



## Aspen Mountain, Colo. »

- + Stunning steeps with a great town at the base.
- Expensive. Not a lot of easy terrain.

THAT ASPEN MOUNTAIN RANKS SO HIGH IN dining and après (no. 2 in both) will come as no surprise to any skier who's visited this picturesque mining town deep in the Elk Mountains. The 65-year-old ski area looms over a town that prides itself on offering urban-quality restaurants and bars (with prices to match) steps from Gondola Plaza. But here's the story the rankings don't tell: This mountain offers a huge variety of terrain in a compact package. Its 673 skiable acres are misleading. What counts here is vertical, and when it tops 3,500 feet accessed via a high-speed gondola that rarely draws a line, it's more than most visitors' quads can handle. Intermediates entertain themselves on fall-line groomers, but it's the experts who fully capitalize on Aspen Mountain's offerings. —*T.W.*

### TOP RANKED: LUXURY »

#### *Sun Valley, Idaho*

A resort that's a magnet for celebrities and politicians is a resort that knows about the good life. Sun Valley, purchased by Sinclair oilman Earl Holding in 1974, is meticulously maintained, each upgrade a labor of love. But it all started with the legendary Sun Valley Lodge (pictured), where service has always reigned supreme.

**On-Hill Lunch »** The white-bean chili and homemade apple strudel (with real whipped cream) lure locals and tourists alike to the cozy cabin interior and two-tiered deck at Bonnie's.

**Don't Miss »** Aspen Mountain is sprinkled with shrines to everyone from late locals to legendary musicians. Create a tour on skis at [aspensnowmassshrines.com](http://aspensnowmassshrines.com).

**Après Spot »** The Sky Hotel has après locked down, but if the pool scene is too rowdy, head to **BB's Kitchen**, a newish joint with a second-floor patio prime for catching late-day sun.