



**TRAVEL** BY TAMMIE DOOLEY

*Three towns with skiing, sightseeing, shopping and so much more. Let your winter vacation planning begin now.*



Voted one of the top ski towns in America, Crested Butte offers a vertical drop on the mountain of 2,775 feet from a summit of 12,162 feet. And with 300 inches of snow on average per year, skiing opportunities are plentiful.

Photo courtesy of skicrestedbutte.com.

SKI!

**A WINTER VACATION SPOT**

is about more than downhill skiing. As a matter of fact, the frozen white stuff provides a backdrop that can just as easily facilitate doing nothing as any Caribbean beach. And similar to a beach, options abound for various activity levels — from sitting next to a fireplace with a great read to a blast downhill at 100 mph. Here are three winter destinations with history, beauty and attractions to spare.

**LITTLE BLACK BOOK:**  
**Gunnison-Crested Butte, Colo.**

**REASONS TO GO:** It's remote, small and bountiful in recreational possibilities during all seasons of the year. But come the first snowfall, spandex and Wranglers mix harmoniously in a laid-back clash of people pursuing the same thing — a great time.

- 2009 Crested Butte — “Top 10 Family Ski Resorts” by Sherman’s Travel
- 2008 Crested Butte — “Top 20 Ski Towns” by SKI Magazine
- 2008 Crested Butte — “America’s Best Small Ski Towns” by Travel + Leisure magazine
- 2007 Gunnison — “50 Best Adventure Towns” by National Geographic Adventure magazine

Gunnison’s elevation is 7,775 feet; Crested Butte’s elevation is 8,885 feet, with the ski base area at 9,380. The lift-served vertical drop on the mountain is 2,775 feet from a summit of 12,162 feet. There are 121 trails, with the longest run at 2.6 miles.

Average snowfall is 300 inches per year. For the mountain PowCam, visit [www.skicb.com](http://www.skicb.com). For more information, visit [www.gunnisoncrestedbutte.com](http://www.gunnisoncrestedbutte.com).

**HOW TO GET THERE:** The Gunnison-Crested Butte area is approximately 228 miles southwest of Denver. Crested Butte is 28 miles north of Gunnison. United, American Airlines and Continental service Gunnison-Crested Butte Regional Airport (GUC) in Gunnison in the winter.

**WHERE TO EAT/DRINK:**  
**Camp 4 Coffee.** You can't ski the entire day without it. The best coffee in Colorado, according to the Denver Post. Four locations in the Crested Butte area. [www.camp4coffee.com](http://www.camp4coffee.com)

**Gunnisack Cowboy Bistro.** People's Choice winner for the best burgers and chicken-fried steak. 142 N. Main St., Gunnison; 970-641-5445

**Lil's Sushi Bar & Grill.** More than just sushi – beef and seafood entrées as well. 321 Elk Ave., Crested Butte; 970-349-5457

**Souppçon.** Small, romantic, hole in the wall. The best meal experience in Crested Butte. Two seatings a night. 127 Elk Ave., Suite A, Crested Butte; 970-349-5448; [www.souppconcrestedbutte.com](http://www.souppconcrestedbutte.com)

**WHERE TO STAY:**  
**Crested Butte Mountain Resort.** An all-inclusive great time. From lessons to guided treks on the mountain to a sleigh ride dinner by moonlight, this resort is the area's hub. 12 Snowmass Road, Crested Butte; 800-810-7669; [www.skicb.com](http://www.skicb.com)

**The Ruby of Crested Butte.** Ranked the No. 1 Colorado Bed & Breakfast by TripAdvisor.com and recommended by numerous travel magazines. 624 Gothic Ave., Crested Butte; 800-390-1338; [www.therubyofcrestedbutte.com](http://www.therubyofcrestedbutte.com)

**Elk Mountain Lodge.** Built in 1919 as a miner's hotel. In Crested Butte's historic district. 129 Gothic Ave.; 970-349-7533; [www.elkmountainlodge.com](http://www.elkmountainlodge.com)

**WHERE TO SHOP:**  
**Treads N' Threads.** Outdoor/casual clothing and footwear. 113 N. Main St., Gunnison; 970-641-1551



Photo courtesy of [skicrestedbutte.com](http://skicrestedbutte.com).

Crested Butte features a variety of ski resorts offering ski lessons, tours and topnotch dining and accommodations.

**Corner Cupboard.** Voted best home décor in 2008. Kitchen gadgets to gourmet Colorado food. 101 N. Main St., Gunnison; 970-641-0313

**Lavish.** Unique artisan accessories. 234 Elk Ave., Crested Butte; 970-349-1077; [www.lavishcb.com](http://www.lavishcb.com)

**WHAT TO SEE/DO:**  
**Dog sledding.** What's not to love about learning to mush on your vacation? Short rides of two hours to all-day trips. **Cosmic Cruisers Sled Dog Tours:** 970-641-0529, [www.gunnisonsleddogs.com](http://www.gunnisonsleddogs.com). **Lucky Cat Dog Farm:** 970-641-1636, [www.luckycat-dogfarm.com](http://www.luckycat-dogfarm.com).

**Ice fishing.** The Iola Basin of Blue Mesa Reservoir (in the Curecanti National Recreation Area) offers the best ice fishing. You'll need a Colorado state fishing license. Outfitters available. 800-814-7988

**Mountain Bike Hall of Fame.** Crested Butte is one of the places where people claim mountain biking started. 122 Tecocallí Road, Crested Butte; 970-349-6817; [www.mtnbikehalloffame.com](http://www.mtnbikehalloffame.com)

**JUST FOR THE VIBE:**  
**Last Steep Bar & Grill.** Excellent chips and salsa, pulled

pork sandwich. 208 Elk Ave., Crested Butte; 970-349-7007; [www.thelaststeep.com](http://www.thelaststeep.com)

## Santa Fe, N.M.

**REASONS TO GO:** World renowned for its food, architecture, climate, outdoor beauty and cultural heritage, it's also of great historical significance. Santa Fe is the second-oldest city founded by European colonists in the United States. Only St. Augustine, Fla., is older. Built on the ruins of an abandoned Tanoan Indian village, Santa Fe was the capital of the "Kingdom of New Mexico," which **Coronado** claimed for Spain in 1540.

- For 2010, TripAdvisor.com ranked Santa Fe, N.M., as the No. 9 U.S. destination in the Relaxation and Spa category, No. 9 for Great Food and Wine and No. 10 for Culture and Sightseeing.
- Travel + Leisure magazine's World's Best Awards ranked Santa Fe the No. 5 destination in the United States.

Sixteen miles from "The Plaza" (the center of Santa Fe), Ski Santa Fe offers 73 trails, 3-mile runs and a vertical drop of 1,725 feet from a 12,075 summit (lift-

served). Santa Fe is at 7,000 feet. The base of the ski mountain is 10,350 feet. Snowfall averages 225 inches. For more information, visit [www.skisantafe.com](http://www.skisantafe.com), [www.santafe.org](http://www.santafe.org) or [www.santafenm.gov](http://www.santafenm.gov).

**HOW TO GET THERE:** American Eagle services Santa Fe Regional Airport (SAF). Capital City Cab provides airport taxi service. Shuttles available. Albuquerque International Sunport (ABQ) is 65 miles south of Santa Fe.

**WHERE TO EAT:**  
**Chocolate Maven Bakery & Café.** Tucked away in a small industrial park, you'll have to follow your nose to find it. Request a seat in the dining room downstairs near the glass partition, behind which you'll get to watch the bakers at work. Not open for dinner; closes at 3 p.m., Sundays only. 821 W. San Mateo Road, Suite C; 505-984-1980; [www.chocolatemaven.com](http://www.chocolatemaven.com)

**Café Pasqual's.** No secret if you've been to Santa Fe, but this organic James Beard multiple award-winner is worth whatever effort it takes to get a seat. 121 Don Gaspar Ave., 505-983-9340, [www.pasquals.com](http://www.pasquals.com)

**TRAVEL** << P. 97

**Rancho de Chimayo.** More than 40 years of serving some of northern New Mexico's best traditional cuisine made this a gem stumbled upon during my last trip to the area. Don't miss the ropes of red chilies dangling from the roof line. **Chimayo, N.M.;** 505-984-2100; [www.ranchodechimayo.com](http://www.ranchodechimayo.com)

**WHERE TO SHOP:**

**Andrea Fisher Fine Pottery.** You know you want a black piece of pottery but have no idea what it's called. The helpful, informative salespeople here do, and they'll open the world of pottery to you. By the way, **Maria Martinez** (1887-1980) of the San Ildefonso Pueblo made the black pots famous. **100 W. San Francisco St.,** 505-986-1234, [www.andreafisherpottery.com](http://www.andreafisherpottery.com)

**Back at the Ranch.** The largest and most unique collection of handmade cowboy boots I've seen. Not just for cowboys. **209 E. Marcy St.,** 505-989-8110, [www.backattheranch.com](http://www.backattheranch.com)

**Alpine Sports.** Voted the "Top Ski Shop in the Rocky Mountains" by SKI Magazine, this shop has everything you'll need for year-round activities. **121 Sandoval St.,** 505-983-5155, [www.alpinesports-santafe.com](http://www.alpinesports-santafe.com)

**WHERE TO STAY:**

**La Posada.** The grounds of this historic resort are even more appealing than the rooms – a feat. AAA Four Diamond. **330 E. Palace Ave.,** 866-331-7625, [www.rockresorts.com](http://www.rockresorts.com)

**Inn of the Five Graces.** On the Relais & Chateaux register. Southwest architecture over East Indian and Tibetan antiques, oriental carpets and nomadic textiles. **150 E. de Vargas St.,** 505-992-0957, [www.fivegraces.com](http://www.fivegraces.com)

**The Bishop's Lodge Resort & Spa.** Travel + Leisure magazine ranked this hotel, located at the base of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, as one of America's premier retreats. **1297 Bishop's Lodge Road,** 505-983-6377, [www.bishopslodge.com](http://www.bishopslodge.com)



Photo courtesy of [skisantafe.com](http://skisantafe.com).

Renowned for its food, architecture, climate and history, Santa Fe is also a popular ski destination.

**Santa Fe's 400th anniversary, 1610-2010**

With the landscape of the Southwest and the Old West, plus Native American, Spanish, Mexican, European and African-American cultures, the city comes honestly by its nickname: "The City Different."

Although Santa Fe is the nation's oldest capital city, its history can be easily relegated to a lower priority in lieu of appreciating its sensuous aesthetics. This year, however, marks 400 years since the conquistador **Don Pedro de Peralta** settled in Santa Fe in 1609-1610. Santa Fe is the site of both the oldest public building in America, the Palace of the Governors, and the nation's oldest community celebration, the Santa Fe Fiesta, established in 1712. **For a list of activities celebrating Santa Fe's history, visit the official anniversary website: [www.santafe400th.com](http://www.santafe400th.com).**

**WHAT TO SEE/DO:**

**Take a drive (most of it one-way) on Canyon Road.** Now replete with restaurants and galleries of distinctive architecture, the road once served as the principal route to the Pecos Pueblos. [www.canyonroadarts.com](http://www.canyonroadarts.com)

**Sign up for a glass-blowing class at Liquid Light Glass.** **926 Baca St., Suite 3;** 505-820-2222; [www.liquidlightglass.com](http://www.liquidlightglass.com)

**Tour at least one museum or art gallery.** Combined there are more than 200 from which to choose, including New Mexico's new 96,000-square-foot History Museum. **113 Lincoln Ave.,** 505-476-5200, [www.nmhistorymuseum.org](http://www.nmhistorymuseum.org)

**JUST FOR THE VIBE:**

**In town:** Coyote Café's rooftop cantina. Get a seat on the street side. Have margaritas and a basket of the house-fried tortilla chips with three versions of fire-roasted salsa (the best I had in Santa Fe). **132 W. Water St.,** 505-983-1615, [www.coyotecafe.com](http://www.coyotecafe.com)

**At Ski Santa Fe:** Totemoff's Bar & Grill. A 50-year-old institution at nearly 11,000 feet (at the base of the bunny hill). Very cozy with an inventive drink list. **Visit [www.skisantafe.com](http://www.skisantafe.com) for more information.**

**Taos, N.M.**

**REASONS TO GO:** The light in Taos, located at the foot of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, lends mystery and intrigue no matter the time of day. Regardless of your skill at photography, every shutter click turns out looking as if you made the shot with a high-end camera. And with past residents such as **D.H. Lawrence** and **Kit Carson**, it's no wonder this ski town has more personality than its size justifies.

Taos' elevation is 7,000 feet, but the Taos Ski Valley ranges from 9,207 to nearly 12,000 feet. There are 110 trails with a lift-served vertical drop of 2,612 feet. Average annual snowfall is 305 inches. **For more information, visit [www.skitaos.org](http://www.skitaos.org), [www.taoschamber.com](http://www.taoschamber.com), [www.taosgov.com](http://www.taosgov.com), [www.taosguide.com](http://www.taosguide.com) or [www.taosartexperiences.com](http://www.taosartexperiences.com).**

**HOW TO GET THERE:** Only 70 miles separate Taos and Santa Fe. The nearest airport served by a major airline is Santa Fe Municipal Airport (SAF), 70 miles south, or Albuquerque International Sunport (ABQ), 135 miles south.

**WHERE TO EAT:**

**Lambert's.** Elegant but comfortable and unpretentious. Try one of the absinthe cocktails. 309 Paseo del Pueblo Sur, 575-758-1009, www.lambertsoftaos.com

**Michael's Kitchen Café & Bakery.** A Taos foodie landmark for more than 30 years. You won't forget any meal here. Fantastic breakfast. 304 Paseo del Pueblo Norte, Suite C; 575-758-4178; www.michaelskitchen.com

**Chef Damon's.** Wild porcini mushroom soup. Lamb enchiladas. Service is inconsistent, but the food is not. 1014 Paseo del Pueblo Sur, 575-737-0410

**WHERE TO STAY:**

**Taos Inn.** An Old West atmosphere, a great location and one of the best values in town. 125 Paseo del Pueblo Norte, 575-758-2233, www.taosinn.com

**Alpine Village Suites.** In the Ski Valley, these accommodations offer kitchenettes, fireplaces and multiple bedrooms. 100 Thunderbird Road, 800-576-2666, www.alpine-suites.com

**El Monte Sagrado Resort.** Home to the Grand Bohemian Gallery; reason enough to stay. 317 Kit Carson Road, 575-758-3502, www.elmontesagrado.com

**WHERE TO SHOP:**

**Thom Wheeler's studio/home.** This native Texan began his career creating large-scale pieces from highly polished, textured metals such as brass, copper and aluminum plate set with ivory, wood, cast glass, stag horn, turquoise, malachite and jasper. Now he is contentedly building an eclectic dwelling that is as much a piece of art as his coveted "wall jewelry." 939 Kit Carson Road, 575-758-8870, www.thomwheeler.com

**Andean Software.** Clothing, ethnic jewelry and folk art collide for a fun shopping experience. 121 de la Placita, 575-776-2508, www.andeansoftware.com

**Starr Interiors.** Hand-loomed weavings/Zapotec rugs. 117 and 119 Paseo del Pueblo Norte, 575-758-3065, www.starr-interiors.com

**WHAT TO SEE/DO:**

**Drive on U.S. 64 (west of Taos) to the Rio Grande Gorge Bridge.** The drop is a breathtaking 650 feet. Or take the historic Taos self-guided walking tour. www.essentialguide.com

**Visit the Taos Pueblo.** An UNESCO World Heritage site, it is one of the longest continually inhabited communities in the nation, and the largest surviving multi-storied Pueblo structure. You can also view the state's highest peak, Mount Wheeler, from here. www.taospueblo.com

**Take a pottery class.** Taos Clay Studio (Wannamaker Pottery). 1208 Paseo del Pueblo Norte, 575-770-4334, www.taosclay.com

**Take a hot air balloon ride.** Float over the Rio Grande Gorge in the colorful basket of a hot air balloon. Four-hour trips. Offered year-round. Pueblo Balloon Co.: 575-751-9877, www.puebloballoon.com

**JUST FOR THE VIBE:**

**Old Blinking Light.** Mountain views, outdoor seating with a fire pit, full bar and Tex-Mex food. 100 State Road 150 (mile marker 1 on Ski Valley Road), Taos; 575-776-8787; www.oldblinkinglight.com ■

*Tammie Dooley is a Tulsa-based freelance writer. Find her online at www.SoloRoadTrip.com.*

**ASCENT**  
OUTDOOR APPAREL & ACTIVE WEAR

Cherry Street Shopping District  
1325 East 15th  
Tulsa, OK  
918.794.0243

www.facebook.com/ascenttulsa

**TOP 20 SKI TOWNS**  
by SKI Magazine.  
You be the judge!

**Gunnison Crested Butte**  
COLORADO ~ PURE & SIMPLE™

UNITED Continental American Airlines

GunnisonCrestedButte.com or  
call 877.369.7637

1880s Western and Victorian Rocky Mountain Towns