

MONTHLY FORECAST BY J.B. BISSELL:

# Variable Weather With a 100% Chance of Good Times

Cycle your way through Colorado's fall foliage. RIGHT: Brace for thrills — and out-of-this-world views — on a white-water rafting excursion.

David Epperson/Getty Images; Blaine Harrington III/Getty Images

There's no such thing as an off-season when it comes to outdoor recreation — and relaxation — in the **Vail Valley**.

One of the reasons I can't fathom living somewhere other than Colorado is because I enjoy the changing of the seasons so much. *All* of them.

In our house, we celebrate the first snow of every winter with a fun family dinner (elk chili, homemade biscuits, and chocolate chip cookies straight from the oven) paired with conversation about upcoming powder days. By the time spring arrives, I always hope to squeeze in one more day of skiing — but I'm also perfectly content to be wearing flip-flops again. I love hot summer days spent sitting by a swimming pool and the cool autumn nights around a firepit that follow. And then, a couple months later, when the first snowflakes tumble out of the sky again, the cycle is complete and it's time for another big batch of chili.

Visitors, of course, typically experience a mere fraction of any given Colorado season — and often think the only worthwhile times to be here are either in the dead of winter to ski or at the height of summer to hike. In fact, your travel window for those activities is much larger, and even if those specific pastimes aren't in full swing when you arrive, there's always something to do outdoors to take advantage of Colorado's lovely year-round climate.

So, whether you crave high-altitude vitamin D or are a wintertime warrior, perhaps this is the year to check out the Vail, Avon, and Beaver Creek area during a slightly different time period. Maybe it'll even inspire you to pick up a new hobby, and before you know it, you'll be planning your own seasonal celebration dinner.

## LATE SUMMER TO EARLY FALL

Expect warm days and signature blue-bird Colorado skies — until late afternoon, when the signature thunderstorms roll over the Rocky Mountains. The showers are brief, though, and give way to refreshingly crisp evenings.

**Pure alfresco adrenaline:** Racing down any mountain will definitely get your heart pumping. When there's no snow, the



best way to do that is on two wheels. More than 340 miles of mountain biking trails crisscross the surrounding peaks, providing pedaling experiences that range from demanding singletrack to resort riding. Speaking of which, at Vail and Beaver Creek specifically, the routes are rated from beginner to expert so you always have an idea about what you're getting into, and you can even access some terrain by means of a give-your-legs-a-break gondola ride.

**Easygoing outdoor fun:** Put on a life jacket, pick up a paddle, and prepare to get soaked. A number of local outfitters offer white-water rafting day-trips along various rivers near Vail and Avon. Access to the biggest rapids closes in mid- to late-August, which means this is the perfect time to try some of the family-friendly stretches — where no experience is necessary — that run through September. The visually breathtaking Shoshone trip in Glenwood Canyon, for example, is a regional highlight.

**Outside — but no side ache:** Golf isn't always considered a low-key endeavor. Chunking a short iron or leaving a 3-foot putt short can certainly bring your blood to a boil. But check out the view. At courses such as the Vail Golf Club, you're teeing off amid glorious mountain peaks and pine forests — and by this time of year, there might even be some golden aspen leaves blazing in the distance. In other words, soak up the scenery and don't fret about another double bogey.

## AREA RESORTS



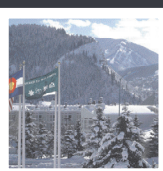
### Sheraton Mountain Vista (VTA, VT1)

Sheraton Mountain Vista is a great location in which to experience the best of Vail Valley. When the snow melts, the fun continues with rafting, rock climbing, hiking, fishing, bicycling, golf, and horseback riding through alpine beauty. Depending on the season, warm yourself near the fireplace in the lobby, or cool off in the swimming pool. Then relax in the comfort of a one- or two-bedroom suite, featuring a kitchen, separate living/dining area, and breakfast bar.



### Sheraton Lakeside Terrace Villas at Mountain Vista (LFP)

At the doorstep of Sheraton Lakeside Terrace Villas at Mountain Vista are 6,000 acres of powdery trails and some of the highest ski-worthy terrain in North America. Relax in one of the two-bedroom, two-bath villas featuring comfortable living rooms, fully equipped kitchens, whirlpool baths, and private balconies. Adjacent to the resort is Nottingham Park and Lake and the Avon Recreation Center, with complimentary access to exercise equipment and indoor pools.



### The Christie Lodge (TCL, TC2, TC3, TC4)

The Christie Lodge is centrally located for abundant Rocky Mountain activities. Cozy units feature private balconies, wood-burning fireplaces, and partial kitchens. While the units are air conditioned in the living room only, you can enjoy the fresh mountain air and many outdoor activities. On-site summer and winter sporting equipment rentals are available, and a convenient shuttle bus service connects you to Vail and Beaver Creek.

To view all of the Vail, Avon, and Beaver Creek resorts in Interval's network, go to [intervalworld.com](http://intervalworld.com).

## FALL

When the calendar flips to October, a few inches of overnight snow in the high country is always a possibility. More likely, though, are comfortable days made even more pleasant — despite whatever the thermometer reports — by the seemingly constant sunshine.

**Pure alfresco adrenaline:** Autumn is arguably prime hiking season in Colorado. It's cooler, but you're also much less likely to get caught in one of those aforementioned afternoon thunderstorms. Plus, foot traffic is pretty light and changing aspen leaves add some vibrant color to the woodland palette. Like mountain biking, you can trek on designated trails at both Vail and Beaver Creek. More experienced — or adventurous — hikers will probably want to explore farther afield. The nearby Pitkin Lake, Booth Lake, and Missouri Lakes trails all provide challenging and rewarding back-country experiences.

**Easygoing outdoor fun:** You don't need to know the difference between a blue-winged olive mayfly and an October caddis to enjoy a day of autumn trout fishing. And if you do know the difference, you probably also know the benefits of breaking out your fly rod in the fall: uncrowded rivers and hungry unpressured fish. Either way, Vail Valley Anglers has a suitable guided excursion to get you out on the river. Float trips aboard a drift boat or raft are particularly cool because you'll likely travel through terrain that's not otherwise readily accessible.

**Outside — but no side ache:** Open daily from dawn to dusk, and located at about 8,200 feet above sea level, the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens is the highest botanical garden in North America. The grounds are divided into three main foliage regions — Taming of the Mountain West, Alpine Plants of the World, and Rocky Mountain Ecosystems — and connected by walking paths and bridges that span gurgling streams.

## LATE FALL TO EARLY WINTER

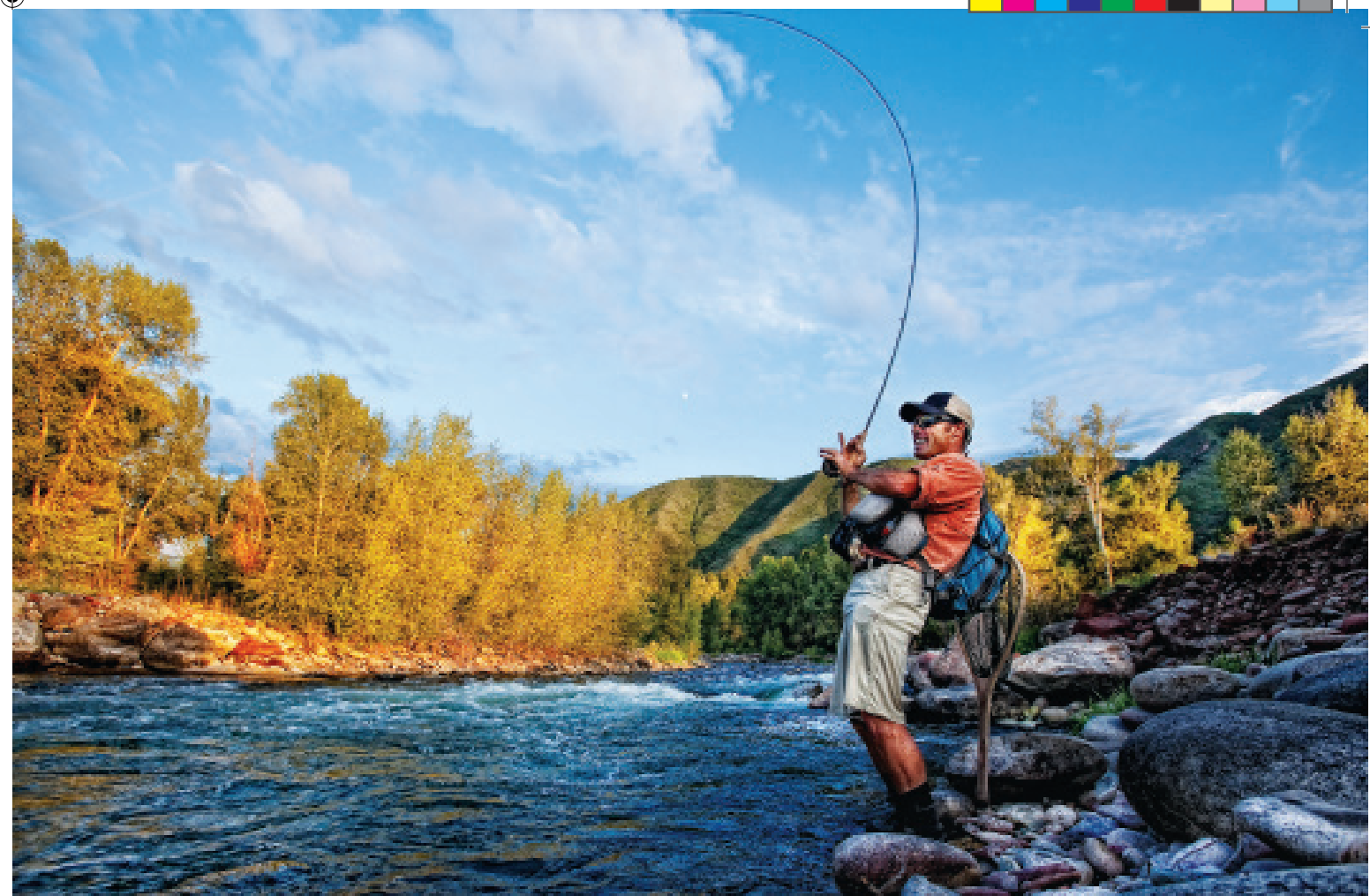
Snow flurries are more consistent in November and December. Even better are the full-blown snowstorms. Pack for the winter weather, but here's an inside tip: Waking up to clear skies and bright sun the morning after a big snow is one of the true joys of a Colorado mountain vacation.

**Pure alfresco adrenaline:** Ski and snowboard season at Vail and Beaver Creek typically kicks off in mid- to late-November. Depending on snow coverage, of course, certain terrain might not be open that early. (It takes a good foundation of snow to sufficiently cover more extreme territory, such as Vail's famous Back Bowls and the hidden gem Stone Creek Chutes at Beaver Creek.) But that doesn't mean you'll be stuck lapping just one or two runs. Both resorts do a great job of ensuring a variety of trails — ranging from short bunny hills to groomed cruisers to challenging top-to-bottom trips with detours through the trees — are ready for early-season riders.

**Easygoing outdoor fun:** Snowshoeing is probably the Vail Valley's most peaceful wintertime activity — especially when you find yourself standing in silence in the middle of an aspen grove. And it's truly a no-experience-necessary pursuit. Simply put on whatever boots you brought for your trip, strap into a pair of

[intervalworld.com](http://intervalworld.com)

Ken Redding/Getty Images; bluefootage/Getty Images; Steve Hamblin/Alamy Stock Photo



snowshoes (they're available for rent at multiple shops), and start walking. Both ski areas offer formal tours, or meander at your own pace along the 6-mile trail at the Vail Nordic Center.

**Outside — but no side ache:** Shopping is a bona fide recreational pursuit in Beaver Creek, Lionshead, and Vail villages, and the spoils go way beyond mountain-themed trinkets and funny T-shirts. You can browse various art galleries and jewelry stores, outfit yourself in some authentic Western wear, and purchase the latest outdoor gear from brands such as Burton, Oakley, Patagonia, Salomon, The North Face, and more. ■

[intervalworld.com](http://intervalworld.com)

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Novice or pro, fly fishing in the Centennial State is a must. | Whether it's hiking in the autumn or snowshoeing in the winter, the best way to take in the Vail landscape is on foot. | Start your day at Betty Ford Alpine Gardens at the Education Center and learn all about the plants that thrive in this alpine environment.

The **Vail Valley**  
Is Always a Good Idea

Make an exchange or buy a  
Getaway at [intervalworld.com](http://intervalworld.com).

Getaways start from **\$457**.

The Getaway price is valid Aug. 1, 2021,  
through Jan. 31, 2022.