

Best Ski Towns: Luxury Vail ski vacation

Amy Whitley | December 27, 2017

It's impossible to have a ['best ski towns' series](#) and *not* include Vail, Colorado. There's a reason Vail has been absent from our list thus far...it's already on everyone *else's* list. That said, Vail deserves a place on ours as well, because with perhaps the exception of [Deer Valley Utah](#), [Vail](#) and its neighbor and Vail Resorts partner, **Beaver Creek**, offer up the most luxurious ski vacation experience we've tried. If you're looking to book a luxury Vail ski vacation, here's how to do it.



Luxury Vail ski vacation planning:

Start by setting the tone for your vacation by [staying at The Sonnenalp](#). This Leading Hotels of the World-classified hotel delivers that coveted and rare combination: it's both luxurious and comfortable. It's right in the heart of the Vail Village, and the Sonnenalp ski concierge service ensures you never have to carry your own gear anywhere (plus you get a private ski locker and changing area directly across from Gondola One). I love the amenities at a hotel, but still want the space of a rental during a ski vacation, and at the Sonnenalp, almost all the rooms are suites. Vail Resorts-owned [Arrabelle](#) is also a home run, located in the Lionshead Village (a very short shuttle ride from Vail Village).



At Vail, the skiing and snowboarding can be fantastic, thanks to its sheer [size and diversity of terrain](#), but a vacation here is also about the overall experience. To that end, when planning a luxury Vail ski vacation, take as much time to plan your dining reservations as you do your ski days. (Yes, it almost hurts me to write this, as an avid ‘go all day long’ skier, but when in Rome...)

With kids, definitely make at least one reservation at **Swiss Chalet**, located in The Sonnenalp. They’ll love the authentic Alpine cuisine, and fondue is fast to the table and fun to eat, keeping kids entertained. Other sure bets in Vail with kids: **Bully Ranch**, with casual burgers and to-die-for tater tots, and **Blue Moose Pizza** (a crowd-pleaser for sure).



If you and your partner or spouse can get away for a long lunch on the mountain, head to [The 10th](#), Vail's premiere on-mountain option (in my opinion). There's just something so luxurious about a sit-down lunch during the heart of the day. Plus, the views are amazing, so even if you're not skiing, it's worth booking (you can take Gondola One up without ski gear).

Additional must-do's for the grown ups: **La Tour** on East Meadow Drive for French cuisine in the heart of the village and **Tavern on the Square** in Lionshead Village. If you're in the mood to stay out late, head to the Red Lion in Vail Village for the best live music (and a very local scene), then finish your evening out with a nightcap at **King's Club** in Sonnenalp.

In addition to skiing, hotels and ski rental shops alike will rent or lend you snowshoes, which families can take on their own around the villages or up the nearby summit passes (if you have a car), or guided snowshoe trips are offered at Sonnenalp and other luxury properties.



Plan an evening in which you simply window shop (or productively shop...your choice) in Vail Village, Beaver Creek Village, or Lionshead Village, where you'll find the top stores in outdoor gear, lifestyle wear and more, and then go ice skating on one of the many outdoor rinks (we counted three in Vail and one in Beaver Creek, but there are probably more). If interested, look to time your visit around world-class ski and board competitions: Vail and Beaver Creek host many, including the Burton cup and the Birds of Prey stop on the World Cup downhill tour. Best of all, viewing these competitions is often free.



Kids' ski lessons are among the best quality in the world at both Vail and Beaver Creek (BC especially often wins awards and recognition for theirs), and as an added incentive (if you need it), near Vail's ski school learning areas in Lionshead, a full ropes adventure course is on offer...tempt your kids to try this after their lessons are over for the day!