



PEAK CAPACITY

Yes, you can ski this season. But you'd better book now: New safety measures have made these top U.S. resorts even more exclusive.

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When COVID-19 incited an abrupt closure of ski resorts last March, it wasn't clear how this viral bogeyman managed to spark outbreaks from the Tetons to Maine's Sugarloaf Mountain. Eight months later, it is. Knowing that the novel coronavirus prefers slinking through crowded indoor spaces to the great outdoors, the ski industry has been able to pivot to a season that delivers a safe — albeit nuanced — experience. What will that look like?

While skiers can carve up the bowls and schuss down powder-dusted mountains, new protocols address those bottleneck moments in between. To wit: face covering required on lifts, in lines and in all indoor public spaces (except when seated to eat), socially distanced gondola load-in, spaced-apart lift lines, reimagined on-mountain dining, and the absence of a boisterous indoor après scene. Since resorts will be managing capacity, pre-booking is essential to lock in select dates. As for lodging, while some are content with a traditional hotel setting, many prefer a condo or private home where public lobbies and crowded restaurants can be avoided. This is all happy news. In a year filled with restrictions, the fact that a ski season will unfold in any capacity is thrilling.

Jackson Hole, Wyoming

Opening Date: November 26

Here, locals are imagining COVID-era skiing to resemble the 80's, when the resort was populated primarily by ski bums. To their chagrin, safety protocols will not keep tourists from flocking to Jackson Hole. Its steeps, chutes, and 2,500 acres of thigh-burning terrain are simply too enticing.

For the first time in its 55-year history, JHMR will require advance day ticket purchases for sale online, to cap daily capacity. To further control flow, lift lines will be redesigned for enhanced physical distancing, and lower mountain chairs (Teewinot and Après Vous and Sweetwater Gondola) will load earlier than usual in order to get guests up the mountain and allow for physical distancing. Another safety measure will be strategically placed thermal imaging cameras to check guest temperatures. In regard to dining, there will be limited indoor seating for food and beverage, and QR codes will be employed for ordering by phone. In Teton Village, après will unfold at **Bodega's** new tented beer garden. Another option is to gather après essentials from **Il Villaggio Osteria** to enjoy in your lodging.