



Summer Catch

When her teenage kids seem to be straying too far from the family nest, this Colorado mom lures them back through their traditional summer visits to Keystone. *by Kara Williams*

I knew it was coming. The age of “Stop, Mom. No, you’re embarrassing me.” Where they no longer cling to me like little koalas at the grocery store or would ever be caught dead giving me a good-bye kiss at the school bus stop. Yes, my son and daughter, at 11 and 13 years old (Ben and Kaylin, respectively), have hit their tween years, skyrocketing them into a world of Minecraft, One Direction, and Instagram, while seemingly leaving me behind.

But there is a time of year when they start to come back, like satellites orbiting back from the dark side of the Earth, here, to the side of the sun, with me. Our summer trips to Keystone have become the place where I’m able to reconnect with them, while looking back

at just how much they’ve grown. When they were 4 and 8, we would run out of quarters buying fish food to toss to the giant trout that hover around the docks at Keystone Lake. They loved watching the open-mouthed fish tussle for every morsel. At 8 and 10, they rode their first full-sized horses at Keystone Stables. Trail rides here are mellow, head-to-tail in a single file, led by knowledgeable cowboy guides. Behind them on the trail, I’d watch their pint-sized bodies bounce up and down on the big animals through open meadows, their stick-like arms yanking on the reins when their horses tried to eat grass. Turns out, they’re much more comfortable on horses than I will ever be.

During our visits today, they like to explore the easy-to-navigate River Run

Village by themselves – shopping for souvenir T-shirts, swinging by the pizza place, or ordering sugary (decaf) lattes at the local coffee shop, all the while checking in via text (per my insistence). “Where R U now?” I type. From my teen: “At Inxpot. FAB cinn rolls. Want 1?” As a family, we hike or bike together, linger over mountain picnics, and share stories in the condo’s hot tub – me squeezing in as much quality time as possible. After all, as they grow into adulthood, summer jobs and spending time with friends (or boyfriends and girlfriends – ack!) will eventually cut into the time we spend on family getaways.

But until then, Keystone remains my lure, bringing them back to me, like the trout in Keystone Lake that once so entertained them.

ARON DOUGES

LUCKY PFLUGER

Riding through wildflowers on Keystone’s roller coaster—The Let It Ride track (right) can be White River National Forest from a different perspective with Keystone Stables.

SUMMER SMORGASBORD

Mini-golf from sun up to sun down, warm-weather tubing, and four other activities to build into your summertime vacation at Keystone.

KEYSTONE ADVENTURE PACK

Rather than purchasing Keystone’s many family-oriented outdoor activities à la carte, this package lets you sample them all throughout the day – and for one great price. The pass includes unlimited access to activities, such as scenic lift rides, the rock-climbing wall, bounce house, boat rentals, and putt-putt golf, plus two gem-panning passes, two bungee jumps, and a \$15 voucher that can be used at Summit BBQ or 9280’ Tap House.

keystoneresort.com, 800-258-9553

KIDTOPIA PLAY PARK

At the Kidtopia Play Park in River Run Village, kids test their strength and sense of adventure at the 30-foot Climbing Wall and explore their geologist side while panning for gems. Don’t miss the popular Tuesday Discover Days with face painting, spin art, bouncy houses, and a rotating schedule of kid-friendly performances.

keystoneresort.com, 800-354-4386

BLUE RIBBON BACON TOUR

Dubbed the “mecca of all bacon festivals,” the Blue Ribbon Bacon Tour serves up pork-laden dishes, like creamy potato-bacon soup and chocolate-bacon-bourbon tart, as well as a bacon-eating contest and annual beauty pageant. You can even indulge in some intellectual consumption with bacon lectures while savoring the famed bacon Bloody Mary.

blueribbonbaconfestival.com

MINI-GOLF

For \$8 per person, the family has free rein of the mini-golf in River Run all day. This par-43 course sits right at the base of Dercum so the family can enjoy the view while tackling mining-themed obstacles, like a town jail and country store.

keystoneresort.com, 800-354-4386

ADVENTURE POINT TUBING

Keystone finds use for its leftover end-of-the-year snow: haul it to Dercum Peak to build two summertime tubing lanes. Located at 11,840 feet – the highest tubing point in the world – the lanes offer a wild ride beside a breathtaking view of the Rockies.

keystoneresort.com, 800-354-4386

GPS SCAVENGER HUNT ADVENTURE

With a GPS receiver, riddles, and clues, families pinpoint hidden prizes across Keystone Resort using longitude and latitude points. Collected items can be turned into the summer activities office at Buffalo Square for prizes, like posters and koozies.

keystoneresort.com, 800-354-4386

KEYSTONE STABLES

During one-, two-, or four-hour rides through the White River National Forest, expert guides recount the tales of gold-embedded hills and how the ranch used to be a lettuce farm. On Wednesday evenings, the day ends with a campfire social of country tunes, spectacular sunsets, and roasting s’mores over an open fire.

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