

# ESCAPADES

[ THREE FORKS RANCH An Adventurer's Outdoor Wonderland ] BY KARA WILLIAMS



“The answer is yes... now, what’s your question?” That’s the guest-service philosophy at Three Forks Ranch, a luxury ranch resort straddling the Colorado-Wyoming border on an incredible 200,000 acres of pristine land—rolling hills, vast meadows, trout-filled rivers and winding streams as far as the eye can see. The stunning landscapes at Three Forks Ranch will undoubtedly capture your heart, but so will the attentive, down-to-earth staff. These folks, from recreation guides to dining-room wait staff to front-desk management, go above and beyond to make your stay at the Ranch an incredible vacation of a lifetime.

When my family spent a glorious long weekend at Three Forks Ranch last winter, we were blown away with the gracious hospitality and flexibility of the staff. Want to ski on private mountain trails via snowcat in the morning and then go sledding in the afternoon? “We can make that happen.” Can we get our pastries and fresh coffee delivered to our room at 7 a.m. instead of 7:30 a.m.? “Of course, Mrs. Williams.” We’d like to bump our spa treatments by a half-hour since we’ll be late getting back from our snowmobile tour. “No problem.”

This personalized service is commonplace at Three Forks Ranch because of its exclusivity: the grand, 35,000-square-foot Lodge has just 15 double-occupancy rooms. By the time you

attend your first cocktail hour in the elegant-yet-cozy Middle Fork Lounge, staff will no doubt know your name. By the second night, you’ll have met all the other guests. By the third, you’ll feel like one big, happy family.

Once you arrive at Three Forks Ranch, everything’s included: lodging in spacious sleeping quarters with brilliant mountain views; wine, beer, soda and snacks in the mini-bar; in-room morning coffee service; three exquisite gourmet meals a day; drinks at convivial happy hour; and unlimited spa treatments—as many massages, facials and scrubs you can schedule between adventures in the outdoors.

In fact, recreation in the vast natural playground is where Three Forks Ranch truly shines. In the winter, it’s downhill skiing and snowboarding, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing and tubing—also all included in the price of your stay. Summer brings some of the best fly fishing on the planet, as well as hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding and shooting clays.

Of course, at Three Forks Ranch, simply lounging with a book in front of a roaring fireplace in the Great Room is a perfectly acceptable pastime, too. After all, this is your custom dream vacation at one of the most exquisite ranch resorts in the West. [www.threeforksranch.com](http://www.threeforksranch.com)

[top FIVE things to do at THREE FORKS RANCH]



>> 2. FLY FISH IN PREMIER STREAMS

When David Pratt purchased Three Forks Ranch in 1998, he embarked on a massive restoration of the Little Snake River, turning muddy torrents into pristine streams, where massive amounts of trout now happily make their home in crystal-clear water. Catch and release to your heart's content on 16 miles of exquisite waterways, June through October.



>> 4. EAT LIKE A KING

Nightly dinners are three-course meals you've ordered the night prior, so everything is cooked fresh, just for you. My favorite: Caprese salad, elk tenderloin with grilled asparagus, and mint chocolate chip ice cream topped with house-made chocolate sauce. Lunch is buffet style, with gourmet salads, deli platters, a hot entrée and the best-ever chocolate-chip cookies. Breakfast is a la carte; choose from filling custom-made omelets, fluffy Belgian waffles or healthy yogurt granola parfait.



>> 1. PRIVATE SKI TRAILS

A snowcat whisks you up Three Forks Mountain and drops you off at the top of one of 20 private ski trails: sail down the knee-deep powder, cruise along groomers or skirt the trees. At the bottom, sip hot cocoa in a cozy warming hut, then hop on a snowcat to do it all over again—as long as you'd like! No lifts, no lines. It's a skier's nirvana, December through March.



>> 3. INDULGE IN THE SPA

With all spa treatments included in the price of your stay, you can book a massage every afternoon, if you like. In fact, the staff recommends it—what better way to soothe tired muscles after a stint on the slopes or on the river? Before your treatment, soak in co-ed hot tubs or the nifty indoor/outdoor infinity pool set amid a pretty rock grotto (pictured here).



>> 5. DRIVE CATTLE

This is a working ranch, so join authentic cowboys on their workday, moving cattle from one pasture to another in the summer months. Be prepared to get delightfully dirty and dusty, all the while admiring the breathtaking expanse of land from your perch in the saddle. Yeehaw!