Breckenridge Prepares for a Promising El Niño Winter with NEW and Signature Winter Dark Sky and Ski Events, Expanded Winter Activities and MICHELIN-Recognized Dining

BRECKENRIDGE, Colo. - October 21, 2026 - Winter starts a little higher in Breckenridge, where snow falls cold and dry at 9,600 feet over a historic mining-era Main Street. This winter, forecasters are tracking the strongest El Niño since 1997-1998, a pattern that has historically brought Breckenridge a strong early-season start and a snowy spring. Breckenridge is ready to welcome a powder-filled winter season with a brand-new dark sky festival, new in-town events and concerts, off-piste celebrations, two new MICHELIN recognitions, and more.

In Breckenridge, skiers ride North America's highest chairlift across five peaks, then ski right to Main Street for historic small-town charm. Locals have thrown a party for the Norse God of Snow (Ullr) every year since 1963, and after dark, some of Colorado's darkest skies put on a show overhead. This season brings milestone anniversaries, more live music, full moon-apres traditions, and winter experiences for every ability level.

Signature Events - When the first flakes fly in town, the vibes are immediately palpable. From a thousand racing Santas and a 63-year-old snow god celebration to 25-ton blocks of snow turning into art, Breckenridge celebrates the season through party after party to make winter unforgettable.

- **NEW Breck Sky Fest (Nov. 11 - 30, 2026)**: The night sky gets its own celebration in Colorado's first certified Dark Sky resort town. AstroTours launches Breck Sky Fest, a new dark sky festival packed with stargazing, accessible astronomy, daytime science, and local partner activities. It kicks off Nov. 11 with an accessible public stargazing night and a Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center (BOEC) student astronomy program, then peaks during the main public weekend with a headline stargazing event in Breckenridge at Beaver Run Resort (Nov. 28).
- **Holiday Dog Parade, Race of the Santas and Lighting of Breckenridge (Dec. 5, 2026)**: More than 700 of Santa's cutest dogs parade down Main Street to kick off the day, followed by at least 1,000 Santas sprinting a mile around Breck to kick off the holiday season! Don't miss the expanded Winter Holiday Market, the kids' Moose March, and a countdown to the Lighting of Breckenridge when Santa flips the switch at 5 p.m. to turn on 250,000 holiday lights and transform town into a real-life snow globe.
- **63rd Ullr Fest (Dec. 17 - 19, 2026):** Grab your Viking helmet for Breckenridge's ultimate Pray for Snow celebration. Since 1963, Ullr Fest has kicked off winter with a zany Main Street parade and the famous Shotski® "unofficial" world-record attempt, poured this year with Breckenridge Distillery honey whiskey.
- **The 36th Annual International Snow Sculpture Championships (Jan. 23 - Feb. 2, 2027)**: Teams from around the globe hand-carve 12-foot-tall, 25-ton blocks of snow into temporary works of art - no power tools allowed! Sculpting week runs Jan. 23-27, followed by free, 24/7 viewing at the Riverwalk Center, including sculptures lit up at night by dazzling lights.

B Like Breckenridge Story - Breckenridge became a certified Dark Sky Community by DarkSky International in August 2025. 91% of Breckenridge properties comply with the newly adopted lighting code as of 2026.

Breckenridge Ski Resort Celebrates the Kingdom of Breck — This season, Breckenridge Ski Resort is embracing its bold non-conformist mountain heritage with the launch of The Kingdom of Breck™ (KOB). The royal treatment starts at Wake Up Breck (Nov. 5) and Opening Day (Nov. 6), with giveaways and a Welcome to Winter party at the T-Bar. December is action-packed with Founders Day (Dec. 16), an all-day celebration at Peak 8's Vista Haus and a community ski-down, followed by the Rockstar Energy Open for three days of professional snowboarders throwing down on a rider-designated slopestyle course and free live music (Dec. 18-20). The Outer Range Brewery 10th Anniversary Party (Jan. 16) brings a 90s-themed DJ takeover to the mountains, and the ski-in, ski-out Apres at the Overlook series on Peak 9 features headlining DJs on Jan. 2, Feb. 6, and March 20. Breck's signature spring celebration will include New World's snowboarding competition (April 24) and Pond Skim (April 25) to send the season off with a splash.

B Like Breckenridge Story - Park once and keep it there for your whole trip. The free BreckConnect Gondola, ski-to-town trails and Breck's free bus system link Main Street to the slopes, so getting to the Kingdom is easy on travelers and the mountains alike.

Culinary Scene Evolves with Three MICHELIN Nods - Breckenridge's dining scene is growing up. It's evolving into a town with understated opulence, where you can grab a slice from a walk-up pizza window, or sit down for a 12-course tasting menu. James Beard Award-winning Chef Matt Vawter's Rootstalk and Radicato were both recognized as recommended eateries in the **2026 MICHELIN Guide Colorado**, with Radicato's Chef Cameron Baker taking home the **2026 MICHELIN Guide Colorado Young Chef Award.** **Forage** enters its first winter season with each of its 12 dishes relating to Breckenridge's old and new history. From beef-tallow mining candles to wildflower dried-ice-cream, the innovation takes Breckenridge's dining scene to new heights. **NEW** this December, **The Stable** opens as a western-inspired walk-up window behind The Horseshoe, serving breakfast burritos and coffee, tasty tater tot bowls and nostalgic cotton candy for the kids.

B Like Breckenridge Story - Breckenridge's MICHELIN moment is rooted in local flavor. Radicato kneads its handmade pastas around Colorado producers, while Rootstalk serves sustainable dishes that celebrate the state's seasonal bounty.

Stay in a Variety of Ways at 9,600' - Breckenridge's lodging is as varied as its terrain, from backcountry huts to slopeside luxury. **The Lodge at Breckenridge** says "Goodbye Resort Fees, Hello More Mountains." The Lodge has dropped its daily resort fee with some of the best morning views in town. Downtown, **Residence Inn by Marriott** welcomes winter with a top-to-bottom renovation of its suites, dining spaces, mountain-view pool and new Base Camp Lounge. Ski-and-stay favorites include **The Carlin's** restaurant with rooms, luxury suites just steps from the gondola and **Hotel Alpenrock**, perfectly positioned between Peak 9 and Main

Street. Stay at **Gravity Haus'** slope-side rooms or opt for a true backcountry escape with the **Summit Huts Association**, with huts accessible by skinning or snowshoeing. **Imperial Hotel at Finale**, a 36-room hotel at the base of Peak 8, is slated to join The Leading Hotels of the World and will begin its phased opening in early 2027 with its Independence Townhomes.

Breckenridge Arts and Culture Excellence - Breck Create is launching a three-year Popular Music + Entertainment Initiative (2026 - 2028), to bring more live music downtown all year round. Opening ski weekends offer **Houndmouth and The Lordy Tour** to the Riverwalk Center (Nov. 7) and **Breckenridge Backstage Theater's** winter schedule showcasing the classic Miracle on 34th Street (Dec. 9 - 30) and closing out winter with Mary Poppins, Jr. (Feb. 4 - 7).

After Dark in Colorado's FIRST Certified Dark Sky Resort Town - Skin up under the full moon all winter long for **Uphill Climb & Dine Dinners** at the ski resort with live acoustic music (Dec. 23, Jan. 22, Feb. 19 and March 19), catch DJ Sets at **Overlook Apres** on Peak 9, or keep the party going at **T-Bar Apres** every Friday and Saturday. For a quieter night, **AstroTours,** expands its **Dark Sky Tour at Beaver Run** with a stargazing program featuring constellations, folklore, navigation and telescopes. **The Gold Run Nordic Center** brings back moonlight guided snowshoe tours for its second season, with monthly hikes under the full moon.

Off-Piste Adventures, Adaptive Sports & Wellness - Good Times Adventures celebrates 40 years of dog sledding and snowmobiling in 2026 with a brand-new fleet of Ski-Doo snowmobiles and a kennel of more than 150 huskies, one of the largest dog yards in the nation outside of Alaska. **Golden Horseshoe** sleigh rides offer a tech-detox on its trails with no cell service. **Breckenridge Nordic Center** debuts a new app for Nordic skiers and snowshoers, with a live GPS trail map, real-time conditions and closures, and virtual skate lessons. **Meta Yoga Studios** hosts new retreats including Winter Solstice Restore & Reset (Dec. 19), the Art of Slowing Down (Jan. 9), and Lunar Alchemy: Breath, Sound and Reiki (Feb. 20). **The Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center** (BOEC) brings back two signature camps: Mono Camp (Jan. 12-22), the BOEC's highest-level progression camp for mono-skiers who cruise on a single ski attached to a bucket seat, and She Shreds (March 1-5), the five-day, all-women adaptive camp. The BOEC also welcomes the 40th Celebration of the Hartford Ski Spectacular, the world's largest adaptive winter sports festival (Dec. 6-12).

> ***B Like Breckenridge Story*** - The trail doesn't end at retirement. Good Times huskies retire around ages 7-8, and its sled dog adoption program matches each retiring athlete with a forever home based on the dog's personality and energy level and the adopter's lifestyle.

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About Breckenridge

In the 1800s, gold was discovered in what was soon to be Breckenridge, Colorado, and prospectors flocked to the mining town to find their fortunes. Today, travelers continue to be drawn to Breckenridge's historic yet timeless spirit, laid-back charm, and authentic character. Surrounded by inspiring mountain peaks that seem to stir a sense of adventure for all residents and guests, the town of Breckenridge is a year-round destination for outdoor enthusiasts of all ages and abilities. Breckenridge's rich, colorful heritage and convenient, world-class amenities unite with more than 200 shops and restaurants mingling among Colorado's largest historic district. As one of the nation's premier year-round destinations, Breckenridge visitors feel welcome and, when here, feel local.

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