

Smart meetings

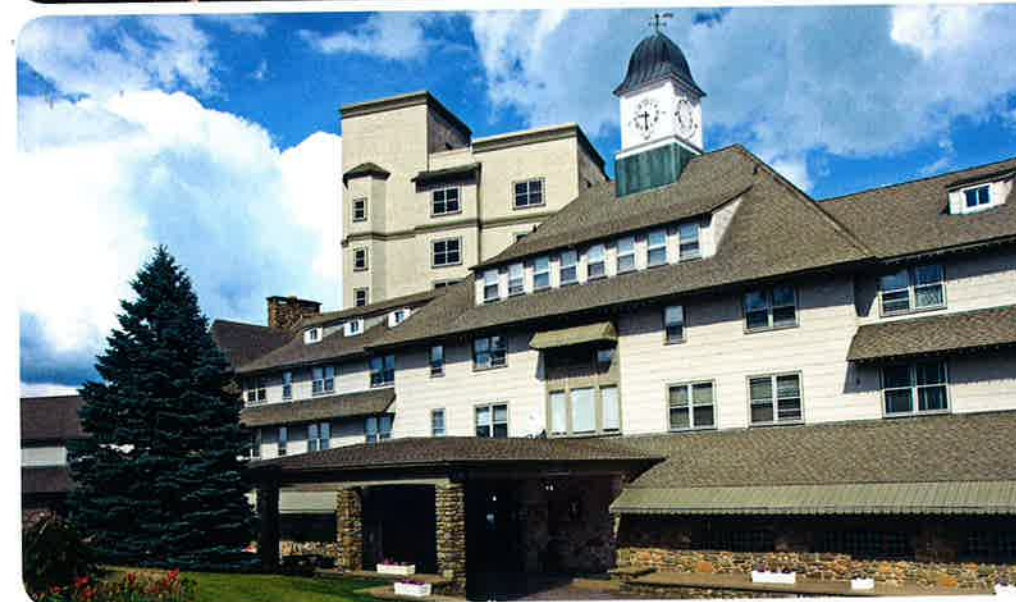
The Intelligent Way to Plan

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Are they listening?
How to be heard by top brass

ARIZONA/ NORTH CAROLINA/
LAS VEGAS/ EAST CENTRAL
FLORIDA/ ORANGE COUNTY/
GREATER SEATTLE





Above, Stowe Mountain Resort, Vermont; below, The Inn at Pocono Manor, Pennsylvania.

Luckily for the latter, today's mountain resorts and lodges offer state-of-the-art facilities, full meeting and incentive packages, and team-building opportunities galore. Known for their snow sports in the winter, these resorts come to life in the summer with hiking, boating, fishing and river-rafting options—not to mention top-notch golf courses and full-service spas.

The best part: These luxury offerings often come at bargain prices in the warm-weather months, because summer is considered the “off-season” for many mountain resorts. While roughing it might sound like an adventure to some, there's no need for attendees to ditch their Blackberries as they take in the mountains' rugged beauty.

Here's a look at destinations across the U.S. that combine alpine summer fun with extravagant accommodations and meeting spaces worth escaping to.

THE APPALACHIANS

Split up into 13 provinces (per the U.S. Geological Survey), the Appalachian Mountains stretch along the eastern U.S., from Alabama all the way up into Canada. They are believed to have been the highest mountains on earth roughly 466-million years ago, when today's continents were joined. Among their several ranges are the Green Mountains, the Berkshires, the Poconos and the Southern Highlands.

The Green Mountains

Vermont's Green Mountains are appropriately named after the state itself, which means “green mountain” in French. The range's shining emerald is the village of Stowe, home to the state's tallest peak, the 4,395-foot-high Mt. Mansfield. Stowe retains the historic allure of 18th-century New England with antique shops and a rich classical music culture. (The Vermont Mozart Festival is held here every September.)

Possibly best known as the relocation site of the famous von Trapp family, whose lives were fictionalized in *The Sound of Music*, the town also comes equipped with charming meeting facilities. One is the Austrian-inspired **Trapp Family Lodge**. Established as a 27-room ski lodge in 1950—just eight years after the von Trapps moved to the U.S.—the 2,400-acre resort has grown into a full-fledged meeting destination. It features the 96-room Alpine Lodge, 100 chalets and a collection of three-bedroom villas. Groups can meet in one of four meeting rooms, including the St. George's Room, which can seat 150 people. “Trapp Family Lodge is one of the most unique properties in Vermont mainly because of the colorful history of the Trapp Family,” says Scott McIntosh, director of sales for the nearby **Stoweflake Mountain Resort & Spa**.

To remind visitors of the family's history, McIntosh says the Four-Diamond Stoweflake Mountain Resort & Spa airs a weekly showing of *The Sound of Music* for its nostalgic guests. The Stoweflake offers 175 guest rooms (including on-site townhouses) and 22,000 sq. ft. of meeting space in a dedicated conference center, as well as amenities such as the Spa at Stoweflake and two award-winning restaurants. Another possibility for meetings is the **Stowe Mountain Resort**. With several lodging options throughout, it offers a total of 56,000 sq. ft. of flexible meeting space, including the **Spruce Peak Performing Arts Center**, a 420-seat amphitheater.

The Berkshires

The Berkshires of Western Massachusetts are a continuation of Vermont's Green Mountains, with a lower elevation of about 2,841 feet. A popular getaway for locals in Connecticut and Massachusetts, the area “combines classic New England charm and enchanting natural beauty with the state-of-the-art equipment, amenities and services that make any meeting successful,” says Lindsey Hammond, director of marketing services for the **Berkshire Visitors Bureau**.

A prime example of this combination: the historic **Cranwell Resort, Spa and Golf Club**. The 96-room resort can host meetings of 2–200 in its ballroom, boardroom and business center. The property also features the 35,000-square-foot Spa