

## Heber Valley, UT



Although it will always be a ski town first and foremost, and will forever be known as an Olympic venue (2002 Winter Games) Park City, Utah is also an amazing golf destination for the traveling golfer.



Park City, UT

Need proof? The subject of this travelogue won't even be Park City proper, but instead the five championship courses, comprising ninety holes of entertaining golf, found some fifteen miles east of town in the sleepy community of Midway, Utah.

Besides the perfect summer weather and scenic alpine panoramas, one of the great attributes of this region is the accessibility from the airport hub in Salt Lake City. While a quick drive in a National Rental Car from the airport to Park City is but forty minutes, the extra twenty minutes traveling east on Highway 40 is well worth the effort.

The Homestead Resort in Midway is undoubtedly best known for its infamous Crater. This is a 10,000 year old geothermal spring, hidden within a 55 foot tall beehive shaped limestone rock. The Crater is the only warm weather scuba destination in the US; the mineral water stays a constant 90—96 degrees. Luckily the summertime temperatures on the nearby Crater Springs course almost never get that high.



Crater Springs Golf Course

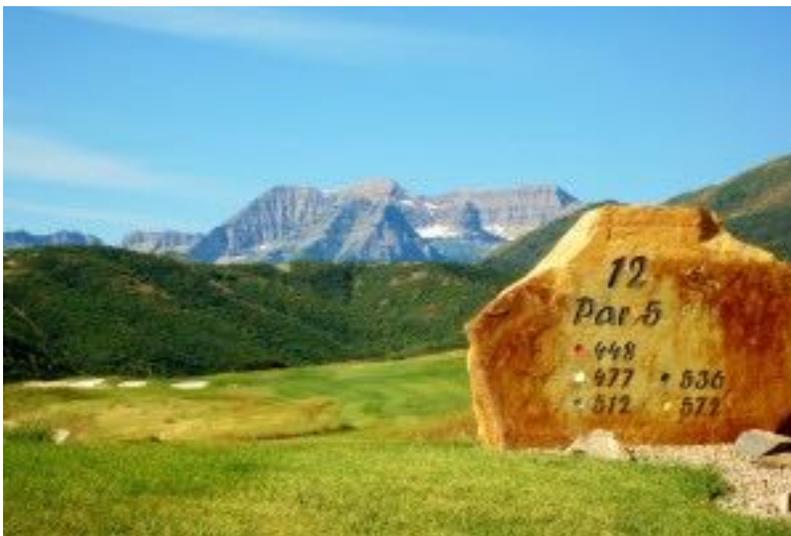
**Crater Springs** is an amalgamation of doglegs, narrow fairways, streams, ponds and more than a few road crossings. It's a bit of a crazy quilt, meandering as it does back and forth through a variety of residential neighborhoods. It's a pleasant enough resort course, but many players will gravitate towards Soldier Hollow.

The Gold and Silver courses at **Soldier Hollow** were designed by veteran architect Gene Bates. He began his career with Gary Player, then worked on the Jack Nicklaus design team. He's co-designed courses with players such as Johnny Miller and Fred Couples, and is no stranger to Utah, spending up to three months a year around Park City. While both courses occupy terrain used for the cross-country ski events in the 2002 Winter Games, the Gold and the Silver have entirely different personalities.



Soldier Hollow Golf Course

The Gold Course might well be called the gold standard. This is the championship venue, the course better suited for statewide or professional competitions. “This is the more challenging course,” says Bates. “To get to the premium position on the fairway, a player must produce a bold tee shot that will carry over the fairway bunkers. This is a good second shot golf course, particularly on some of the longer par 4s. The greens are well bunkered, although there are openings in front to allow the less skilled player the opportunity to run the ball onto the putting surface.”



Soldier Hollow Gold Course

The Gold Course was built at higher elevation, with ravines and steep drop-offs surrounding many greens. The Silver Course was built on lower ground, and offers larger putting surfaces than the Gold. The Silver was built in the alfalfa fields, on a lower part of the property. There are big grass bunkers and some serious mounding to contend with. Sweeping mountain views, including views of Mount Timpanogos, are part of the appeal and in keeping with the capacious scope of the property, the course features big tees, big fairways, big bunkers and big greens.



Wasatch State Park Golf

Finally, **Wasatch State Park** offers the Mountain and Lake courses. The latter is situated on gentler terrain, and considered to be the easier of the two offerings. It has several reachable par-5 holes, but ruler-straight tee shots are a necessity to avoid well-positioned stands of mature trees that line the fairways. The serene setting features eight lakes and ponds.

The Mountain Course is a more rugged experience, and requires shots played from downhill, uphill, and side-hill lies. The wildlife is nearly as varied as the stances a player will need. Deer, elk, wild turkeys, moose, and other critters make the course their home. While our four-legged friends perambulate, the rest of us need golf carts; the 9th hole sits nearly two miles up the canyon from the clubhouse.



Snake Creek Grill

The Snake Creek Grill in Heber is one of the preeminent eateries in greater Salt Lake, which is saying something. Rustic setting, hearty

American cuisine with flair, fine service. But save room for stupendous ice cream and milkshakes at the nearby Dairy Keen, a retro drive-through that is one of the best ice cream joints in the west.