

SKI

**Three-Minute
Clinic**
**SKI POWDER
LIKE THE PROS**

Why We Ski...

GROWING UP A SKIER
All Trails Lead Home

rites of passage
Add to Your Bucket List

WHAT TO DO (AND NOT DO)
With Your Kids on the Hill

PLUS

- » Ski More, Pay Less: Pass Roundup
- » This Season's Best Baselayers
- » Ski-Boot Revolution?

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A morning of powder skiing on C Lazy U's 1,000 skiable acres in northern Colorado is but one of the many experiences on tap.

NEED TO KNOW »

C Lazy U is about a two-hour drive from Denver International Airport. The ranch has 11 winter cabins of varying sizes and two ranch houses that sleep 11 and 12 people. À la carte rates (exclusive of meals) start at \$249 per room per night. All-inclusive rates (with meals and activities) start at \$325 per person, \$125 for kids. Cat skiing is extra, running \$75 per half-day, \$35 for kids. clazyu.com

Powder Wranglers

MOSEY OVER TO COLORADO'S C LAZY U GUEST RANCH FOR A UNIQUE AND HIGHLY FAMILY-FRIENDLY SKI VACATION. *By Samantha Berman*



This Western ski vacation is the real deal, complete with riding, roping, and chowing down. From homemade biscuits and gravy in the dining room to winter trail rides through the snow, this is the Colorado ski country you might not expect.

If you're a skier, then Colorado is synonymous with powder skiing, high peaks, and blue skies. But there's another side to this state that's worth visiting. Wintertime on a Western ranch is everything the words conjure: horses, cowboys, sledding, bonfires, snowball fights. And if you visit C Lazy U Guest Ranch, outside Granby, Colo., add skiing to the list.

C Lazy U has been a summer dude ranch since the early 1900s and opened for winter vacationers in the 1940s. For years, cold-weather diversions across the ranch's 11,000 acres included tubing, sledding, cross-country skiing, ice-skating, winter trail rides, snowmobiling, and snowshoeing. In 2009, a single green snowcat took its place among the ranch's winter

toys, and private snowcat skiing kicked into gear.

The ranch has 1,000 acres of low- to moderate-pitch terrain, including some bowl skiing on the back side. It's ungroomed save for a kids' bunny hill. Over the course of a couple hours, I knock out a half-dozen runs in waist-deep powder, sluicing past aspen groves and forests of Christmas-tree evergreens, not a soul to poach my lines. They're not kidding when they call it private cat skiing. I might have skied all day if there weren't so much more to do.

During our three days at the ranch, we sample pretty much every activity on offer, from winter horseback rides through knee-deep snow to whiplash-inducing tubing runs down steep, manicured slopes. We

skate on the ranch's Zamboni-slicked pond. We suit the kids up in cross-country skis for the first time and giggle alongside them as they flop around clumsily. We make snow angels beside the skating pond and then retreat inside for steaming cups of cocoa.

And we eat. Well. Family-style meals in the ranch's dining room bring together folks from all over the country, drawn to a Colorado winter for as many reasons as there are snowflakes. The cuisine is hearty and delicious—like curried apple and butternut-squash soup, farm-raised Colorado striped bass, and braised short ribs of beef. We make friends, and so do the boys. And before we've even loaded up the car for the two-hour ride back to Denver, we've already made plans to return.



FAMILY LIFE LIST »

These signature experiences should be on every ski family's agenda. What are you waiting for?

1. **SHRINE MOUNTAIN INN**, a collection of three ski huts, is part of Colorado's 10th Mountain Division system. You gain 2.7 miles of elevation from the trailhead, and the huts have running water and indoor plumbing. huts.org
2. Your strong intermediate skiers are ready for a late-spring trip to New Hampshire's **TUCKERMAN RAVINE**. The two-hour hike to the ravine floor is moderate, and when conditions are good, mellow terrain options can be found.
3. Looking for a memorable holiday? Sign on for a Christmas-break heli-ski trip with **CANADIAN MOUNTAIN HOLIDAYS**, designed for strong intermediates age 12 to 17 and their families. canadianmountainholidays.com
4. Hit five g's of force on the bobsled track at **UTAH OLYMPIC PARK**. You'll reach speeds of 80 mph and negotiate 15 banked turns over the almost milelong run. Must be 13 or older and over 100 pounds to ride. utaholympiclegacy.com
5. Spend a night in the Stone Hut atop Stowe's **MOUNT MANSFIELD** and your brood can nab first tracks in the morning. vtstateparks.com
6. Don't hesitate to take the family to Europe, where kids start skiing as soon as they can walk. It's a great cultural and educational experience. Try one of the smaller villages such as **ANDERMATT, SWITZERLAND**, with abundant powder, a quaint town, and a family-friendly vibe. andermatt.ch/en