

Utah's Other Mountain Biking Gem

Park City is a rider's oasis far above Utah's blistering deserts



Play word association with "Utah" and riders will respond, "Moab." In fact, *Mountain Bike Action* receives more images for our monthly feature "Trail Mix" from riders perched high above the mesas of Moab than any other location. Riders familiar with our destination suggestions will also recognize the name Gooseberry Mesa, just outside of Hurricane, Utah. For years, we have touted these ultra-fun, snaky trails established by the Harris brothers. Both locations are "must-ride" Utah desti-

nations for riders who want to sample the state's desert experience.

But Utah is a big place that offers more than slick-rock, Native American rock art, sandstone arches and the skeletal remains of unprepared mammals. The polar opposite of the dry, desolate Utah desert destinations are the luscious, high-altitude, green mountains of Park City. This is a place that takes summer recreation seriously and aggressively caters to mountain bikers.

Accessibility: If you are flying, Salt Lake City, Utah, is just 33 miles away from downtown Park City. Another option for riders traveling a great distance would be to fly to Las Vegas, Nevada, where flights, even from Europe, can be had at very attractive prices, and then rent a vehicle. The drive to Park City is 425 miles, but you could break it up by riding Gooseberry Mesa outside of Hurricane, Utah, on your way to Park

City (this is not an option if you are headed to Park City in the middle of summer, because the Goose will be too hot).

Park City is in the upper quarter of Utah, so driving there for riders who don't live in Salt Lake City is a major road trip. We'd rather belly up for a one-hour puddle jumper flight and get an afternoon of riding in than sit in a car for six or more hours of dodging texting drivers trying to beat the

boredom. Driving distances are:
33 miles from Salt Lake City, Utah
235 miles from Moab, Utah
292 miles from Hurricane, Utah
374 miles from Boise, Idaho
425 miles from Las Vegas, Nevada
566 miles from Carson City, Nevada
690 miles from Los Angeles, California
760 miles from San Francisco, California



Ride and repeat: Scott House leads Doug Dalton on the Mid Mountain Trail. This is pretty much what the trail looks like for over 20 miles.

ALL RESORT EXPRESS:

Since most Park City riding is close to town, you don't need a rental car for your stay. We used All Resort Express, (877) 658-3999. They will pick you and your bike up at the airport and deliver you right to the hotel or condo where you are staying.

Lodging and camping:

Being primarily a winter ski resort destination, Park City has plenty of accommodations during the summer months. Large groups should check Utah Vacation Homes, (800) 667-9456, for condo and home rentals.

If you want the absolute coolest place to base your mountain biking vacation from, you've got to book your rooms at the Treasure Mountain

Take the long way home: Following the Deer Crest Trail back to town from Deer Valley.



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Change it up: The beauty of Park City is the variety of terrain found on the same trail. It can be wide-open meadows one mile and a forest the next. Park City takes their trail maintenance seriously and funds a full-time summer crew.



Inn, (800) 344-2460. It is located at the top of Main Street, so you are right in the thick of things after your ride. The suites have kitchens, so you won't need to eat out every meal, and the Jacuzzi is ready for after your rides. The Treasure Mountain Inn's owners are riders and have hosted many a bike company's product launch. Mountain biking, they totally get. We can highly recommend the place.

Campers will be disappointed, because campsites are non-existent in Park City. The closest campsites are in Francis, Utah, and Heber City, Utah, both 17 miles away.

Eats: You better plan long rides, because there is so much good food in town that you will gain weight during your stay if you don't burn a lot of

Welcome to town: The Mountain Trails Foundation executive director, Carol Potter, and town Mayor Dana Williams (center) welcome MBA's Jimmy Mac. Carol, who is responsible for a good part of the area's trail network success, was profiled in our December 2009 issue.

calories. A great sandwich/salad place is Morning Ray Cafe at 255 Main St. It is tiny and a favorite with locals. For an upscale dinner, we highly recommend Shabu at 333 Main St. They specialize in what they call freestyle Asian cuisine and, yes, the owner is a rider. Please don't eat there without ordering the Firecracker Shrimp appetizer.

BIKE SHOP/TOUR

SERVICE: White Pine Touring, (888) 649-8710, has all your equipment and riding needs covered. The large bike shop is an official dealer for Specialized, Cannondale and Yeti bicycles, plus they offer a full-service repair facility and complete accessory and apparel departments. White Pine Touring also offers bike rentals and guided tours led by Park City locals to show you why they are so stoked to live in Park City.

MAPS: The Park City trail map is available at the Chamber of Commerce, the Visitor's Center, the Museum on Main Street, White Pine Touring,

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JANS Mountain Outfitters and Cole Sport. *Park City's Prime Cuts* \$18 guidebook is comprehensive and will fit in a hydration pack. It is available from White Pine Touring.

If you don't have a lot of time, it is best to invest in a tour from White Pine Touring. They can tailor the ride to your ability and the type of riding you are looking for. Park City offers so many trail-riding choices that trying to do it on your own could be a hit-or-miss proposition.

Mountain Trails Foundation: Every town should be so lucky as to have an organization like Park City's Mountain Trails Foundation (MTF). Park City is surrounded by privately owned land. Park City, understanding the importance of a strong trail network, passed an ordi-



Awesome break: Deer Valley Food and Beverage Manager Julie Wilson checks on (from left) Cannondale's Doug Dalton, Jimmy Mac, Carol Potter and Scott House. Deer Valley is one end of the Mid Mountain Trail.

PC history: An abandoned mine below the Keystone Trail is a reminder of Park City's past. The area now relies on tourism and major events like the Sundance Film Festival.



Endless possibilities: You will be overwhelmed on your first trip to Park City. Locals claim they are learning about new trails five years after moving there.



nance over 17 years ago that required new developments to put in trails and link existing trails. The MTF assures right-of-way is established for their trail network, and then they hire the expertise necessary to maintain, sign and construct the trails. The MTF's executive director, Carol Potter, was featured in our "Riders Who Inspire" story in the December 2009 issue and explained, "This is a very social community, and that spirit extends to the trails. Park City has always been trail friendly, and we continue to grow our trail network. It is a great time for trails."

The weather: Unlike the dry, dusty, brown desert that Utah is famous for, Park City is an emerald oasis. Lush green mountains and tree-covered trails are what you will find during the summer months. You will need to keep an eye on winter snowfall reports to determine when the riding season will kick off (or call the guys at White Mountain Touring). Some riding could start as early as May, but if you are planning months in advance,

Tour guides: White Pine Touring has got you covered for your trip to Park City.



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use the window of late June through October. The best riding of the year falls in September and October, and both those months are good for including a stop in Moab or Gooseberry Mesa.

Deer Valley Resort: If you are looking for more fun and less work, head to the Deer Valley Resort. Lift-served mountain biking is offered from the Silver Lake Express chairlift at the Deer Valley base facility, Snow Park Lodge, and the Sterling Express chairlift. If you are using the lifts, start your day from Snow Park, which offers ample parking. In addition, bike rentals and lessons are available from either location. While the mountain offers black-diamond runs suitable for downhill bikes and some man-made terrain features, the runs we sampled were flowy trails best enjoyed on long- or short-travel trail bikes.

Riding Deer Valley on the first day of your trip would be the best way to acclimate yourself to the altitude if you are visiting from a lower elevation. The mountain biking lifts are open daily from June 19 through Labor Day, then weekends only through Sept. 13, conditions permitting.

The trails: We told you how to get to Park City, where to sleep and where to eat. And, we are saving the best for last: the riding. The trail that made Park City famous is the Mid Mountain Trail. As the name implies, the trail rolls around the Park City basin. The trail snakes along at 8000 feet with only minor changes in elevation, and it stretches an honest 23 miles of singletrack bliss. There are off-shoots and loops off Mid Mountain at what seems like every two miles. Mid Mountain can be accessed via a chairlift that operates from the bottom of Main Street or you can hop Park City's free transit buses that will take you up from one of the mountain resorts. Of course, you can ride up to it for a proper warm-up. Mid Mountain is not a technically challenging trail and is appropriate for a novice rider in good physical condition. Some of the trails off Mid Mountain require black-diamond trail-riding skills, but these trails are marked on the trail guides.



Cruise or crushed: White Pine Touring's Scott House carves down Deer Camp Trail at the Deer Valley Resort. This trail can be climbed, but a lift ticket will get you multiple runs down in one day without the suffering.



Dinner on the balcony: A summer evening above Main Street at Shabu freestyle Asian cuisine restaurant.

Following the paved rail trail from White Pine Touring East takes you out to a maze of trails called the Round Valley Trails. These close-to-town trails are perfect for novice riders, with mellow climbs and flow trails. Linking the trails of Round Valley could keep you entertained all morning and make you want to get back out there in the afternoon. ☐



Fashion conscious: A Park City local.

All aboard: The free Park City transit systems will take you from downtown right to the Deer Valley Lodge, where riders can buy a lift ticket and enjoy gravity riding or hop on the Mid Mountain Trail.



After-ride time: Park City Main Street from the balcony of the Treasure Mountain Resort is an inviting sight after a day of hammering the trails. Park City is the Austin of Utah. It has a different vibe than other Utah towns.

