

FREQUENT FLYER DESTINATIONS

ENDLESS SUMMER IN MALTA

ADVENTURING IN VANCOUVER

FINDING MEZCAL IN MEXICO

DISCOVER BUENOS AIRES

SKI UTAH

FREQUENTFLYERMAGAZINE.COM

WINTER 2017-18

 AIRGUIDE

FEATURE

UTAH WINS THE GOLD MEDAL FOR WINTER FUN

BY NATALIE COMPAGNO

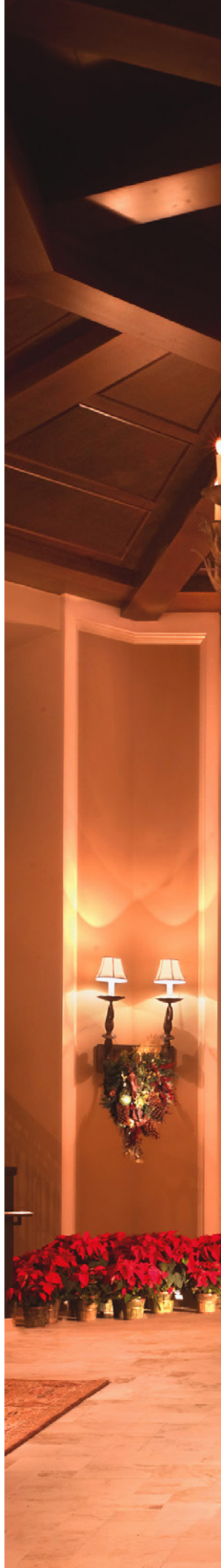


Catch Olympic gold fever! If flying to South Korea is not on the travel calendar this Olympic season, the next best option lies high in the Wasatch Mountains.

Utah takes big ski jumps this winter with Olympic quality adventures and sky high experiences. Whether shredding the backcountry in pristine wilderness, bobsledding like an Olympian, or skiing with an Olympic athlete, Utah has something for every winter sports enthusiast. "The Greatest Snow on Earth" only lasts until about April, so grab some earmuffs and boots--and an adventurous spirit--and hit the Utah slopes.

The best way to get into the Olympic spirit is to spend time with an Olympic athlete, and Deer Valley Resort has just the thing. The Ski With A Champion program gives fans the once in a lifetime experience of skiing with a former Olympian. Heidi Voelker is the official Ambassador of Skiing for Deer Valley Resort; she and six other former Olympians take individuals and groups of six out on the trails.

Lucky skiers get to hang with Fuzz Feddersen, coach of the 1998 U.S. Winter Olympic Aerial Ski Team and three-time Olympic athlete. He loves the personal connection he makes with guests on the chair lift, talking about the Olympic experience.





Most want to know about what it was like walking in the opening ceremonies, but some like the funnier stories about teammates and quirky personalities. Fuzz praises the beauty of the mountain, "I just love being on the mountain with people. It is such a beautiful place and the weather is gorgeous. I get to show people my favorite secret places."

Discerning travelers choose Montage Deer Valley Resort, a high-end ski-in/ski-out option. A destination in and of itself, the Montage boasts the largest spa in Utah, and a pub with its own bowling alley. This season, guests are booking rooms to be a part of the Olympic spirit. Montage Deer Valley will host exclusive ski sessions with Shannon Bahrke of Ski With A Champion, replete with nutrition tips and cool down sessions. Being a champion takes work, so enjoy the fun side of training.

Advanced skiers have a thrilling option with the Ski Utah Interconnect Tour. Imagine schussing down slopes that are only available to insiders, covering an average of 25 miles at up to six resorts in a day. A third of the day is spent in the back country, the rest in-bounds with mountain lifts. Most tours start at Deer Valley and end at Snowbird, and all tours provide two guides and lunch.

Deb Lovci has been a guide for 27 years and her excitement and dedication to the program is obvious. "Everyone comes together because of our passion for skiing. The U.S. Forest Service and Ski Utah work together as envoys for the great outdoors. Resorts also play a huge part as everyone is devoted to showing off how incredible Utah skiing is." Lovci's favorite part of the job is the energy guests exude after skiing in places they never thought they could. "At the end of the day it is high fives and smiles all around," beams Lovci, "It's all about the memories."

Adrenaline rush warning! Gold Medal Adventures and Utah Olympic Park allow visitors to play Olympian for a day. "Cool Runnings" fans will love the Winter Bobsled Experience. The same track that hosted the Jamaican bobsled team--and skeleton and luge competitions in the 2002 Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City--offers bobsled rides for the fearless. A professional pilot takes three



riders down the track at incredible speeds. Hold on to that egg!

For a change of pace, Whisper Ridge calls from deep in the Wasatch Mountains. This premier backcountry powder destination allows natural beauty and luxury to combine on 60,000 acres of private ski terrain. This is the newest and largest ski resort in all of Utah. Whisper Ridge offers cat skiing – upscale, cozy snowcats that whisk guests up the mountain. No lines, no ski lifts and no waiting for virgin snow. There is also cross country skiing, snow shoeing and snowmobiling for those who

want more than a downhill rush.

Day trips to Whisper Ridge are possible, but to truly experience this powerful place stay overnight in one of the luxury yurts. The semi-private suites are well-decorated with antiques and country charm. The Perch Yurt Village has everything après-ski life could hope for – outdoor hot tubs, board and card games, an outdoor ice bar (review alcohol options in advance), and live music. The dining yurt is overseen by a five-star chef and meals can be customized depending on diet.

“The owners of Whisper Ridge have

recreated on this land for decades and they love to share their passion for this magical place with guests,” explains Wes Light, Mountains Operation Manager, “It is a unique experience because it’s a large unspoiled wilderness, a sanctuary where people can play and explore among nature.”

Utah might not host the Olympics this year, but every winter visitors play like Olympians in its glorious, enviable powder and majestic scenery.