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Why You Should Never Buy Ski Gear Again

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Flying with ski gear is a pain, and even the best equipment depreciates quicker than fast-fashion. Here, why you should rent—never buy—nearly all your slope needs from now on



Until recently my ski vacations have begun with frustration. I've muscled a mountain of equipment into several duffels for the plane and torched my Amex with baggage fees only to stuff everything into the always-smaller-than-advertised rental car when I land. The only real alternative was renting scuffed-up gear at the resort.

No more. Now online outfitters similar to services like Rent the Runway and made-to-measure brands like Indochino will fit you for top-flight gear and deliver it to your hotel room or to an in-town pick-up spot at almost any U.S. mountain you wish to zhush down.

For these brands, "the big change is better customer service," said Amy Yearwood Crider, vice president at Alpine Adventures, a ski-trip consultancy company that steers travel agents toward the best packages. People expect to be taken care of and they expect everything to look and fit nicely, and work as advertised. In the past five years Alpine Adventures has seen a 44% increase in customers renting gear.

New services bring skis, poles, helmets, goggles, boots and more directly to your hotel or condo for in-room fittings.

Elsewhere, Park City's Lodge at Blue Sky offers a full-service fireside fitting. After getting kitted out with gear, you'll find it waiting in the hotel's exclusive Ski Lounge at the base of the mountain, where your boots will be waiting pre-warmed, your skis will be waxed and you can pop back at any time for wine or beer.