

# Coloradog-Bound! Two Ski and Wag-Worthy Towns for Snow Season

Dogs are allowed on the gondola, so we knew we were in the right place.

By ROBIN TIERNEY

N TELLURIDE, IT'S SO MUCH FUN TO BE SUS-PENDED MID-AIR WITH FIDO. A stylish gondola links Telluride, Mountain Village and the mountain separating these two distinctive towns. Amazing vistas surround you on the 15-minute trip, which replaces long 'roundthe-mountain drives.

Other qualities make this gondola system special. It's free public transportation, it runs early morning to midnight year-round, its attendants welcome you with gusto while helping board riders and recreation equipment with quick efficiency, it has handicap-accessible cabins *and* cabins for dogs. Station decor even includes a large art-photo titled "Gondogola" featuring five lovely Golden Retrievers. The artist is Mary Kenez, whose works you can browse and purchase at Kamruz Gallery in downtown Telluride.

Tucked in southwest Colorado's San Juan Mountains, Telluride's framed by finely chiseled 13,000- and 14,000-foot peaks. It offers 2,000 steep acres of 147 alpine trails and nordic ski areas, hiking, mountain biking, trail running, golf, cultural festivals and shops that put out the welcome mat and bowl for Fido.

The area's attractions, beauty and cheery laid-back vibe make it a crowd-pleaser that's remarkably free of crowds, despite its ranking among the world's top ski resorts.

Now about the dual destinations. Nestled in a box canyon, the historic mining town of Telluride charms you with wild west buildings housing bars, eateries, galleries and boutiques. Fido-worthy places to stay include The Hotel Telluride, a classic and luxurious basecamp for adventure, and Mountain Lodge Telluride, a rustic Rocky Mountain-side retreat.

In contrast, Mountain Village offers a modern, upscale Alps-style resort perched high on a plateau. At its center, casual-elegant Madeline Hotel and Residences, recently added to Auberge Resorts Collection, offers luxurious Fido-friendly rooms, a spa, a big outdoor hot tub, hip-gourmet dining and a big neighboring ice rink.

Take the gondola from Mountain Valley to Telluride, then wander over to the charming down-



town and look for Alpen Schatz. Not only does this shop brim with authentic alpine clothing and other goodies, its collection includes scads of gorgeous old Europe-style dog collars, leashes, vests and other accessories. Look for shopkeeper Mary Dawn DeBriae and her handsome Bernese Mountain Dogs Davinci and Nikolai, who love to be petted and pose for pictures.

Kamruz is not the only spot in town featuring canine-inspired art. Dogs pressing noses against the front windows drew me to the Turquoise Door Gallery. There, painter/fabric artist Valerie Levy Franzese enchants visitors with her depictions of family dogs and local wildlife. Lustre Gallery displays hand-painted illuminated art chandeliers, fine art and handcrafted jewelry. Dogs enjoy greeting the bronze bobcat, raven and other wildlife sculptures of Jim Eppler. Lustre owner Christine Reich has curated a collection inspired by a love of nature.

With Fido on leash, you can snowshoe gorgeous terrain. Telluride Adventure Center naturalists such as Jane Watenpaugh guide fun and educational treks among the spruce and fir trees.

Hikers and cyclists love the quietude, elevation gains and variety of terrain: slopes, aspen groves, old mining roads and rail trails. Take long walks with Fido around Telluride Town Park. Other great hikes: the long path edging the San Miguel River, and starting at Town Park, Bear Creek Trail, an easy two hour round-trip stroll with sights that include a waterfall.

Great eat-spots in Mountain Village include

Black Iron Kitchen & Bar and M Lounge, where you can sip and dine outdoors with Fido at the fire tables. In the town of Telluride, dog-friendly restaurants include Baked in Telluride, Oak and Smuggler Union Brewpub.

This is definitely a resort getaway ideal for ruffing it.  $\boldsymbol{\sigma}$ 

# Details for a Terrific Time in Telluride

**VISITOR INFORMATION:** 

Visittelluride.com

Tellurideskiresort.com

PARKS AND TRAILS:

Telluride-co.gov/186/Town-Park

Alltrails.com/trail/us/colorado/bear-

creek-preserve-trail

LODGING:

Aubergeresorts.com/madeline

Thehoteltelluride.com

Mountainlodgetelluride.com

Shops, galleries and restaurants:

Alpenschatz.com

Turquoisedoorgallery.com

Kamruz.com

Oakstelluride.com

Bakedintel.com

Smugglersbrewpub.com

Aubergeresorts.com/madeline

PHOTO CREDIT ROBIN TIERNEY

# Details for a Vail Holiday

### VISITOR INFORMATION:

Vail.com

#### LODGING:

Hyatt.com/en-US/hotel/colorado/ grand-hyatt-vail/egegh Thevailcollection.com/locations/vailvillage/the-lodge-at-vail-a-rockresort

## **DOG-FRIENDLY TRAILS:**

Alltrails.com/us/colorado/vail/dogs

#### **DOG PARKS:**

Petfriendlyvail.com/parks.html
Betty Ford Alpine Gardens:
Bettyfordalpinegardens.org
White River National Forest:
fs.usda.gov/whiteriver
Eagles Nest Wilderness Area:
coloradoswildareas.com/
wilderness\_area/eagles-nest-wilderness
Gore Creek:

fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\_DOCUMENTS/ stelprdb5186353.pdf

**Epic Discovery:** 

vail.com/explore-the-resort/activitiesand-events/epic-discovery/epic-

discovery-passes.aspx

Vail Farmers' Market and Art Show:

vailfarmersmarket.com

Bluegrass concerts:

Vailbluegrass.com

## **RESTAURANTS:**

bullyranchrestaurant.com thevailcollection.com/tavern-onthe-square Latour-vail.com vendettasvail.com WITH ALL OF THE ULTRA-WEALTHY FOLKS WHO FREQUENT VAIL, visitors often expect the level of attitude to match the altitude. But when you know where to go in this classic Colorado ski and summer fun destination, you and Fido will feel completely at home away from home.

Designed to resemble a classic European alpine village, inspired chiefly by Zermatt, Switzerland, Vail offers year-round attractions from art exhibitions to indoor and outdoor concerts. The fanciful architecture makes a magical backdrop for your getaway.

Recreation has always been the main draw. Besides 11 ski resorts, White River National Forest offers 2,500 miles of trails and 10 mountain peaks topping 14,000 feet. Soar 10,350 feet on Vail Mountain's gondola, which is free. Dogs aren't allowed on the ride up, but they can ride along on the way back down. So a good plan is to hike up-mountain with Fido on trails such as Berry Picker, which starts in the valley, and then wrap up the outing with a relaxing gondola ride.

With Fido at your heels, you can hike pristine aspen forests filled with wildflowers and wildlife. Ridgetop rambling on Eagle's Loop offers breathtaking views of Mount of the Holy Cross. Gore Creek Valley Trail also rewards hikers with stunning panoramas.

**Tip:** keep Fido on leash. On United States Forest Service property, having a dog off-leash can result in a substantial fine.

Service dogs can come along on guided hikes with outfitters such as Paragon Guides on routes such as Bighorn Creek Trail in East Vail, where sights include proud stands of aspen, a rushing creek and wildflowers.

Check out Vail's newer offerings. Epic Discovery runs zipline across Game Creek Bowl, a mountain coaster and ropes challenge course. Dogs can come to the park, but have a human companion ready to entertain Fido while you play on the attractions. For example, you can climb on rope courses, or take the Adventure Bahn carpet ride up 550 feet and tube

downhill to the sound of music.

Take Fido on leash to zen out at Betty Ford Alpine Gardens, the world's highest botanical gardens. And yes, there are places where Fido can romp off-leash, including Stephens Dog Park and Bighorn Dog Park.

One wonderful place to lodge is brand-new Grand Hyatt Vail, which welcomes dogs up to 50 pounds for an additional fee of \$100 per stay. The rooms at this smart ski-in ski-out, adorned with stone, slate and fireplaces, feel both spacious and intimate, a perfect place to rest between adventures. The pool and hot tub deck face the woods and creek-side trail.

Grand Hyatt Vail gears its spa treatments to outdoor enthusiasts. Kids' activities encourage creativity. The hotel's Après Everyday social hour features nibbles and music, and Fido can sip water by your side. Edging Gore Creek at the base of the mountains, the hotel provides breathtaking views from guestrooms and lounge areas. You'll enjoy walking Fido along the safe, quiet path that runs along Gore Creek.

Up at 8,150 feet, Grand Hyatt Vail's aspen forest neighbors include marmots, moose and trout in Gore Creek. At the hotel's chef-driven Gessner restaurant, zen out by the windowed walls or on the dining terrace, which face the forested mountainside, burbling creek and the trail that link Vail's lovely communities. Gessner fare, merging flavors from the European Alps and the Rocky Mountains, includes delectable vegan and glutenfree choices. Its breakfast buffet invites lingering, with its divine blackberries, juicy slices of grapefruit and nice touches such as soy and almond milk. The restaurant is named for Conrad Gessner, the first naturalist to ascend the Swiss Alps.

Getting to Vail Village and Lionshead is easy; just hop the frequent, free shuttles. Alas, the shuttles don't allow fur-kids. At the center of Vail Village, fine accommodations include the Lodge at Vail, which combines chic alpine with proximity to Gondola One and allows pets in select rooms.

Vail and Lion's Head offer plenty of terrific restaurants that welcome dogs. Among them: Bully Ranch, Tavern on the Square, La Tour and Vendetta's. Dog-friendly places for great local music include free jazz at the Sunday Vail Farmers' Market and Art Show, and free bluegrass concerts at Solaris Plaza on Wednesday evenings during warmer months.

Sounds like good times? That's what a Vail vacay is all about.



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featuring five lovely Golden Retrievers by Mary Kenez. Author Robin

Tierney snapped a photo of a Mary Kenez photo at Telluride,

CO depicting dogs riding for free on the gondola.



c ROBIN TIERNEY, an award-winning writerphotographer, seeks out intriguing places, preferably with dogs by her side. Contact her at

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