

The Summer Side of Park City

Written by Written by Allison Young

Tuesday, 22 May 2012 16:13 - Last Updated Tuesday, 22 May 2012 16:55

From winter wonderland to warm-weather escape, Park City has it all—and a cool new boutique hotel to boot.



When you think Park City, what comes to mind: Snow? No doubt. It is a first-class ski destination, after all, with 3,300 skiable acres. You also probably think Sundance. That's a given. Come January, Hollywood heavyweights flock in droves to the largest indie movie festival in the country. The mountain town may even conjure up images of charming shops and intimate art galleries. All true, but that's just the tip of the iceberg.

The city doesn't get enough props as a warm-weather wonderland. Once the snow melts you'll find a hibernating summer playground where you can swim, bike, hike, golf, spa, museum hop or just chill in your posh hotel while you drink in the views. The cooler weather is also a draw. Park City's 7,000-foot elevation brings with it perfect 70-degree temperatures and cool mountain breezes. In other words, sweet relief from scorching Scottsdale.

Another bonus: Park City is emerging as a haute hotel haven. You've got Waldorf Astoria Park City, Montage Deer Valley and St. Regis Deer Valley Resort—all regal getaways. But for a truly special stay, the über chic Washington School House really does rock. Housed in an original quarried limestone exterior built in 1889, one of the last original school houses in the United States (thus the name), the historic hot spot is an unexpected jewel in the heart of the city, mere steps from Main Street and its mile-long stretch of posh shops and eateries.

Don't let the cold stone exterior fool you. Inside is a white-washed palace garnished with standout antiques and glitzy chandeliers. Take the "living room," a lobbylike space for chilling, eating and socializing; it showcases a one-of-a-kind crystal-studded antler chandelier and an impressive 10-foot mirror from France, both massive. But what sounds opulent actually has a warm and cozy vibe, in part thanks to the warm and cozy staff. They are there for your every whim (24-hour concierge), but never do you feel like you're asking too much. Want the use of an iPad loaded with movies or an iPod crammed with tunes? No problem. Want your clothes laundered? You got it. They're also happy to arrange dining reservations, outdoor guides, lift tickets, yoga classes, art gallery tours, fly fishing, rafting, horseback riding and transportation.

Each of the 12 rooms and suites comes with more than a view. Rooms are outfitted with original art, reclaimed oak barn wood floors and Pratesi linens (you will not want to get out of bed), plus extra touches like hooded robes, heated bathroom floors and Molton Brown bath goodies. Standouts are the lofted suites with their spiral cast-iron staircase and 9-foot windows, and the palatial penthouse with its private elevator entrance and 270-degree mountain views.

Sundance isn't the only festival... Come summer, foodies can rejoice in two prominent food festivals: the Park City Food and Wine Festival (July 5-8) and Savor the Summit (June 23). The later features a nearly mile-long dining experience running down Main Street.

TO LEARN MORE

Washington School House www.washingtonschoolhouse.com.



School's in session: Morning at Washington School House means a hearty mountain breakfast followed by a day outdoors.

As much as the service, décor and amenities standout, so does the food. The price of admission includes a hearty mountain breakfast (think omelets loaded with good-for-you greens and buttermilk pancakes topped with pure maple syrup) and fab après- ski—or après-mountain biking—bites that change with the season, plus free-flowing Champagne, wine, beer and spirits. Dinner exclusive to hotel guests is also on the menu. Expect to be wowed with a short but sweet menu that might offer roasted garden vegetable risotto one night and a New York strip with fingerling potatoes another.

We saved the best two for last. The School House's basement boasts a funky après-ski lounge with a stretched fireplace and lots of sitting space. It's the perfect place to chill with an app and an aperitif after an adrenaline-filled day. The top of the hotel has another tucked-away surprise: a heated pool and spa. Nestled into the hillside and surrounded by boulders and aspens, the rooftop waters are ideal for soaking away your worries and relishing the cooler temps. Ahhh, summer.

The Summer Side of Park City

Written by Written by Allison Young

Tuesday, 22 May 2012 16:13 - Last Updated Tuesday, 22 May 2012 16:55

Dining in the City

Ski towns aren't exactly known for their gourmet grub. Chili, yes. Rack of lamb, not so much. Yet Park City is carving out a niche as a dining town. There's Spruce at the Waldorf Astoria and Jean-Georges' J&G Grill at the St. Regis, plus Prime Steak House and Grappa on Main Street. Our favorite, though, is Talisker on Main, an intimate eatery featuring an open kitchen and the award-winning cuisine of Executive Chef John Murcko. The seasonal cuisine changes daily and includes standouts like lobster hush puppies and buttermilk fried chicken breast. www.taliskeronmain.com.