

Best ski resorts in North America for families

(Courtesy of Jennifer Yellin, The Points Guy)

Whether your child is a shredding, snowboarding teen or a newbie headed to ski school for the very first time, there are many mountain resorts across North America that excel at catering to families.

While skiing is one of my family's favorite winter activities, the after-ski scene is equally as fun. With many resorts offering alternative snow-related activities — such as tubing, snowshoeing and even horse and carriage rides — all families can enjoy the entire ski experience. Although some resorts have changed a bit over the past few years, most are back to the way they once were, and the charm of the slopes is still very much present.

However, before you book your vacation, check in with the mountain for any specific ski school questions. Some mountains offer lessons to students as young as 2 years old, while others require that the child is at least 4. Many — although not all — also offer childcare.

Lessons can book up well in advance, so if ski school — or even on-mountain daycare — is a must-have for your vacation, double-check the options to ensure they fit your ski vacation goals.

Once you decide on the best resort for your family, research its lift ticket and pass options. Many resorts will hit capacity limits well in advance, so you'll also want to make sure to purchase your tickets or make reservations (which are required with some [passes](#)) prior to arriving. For example, while [Vail resorts](#) no longer require reservations for pass holders, the company will limit ticket sales. Many Ikon resorts, on the other hand, will require advance reservations.

With all of those nuances in mind, check out the current offerings at these top-rated North American mountains that are some of the best spots for families.

Beaver Creek Resort, Colorado

Perhaps one of the friendliest slopes for kids is [Colorado's Beaver Creek](#). Just about two hours from [Denver International Airport \(DEN\)](#) or 30 minutes from Eagle County Regional Airport (EGE), this resort is relatively easy to access from both East and West Coast destinations.

Last year, Beaver Creek opened a brand new, 250-acre, lift-served expansion called McCoy Park. This offers even more terrain for beginner and intermediate skiers and snowboarders, and it elevates the mountain experience with 17 new groomable trails plus two additional chairlifts. Along with Haymeadow Park and Red Buffalo Park, McCoy Park solidifies Beaver Creek Kids Ski and Snowboard School as the industry leader.

For your apres ski activities, head to the bottom of the mountain for Cookie Time where kids — and adults — can enjoy free freshly baked cookies at 3 p.m. Needless to say, it's a big hit with families. Or, if you're looking for a sugar rush while still on the mountain, don't miss the vintage Beaver Creek Candy Cabin or the Ice Cream Parlour at the top of the slopes.

The open-air sleigh rides to Allie's Cabin restaurant will return again this winter. Although the eatery won't offer dedicated family dinners like it did pre-pandemic, a new Northern Italian menu offers a la carte options to satisfy the whole family.

Off the mountain, you can enjoy snowshoe treks, ice skating in the village, snow tubing and even dog sledding.

Stay at the [Park Hyatt Beaver Creek](#) (from 25,000 World of Hyatt Points), Hyatt Residence Club Beaver Creek (from 21,000 World of Hyatt Points), [The Ritz-Carlton, Bachelor Gulch](#) (from 84,000 Marriott Bonvoy points), Beaver Creek Lodge — The Autograph Collection (from 82,000 Marriott Bonvoy points), The Westin Riverfront Resort and Spa (from 71,500 Marriott Bonvoy points), the Sheraton Mountain Vista Villas (from 44,000 Marriott Bonvoy points or use your [35k free night certificate](#)) or Comfort Inn Near Vail Beaver Creek (from 30,000 Choice Privileges points).

Keystone Resort, Colorado

Out of all the Colorado ski resorts (and there are plenty), Keystone is the hot spot for kids of all ages.

There is the usual dog sledding, snow tubing, ice skating and sleigh rides, but the piece de resistance is the resort's kid programs and accommodations. With fun on-mountain experiences — such as snowcat skiing, night skiing (weekends and holidays) and the famous Snow Fort — your kids will never be bored. Additionally, the resort offers a ton of family conveniences, such as free front-row family parking and red wagons to help tow skis, boards or even tired kiddos.

In addition, Keystone aims to be one of the first ski resorts to open in October, so you can get a jump start on your family ski trips. And if you are an Epic Pass holder, you can enjoy the Epic Pass First Tracks where you'll receive exclusive access an hour before the general public on Nov. 11, 18 and Dec. 2.

Within the resort's 3,000 acres, your family will be able to experience a wide range of terrain. Best of all, [kids 12 and under ski free](#) when you stay at one of the resort's properties for two nights or more, with no blackout dates.

Stay at the [Hyatt Place Keystone](#) (from 12,000 World of Hyatt points or use your [Category 1–4 free night certificate](#)) or [rent a house nearby for the whole family](#).

Snowmass, Colorado

Snowmass is one of the mountains that comprises the swanky Aspen ski area in Colorado, so you can check a high-end ski resort visit off your bucket list and entertain the kids in one vacation. A bit less showy than its big sister Aspen, Snowmass includes the Treehouse Kids' Adventure Center — an all-inclusive kids club for children between 8 weeks and 4 years old. The center can occupy little ones while older kids take part in ski school and parents enjoy diverse terrain. Kids as young as 2.5 years old can join ski school lessons, with a maximum of five children in the lesson.

Other activities include snow tubing, alpine coasters, ice skating and snowshoeing tours. During select dates — six of them throughout the winter — Snowmass will offer a nighttime winter wonderland party called Ullr Nights filled with activities for families. This includes a gondola ride to Elk Camp, bonfires, tubing, alpine coaster rides, fire dancers, kids snow biking and kids tubing.

New this season, you'll experience a fully transformed base area at Buttermilk. This new 9,000-plus square foot building will feature an expanded bar and outdoor patio as well as additional services, a renovated and rebranded restaurant and, ultimately, a better experience for guests. If you want to see some world-class skiing, the world cup will take place in Aspen March 3-5, 2023.

Stay at Viewline Resort Snowmass (from 49,000 Marriott Bonvoy points or use your [50k free night certificate](#)); Woodrun Place — A Destination by Hyatt Residence (starting at 21,000 World of Hyatt points); Willows — A Destination by Hyatt Residence (from 21,000 points per night); or Stonebridge Inn (from 21,000 World of Hyatt points).

Copper Mountain, Colorado

If you are looking for a ski resort experience with lower prices than its neighbors, Copper is a great choice. This resort has family-friendly written all over it, with an array of activities for all ages.

In addition to skiing in prime snow conditions, you'll have the Rocky Mountain Roller Coaster, snow tubing, ice skating on West Lake in Center Village and even daily complimentary snowshoe tours. Additionally, whenever there is a full moon, Copper Mountain will offer guided Full Moon Snowshoe Tours in the evenings.

For the second year in a row, the Copper Maze will return. Located near the base of the Super Bee lift in East Village, this maze is extremely fun for kids as it's made entirely of snow.

During your visit to the mountain, you'll also want to check out the Woodward Copper Barn. This 19,400-square-foot barn is an action sports playground with multiple skate/scooter/BMX zones, indoor ParkSki and Burton ParkBoard training, spring floor, tumble track, five Olympic-grade fly-bed trampolines and one 12x12-foot Super Trampoline. For an off-mountain indoor activity, Woodward should not be missed.

Last year, Copper undertook a multi-year project called the Western Territory Expansion. This area is on the far west side of the mountain and is designed to inspire beginner skiers, kids and families to connect with Copper's history and heritage. In addition to the two new trails that debuted last year, an enhanced kids' tree trail will continue to improve the on-mountain skiing and riding experience.

Copper will also be celebrating its 50th anniversary season this winter. With that, you'll be sure to see many extra resort activities, promotions and customized 50th anniversary items. The company will release more specifics on Nov. 14 on how it will honor this major milestone.

Stay at Element 29, a brand-new hotel at the mountain base where you can use your flexible credit card points and miles.

Deer Valley Resort, Utah

When kids are just getting their bearings and making big side-to-side turns on a slope, it can be scary for them to interact with snowboarders or others speeding straight for the bottom.

There are no snowboarders to heed at the ski-only resort Deer Valley. There's also a children's adventure area on the mountain where your kids will find 14 pint-sized trails allowing them to practice new techniques — although their favorite part will probably be the tiny cabin hidden in the woods. The mountain limits its ticket sales each day, which keeps crowds (and lift line waits) at a minimum.

If you are looking for a ski resort that can also entertain a non-skiing child, the Deer Valley Children's Center offers full-day child care with many activities, as well as outdoor and indoor playgrounds. Children from 2 months through 12 years old can enjoy this facility.

On-mountain activities include a NASTAR race course and snowmobiling at Summit Meadows Adventures. There are also Mountain Host Tours, where intermediate and expert skiers can learn about the resort's terrain and history while discovering new runs with the locals. If you want to go big, you can also ski with an Olympic snowsport athlete (though participants must be at least 7 years old).

If you drive a few miles out of town, you can experience the fully revamped Woodward Park City. Here, kids can enjoy a state-of-the-art ski and snowboard terrain park, a seven-lane tubing park and an indoor facility with trampolines, foam pits and a skate park.

Stay at [St. Regis Deer Valley](#) (from 96,000 Marriott Bonvoy points) or Sheraton Park City (from 30,000 Marriott Bonvoy points) or use your [35k free night certificate](#).

Northstar California Resort, California

California's Northstar Resort, along the California–Nevada border on Lake Tahoe, is excellent for families. They can ski together in the Kids Adventure Zone, where two mountain areas with blue trails are safely tucked away from bigger, faster skiers and snowboarders. Plus, since the mountain is celebrating its 50th anniversary this winter, there's bound to be a lot of extra special fun.

This winter, the mountain will see the return of tōst — one of the mountain's most unique traditions. Here you can kick up your feet and unwind mid-day while enjoying a glass of apple cider (or a glass of bubbly for the adults). Additionally, every Saturday from 2 to 5 p.m. in The Village at Northstar, families can enjoy their apres skiing by cozying up around the fire pit — or strapping on their ice skates — while listening to live music. At other times, you can enjoy fireside s'mores and hot cocoa.

If you happen to be visiting over the holidays, the Village at Northstar turns into a magical winter wonderland. With lights and music — and even a visit from Santa — your family can enjoy the holidays on the ski slopes.

If cross-country skiing is your activity of choice, the Nordic Center offers nearly 22 miles of scenic trails for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and fat-tire biking.

Stay at [The Ritz Carlton, Lake Tahoe](#) (from 88,000 Marriott Bonvoy points), Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe Resort (from 21,000 World of Hyatt points) or Hampton Inn & Suites Tahoe-Truckee (from 29,000 Hilton Honors points).

Smugglers' Notch Resort, Vermont

An uber kid-friendly ski resort, Smugglers' Notch focuses on the entire family experience, which is why it's well known as "America's Family Resort." Smuggs, as it's called by those who know and love it, offers an award-winning Snow Sport University that starts lessons with little ones as young as 3 years old. Sir Henry's Learning and Fun Park has two "magic carpet rides" that gently guide new skiers to the top. Families return year after year and request the same instructors.

For those who already know how to ski and board, the mountain has everything they could want: 78 trails, eight lifts, the highest vertical drop in northern Vermont at 2,610 feet and more than 300 inches of natural snow each year. Not to mention multiple terrain parks and 1,000 acres for skiing and riding.

For those staying at the resort, everything is a few steps away, and an on-demand shuttle will take you wherever you need to go.

Not a skier or snowboarder? No problem. Smuggs offers many non-skiing activities, including snowshoeing, tubing, cross country skiing, swimming and ice skating. You can also experience the updated Fun Zone 2.0, which features a Ninja Warrior course, laser tag, miniature golf, an arcade, large inflatable slides and more spread across 26,000 square feet of indoor space.

The day doesn't end at Smuggs when the sun goes down. While the winter's schedule has yet to be set, typically there are fun family activities every night, including bingo, "Hungry, Hungry Humans," family gaga ball and a Winter Carnival with fireworks each Thursday.

You'll also find night skiing, glow tubing and night lessons for learning snowboarding and jibbing (freestyle snowboard tricks). Last season, Smuggs also introduced Snowshoeing and S'mores, where you can snowshoe on a lantern-lit trail to a bonfire and make s'mores before heading back — the ultimate way to end a winter day.

Stay at Smugglers' Notch (use your [flexible points](#) to wipe away the cost) or Club Wyndham Smugglers' Notch (15,000 points per bedroom per night, but limited availability).

Stowe, Vermont

[Stowe](#) has a world-class ski school and plenty of long, beautiful blue trails to keep your not-yet-expert skiers and snowboarders engaged. The newly created Adventure Zone was a hit last year and will continue to be improved and expanded. These low-angle, gladed areas are appropriate for anyone in the family looking for a fun experience skiing or boarding through the trees on Mount Mansfield.

Families will also benefit from a huge lift upgrade this winter with a new high-speed, detachable six-pack. This will give skiers and riders more direct mountain access from the Mansfield Base and it will reduce lift lines.

After a great family day on the slopes, take in a free, pre-dinner skate at the Spruce Peak outdoor ice rink or embark on a guided twilight snowshoe tour through the woods. The resort's Adventure Center will also be open to the public this winter, with its Stowe Rocks climbing gym available.

If you want to skip the "are we there yet?" choruses in the car, hop on a Tradewind Aviation flight from Westchester County Airport (HPN) outside New York City directly to Stowe Morrisville State Airport (MVL). Flights are limited to just Friday and Sunday, from January through March; while the cost might burn a hole in your wallet, you can purchase a ticket book to reduce the cost slightly. On the plus side, there is no extra charge for all of your ski gear.

The main issue with Stowe Mountain is its ticket prices compared to many other East Coast resorts. Luckily, the [Epic Ski Pass](#) can potentially save your family money. You could even look at Epic's Northeast Value Pass if you expect to ski only East Coast mountains this winter.

Stay at [The Lodge at Spruce Peak](#) (from 25,000 World of Hyatt points) or Trapp Family Lodge (yes, that Trapp family).

STOWE MOUNTAIN RESORT

Jay Peak, Vermont

People love Jay Peak thanks to its indoor water park, which is ideal for families who want to take a day off from skiing or have something to do after morning ski school. The Jay Peak Pump House features slides, a Flowrider surf simulator and an entire kids' play area. There are many lodging packages that include water park access, or you can purchase a day pass (purchasing in advance is recommended).

Aside from the water park, there are two arcades, a climbing gym, an ice skating rink, an indoor ropes course and a movie theater. Although some of these activities have been closed for the past few seasons, fingers crossed they are back up and running this winter.

Best of all, there's a surplus of ski-on/ski-off condo and hotel options, giving families the perfect opportunity to stay in accommodations that work best for their needs. For those with little ones — or even big ones — Jay Peak offers childcare for children as young as 6 weeks old both during the day and in the evenings.

Stay at Jay Peak Resort, which offers three hotel options and various condos for lodging accommodations. (You can also [use your Wyndham points through Vacasa](#) to book some on-mountain condos)

Jay Peak, Vermont. JAY PEAK RESORT

Bretton Woods, New Hampshire

Just over the Vermont border is New Hampshire's answer to family-oriented skiing: Bretton Woods.

Home to the family-friendly [Omni Mount Washington Resort](#), Bretton Woods features fat-tire snow biking trails, a 62-mile trail network for cross-country skiing, sleigh rides, snow tubing, canopy tours and an indoor and outdoor heated swimming pool (just for guests). The newly debuted Rosewood Lodge at the top of the mountain also gives skiers and riders that top-of-the-mountain lodge and luxury dining experience which you won't find at many other nearby mountains.

However, ski lessons will be slightly different than they were before the pandemic. While the mountain is still finalizing its winter offerings, it will most likely provide just private and semi-private lessons. If a full-day ski lesson at a reasonable cost is imperative for your child, then you might want to push a visit to Bretton Woods off for another year.

My family had the opportunity to stay at the Omni a few years ago and ski at Bretton Woods, and it was one of our favorite ski trips of the season. We truly felt like we were on vacation, and we never had to leave the resort area since all activities and dining experiences were a stone's throw away.

From the hotel's architecture to the incredible views of the top of Mount Washington, it's no surprise that the resort is a top destination for families. With many fun activities for the entire family, as we experienced first-hand, and, with over 468 acres to ski, there should be no shortage of on-mountain fun.

Stay at the [Omni Mount Washington Resort](#) for easy mountain access.

Whiteface, New York

Lake Placid is such a perfect winter destination that it has — not once but twice — hosted the Winter Olympic Games. The town of Lake Placid offers a plethora of kid-friendly activities and dining, and Whiteface Mountain offers non-skiers ages 6 and under a camp with arts, crafts and more. For skiers, the mountain offers the single longest intermediate run in the Northeast at 2.1 miles long — allowing for more time on the mountain, than off.

If lessons are a necessity for your trip to the mountains, you should note that Whiteface only offers morning two-hour lessons. However, after ski school or on a non-skiing day, you can fill your time by checking out the Olympic sites and activities, including a chance to experience bobsledding.

With [New York State's Learn to Ski or Ride Passport program](#), third and fourth graders will receive a free sky day at this resort (except on peak holiday dates). The details have not been fully announced yet for this winter, but more information about the program will be announced this fall.

Stay at [Whiteface Lodge and Resort](#), Hampton Inn and Suites Lake Placid (from 36,000 Hilton Honors points), Mirror Lake Inn Resort & Spa (from 21,000 World of Hyatt points), Courtyard Lake Placid (from 31,000 Marriott Bonvoy points) or Grand Adirondack Hotel, Lake Placid, a Tribute Portfolio Hotel (from 40,000 Marriott Bonvoy points).

WHITEFACE LODGE RESORT

Camelback Resort, Pennsylvania

The Eastern Pennsylvania slopes may not offer as many runs as the other destinations on this list. However, the Pocono Mountains are home to Great Wolf Lodge and Kalahari Resort, where kids are treated to gigantic indoor water parks, arcades and daily festivities. Nearby Camelback Mountain ski resort has its own indoor waterpark at Aquatopia, creating a terrific non-skier trifecta.

For those who do love the powder, there's Camelback's adventure park, snow tubing, and, of course, skiing and snowboarding.

Stay at Kalahari Resort, Camelback Mountain Resort or Great Wolf Lodge.

CAMELBACK RESORT

Mont-Tremblant Ski Resort, Quebec

Ski internationally without crossing the pond at this French-inflected getaway just a couple of hours outside Montreal. Featuring 102 slopes and great snow conditions, Tremblant is one of the best ski experiences in North America with the highest peak in the Laurentians region. While older family members explore the high peaks of Mont-Tremblant, kids ages 1 to 6 years old can play in the Mother Nature Camp, which offers a full day of activities.

Guests can also discover a unique European-style pedestrian village directly at the base of the mountain. The pedestrian village allows easy access from the front step of your hotel door to the bottom of the slopes. With its colorful and historical buildings — including more than 75 shops, restaurants, bars and boutiques — there is plenty to do in any kind of weather.

On a non-skiing day, grab the kids and hit the snow-covered trails ripe for fat-tire biking, winter dune buggy rides, snowshoeing, ice fishing, sleigh rides and even ice climbing. Families also will not want to miss the Brind’O Aquaclub waterpark which offers four slides, indoor and outdoor hot tubs, 35 interactive water games and a revamped fitness room. There's also laser tag and a virtual reality arcade.

Stay at Fairmont Tremblant, Residence Inn Mont Tremblant Manoir Labelle (from 43,000 Marriott Bonvoy points), Le Westin Tremblant (from 50,000 Marriott Bonvoy points) or Homewood Suites by Hilton Mont-Tremblant Resort (from 46,000 Hilton Honors points).

Whistler Blackcomb, British Columbia

British Columbia’s [Whistler](#) is another Canadian winter hot spot with a family-friendly focus. Your kids will love the pint-sized skiing at the resort’s Enchanted Woods — which are clear of more experienced and faster skiers. Or, embark on the thrilling, bubbly Tube Park.

In addition to the return of the Magic Castle and Tree Fort outdoor playlands at both Whistler and its sister mountain, Blackcomb, families will also be entertained with the mountain's free Fire and Ice performances every Sunday night (a display of ski and snowboard skills). Families can also exchange their ski boots for ice skates and skate — for free — in Whistler Village.

Stay at Four Seasons Resort Whistler, [Fairmont Chateau Whistler](#), Delta Hotels Whistler Village Suites (from 40,000 Marriott Bonvoy points) or [The Westin Resort & Spa, Whistler](#) (from 50,000 Marriott Bonvoy points), or Hilton Whistler Resort & Spa (from 47,000 Hilton Honors points).

Bottom line

Dreaming of a winter getaway with your family? Read more TPG tips for [planning your ski trip with points and miles](#).