

FYI Travel: Big Bear's Sky Chair gives summer visitors a lift

by Tom_Roebuck

The fun doesn't end after the snow melts away at Southern California's Big Bear Mountain Resorts. While the other chairlifts sit idle in the sun, Snow Summit's East Mountain Express turns into the Scenic Sky Chair, a 15-minute ride up the mountain for sightseers, hikers and even mountain bikers. The lift runs at a high speed during the winter, but in the summer it makes its way slowly and silently up the mountain so riders can enjoy the breathtaking views, both up and down. For those who are a little nervous about getting on and off the Sky Chair, it can be stopped completely for riders who need more time.

There's a snack bar and grill at the top, where hikers and bikers can sit and have lunch and a beer amid the thin mountain air. Shady trails meander down the mountain, and adventurous hikers can take the chair to the top and make their way down. For a more leisurely visit, guests can take in the dramatic views of the San Bernardino Mountains and ride the chairlift back down, featuring one of the best views of Big Bear Lake.

THE SCENIC SKY CHAIR - Snow Summit in Southern California keeps a chair lift open during the summer, transporting mountain bike riders and sightseers to the 8,200-foot summit. CNS Photo by Tom Roebuck.

The Sky Chair is a hit with mountain bikers. Bikes are hung from a hook on one chair, and riders follow in the next chair - the bikes are waiting for them as they exit the lift. The mellow Sky Chair ride from 7,000 feet to the summit at 8,200 feet is followed by an exhilarating excursion back down. Bikers can cruise over dirt roads that wind down the mountain, while trails provide a more challenging test for experienced riders.

FYI: Round-trip rates for the Sky Chair are \$10 for adults, \$5 ages 7-12. One-way rides are \$7 for adults and \$4 ages 7-12. A one-way ride with a bicycle is \$10 for adults and \$5 ages 7-12; an all-day pass is \$20 for adults and \$10 ages 7-12. For more information call 909-866-5766 or visit www.bigbearmountainresorts.com.

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ELVIS FANS MEET IN MEMPHIS

In celebration of Elvis Week and the life of the King of Rock 'n' Roll, The Peabody Memphis will offer the Elvis' Rock 'n' Roll Package throughout August. Elvis Week 2007 will take place Aug. 11-19 with a full slate of events memorializing Elvis Presley. This year marks the 30th anniversary of Elvis' death; he died on Aug. 16, 1977.

The Elvis package includes one night's deluxe accommodations, Platinum Tour tickets to Graceland, featuring an audio tour of the mansion, and self-guided tours of Elvis' two custom airplanes, the Elvis auto museum, the Sincerely Elvis museum and Elvis After Dark. Also included are tickets to Sun Studios, where Elvis recorded his first single "That's Alright Mama," and a poster of Elvis and his personal tailor Bernard J. Lansky, who runs five retail shops in The Peabody's lobby and can still be found almost daily at the hotel, sharing stories of his friend.

FYI: Elvis' Rock 'n' Roll package at The Peabody is \$252 for single occupancy and \$309 for double occupancy and is valid Aug. 1-31. Reservations can be made by calling 800-PEABODY or online at www.peabodymemphis.com.

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