

VARIETY

Film Festivals

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Lodgings and eateries at Sundance

Park City offers a wide array of hotels and restaurants

An estimated 40,000 to 50,000 Sundance festgoers descend on Park City -- which has a permanent population of a mere 8,000 -- during the annual film blowout, clogging streets, sidewalks and eateries, and creating transportation nightmares. Although screening venues in Salt Lake City may be less crowded, most industryites prefer to be where the action is: on -- or just off -- Park City's historic Main Street.

By early January, lodging for the fest's first four days will be at a premium; however, day five through the fest's closing weekend typically offer more options. The least expensive stay in Park City is the Chateau Apres, with \$45 per night/per person dorms (but limited availability). The booking firm Park City Crash Pads offers lower-cost properties with amenities such as free wi-fi.

Just outside of town, but accessible by free Park City buses, the Canyons Resort has several plush apartment-style accommodations, in addition to the Waldorf Astoria Park City (opened in 2009). The Hyatt Escala Lodge (opened in November 2010) offers a discount for the second half of the fest.

Salt Lake City hotels are less pricey; the drive to Park City is just under an hour depending on weather.

Websites VRBO.com and Craig's List are another resource for last-minute bookings -- though if a deal is too good to be true, well, you know. ...



Canyons Resort



Hyatt Escala Lodge

Quick bites are a fest must, since most higher-end eateries are booked for private dinners. Open 24/7, Fresh Market (formerly Albertsons) offers a sandwich counter and in-store Starbucks. Burritos from El Chubasco (close to festival HQ at 1890 Bonanza Dr.) are handy for wait-list lines, and the year-old Sammy's Bistro (in the same minimall at 1890 Bonanza Dr.) has sandwiches, soups and salads. Often overlooked, the cafeteria at Park City Mountain Resort's Legacy Cafe is a reliable choice for breakfast and lunch, and is on a shuttle route.

The Yard event space (formerly home to non-official gifting lounges) at a former lumber yard near the Yarrow Hotel will be an official festival venue this year, hosting New Frontier films. Onsite is a 400-car parking lot and a stop for the express shuttle to the Temple Theater. Within the Yard will be a cafe with a newly installed New York-style pizza oven. Run by the proprietors of the Blind Dog Restaurant and Sushi (also within the complex), the Yard cafe will open be open daily from 11:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. and then transform into the fest's latenight lounge.

Other new eateries include: Park City's first-ever kosher restaurant, the Bistro at the Canyons Resort; the locally stocked Farm at the Canyons Resort; and for a high-altitude nosh, Yama Sushi at the Montage Resort in Deer Valley. Easy Street at the Sky Lodge recently added gluten-free menu items; the hotel's rooftop Sky Blue bar remains a civilized retreat above Main Street's frenzy.

Music is an integral part of Sundance activities. Although the sheriff padlocked the city's largest music venue Harry O's earlier this year, it will be re-incarnated as Park City Live during the fest. The ASCAP Music Cafe returns to lower Main Street during the day; a program that changes nightly will showcase music from festival films -- an event that will require a fest credential along with tickets available at the main box office.

Fest organizers will tweet scheduling changes, screenings and ASCAP Music Cafe nighttime shows via @sundancefestnow. A free Sundance festival mobile phone app is available for iPhone, iPad and Android users.

The former Racquet Club Theater is back, rebuilt with 550 seats and renamed the MARC. Expect an expanded concession stand (from the same vendors at the Library Theater) as the popular Racquet Club Grill is no more.

As always, warm socks and ibuprofen should be at top of any packing list.