

Revelstoke revs up for families

By Anne Bokma on March 10, 2015

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When I tell my friends I'm heading to Revelstoke Mountain Resort in B.C. for a ski vacation, they look at me kind of funny. I just took up skiing two years ago, at age 50, and Revelstoke is about as far from a beginner's mountain as you can get. In fact, it's been named as a "must do trip" on National Geographic's Ultimate Adventure Bucket List. With terrain split stats of seven percent green, 45 percent blue and 48 percent black, it's known as a backcountry skiing and snowboarding paradise — and an epicenter of heli skiing and cat skiing — with big terrain, big pitch, big snowfall (30-35 feet a year) and big vertical (the highest in North America at 5,620 feet).



While the primary demographic niche of the resort is still adrenaline-lovin' advanced riders, beginners like me can cope just fine since there are plenty of long mellow groomed runs (The Last Spike at 15.2 km is the longest, a meandering green with stunning views of the spectacular ice-clad peaks of the Monashee Mountains). And daily free mountain guide tours will match with you a pro who will help find the easier terrain if you're a relative newbie like me.

Revelstoke hasn't been touted as much of a family ski destination either, but that too is changing as the resort has recently been making efforts to appeal to parents with kids from tots to teens. "People think of Revelstoke as a daunting mountain, but there's plenty to appeal to younger kids on the lower mountain," says Liz Craig, Revelstoke's media relations co-ordinator, who points to the Turtle Creek area with its magic carpet, learner's slope and tubing area as an example. The family friendly evolution also includes the recent addition of Kids ROC, a dedicated space for young snow school participants during the day and an activity centre from Thursday to Sunday evenings. There's also a child care centre that's open seven days a week for children 18 months to six years. Kids' lift tickets are inexpensive here (\$30 a day or \$130 for five days) and a Chaperone pass allows adults to ski the lower mountain for free with their kids. Other features that make Revelstoke attractive to families are the short-lineups, wide-open spaces giving kids plenty of room to roam and the comfy high-speed 15-minute Revelation gondola ride which offers great views to begin and finish the day. Another bonus: Guests who stay at the on-site Sutton Place Hotel can drop off their skis at the end of the day with a valet who will whisk them into storage and ensure they appear back in the ski rack at the base of the hill the next morning, thus bypassing the need for tired-out kids to haul their gear back to the storage lockers

As kids get older and outgrow the lower mountain, they can aspire to Revelstoke's more challenging terrain where their parents will, no doubt, likely begin to trail them in the powder.

While Revelstoke isn't touted for the weak-kneed, there's no shortage of runs to keep both beginners and kids happy. In fact, Revelstoke actually has a long history as a kids' skiing wonderland. A current exhibition in town at the Revelstoke Museum on the history of skiing in the area recounts that the American magazine Mid-Week Pictorial stated in its January 21, 1928 edition that children growing up in Revelstoke went right "out of the cradle and onto skis."

If You Go

Revelstoke Mountain Resort, located two hours from Kelowna, has been open just seven seasons and development is ongoing — it's expected to have a total of 10,000 acres when it's finally completed, making it the largest ski resort in North America.

Where to Stay

The on-site Sutton Place Hotel offers ski-in/ski-out access, luxurious condo suites with fully equipped kitchens, washer-dryers and picture-window views of the mountain. Guests are treated to a welcoming reception on arrival with wine and fancy cheeses, incredibly friendly staff and the opportunity to unwind at the end of the day in one of two hot tubs and a large heated pool where you can take in the Rocky Mountains scenery while floating on your back. If that's not relaxing enough for you, book a massage at the on-site Refinery Day Spa. The head-to-toe rosemary mint awakening body treatment will have you curling your toes in ecstasy.

There are also plenty of accommodation options in town to suit all budgets, from the historic Regent Hotel to the funky Cube Boutique Motel (which has a shared kitchen and lounge as well as ski storage) and the Powder Springs Inn, which offers free passes to the Revelstoke Aquatic Centre just a two-minute walk down the street.

In town

You won't have any trouble keeping busy for a day in the town of Revelstoke. While the population is only 7,000, it boasts dozens of eateries, a few museums and plenty of unique shops worth checking out, including Grizzly Books and the Art First! independent gallery. If you are in the mood (or trying to get in the mood), the Spice O' Life Emporium bills itself as the "most tasteful sex shop in the west."

Good Eats

Food offerings at the Revelstoke Mountain Resort include La Baguette for lattes and morning treats at the foot of the mountain. The 160-seat casual upscale Rockford has Monday night chicken wings for only 35 cents. Early risers can head for the First Tracks full breakfast buffet at Revelation Lodge on the mid-mountain. At the top of the gondola The Mackenzie Outpost offers fabulous mountains views and the best veggie burger ever (secret ingredient? Beets).

In town there are more than 35 restaurants to choose from. A few to try: the popular Taco Club food truck and

restaurant, Kawakubo for unforgettable sushi, Emos for pasta and pizza and the Village Idiot for pub grub.

Nearby

- Revelstoke Dam Visitor Centre: Learn how the Revelstoke dam was built, how water is turned into energy, and take a self-guided tour on an elevator ride to the lookout located atop the massive concrete dam.
- Revelstoke Railway Museum: Chat with a locomotive engineer and experience driving an engine on the railway simulator.
- B.C. Interior Forestry Museum: Learn about the struggles and victories involved in old-time logging.
- Rogers Pass National Historic Site: This high [pass](#) through the [Selkirk Mountains](#) is located in the heart of Glacier National Park.
- The Nickelodeon Museum: Canada's only mechanical music museum with automatic vintage self-playing musical instruments.

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