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**SKIERS GUIDE TO KEYSTONE**

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**PARKING**

**Free Parking:** The River Run Gondola lot, formerly known as the Montezuma lot will remain FREE every day (a bit of a walk, but overall pretty good deal – no shuttle buses). Families with young children or cars with four or more passengers will be directed by parking staff to first-come, first-served spaces up front. TIP: The second lot entrance is preferable.

If there is a traffic backup on the Hwy 6 entrance, continue up to the next exit on Montezuma Rd and back track to the lot entry.

The best spots (shortest walk) are closest to the lane of this second entrance.

**$10 Parking:** The Mountain House East E lot (formerly known as the Pika lot).

**$20 Parking:** The other Mountain House base area lots, Mountain House West A, Mountain House West B and Mountain House East D (formerly the Marmot and Porcupine lots).

**$30 Parking:** Paid parking lots servicing River Run – Hunki Dori (gone starting with the 2019-20 season) and Gold Bug.

Pay lots will be changing from an entry gate system to one involving the Passport Parking app and kiosk system. Guests can park at a space and pay in advance at the kiosk, or install the Passport Parking app and pay remotely on their phone.

**LIFT ACCESS & PLANNING**

Keystone Resort consists of three separate mountains. Initial access to the slopes is only available on the frontside Dercum Mountain. The middle mountain is North Peak and the third is The Outback. The layout is very simple and efficient with a single lift serving each summit and another lift for returning. Big acreage and few lifts equates to more time on the snow and less time sitting in a chair. There is also a gondola bridging the gap between Dercum and North Peak which can come in handy at times (more on that later).

There are two base areas: River Run Village and Mountain House. Which one you use will depend on where you choose to park.

River Run is the larger area, and has two lifts, the RR Gondola and Summit Express quad chair with side by side direct access to the summit. (TIP: If the gondola is crowded, it’s usually worth the quick walk across the bridge to the Summit Chair to get on your way)

The Mountain House base offers access on the summit on the Argentine connecting to the Montezuma Lift and also access to the Terrain Park area on the Peru Express Lift.

Once at the summit, you have the option to ski the frontside or ski down the back side to the bottom of North Peak and you can do the same again from North Peak to The Outback. When ready to return, simply use the dedicated Wayback and Ruby Lifts.

While each mountain has a varied choice of terrain, each seems to have a distinctly unique character. The frontside Dercum specializes in long rolling groomers, the middle North Peak has long consistent bump runs, while the Outback has acres of gladed trees. Great choices to make!

**GROOMERS**

Keystone has some of the best long, rolling groomers of all the resorts in the area.

On the frontside, Wild Irishman, Frenchman, Flying Dutchman, and Jackwhacker are all stellar. If you’re doing laps, don’t bother to continue to the bottom of the mountain , but catch the cutoffs to the Montezuma Lift instead. If you’re in the mood for some high speed Super G turns, the lower angle Spring Dipper is sweet.

Heading over to North Peak on Mozart is usually great, but the southerly exposure can be anything from soft to crusty. The same can apply to its twin run Anticipation when transiting to The Outback.

Although dominated by bump runs, North Peak has a gem called Starfire. It is a higher angle groomed black diamond run. Although it’s susceptible to being a bit scraped off or icy at times, it can occasionally be perfect and is always a hoot.

The Outback is mainly gladed tree terrain, but does have a couple groomers. Elk Run is very popular, but not on the recommended list because it gets rapidly scraped off and attracts too many yahoos. Porcupine, on the other hand, sees little traffic and can be very nice if it has been recently groomed.

**BUMPS**

If moguls are your thing, then you’ll love Keystone. The choices are many and the fall lines are generally consistent and long.

The frontside has some decent smatterings, but if you’re seriously looking to get into some bumps, head directly to North Peak. Cat Dancer stands out as probably one of the finest bump runs you’ll find anywhere. We’re talking 1600’ vertical and .85 miles of nonstop, consistent moguls. Geronimo is right next door and almost as good. If the slight southern exposure results in less than optimum conditions, just head for Ambush, Powder Cap, or Bullet. Their northerly aspect almost always holds loose powdery snow.

The Outback can also be worth a visit. If you’re learning bumps or just don’t want to excessively punish your knees, Bighorn is superb. It has a lower angle and smaller bumps, but is still long and challenging. Even a bit easier would be Oh Bob to Wildcat.

**TREES**

Tree skiing is another strong suit of Keystone. While this part of Colorado is generally dominated by a thick forest of Lodgepole Pines, Keystone is about as good as it gets with many areas of decent spacing, alleys, and sightlines. As is always the case in the trees, fresh snow makes all the difference. The popular lines all get bumped out and scratchy after dry spells.

From the top of Dercum, many find the Windows enjoyable. A short hike up the cat trail from the top of the gondola yields many possible lines all the way down to Mozart. This then takes you to the Santiago Lift and up to North Peak which has also some worthy spots such as Cat South Glades and Geronimo Glades.

But the real majority of quality tree runs will be found in The Outback. It seems like almost the entire mountain can be tree skied, but we’ll try to boil it down a bit.

The trees between Oh Bob, Elk, Bighorn, Porcupine and Pika all hold good lines. Pika Glades, Wildfire, and Wolverine can be great with fresh snow, but you’d better be quick because this area seems overly popular and gets tracked out quickly.

Some of the most popular expert terrain at Keystone is the entire area between Timberwolf and The Grizz. The area is steep and the north aspect holds great snow. It is a mix of bump runs, glades, and trees and everything in between. (TIP: to keep your orientation on The Grizz look for sequential numbers posted on the trees). The only downside to skiing this area is the annoying exit through the gulley on Coyote Caper.

**POWDER DAYS**

Basically, see TREES and HIKE-TO TERRAIN. It’s that simple.

Other than that, getting to the goods first can net you first tracks. This is where the Outpost Gondola comes into play. When bee-lining to the Outback, skip skiing Mozart to the Santiago Lift and just take the gondola directly to the top of North Peak, then ski down Anticipation to the Outback Express Lift.

**HIKE-TO TERRAIN**

Although Hike-To skiing is not Keystone’s strong suit, it’s still a worthwhile venture. None of the hikes are too strenuous and all yield some decent returns. Each of the three peaks has its own opportunities. The resort lift map does a nice job of showing the routes. Starting at the top

of Dercum, you can continue up a cat trail behind the Outpost Gondola building to get access to the Windows and Upper Windows areas.

On North Peak you can hike as far as you want on the 1.5 mile ridge behind the Outpost Lodge and gain access to Bergman Bowl on lookers left or Erickson Bowl on the right.

The most popular hike is on The Outback following along side of the snowcat trail on the 1 mile long ridge to Wapiti Peak. An easy 10 minute hike yields access to traverses over to the Victory and Conquest Chutes (glades) in North Bowl on lookers left or South Bowl on the right. Further hiking will result in fewer tracks.

**Terrain Park, Night Skiing & Cat Skiing**

When it comes to Keystone, each of these categories is important either because it’s “a cut above” or just unique.

The **Area 51** **Terrain Park** is definitely a cut above. The entire right side of Dercum Mountain is mostly dedicated to parks of all the different difficulty features and is served by the dedicated A51 lift.

The **NIGHT SKIING** at Keystone is both unique and a “cut above”. It is by far the largest night skiing network of lighted trails in Colorado and is routinely groomed at dusk to provide a late corduroy fix. Night skiing goes till 8pm and is included with your daily ticket or Epic Pass. It is available most nights, but not all. Check the resort website for dates.

Finally, the **CAT SKIING** at Keystone is also unique. Weather and conditions permitting, there is a daily snowcat operation doing laps on top of The Outback. For $10 per ride you can line up (and sometimes wait a bit) for the short haul up the one mile ridge to Wapiti Peak.

Additionally, Keystone provides day long guided snowcat tours through Keystone Adventure Tours. These tours serve mainly the Independence, Erickson, and Bergman Bowls above Dercum Mountain and North Peak.

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