

ASPEN DEFY ORDINARY

Aspen Media Kit

This media kit provides a comprehensive overview of Aspen, Colorado, for media and journalists, highlighting its appeal as a year-round destination. It covers the town's history, culture, and activities to inspire stories; if you have any questions or would like to request images for editorial use, please reach out to Backbone (acra@backbone.media).

Aspen History & General Overview

Aspen is nestled in the awe-inspiring Rocky Mountains. Here, visitors can enjoy renowned arts and culture, exceptional cuisine, world-class accommodations and countless outdoor pursuits - all the makings for an extraordinary vacation experience.

Aspen's story begins with the **Ute people**, who first used the Roaring Fork Valley as a hunting ground. In the late 1800s, Aspen became a booming **silver mining town**, growing rapidly until the collapse of silver prices in 1893. After decades of decline known as the "Quiet Years," Aspen was reborn in the 1940s with the introduction of skiing, sparking its transformation into one of the world's most renowned mountain destinations. During this time, modern day founders Walter and Elizabeth Paepcke arrived with a vision for the community that focused on [Mind, Body and Spirit](#), and helped Aspen begin a civic and cultural renaissance - one that continues to this day. We call it "**The Aspen Idea**."

While Aspen gained recognition as a premier skiing destination, it wasn't long before visitors began to explore and appreciate the area, sans snow. Spring, summer and fall are ideal times for hiking, biking and rafting. Exceptional dining, premier shopping, a variety of events and leading arts & culture draw people from around the world.

Arts & Culture

Aspen boasts a thriving arts and culture scene. While many marquee events take place during the summer season, the community offers exceptional programming all year long. Among the many highlights are:

- The annual [FOOD & WINE Classic in Aspen](#): A must-attend culinary event with celebrity chefs, master sommeliers, and grand tastings that draw the industry's best.
- [Wintersköi™](#): Aspen's annual winter celebration to kick off the season, honor the alpine lifestyle, and bring together the local community.

- The [Aspen Art Museum](#): Designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Shigeru Ban, this contemporary museum features rotating exhibitions, rooftop programs, and community events.
- The [Aspen Music Festival and School](#): A premier classical music festival offers more than 400 performances each summer, drawing world-renowned musicians and students.
- [Jazz Aspen Snowmass](#) hosts annual festivals in June and over Labor Day weekend, bringing jazz, pop, rock, and R&B artists against Aspen's stunning mountain setting. The new Paul JAS Center opened its doors in December 2025 and adds a dynamic new chapter to Aspen's cultural scene as a year-round, intimate venue for live music, education, and community gatherings in the heart of downtown.
- The [Aspen Ideas Festival](#): A globally recognized gathering of leaders, innovators, and changemakers that takes place each summer, sparking conversations on the world's most pressing issues.
- [Aspen Film](#): A cultural cornerstone since 1979, Aspen Film hosts year-round programming including Aspen Filmfest, Academy Screenings, and Shortsfest.
- Art Week: Integral to the Aspen community, the city plays host to several Art & Design fairs and events throughout Aspen Art Week, including but not limited to [Intersect Aspen](#), [Aspen Art Fair](#), [AIR](#), and [ArtCrush](#).
- [Up in the Sky Festival](#): Located at the base of Buttermilk with views of the Elk Mountain Range, this two-day festival offers live music from today's top artists in an unforgettable mountain setting.

Outdoor Recreation & Adventure

No matter the season, a trip to Aspen isn't complete without outdoor adventure. With nearly 300 days of sunshine a year, visitors can recreate outdoors during all four seasons, with offerings that include [hiking](#), [biking](#), [golfing](#), [whitewater rafting](#), [fly fishing](#), [climbing](#), downhill [skiing and snowboarding](#), [Nordic skiing](#), and more.

- Trails range from easy, family-friendly hikes to strenuous alpine adventures, with the surrounding Elk Mountain Range boasting seven of the state's [14ers](#).
- Aspen and the Roaring Fork Valley became the first destination in Colorado to receive the [IMBA Gold Ride Center](#) designation from the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) in 2020. This Gold-Level award distinguishes the destination as the pinnacle of [mountain biking](#) communities.
- High-altitude golf is a summer highlight, with courses in Aspen and Snowmass offering varied terrain, stunning views, and extra distance thanks to the thin mountain air.
- Aspen is [family-friendly](#), with numerous outdoor activities and free events. Explore family-favorite spots [here](#).
- Attend various [on-mountain events](#) throughout the winter season such as [Aspen Gay Ski Week](#), Winter X Games, Snow League, Toyota U.S. Grand Prix, and more.

Dining and Nightlife

Aspen is a culinary hotspot, offering dozens of eateries in downtown Aspen, the town has everything from fine dining to beloved local favorites, with plentiful patios for al fresco dining.

The first edition of the [MICHELIN Guide Colorado](#) selection was revealed in September 2023. In 2025, it was announced:

- [Bosq Aspen](#) retained its one-star rating.
- Local restaurants [Element 47](#), [Mawa's Kitchen](#), and [Prospect](#) are all recommended in the guide.
- [Nick Heileman of Bosq](#) was named MICHELIN Guide to Colorado 2025 Sommelier of the Year, following [Chris Dunaway of Element 47](#) in 2024.

Find a few local's guides to dining in Aspen below:

- [Bar Menus in Aspen](#)
- [Al Fresco Dining in Aspen](#)
- [Happy Hours in Aspen](#)
- [Adventure Dining in Aspen](#)

Aspen's nightlife is equally dynamic. Nightlife in Aspen includes everything from craft cocktails and local brews to live music and DJs. Check out our local's guide to Aspen after dark, [HERE](#).

Lodging

Aspen's lodging options span the full spectrum, from cozy lodges to five-star luxury hotels, including MICHELIN Key properties. Accommodations include condominiums, bed and breakfasts, hotels, and vacation rentals, many of which offer pet-friendly stays.

- [Hotel Jerome](#), [The Little Nell](#), and [MOLLIE Aspen](#) each retained their MICHELIN One Key rating in the [2025 Colorado Hotel Guide](#).

Shopping

Aspen's many retail shops range from luxury boutiques and outdoor retailers to art galleries and consignment stores. The town's pedestrian malls create a relaxed, scenic outdoor shopping experience, offering everything from local jewelry and home goods to art and high fashion in one of the country's most eclectic retail scenes.

Sustainability Initiatives

Since its founding in the 1960s, Aspen Chamber Resort Association (ACRA) has worked to create an environment for Aspen to thrive. In 2020, ACRA shifted from destination marketing to [destination management](#), with goals that include:

- Addressing visitor pressure.
- Enhancing the Aspen experience.
- Preserving small-town character.

Aspen is proud to be recognized internationally for its commitment to sustainability. Certified as a sustainable mountain resort destination through the prestigious [Mountain IDEAL Certification](#), Aspen sets the gold standard for sustainable destinations worldwide.

Aspen's certification comes from Green Destinations, an internationally accredited certification body verified by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council. This accolade is a result of years of dedicated leadership within the Aspen community and drive to implement leading environmental and sustainability programs that address the needs of both residents and visitors.

Check out more about Aspen's sustainability initiatives at [aspenchamber.org](https://www.aspenchamber.org)