



Hiking is the quintessential summer activity.

# COLORADO DOUBLEHEADERS

How to make the most of mountain living

**COLORADO IS STUNNING. I MOVED HERE 23 YEARS AGO AND SOMETIMES I STILL CAN'T** believe I get to call this place home. Unlike those who “moved here for one season and never left,” when I packed my bags in Miami, Florida and set off for Boulder to attend the University of Colorado, I knew exactly what I was doing: heading to my new home.

People move to Colorado for a variety of reasons but most cite the numerous outdoor options afforded by our spectacular surroundings. Though my husband, Brian, came to Colorado to snowboard, he is the ultimate all-around outdoorsman. I call him “Nature Boy” because he will always find an outdoor adventure for us — regardless of the season. And that brings me to the Colorado Doubleheader. Although skiing, snowboarding and snowshoeing are clearly snow-dependent winter/spring activities and hiking and fishing are usually considered summer/fall activities, those traditional seasonal “restrictions” are not always set in stone.



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### DOUBLE THE FUN

One of the perks of living in Eagle County is the option to participate in two outdoor activities on the same day – Brian and I call it the Colorado Doubleheader. There are so many benefits to the Colorado Doubleheader, including maximizing your time while efficiently trying out multiple endeavors and giving your body a break without sacrificing any fun. Scheduling two types of recreation also appeals to families because it lends to shorter kid attention

spans and fills the day.

Making a Colorado Doubleheader happen doesn't have to be hardcore – in fact, it is meant for any age or level. Because Brian and I are now in our 50s and 40s, respectively, the Colorado Doubleheader has become even more relevant. Anyone who has lived in the mountains for a significant amount of time has endured wear and tear on their bodies and that's true for us as well. Therefore, snowboarding from

open to close is no longer attractive or sustainable. Also, and most importantly, six years ago our son Fleet was born so his schedule and needs shape our doubleheaders as he continues to grow.

As most parents know, young kids don't always last long doing one activity — especially when it's "too cold" or "too hot" outside. Therefore, switching things up and planning for two shorter excursions (with a break of some sort in between) usually makes the day more successful. I also

appreciate maximizing our time off — particularly on quintessential Colorado bluebird days. My mother, who has been an Eagle County resident for over 20 years, can attest to the advantages of doubling up on activities. In addition to skiing, she likes snowshoeing with friends, as well as exploring and playing in the snow with Fleet. In the summer, they both enjoy putting on their hiking shoes or saddling up on a horse — especially since both options offer incomparable views.



*There's nothing like ripping through the powder after a storm.*



**HIKING & HORSEBACK RIDING**

We've been here long enough to remember when the Vail Valley shut down for six weeks during the spring and fall "shoulder seasons" and when summers were quiet. Clearly, that has changed. As we say, people come here for the winter and stay for the summer. Given our town's current demographics and influx of visitors who want to spend their summers out west, Eagle County is a desirable destination for multigenerational families who prioritize outdoor activities.

My ideal summer Colorado Doubleheader is a day spent hiking and horseback riding. Mornings and evenings provide cooler summer temperatures so deciding which one to do in the morning versus the afternoon depends on preference. I'd rather begin the day walking uphill with our pup Zephyr, so I'm partial to hiking in the morning and horseback riding in the afternoon. That being said, trails can get dusty so some might prefer starting the morning with a crisp ride overlooking high country landscapes and then finding shady trails for an afternoon stroll. What sets the Colorado mountains apart is that, either way, you're getting a panoramic view.

Three favorite intermediate Beaver Creek hiking trails include Aspen Glade into Allie's Way, Overlook (which can continue to Royal Elk) and Beaver Lake (at almost 10,000 feet, this one reaches the highest elevation of the three). Depending on your schedule and/or how many miles you want to clock, all three trails intertwine at various points allowing you to choose your own adventure.

## MY IDEAL SUMMER COLORADO DOUBLEHEADER IS A DAY SPENT HIKING AND HORSEBACK RIDING.



Beaver Creek offers hiking trails for every level.





Horseback riding can be a morning or afternoon activity.

Aspen Glade into Allie's begins with a climb through the trees and traverses across Overlook which, along with Beaver Lake, features the steepest ascent.

Be sure to consult the Beaver Creek summer trail map beforehand because these hikes vary in difficulty and length depending on the route. Keep in mind that some Beaver Creek

residences and hotels have unique access points that allow for "hike in/hike out" opportunities. Having that kind of access can be a gamechanger for those who want to experience the sights but not the severe vertical feet. An example is the Village to Village hike because it provides sweeping views and is ideal for most family members. More

leisurely trails include the Village Loop, Five Senses and the Creekside Family Walk.

While enjoying Vail Valley views on foot is both memorable and an excellent workout, there is nothing like taking in the beauty of Beaver Creek on horseback. Located just above the Haymeadow Gondola, Beaver Creek Stables offers one and two-hour horseback rides,

as well as a two-hour picnic ride that explores the top of the eastern hillside of the resort. Because some of the horse trails intersect with the hiking trails, achieving the summer Colorado Doubleheader is even more fun because you can experience both via different types of recreation.

Beaver Creek Stables also offers adventure dining

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which consists of afternoon/evening dinner rides to Beano's Cabin. Located within the White River National Forest and along Larkspur ski run, Beano's is an award-winning culinary establishment. Featuring an open lawn and wraparound deck at the foot of Grouse Mountain — which is across the creek from where the Birds of Prey races are held each December — the property also contains the original homestead cabin built by Frank "Beano" Bienkowski in the early 1900s.

### SKIING/SNOWBOARDING & FLY FISHING

Spending time on Beaver Creek Mountain during the winter is worth prioritizing, especially if you know where to go. Offering a variety of terrain for a wide range of skill levels, the resort has something for everyone. While advanced riders might spend the morning lapping Chairs 9, 10 and 11, those who want to explore outside of main mountain can head to Bachelor Gulch or Arrowhead. Families can cruise around the runs at the top of Chair 8 or visit the powdery beginner fields at McCoy Park.

In addition to the world-class terrain, an enticing feature of Beaver Creek is its approachable layout which makes it feasible to meet up with people without too much traversing or waiting. You can feel like you're far away from the daily hustle and bustle while staying close enough to meet friends and family at any of the base villages in a reasonable amount of time. That way, you're never too far from your group, making your way to your car via the Leave the Beav run or catching one of the resort or town buses.

WHILE VISITORS FLOCK TO BEAVER CREEK TO EXPERIENCE THE RESORT'S AWARD-WINNING SKIING AND SNOWBOARDING, THERE ARE OTHER OUTDOOR OPTIONS BEYOND THE SLOPES — INCLUDING WINTER FLY FISHING.



Fly fishing in the winter is doable, with some safety precautions.





Skiing and snowboarding doesn't have to be an all-day affair — fit in another activity.

While visitors from all over the world flock to Beaver Creek in the winter to experience the resort's award-winning skiing and snowboarding, there are other outdoor options beyond the slopes — including winter fly fishing. Even though fly fishing is traditionally considered a summer activity, Brian loves spending time in the crisp waters of the Eagle and Colorado rivers surrounded by snow because they provide a relaxing ambiance and post-resort solitude. Additionally, he enjoys seeing alternative color patterns on fish and notices that they are less pressured

(and therefore calmer) because fewer humans are out there.

All that being said, there are several challenges to consider while winter fishing. For example, your line freezing (which can make it really heavy) is something to think about. General safety is a huge factor as walking on an icy riverbank and/or the ice hanging over the water can be dicey. To mitigate those risks, hiring a guide might be helpful and Vail Valley Anglers offers year-round trips. With access to winter fishing locations within a short drive from Beaver Creek, their knowledgeable guides welcome both

beginners and experts. They offer three different types of trips — Winter Wade, Winter Float and Ice Fishing — but the best choice for a Colorado Doubleheader is the half-day Winter Wade because it leaves plenty of time for a second activity. Similar to the mountain, wearing the proper gear is essential for having a positive winter fishing experience so be sure to layer up and wear a warm hat and gloves.

When we snowboard and fish the same day as a family, the juxtaposition between spending time at the resort and by the river is palpable. The stimulating, busy nature of Beaver Creek

versus the calmness provided by the local waters is the cornerstone of the Colorado Doubleheader because they are both fun endeavors that provide various kinds of enjoyment and marvel.

#### MAKING MEMORIES

Whether your favorite activity is hiking, horseback riding, fishing, snowboarding, skiing, snowshoeing — or all of the above — Colorado Doubleheaders are definitely worth exploring. Taking advantage of the different types of adventures in our fair town is the best way to spend a day off and make memories with people who love the outdoors. — **BY LAURA LIEFF**