

## Skiing Secrets Await in the Atomic City

In the 1940s, Los Alamos' best-kept secret was the town itself and its clandestine work on the atomic bomb.

Today, both locals and visitors to the Atomic City agree that Pajarito Mountain Ski Area, just minutes above town, is a snowy secret worth discovering.

Located in the heart of the desert Southwest, the 10,440-foot Pajarito Mountain has 40 runs on 280 acres of cleared skiable terrain, excellent tree skiing and some of the best bump skiing in New Mexico. This ski area is rarely crowded and has few lift lines, making powder days even sweeter and longer than usual.



### Fast Facts: Pajarito Mountain Ski Area

Base Elevation: 9,000 feet  
Peak Elevation: 10,440 feet  
Lifts: 1 quad, 1 triple, 3 double, 2 rope tows  
Steepest Slope: 36 degrees  
Facilities: Rental, retail, cafeteria, snowsports school, terrain park  
Season: Thanksgiving to mid-April (typically open by Christmas)  
Days Open: Fridays through Sundays and public holidays  
Distance from Los Alamos: 5 miles  
Distance from Santa Fe: 40 miles  
Lodging/Packages: Call Los Alamos Meeting & Visitor Bureau at 1-800-444-0707 or on the web at visit.losalamos.com

From the mountain top, skiers are treated to amazing views of the neighboring 89,000-acre Valles Caldera National Preserve, North America's largest sunken volcano, flanked in the distance by the warm adobe hues of the Rio Grande river valley and the Southwest's stunning blue sky.

Pajarito Mountain Ski Area is as rich in history as it is in abundant ski runs and grandiose views.

Started by some of the same scientists who helped design and test the country's first nuclear weapon, the ski area was born on a nearby mountain, but lack of snow necessitated a move to the higher, present-day location on Pajarito Mountain.

Local community members formed a nonprofit all-volunteer organization, the Los Alamos Ski Club, to raise funds to buy the land and plan, build and run the ski area. The

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non-profit Club, which celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2004, continues to use volunteer help to clear slopes and run the ski patrol.

For the past 24 years, a professional area manager, several full-time employees and up to 60 seasonal employees operate the ski area under the direction of the Club's board of directors. The ski school has 20-30 fully trained and accredited instructors teaching alpine skiing, telemarking and snowboarding.

Under its non-profit Club ownership, the area is able to charge some of the most competitive lift prices in the state. Pajarito Mountain Ski Area is open to day skiers. By charter, club membership or season passes are available only to people who live or work in Los Alamos County.

To this day, skiing continues to be immensely popular at the ski area, which serves as a hub for families and visitors to gather, ski and socialize during the winters. The ski area's lodge is complete with a small restaurant, retail store and rental shop, all of which makes Pajarito Mountain a secret worth discovering!

