

Boeing Employees' Ski Club FAQ

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About the club

We promote skiing and snowboarding for Boeing employees, their families and retirees. Currently, there are over 200 active members and a total e-mail membership list of over 500 people. Each year we have about 170 people traveling on a club trip.

We organize weekend and week long ski trips for the members, which are typically at a 20-30% discount to "rack" prices. There are usually 2 weekend trips, 2 week long trips and 1 local Midwest zero vacation day trip.

The club is about 20% beginners, 60% intermediate and 20% advanced. We have both skiers and snowboarders. We are a mix of couples and singles.

Family and friends are welcome on any club trip.

Tell me about the club trips? What should I expect after I sign up?

The club plans both week and weekend ski trips that are offered as a package. They usually include lodging, air, lift and ground transportation as part of the package price plus an included lunch and dinner. European trips offer lift passes ala-cart to allow members to tour or ski based on their schedule. Ground transportation to/from the airport is usually a charter bus. Weekend and week long trips typically have a welcome party, one lunch and one dinner included. Trips are typically priced for double occupancy, and we can make changes for a single

supplement or more people in the room. Note: the “Midwest” trips are generally the most “family friendly” in that children generally won’t have to miss school.

Trips are announced in late July via the web site, e-mail or a sign-up night flyer. If you attend one of the summer events you will probably hear where we are planning on going earlier; although we won’t have all the prices laying flat. The sign-up night is typically in late August. It is not uncommon for a trip to sell out on sign-up night so plan to get there early. You can meet the trip captain, learn more about each trip, and pay your deposit at the event and meet others going on the different trips.

After signing up most of the information will be trip payment information, and information about signing up for ski rentals and possibly other activities on the trip. The club usually has a few other events where you can meet others on the trip. Contact the trip captain with any questions.

About one month before the trip you will receive information about a pre-trip event. The pre-trip party is usually held the weekend one week before the trip and is where you will receive your airline tickets, rooming assignments, and trip itinerary at this event, so if you can’t make it contact your trip captain for alternate arrangements. You also get to meet everyone else on the trip!

Weekend trips – These typically leave on Wednesday or Thursday and return on Sunday or Monday and typically require 2-3 days of vacation and have 3 or 4 days of skiing.

Week trips – We typically leave and return on Saturday and have 5 days of skiing. Most people ski 3 days, take a day off, and then ski another 2 days. There are a few diehards that ski the entire trip.

Who are the trip captains?

Trip captains are ski club board members who love to ski and volunteer their time to plan and organize a trip. They plan the pre-trip and on-trip parties and events. On the trip, they coordinate any events and assists with any problems encountered during the trip. Trip planning begins just before the sign-up party and continues right up through the trip. Remember, the trip captain is volunteering their time and is not a concierge.

What type of lodging does the trip use?

The club uses both condos and hotels for lodging. Trips are typically priced for double occupancy. Families with small children can all stay in the same room and the room pricing can be adjusted accordingly. We try to get condos for week trips as they have a kitchen, which makes getting ready in the morning much easier. Condos can be 2 or 3 bedrooms, and usually have two twin beds in one room and one queen bed in the other. When making condo arrangements, we try

to get one bathroom for each two people. Condos can be requested with one queen bed in each room, but these are sometimes difficult to get.

I've been renting ski equipment for the last few years, what should I buy first?

This is probably the most asked question and the easiest to answer; boots. Boots are what connects you to the skis, what transfers all the leg power to the ski, and what provides stability while skiing. Having boots that fit can make the difference between having a really good day of skiing, and having a rotten day. "Your" boots will be customized to your foot, which reduces "hot spots" and greatly increases your comfort. Bad fitting boots is the number one reason people stop skiing.

If you ski more than 8-10 days per year or are a more advanced skier, you might want to invest in skis. Like having your own boots, having your own skis reduces the variability of the equipment between trips. There are a number of folks in the club that own boots, but rent skis, as they can rent a very nice pair of skis for around \$30 per day. This also reduces the airport hassle with dragging a ski bag along with your other luggage. With modern ski technology, you can expect to get about 120 days of skiing out of a pair of skis, or about one skiing season if you ski every day so purchasing skis can be a good investment. Remember, skis don't last forever, so even if you have less than the useful days on the skis, they may still need replacing.

Buy a helmet. These cost from \$100 - \$250. You can buy cheaper helmets if you don't think your head is worth the cost. Frankly, most of the club have either bought a helmet, or are going to buy one. It's cheap insurance against scrambling your noggin. Its also cheap insurance if/when you slip and fall getting to the ski bus in the morning – ask Blondie how he knows ;)

I don't own skiing equipment, what are my options?

For club trips, we arrange group rental rates that are about 30% under list price. All resorts have rental shops that will rent you skis, boots and poles. The shops can be part of the resort or a local establishment. Rental equipment comes in packages based on your skiing ability; beginner, intermediate and advanced. The intermediate and advanced packages are usually called "performance" package. We recommend that everyone rent at least the performance package, as these tend to be newer skis and boots and will have better performance that will help you enjoy your day of skiing. Renting costs around \$20-30 per day and depends on the resort.

Ski shops also rent "demo" equipment, which are that year models and are intended to give prospective buyers a chance to try equipment before they buy it. You can keep trying different skies the entire time, and if you decide to purchase at that shop, they will deduct the rental cost from the total. This is a great way to try a number of different skis or boots to see what you like.

What kind of ski clothing do I need?

You need to look for quality outer wear that will keep you warm and dry while on the mountain. No jeans! Seriously, people try and jeans get wet and freeze quickly. Most stuff will last for many years and can be used for non-skiing too. Synthetics and other “technical” gear is very popular. A base layer is your “long underwear” with synthetics becoming very popular.

Don't wear cotton. Cotton holds on to moisture and does not wick it away from your skin. It will make you cold. Even cotton t-shirts should stay home. Remember the phrase – cotton is rotten.

There are a large number of brands offering all kinds of ski jackets and ski pants made from many types of material. Look for clothing that, at a minimum, is water resistant and will keep you warm.

Remember to dress in layers. Typical layering would consist of your water-wicking under layer (Under Armor and Patagonia are a few brand names), a light jacket or sweater, and then your ski jacket. You may want to have additional layers. If you get too warm, you can always peel off a layer and put it in a locker at the base. We also recommend a neck gator for warmth. Scarves can be dangerous as they can get caught on ski lifts. Many jackets have a zip in/out liner that allows you to layer very easily. Many jackets also have a type of lightweight hood that stores in the collar. This light hood can be very useful if you encounter heavy snow or winds.

Ski pants keep your legs warm and dry. You will ultimately spend time sitting in the snow! Don't underestimate the importance of ski pants. Typical layering would consist of your water-wicking under layer and your insulated ski pants. If your ski pants are just a shell (no insulation), then you'll want an additional layer.

Gloves need to be waterproof and breathable. There are a number of brands that make a breathable waterproof glove that will keep your hands warm and dry. You can buy either mittens or gloves. Gloves give you more range of motion, while mittens will keep you warmer in really cold weather. Be sure to dry your gloves after each day of skiing or your hands will get quite cold the next day. Using gloves with removable liners also helps them dry quicker.

You lose most of your heat from your head, so keeping covered up is important. Most people need a hat, headband or earmuffs to keep warm. Wearing a helmet will usually be warm enough by itself. We HIGHLY recommend you buy or rent a helmet. You will have to experiment and find what works for you. Most people keep a knit hat with them in case it starts snowing, or gets really windy and cold.

Goggles or sunglasses allow you to see on the mountain and are a must. The sunlight reflecting off the snow can be very bright. Good glasses or goggles will not fog or come off if (and when) you fall while skiing. Most people that ski with

sunglasses also have goggles for when it gets windy. We recommend using goggles as they offer better eye protection, especially if you like to ski in the trees.

The sunlight reflecting off the snow can also cause sunburns very quickly. Most ski resorts are many thousands of feet higher in altitude than most of us are use to. This increases the burning effect of the sun. Carry a small tube of waterproof or sports sun block of SPF30 or greater to apply to exposed areas while on the mountain. You should also have lip balm that is SPF rated. Be sure to reapply at lunchtime.

Everyone should have at least the following equipment

- Helmet (you really should consider one)
- Ski jacket
- Ski pants
- Ski socks
- Water wicking under layer
- Gloves
- Hat, headband or earmuffs
- Goggles or sun glasses
- Suntan lotion (SPF 30 or higher)
- Lip balm with sun block

Optional equipment to bring on the mountain would be

- Fanny pack (holds all the little stuff)
- Camelbak or water bottle (you dry out quickly on the mountain)
- Ski Boots / Snowboard Boots
- Skis / Snowboard
- Ski Poles

I want to bring my kids, is that ok?

Only if you don't mind the kids skiing better than you! Ok, seriously . . . we can easily accommodate children on any trip. Hotels and condos can have rollaway beds brought into the room. Ski rentals and lift tickets are cheaper for those under 12. All mountains offer ski school and most resorts offer a babysitting program where you drop the kids off in the morning, and one of the resort instructors takes the kids out on the mountain for the day (for a fee). Please contact the trip captain for more information.

I've never skied before; can beginners go on a trip?

Absolutely! Everyone had to learn sometime, and there is no better way to learn than with a bunch of other folks that like skiing.

All resorts offer ski school where they will teach you everything from the wedge turn through Christy turns. Ski lessons are usually taken with a group of like

ability skiers. Typically a new skier will take a series of half-day lessons and spend the other half-day practicing what you just learned.

On the trips, there are always a number of groups of different skiing abilities, so finding someone to ski with will not be a problem. Probably the most fun is listening to other club members reminisce about when they first learned to ski.

The club is a bunch of die hard, super expert skiers, right?

Not true. The majority of club members are intermediate level skiers. On any given trip, there are usually 20% beginner, 60% intermediate, and 20% advanced skiers. Everyone had to learn to ski sometime, and being on a trip with other people is a great way to learn to ski. There are a number of club members who love to teach and they are a great resource to improve your skiing technique.

I snowboard; can I come on a trip?

Of course. There are a number of club members who have given up skis for a snowboard. There are a few resorts that still do not allow snowboards, but their numbers are becoming fewer and we try to avoid these where possible.

I'm signed up for a trip, but have to cancel. What now?

Unfortunately things happen that you might need to cancel a trip. The club has a standard cancellation policy. We make every attempt to minimize the cost impact for anyone that has to cancel. The best outcome is if someone else can take the trip for you. The club starts incurring more costs the closer to the trip date as we might have to cancel airline tickets, or lodging. Please be sure to read the cancellation policy, which is part of each trip contract.

How does the club decide where to go skiing every year?

We start planning the next season's trips around April. The entire skiing season is considered one "event" with a number of individual trips. We take survey information from the past years trips and use this to determine potential trips for the next season. Geography actually drives some of the trip selections, as some places are harder to get to than others. So we might go to some places only for a week, while others work well for both week and weekend trips.

The board of directors forms a trip committee who make the initial selections, and obtain bids from tour operators. The club only uses tour operators as this has proven to be very effective in getting good package deals. Once all the bids are in, the trip committee selects the trips based on location, potential demand and cost. Trips are almost always planned every other week from January through March, which allows someone to go on all the trips (it does happen!). The committee presents the selections to the board at either the June or July meetings for a vote. Once the trips are selected, we then select trip captains. The trips are announced in late July or early August in time for the annual sign-up party at the end of August.