

# Exploring Utah!

Utah is a snow lover's feast, with 15 resorts to choose from. **BRIAN THACKER** tests out six of them.

## Area: Cottonwood Canyons

### SNOWBIRD

If you want some of that guaranteed white stuff then Snowbird delivers, with an average annual snowfall of over 12 metres (they get so much snow they sometimes remain open until the 4th of July). Snowbird has it all – chutes, cliffs, moguls, trees, long lung-busting groomers, terrain parks and everything in between, making it one of the most diverse and challenging resorts around. But it's also perfect for families with designated 'family' and 'learn to ski' zones, and Snowbird's mining camp-themed tree trails will have your kids learning history as well as how to ski trees. [snowbird.com](http://snowbird.com)

### SOLITUDE

Solitude is exactly what the name suggests: quiet, peaceful, and easy-going. Although there is not a huge amount of beginner terrain at Solitude, this is a resort that's best suited for intermediate and expert skiing families. And if your kids like to ski or snowboard hard (and on hard terrain), Honeycomb Canyon is the place to be. The skiing is steep, and the powder is deep. If you do have beginners, however, there is the quiet enclave of the Moonbeam base area to explore without the fear of getting mowed down by a speed demon. [solitudemountain.com](http://solitudemountain.com)

01 Up at the top of John Pauli at Snowbasin ©RLT Photos



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**Area: Ogden**

**POWDER MOUNTAIN**

Powder Mountain is often referred to as Utah's best-kept secret. I thought it was one of the 'smaller' resorts, but with 3,425 hectares of all-natural snow-covered fun, Powder Mountain is actually the biggest ski area in the US. There is a lot of backcountry and tree skiing, but the seemingly endless rolling groomers lean heavily on beginner and intermediate terrain, making the entire mountain very accessible to families. Powder Mountain also caps the total number of skiers daily, so it feels like you have the runs to yourself. Competent skiers can try Single Ride Cat Skiing for endless powder stashes and tree skiing. [powdermountain.com](http://powdermountain.com)



**SNOWBASIN**

Snowbasin isn't what you expect. The base-area buildings and on-mountain restaurants are lavishly appointed with tall timber-beamed ceilings, plush carpeting, overstuffed couches, marble bathrooms and oversized chandeliers. Then there's the skiing. Snowbasin was home to the Downhill runs at the 2002 Winter Olympics. But don't worry, 70 per cent of the mountain's trails are for beginner and intermediate skiers. For the younger kids, Bear Hollow Woods is a perfect place to play in the trees. In December 2024, the first on-mountain hotel will open, the 320-room, all-inclusive Club Med at Snowbasin. [snowbasin.com](http://snowbasin.com)

**Area: Heber Valley**

**DEER VALLEY**

Deer Valley is consistently ranked as one of the best ski resorts in America – and it is just that, a skier-only resort, famous for its service. A 'concierge' takes your skis and puts them on the gondola (and someone takes them off at the top, too) – most appreciated when you have a gaggle of kids with you. There's 809 hectares of meticulously groomed trails, high-speed quads everywhere and limits to the number of skiers on busy days. You can stay in Deer Valley, or in Midway in the Heber Valley and access the resort through the Jordanelle chairlift. [deervalley.com](http://deervalley.com)

**SUNDANCE**

Until only recently owned by actor Robert Redford, Sundance is rustic, charming, low-key – and considerably cheaper than other ski resorts in Utah. There may only be 50+ runs, but there's enough room to provide plenty of variety and since there's only one base, no one gets lost. The big fire pit at the base was one of my favourite spots to hang – grab a hot chocolate (or something stronger) and watch your kids come down the mountain. Try the Sundance ZipTour covering more than a kilometre at over 100km an hour! [sundanceresort.com](http://sundanceresort.com)



02 The Needles Gondola delivers spectacular views © Ryan Thompson 03 Riding through Bucky's Front Yard at Deer Valley 04 Taking a break at Sundance © Marc Piscotty 05 Let's go to the Thirsty Squirrel © Marc Piscotty Solitude Resort

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**MORE AWESOME RESORTS TO EXPLORE IN UTAH**

**Brighton** Sitting atop Big Cottonwood Canyon, Brighton has the best of Utah's Greatest snow on Earth® – and lots of it. There are lessons for kids from five years, and kids 10 and under ski and ride free. Choose to zoom downhill on immaculately groomed trails, through trees and down chutes, tackle the natural terrain parks and the manmade parks for those who like to ride, slide, jump and flip. [brightonresort.com](http://brightonresort.com)

**Brian Head** This fun and intimate ski resort has two connected mountains in Dixie National Forest – Giant Steps and Navajo. Brian Head offers a ski school with lessons for kids from five years, private lessons for kids from three to four on skis, and three to six on snowboards. There is tubing on both mountains and make sure to have a meal or drink in the Last Chair Saloon while you are there. [brianhead.com](http://brianhead.com)

**Alta** Sorry snowboarders – Alta is a skiers-only area! Alta has been attracting skiers since 1938 and has a wonderful sense of community. Skiers of all abilities will love exploring the slopes, and with 1,057 hectares, 116 named runs and six lifts, there is plenty of exploring to be done. Alta is 51 kilometres from the airport at Salt Lake City, and it is best to book a transfer – driving in these parts is best left to the locals. [alta.com](http://alta.com)

**Park City Mountain** This enormous ski and snowboard resort has 330 runs, two bases – Park City and Canyons – six terrain parks and 43 lifts. Enjoy the challenge of exploring all the different areas of the resort, with terrain aplenty for everyone. After a day on the slopes, head to historic Main Street for après and then dinner at a range of excellent family-friendly restaurants. [parkcitymountain.com](http://parkcitymountain.com)

**Woodward Park City** While not technically a ski resort, Woodward is like a theme park for skiers and snowboarders who love hitting terrain parks and want to practice tricks, work on technique or just hit the jumps – over and over. Experience lift-accessed snowboarding, skiing and tubing in the park. Woodward has three areas – learning, experiential and performance. [woodwardparkcity.com](http://woodwardparkcity.com)

**Utah Report Card**

Ski [skiutah.com](http://skiutah.com)

Info To book your ski holiday in Utah, visit Mogul Ski World: [mogulski.com.au](http://mogulski.com.au)

Where to stay Salt Lake City: *Monaco Kimpton Hotel*; [monaco-saltlakecity.com](http://monaco-saltlakecity.com) Ogden: *Best Western Plus High Country Inn*; [bestwestern.com](http://bestwestern.com) Midway: *Zermatt Utah Resort & Spa*; [zermattresort.com](http://zermattresort.com)