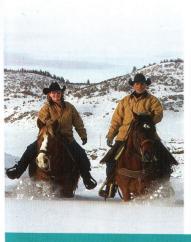
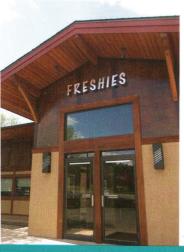
[ESSENTIAL GUIDE]









From left to right: Saddleback Ranch, Freshies, F.M. Light & Sons, Grizzle-T Dog Sledding

true steamboat springs

Heads covered in ski toques or Stetsons mingle on Main Street, while at the ski resort, kids strive to out-schuss the local Olympians: Steamboat claims 84 and counting, more than anyplace else in the country.

Small, candlelit dining rooms and tables tucked into secluded nooks make **Café Diva** a date-night

FOOD FIX

make Caté Diva a date-nig favorite. Follow pork belly sandwiches with the elk tenderloin (1855 Ski Time Sq, 970-871-0508).

Freshies' breakfasts include cherry-granola pancakes and kaleidoscopic veggie scrambles. Lunch means grass-fed beef burgers and Steamboat's best salads (595 S Lincoln Ave, 970-879-8099).

A 122-year-old barn is the setting for sizzling steaks

at the **Ore House at the Pine Grove** (1465 Pine Grove Rd, 970-879-1190).

NIGH Saddle

NIGHT OUT Saddleback Ranch

hosts sleigh rides to Double Dollar Lodge, where hot cocoa welcomes arrivals and ranch dinners conclude with calf-roping lessons (37350 RCR 179, 970-879-3711).

The **Tugboat** has been rocking since 1972 and still stages Steamboat's loudest—and often rowdiest—live music scene (1860 Ski Time Sq, 970-879-7070).

Sleek, modern décor distinguishes Sweetwater Grill from the town's Western vibe. Its fire pits along the Yampa River lure revelers outdoors year-round (811 Yampa St, 970-879-9500).

The DOI

DON'T MISS

The Twilight ski run epitomizes Steamboat Ski Resort's legendary tree skiing: Here, snow-encrusted aspens serve as slalompoles through the region's legendary "champagne powder" (970-879-6111).

Visit **F.M. Light & Sons**, a Western-wear shop founded in 1905 that specializes in dapper cowboy duds (830 Lincoln Ave, 970-879-1822).



STONE'S THROW

Hop on a sled and drive your own dog team with **Grizzle-T Dog Sledding** along a scenic 12.5-mile circuit through ranch country (*HC 66 Box* 39, 970-870-1782).

Rent Nordic skis or snowshoes (Ski Haus, 1457 Pine Grove Rd, 970-879-0385) and head to Rabbit Ears Pass for a 3.7-mile trek along the 1A West Summit Loop that winds through silent pines and open meadows.



THREAD COUNT

The Porches

comprises a cluster of sprawling luxury homes

available to rent that come furnished Westernstyle, with leather, ponyhide, log furniture and stone fireplaces (1291 Turning Leaf Ct, 866-992-0600).

Overlook the dated décor at The Ptarmigan Inn and relish its ski-in, ski-out location and reasonable rates—it's the best bargain in the base village (2304 Apres Ski Way, 800-538-7519).

A \$20 million renovation added luxury villas, sleek lobby furniture and plush beds to The Sheraton Steamboat Resort, located just steps away from the gondola (2200 Village Inn Ct. 970-879-2220).

A 10-year resident of Ski Town U.S.A., Kelly Bastone writes for Sunset, Backpacker, National Parks and The New York Times.

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