

# Ski Bus 101 for Puget Sound Family Skiers - ParentMap

Wednesday, January 27 2016, 4:58 PM

[OUTINGS + ACTIVITIES](#) | [TRAVEL](#) | [FAMILY FUN](#)

## Ski Bus 101 for Puget Sound Family Skiers

Dread driving to the mountains? There's a bus for that.

By Gemma Alexander



Courtesy Stevens Pass

*This article is part of a series on winter sports for families. Also read about [best ski deals](#) for Seattle families, [sledding](#), [ice skating](#), [snowshoeing](#) and [cross-country skiing](#).*

Every time I go to Stevens Pass, I look at the train tracks parallel to Highway 2 and dream of riding a train to the ski lift. If you've ever arrived at the mountain 20 minutes after the lifts open only to find that all parking lots are full, you may share my dream of taking a train to the slopes. Unfortunately, there are no plans to develop a rail solution to ski traffic, but there are alternatives to driving your own car there. Whether your motivation is environmental or you just dread driving in the snow, here are three different approaches to hitting the slopes without the car.

## Ski Bus

Several bus services take riders directly to the mountains. Some of them are sponsored by the resorts while others are completely independent, but the services provided are all similar. Prices usually include lift tickets and transportation, with pickup at designated urban locations. Arrival at the base of the lifts is timed to coincide with the beginning of operation, with return shuttles departing at 4 p.m.

### Weekend-only shuttles to downhill skiing

Crystal Mountain sponsors two MTR Western Express bus routes on weekends and holidays. One route leaves Greenlake in Seattle at 6:30 a.m., with stops in downtown Seattle, Bellevue and Auburn, arriving at Crystal just as the lifts open. A second route serves Gig Harbor, Tacoma, Puyallup and Enumclaw. The cost is roughly equivalent to a lift ticket plus \$20. Season pass holders can purchase transportation-only tickets for \$45. Children under 13 must be accompanied by an adult.

MTR Western has also partnered with Stevens Pass to provide a similar weekend-only shuttle with stops in downtown Seattle, Bellevue and Bothell. A second route serves Everett and Snohomish. This bus is a very good deal, **with transportation-plus-lift tickets costing about \$5 more than a peak-season daily lift ticket**. Transportation-only tickets are \$45. Reservations are recommended, as a minimum number of passengers is required for the bus to run. Children 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult.

Seattle Ski Shuttle provides van rides to The Summit at Snoqualmie on weekends. Passengers for the \$40 roundtrip catch the van in West Seattle, downtown Seattle, or Bellevue. Children as young as 12 with parental consent can travel unattended as long as they carry a cell phone and behave appropriately. Reservations are always required and can be made online or by phone 206-697-9611.



Crystal Mountain, Chair 6

## Weekday/everyday shuttles

The **Stevens Pass Shuttle** provided by Seattle Ski Shuttle picks up passengers in West Seattle, downtown Seattle, the U-District, Lake City and Monroe daily. A round trip ride costs \$45; a lift ticket can be included for a total of \$90. A season's shuttle pass is available for \$450.

**Seattle Ski Shuttle** also provides van rides to Crystal Mountain on weekdays. Passengers can catch the \$50 roundtrip van in West Seattle, downtown Seattle, Mercer Island, Bellevue, Auburn or Enumclaw in order to arrive by 9 a.m. The return shuttle departs promptly at 4 p.m. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult. Reservations are always required and can be made online or by phone 206-697-9611.

**The Baker Bus** departs from Bellingham with stops in Kendall, Maple Falls and Glacier on any day that Mt. Baker is open and at least four people have signed up for a ride. Round trip from Bellingham is \$14; lift tickets must be purchased separately.





Mount Baker ski area. Photo credit: flickr cc

## Join a group to get to the mountain

For \$450 groups of up to 14 people can reserve a private van from [Seattle Ski Shuttle](#) for the day with custom pick-up. Vans serve Crystal Mountain, The Summit at Snoqualmie and Stevens Pass. The vans come with a driver and are equipped with storage for ski gear.

If you're lucky enough to have a student in middle school, check with your PTSA about a school-sponsored ski bus. Many middle schools around the region run a weekly trip to the mountain, and they always need chaperones.

A number of ski schools, tour companies and social groups operate shuttles from a variety of locations around Puget Sound. Some of these require a multi-week commitment, and the minimum age for unaccompanied minors varies. Stevens Pass maintains a [list on their website](#), as does [Crystal Mountain](#).

## Carpool to the slopes

Several groups on Meetup help winter sports enthusiasts connect with each other. Members of [Seattle Ski and Snowboard Meetup](#) have already arranged over 70 events this season. Seattle [Eastside Ski/Ride Meetup](#), with over 1,400 members, is another good resource.

[Rideshare Online](#) is targeted to commuters, but its Ridematch program can help you set up shared one-time trips.

Last but not least, don't underestimate the power of your own social network. A simple Facebook post may reveal a driver among your own circle of friends who would happily let you and your kids tag along on their next trip for the cost of gas.

January 27, 2016