

ASPEN Ski Trip December 12-18, 2015

22 members of the Jacksonville Ski Club traveled to Aspen Colorado for an early season ski trip. There were 2 new members from Tallahassee that met us at the airport. All of us were on a non-stop flight straight into Denver on Southwest Airlines. We then met another new member who had flown in from Fort Meyers. A private coach bus picked us up at the airport and then made a stop at Applejacks & King Soopers so we could pick of groceries for the week. Despite the snow heavily coming down for most of our drive, we made it safely to Aspen in a little over 5 hours. We got dropped off directly at the front door of our lodging, The Limelight Hotel. This is also where 1 other member who lives in Colorado, drove on her own to meet us there. The check in process went very quick and efficient, as the hotel staff handled our luggage and took them up to each of our rooms.

To our surprise, the hotel had upgraded many of our rooms. All the rooms were very spacious and included a wetbar area with a microwave, mini refrig, a keurig coffee machine, and 40" flat screen tvs. There were large closets, extra seating areas, a desk, nice size bathrooms and plenty of space for suitcases and ski gear. We all were extremely pleased with the accommodations and the views from our rooms. The hotel also provided us with access to a fitness room, roof top terrace, 2 hot tubs and a heated pool. The lobby included lots of seating areas, a beautiful Christmas tree, holiday decorations and a cozy fireplace.

After getting settled in our rooms, we all took a bus and headed over to Incline Ski Shop to get our ski rentals. We then brought our ski equipment back to the hotel and were able to store them in the private ski storage area. Afterwards, we attended a "Welcome Reception" party in the lobby. This was a great opportunity for all of us to get to know each other a little more. We had some appetizers, cheese and crackers, and a Free drink. The Event Manager, Lauren greeted and welcomed us. There was also a rep from Aspen/Snowmass to assist us with any questions we had during our stay. Tracey and I then handed out the ski lift tickets to everyone.

Sunday....We woke up to some fresh powder on day 1. Everyone met in the lobby in the morning and enjoyed the free expanded continental breakfast, which was all delicious. Upon discussion of which mountains to ski that day, a majority of us decided to go to Snowmass Mountain, the largest of all. We all gathered our ski equipment from the ski concierge and took a private shuttle from the hotel directly to Snowmass, about a 25 minute ride. It was a beautiful sunny day, about 30 degrees, and most of the slopes were groomed and we enjoyed skiing with a little fresh powder. After skiing there, it was convenient to be able to store our skis at the Incline Ski shop at Snowmass Village. We then took the shuttle back to the hotel, relaxed a bit in our rooms before dinner. Most of us met in the lobby for either an appetizer, dinner, or their well known specialty pizzas. The atmosphere was very relaxing as we listened to the live music.

Monday...A few of us split up and skied different mountains. My group decided to go back to Snowmass. This time we took the local bus and got dropped off by the ski shop to get our skis. This was another nice sunny day with some flurries. Everyone met at Elk camp for a group lunch. Once we returned from skiing, we all rested then met in the lobby before our 1st group dinner. We took the private shuttle to the Sky Hotel and ate dinner at 39 Degrees Lounge. It was a nice cozy, relaxing atmosphere. Some people decided to head back to the hotel as others hit the local hotspot, Eric's Bar and played shuffleboard.

Tuesday...Some people decided to ski Aspen mountain or Aspen Highlands, while others took the day off. This day was an ALL SNOW DAY.....15" total! For those that took off, we strolled around the ritzy town of Aspen for hours popping in and out of stores. Others just took a ride up on the gondola to the top of Aspen Mountain to take beautiful scenery pictures. Everything is so conveniently located and right outside the hotel. This night everyone was on their own for dinner. Some of us ate at the oldest bar in Aspen, called the Red Onion, just 2 blocks from the hotel. All the streets and trees were decorated with bright beautiful holiday lights.

Wednesday...Everyone was split up this day. My group went to Buttermilk Mountain. This is a smaller mountain, but nicely groomed slopes after day full of powder. We got to see the half pipe, in which they were preparing for the upcoming X-games in January. After a great day of fresh powder, we all took the private shuttle back to the hotel. We all met in the lobby again and went out to our 2nd group dinner. This was located on Main Street and was at the Hickory House Ribs BBQ. This is the BEST BBQ in town and we all highly recommend if ever in Aspen.

Thursday....Our last day! Most of us decided to go back to Snowmass as there was more snow and we all wanted to take advantage of the big mountain. We enjoyed skiing together in big groups with all the fresh powder. Afterwards, we were able to drop our skis off at the Incline Ski shop in Snowmass for our convenience. After getting back to the hotel, we all met in the lobby and we were invited to a party. "Aspen Magazine" was hosting a private function. We were provided with Free food and drinks all night. This included pizza, various appetizers as well as Free wine and beer. What a great night to end the week!

Friday...Our private coach bus left the hotel at 9:30 am. It was another sunny blue sky day. We had no trouble with traffic, as we arrived in Denver 4 hours before our departure. We took a non-stop flight back from Denver to Jacksonville and arrived at 11:30 pm. This is where we all said our good byes, but were thinking.....when are we all going back?

The entire week was Absolutely WONDERFUL! We all were able to ski all 4 mountains...Aspen, Aspen Highlands, Buttermilk & Snowmass. It had snowed a total of 26 inches throughout the entire week. We could'nt have had a better week considering it was still early in the season. The weather on average was around the mid 20's, but not too cold. We all would highly recommend lodging at the Limelight hotel again. From the front desk staff, ski concierge, private shuttles, everyone was fabulous there. Overall... the weather, ski conditions, and the hotel were all EXCELLENT! Everyone is looking forward to returning in the near future :)

Your Trip Leaders,
Ana Yazdan & Tracey Lee

