch accommodations vary from site to site. Most ranches encourage guests to disconnect from technology and usually offer limited cell connectivity and sometimes no access to TVs.

Latigo Ranch, near Kremmling, boasts 50-kilometers of world-class cross country, snowshoe, and fat tire bicycle trails. Unfortunately, their summer herd of horses takes a break and are transported to another location in the winter months. This top-rated ranch is run by Randy and Lisa George along with members of their family. I recommend arriving before dark because the snow-packed roads can be treacherous and cell phone coverage can be spotty in rural Grand County.

We enjoyed hearty and nutritious meals served family style and stayed in a modest, clean cabin. Since our short stay introduced us to snowshoeing and cross country, we were limited to the easier terrain. Despite our novice status, we were invigorated by participating in both sports in a majestic and isolated mountain setting.

To reach Vista Verde Guest Ranch, we drove approximately 40 minutes north of Steamboat. Our spacious two-story cabin had three bedrooms and easy access to the main lodge, dining room, fitness center, adventure center, indoor arena, and winter pasture. From the moment we arrived until the time we packed up our car to depart, we encountered a hospitable and personable ranch staff.



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We divided our time between horseback riding in the arena and on a snow packed trail, feeding the horses, snowshoeing with a guide on forest service property, taking an indoor private archery lesson, and eating bountiful meals in the main lodge. We opted to keep an active schedule so we could maximize our activity level. Had we stayed longer, we may have tried tubing or taken a sleigh ride.

#### TAKE THE KIDS TO A FAMILY SKI RESORT

##### Keystone

Decades ago, we introduced our four adult sons to skiing at Keystone Resort. Now our grandchildren are following in our children's footsteps by learning how to ski at Keystone Resort. This kid-friendly environment offers quality ski and boarding instruction with an abundance of easy and intermediate groomed runs.

Adults, teens, and younger children can participate in mountain-top snow tubing, take a scenic sleigh ride, enjoy a backcountry snowmobile tour, go cross country skiing at the Nordic Center or ice skate on Keystone Lake. Kids can take a break by exploring the Snow Fort at the top of Dercum Mountain, designated as the world's largest.

Resort properties include ski-in/ ski-out as well as places a bit farther away. A convenient internal bus system makes it easy to commute from different parts of the resort. Additional accommodations are located throughout Summit County and provide easy access to other nearby ski areas—Breckenridge, A-Basin, and Copper Mountain. Dining at Keystone Resort and at the mountain restaurants can be a bit pricey compared to other locations in Summit County.

#### BE PAMPERED AT A SKI-IN/SKI-OUT LOCATION

##### Limelight Hotel Snowmass and Grand Hyatt Vail

If money is not a concern, research ski/in ski/out locations. These well-situated properties maximize your time on the mountain. After staying at a few of these hotels, I am sold on this hassle-free concept.

##### Limelight Hotel Snowmass

The Limelight Hotel Snowmass's slope-side location is hard to beat. With the added perk of a ski and board storage area near the adjacent ski lift, one does not have to schlep equipment to and from a guest room. If you are planning ski days at Aspen

Mountain, Aspen Highlands and/or Buttermilk, a complimentary ski shuttle will whisk you to your desired destination.

The day begins with a complimentary breakfast buffet in the Lounge. Appetites throughout the day can be satisfied at the onsite restaurant or at diverse dining options located within the adjacent Village or on the mountain. Time off from the slopes can be spent ice skating in the plaza, scaling a five-story rock climbing wall, tubing, snowshoeing, or participating in a snowbike tour.

### **Grand Hyatt Vail**

A closer option is the Grand Hyatt Vail nestled at the base of Vail Mountain. This resort is just a short walk to Vail Village. The ski valet and rental shop is just steps from the slow-moving quad lift (Chair 20 or Cascade Village Lift). After spending a day skiing/boarding, guests can ski to the Cascade Way, an easy run meandering back to the hotel.

Energetic visitors can add other activities to round out their schedule by considering a guided snowmobiling trip, booking an ice fishing time, or exploring Vail Valley trails on cross country skis or on a dog sled. Other outdoor options include a stroll along the snowpacked Gore Valley Trail to Vail Village or a refreshing swim in the resort's outdoor pool.

From Knock and Go guest room delivery to deluxe dining experiences at the Gessner Restaurant and Bar, the Grand Hyatt Vail offers guests diverse culinary choices. Guests wanting to sample Vail's notable cuisine can take the shuttle or walk to nearby Lionshead or Vail Village.

### **FOR AN ECONOMICAL GETAWAY STAY NEAR WINTER PARK AT SNOW MOUNTAIN RANCH**

About 20 minutes from Winter Park Resort, outdoor enthusiasts can reserve a no-frills cabin, lodge room, or yurt at a YMCA facility called Snow Mountain Ranch. This year-round destination is located on 5,000 majestic acres. By staying a distance away from a prime destination, guests can lower the overall cost of their trip. Onsite cafeteria style meals and to go options are available.

Instead of taking advantage of the world-class Nordic Center with over 100 meters of groomed trails catering to children and adults at all ability levels, we visited the onsite dog sledding facility for an introduction to this winter tradition. When it was my turn, I stood behind the musher who led a team of lean dogs with long legs who pulled the sled over the snow packed ground. Even though the presentation to the group was longer than the actual ride, Ira and I thoroughly enjoyed this first-time experience. Equestrians can ride horses by arranging a tour through a third-party vendor.

After skiing at Winter Park Resort one afternoon, we joined a two-hour Grand Adventure snowmobiling tour in the Arapahoe National Forest in Breckenridge. Our frosty 24-mile journey on both double and single tracks was exhilarating and satisfied our desire to try another new activity.

Before January slips by, consider planning a Colorado winter adventure. It will jump start your desire to add more activity into your daily lifestyle and set you on your way to a healthier 2022.

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