**Aspen**

**Categories**

**Good For**

Intermediates

Experts

Snowboarders

Non-skiers

Après ski

Snow reliability

**Data**

**Beginner Runs**

40

**Intermediate Runs**

129

**Advanced Runs**

160

**Total Runs**

329

**Lifts**

41

**Chairs**

26

**Drags**

12

**Gondola Cable Cars**

3

**Parks**

5

**Pipes**

2

**Weather**

**Annual Snowfall**

7.6m (25 ft).

**Overview**

Right up there with the likes of St Moritz and Chamonix in terms of popularity, Aspen is one of those ski resorts with a mass global appeal.

Starting out as a mining town in the 19th-century, Aspen was once the largest silver producer in America. But after the minerals inevitably ran out, it was the resort’s growth into a ski area at the end of the Second World War that saved it from melting away into a mountain ghost town.

And what a ski resort it is - an eclectic mixture of billionaires and ski bums, phenomenal mansions and run-down hostels and world-class skiing and hedonistic nightlife that’s helped make Aspen one of the most vibrant and exciting cities in North America.

For visitors the town is a delight with endless quirky shops and restaurants, and plenty of lively spots to enjoy a drink in the evening.

On the slopes, Aspen lives up to its reputation with hundreds of miles of piste to sample. Between its own slopes and those of neighbouring off-shoots Snowmass, Buttermilk and Aspen Highlands there is plenty of runs to challenge even the most confident skier.

**Location**

Aspen ski resort is located in Colorado's Rocky Mountains, in western USA.

**Website**

http://www.aspensnowmass.com

**Piste Map**

http://www.aspensnowmass.com/images/dyn/trailmaps/ajax.html

**Hit The Slopes**

Aspen's four ski areas have distinct characteristics. Aspen Mountain looks stunning as it rises above the resort town of Aspen in a style that’s familiar to the Alps, but unusual for the USA. Looks here don't deceive as the Silver Queen gondola accesses some of the most exciting terrain skiers will find anywhere, best suited to intermediate and advanced-level skiers and boarders.

Aspen-based beginners are encouraged towards the smallest of the four areas, Buttermilk; a five-minute (5km/3-mile) shuttle bus ride away. Long-time host of the Winter X Games, it's both a giant terrain park and a secluded beginners area.

Snowmass has the lion's share of the resort’s skiing and also boasts the Poma Cirque lift. This lift serves the Cirque powder bowl (one of several the resort offers), along with more than 90 runs for all ability levels covering nearly 240km (150 miles) of pistes.

The fourth ski area, Aspen Highlands, is another short shuttle ride from either Aspen or Snowmass, but it now also has a small base village of its own. Although some more mainstream ski slopes have been added in recent years, it has a reputation as the resort's wild child, with some of the most exciting on- and off-piste terrain, including in-bounds, off-piste hiking and amazing terrain on Highland Bowl.

The ski season in Aspen runs from late November until mid-April. Aspen Mountain (also nicknamed Ajax) and Snowmass have the longest seasons, while Buttermilk and Aspen Highlands open in early December and remain so until the start of April.

**Aspen Highlands**

**Resort**

2451

**Base**

2451

**Top**

3519

**Snowmass**

**Resort**

2473

**Base**

2473

**Top**

3813

**Buttermilk**

**Resort**

2399

**Base**

2399

**Top**

3018

**Aspen**

**Resort**

2422

**Base**

2422

**Top**

3417

**General**

**Beyond The Slopes**

There's arguably more to do at Aspen off the snow than in any other resort in North America, ranging from high-energy outdoor pursuits to more sedate cultural offerings.

The arts feature very highly with about 40 art galleries and museums, including the popular Aspen Art Museum (tel: +1 970 925 8050; [www.aspenartmuseum.org](http://www.aspenartmuseum.org)). The resort also has music and dance schools, several theatres, regular film festivals and even its own ballet company. Live music of all kinds is performed at numerous venues around the resort.

Various adventure sports are equally prominent; the list includes paragliding, ballooning, curling, ice skating, snowshoeing, dog sledding, rock and ice climbing and the more sedate fly fishing.

Being pampered is a must after a few days on the slopes, and there is a wide choice of spas and beauty parlours to enjoy. Among these is the lavish health centre in The Little Nell (tel: +1 970 920 4600; [www.thelittlenell.com](http://www.thelittlenell.com)), which offers a wide selection of treatments.

**Family Fun**

Aspen and Snowmass are both well equipped to cater for families, although the latter has an advantage for younger families with its easier terrain adjacent to the village.

The Treehouse ski school (tel: +1 970 923 1227) at Snowmass accepts children from eight weeks (for supervised indoor play) and offers specially tailored ski classes to suit children’s age and ability. The Family Zone on Snowmass Mountain is home to adventurous and interactive kids' trails, a children's race arena and a terrain park. There's even a special kids' trail map with all the important details.

The recently opened central childcare centre is a state-of-the-art facility for young children, and there are also a large number of babysitting services for toddlers and young ones.

**Retail Therapy**

There are about 300 shops in Aspen, making it a veritable retail paradise unmatched by almost any other ski resort. Most of the world's best-known designer brands are here, including Christian Dior, Prada and Gucci along South Galena Street, but there are also plenty of regular shops and local retailers from grocery shops to pharmacies.

**Splashing Out**

Skiers who love powder should take a Powder Tour (tel: +1 970 920 0720), which involves riding in a luxury snowcat to prime untracked stashes on the backside of Aspen Mountain. After all that hard work, sit down to a gourmet lunch, which is included as part of the tour.

**Apres Ski**

The USA's number one ski party town has a huge choice of après-ski venues and, unlike most other ski resorts in the country, the majority are within walking distance of one another.

The Red Onion (tel: +1 970 925 9955; [www.redonionaspen.com](http://www.redonionaspen.com)) is a very long established, unpretentious pub with a good drinks menu and friendly staff.

Eric's (tel: +1 970 920 1488; [www.sucasaaspen.com](http://www.sucasaaspen.com)) is another household name with 14 beers on tap and more than 50 malt whiskies to try until 0200. Those who prefer tequila should opt for Jimmy's (tel: +1 970 925 6020; [www.jimmysaspen.com](http://www.jimmysaspen.com)), which stocks 80 varieties that can be sipped between bouts of salsa dancing on Saturday nights, starting at 2300.

**Eating Out**

There are around 150 places to eat in Aspen with cuisine served from across the globe, including: Chinese, French, Italian, Japanese, Middle Eastern, Savoyard and Thai.

As well as being a great après-ski spot, Jimmy’s is also good for dining as one of several informal, atmospheric and moderately priced restaurants. The White House Tavern (tel: +1 970 925 1007, [www.aspenwhitehouse.com](http://www.aspenwhitehouse.com)) is similarly popular with a limited menu, mostly burgers, but of large size and made using high quality ingredients.

Boogie's Diner (tel: +1 970 925 6610) in Aspen village, which is inspired by the 1982 film *Diner*, is a good choice for traditional 1950s- and ‘60s-style American food at affordable prices, and is pure fun. Pyramid Bistro (tel: +1 970 925 5338; [www.pyramidbistro.com](http://www.pyramidbistro.com)) is very popular, using organic ingredients to create cuisine that aims to be tasty and fat free.

After a full day on the slopes, there’s no better place to quash hunger pangs than New York Pizza (tel: +1 970 920 3088), which serves classic large American pizza.

**Transport**

**Getting There**

Nearest airports: Aspen-Pitkin County Airport (ASE); Denver International Airport (DEN).

Distances to resort: 6km (4 miles); 354 km (221 miles).

Driving times: 10 minutes; 4 hours.

**Getting Around**

Free shuttle buses operate from 0800 to 1630 between the four ski areas. There is also a free transportation service to virtually all condominium complexes and many outlying residential areas within Aspen and Snowmass Village.

**Hotels**

The attractive old mining town boasts a plethora of top-notch accommodation, including luxury hotels and extravagant chalets to suit its well-heeled clientele. There is also a wide choice of moderate hotels in Aspen, as well as inns, bed and breakfasts, lodges and apartments - with something to suit all budgets.

**St. Moritz Lodge & Condominiums**

Cheap by Aspen standards, the St. Moritz Lodge & Condominiums is a welcoming establishment located close to most of the resort’s primary amenities and the main ski lifts.

**Category**

Cheap

**Thoroughfare**

XXX

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

XXX

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

XXX

**Telephone**

+1 970 925 3220

**Website**

www.stmoritzlodge.com

**Hotel Durant**

The 2-star, family owned, Hotel Durant is within walking distance from the heart of Aspen and only three blocks from the Silver Queen Gondola. Extra bonuses include complimentary cheese and wine each evening and use of the hotel hot tub.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

XXX

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

XXX

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

XXX

**Telephone**

+1 970 925 8500

**Website**

www.durantaspen.com

**The Innsbruck**

A luxurious hotel with very high service standards a short distance from the centre of town. The Innsbruck has very comfortable rooms and suites, while also boasting desirable services, including a free shuttle service to the downtown area of the resort.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

XXX

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

XXX

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

XXX

**Telephone**

+1 866 925 2980

**Website**

www.theinnsbruck.com

**Mountain Chalet**

An old time lodge that has been family-run for more than 40 years, Mountain Chalet occupies a good location, just 220m (700ft) from the Silver Queen gondola. The cosy hotel serves a complimentary full breakfast and houses a year-round heated outdoor pool.

**Category**

Cheap

**Thoroughfare**

XXX

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

XXX

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

XXX

**Telephone**

+1 970 925 7797

**Website**

www.mountainchaletaspen.com

**Limelight Hotel**

A central, affordable property with a generous buffet breakfast included in the rate, Limelight Hotel provides free transfers from the airport, a ski valet service and two days of guided skiing per week. Rooms here come complete with a kitchenette, enabling self-catering

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

XXX

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

XXX

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

XXX

**Telephone**

+1 970 925 3025

**Website**

www.limelighthotel.com

**The Little Nell**

One of the most prestigious addresses in world skiing, the best suites in this 5-star hotel are highly sought-after, particularly in the peak periods around Christmas and New Year. The hotel features a wellness area and a choice of chic places to eat and drink after a day on the slopes.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

XXX

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

XXX

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

XXX

**Telephone**

+1 970 920 4600

**Website**

www.thelittlenell.com