

# ASPEN

Snow bunnies flock to her when she's sheathed in snow but Aspen, the queen of ski resort towns, reveals her true beauty in autumn. It's when thousands of aspen trees change colour and set entire mountains ablaze with vivid yellow leaves. Against a backdrop of clear blue skies, the golden foliage slowly crawls up the hills then sweeps down the valleys until the whole landscape starts to resemble a Klimt canvas. Even the quiet glass-like lakes join the frenzy, reflecting this mad explosion of colour in all its glory.

Although primarily known for skiing, Aspen enjoys dramatically different seasons. It's obviously frenetic in winter, when Australians top the list of international visitors drawn to its snowfields. Summer – surprisingly – is even busier; the town's warm-weather charms are no secret among Americans. Spring sees the snow melt and the mountains turn muddy, leaving autumn, when the scenery is spectacular but crowds are scant. When luxury hotels are up and running but not prohibitively expensive. When restaurants are lively but not impossible to get into. When the gondolas are operating but there are few queues.

Mother Nature is notoriously unpredictable but visiting in mid to late September offers your best chance to catch Aspen's autumn show. Keep this guide handy while you're there.

## Best steakhouse

Red velvet curtains, leather booths and mood lighting give **Steakhouse No.316** ([steakhouse316.com](http://steakhouse316.com)) a cosy old-world atmosphere. Almost every square inch of the walls is covered with mirrors, paintings and framed vintage photographs yet all eyes are on the food. There's the filet mignon, simply seasoned with salt and pepper then grilled to perfection, and the equally unmissable bourbon bread pudding that's studded with pecans, drizzled with an extra-salty caramel sauce and served with a side of vanilla bean ice-cream (it's huge so sharing is the way to go).



*Tomahawk  
rib eye for two at  
Steakhouse No.316*