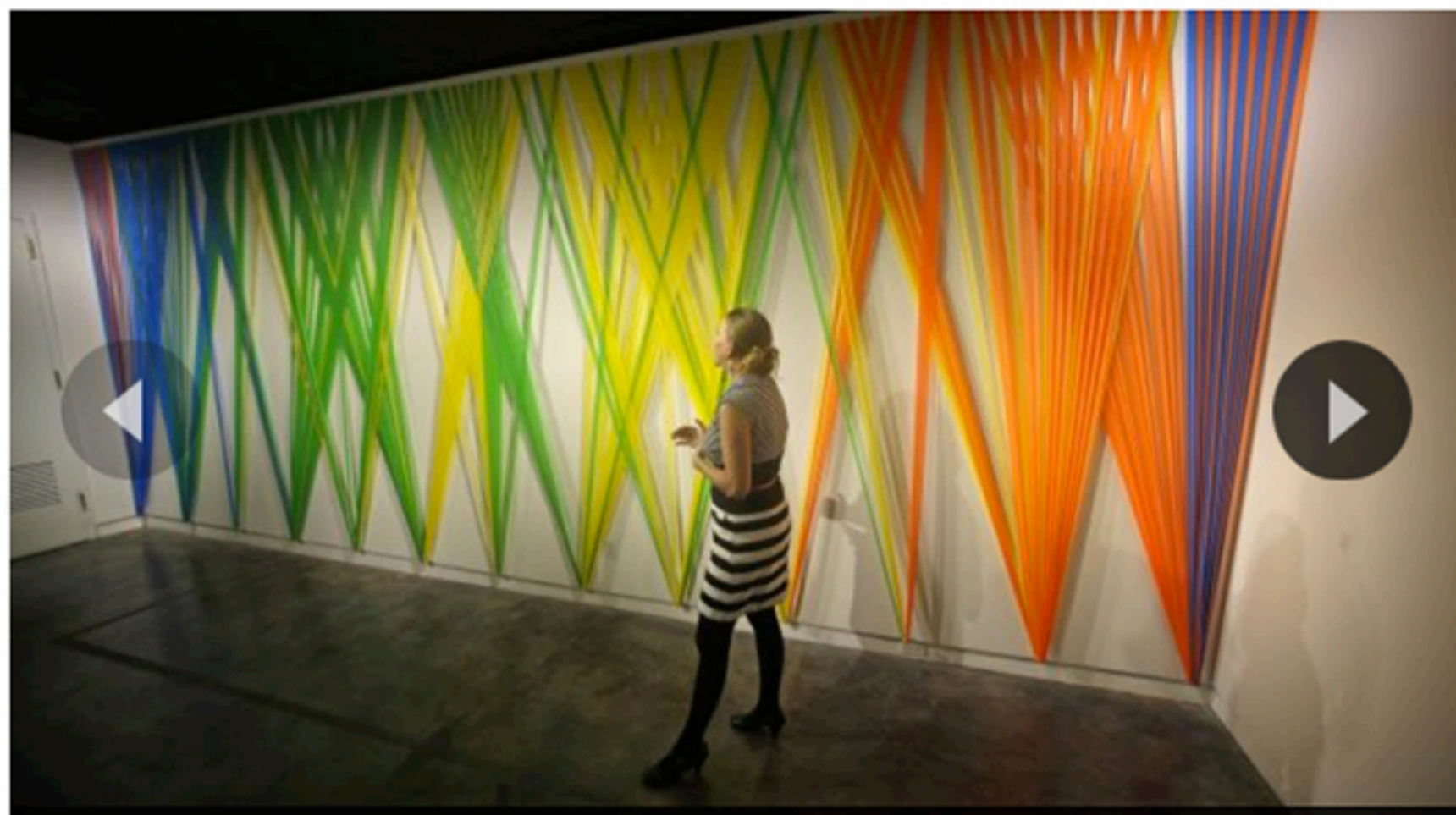


# 5 free things to do in the Salt Lake City area

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**SALT LAKE CITY** – Utah's internationally-acclaimed ski resorts are the main reason people visit Salt Lake City in the winter, but there are plenty of fun, free and interesting things to do in Salt Lake City while in the area and other times of year. Here's a sampling:

## TEMPLE SQUARE

Utah's most-visited landmark, the granite-towered Temple Square invokes the mystery of Mormonism. The 35-acre square is the worldwide headquarters of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and features the church's sacred temple, one of the world's largest genealogy libraries and spectacular gardens. The square is open every day of the year from 9 a.m.- 9 p.m., and free tours are available in 30 different languages. Female church missionaries are happy to answer any questions.

The sacred temple — built over 40 years from 1853 to 1893 — is closed except to all but the most devoted churchgoers with a wallet pass. The temple is considered sacred to church members. At the Family History Library, genealogists will help you track down your family roots free of charge. The gardens within the square feature 250 flower beds with more than 700 different types of plants. They are redesigned every six months.

If you visit on a Thursday evening, you can catch the Mormon Tabernacle Choir rehearsing at 8 p.m. in the historic Tabernacle.

## CITY CREEK CENTER

Built for a reported \$1.6 billion in cash by the Mormon church to revitalize downtown Salt Lake City, it's the country's most modern outdoor shopping plaza. It has a trout stream meandering through the center and retractable roofs that keep the place warm during winter. Just don't call it a "mall," a sacrilege to the architects.

The shopping complex spans two city blocks and has outdoor walkways, plazas, fireplaces and metal sculpture. Waterfalls and fountains dot the village-like development, which includes condominiums and is joined by a pedestrian bridge over Main Street. There are more than 100 stores and restaurants, but don't come hoping to shop and dine on Sundays. The church-owned mall is closed on Sundays.

## DOWNTOWN LIGHT RAIL

Built with the 2002 Winter Olympics in mind, Salt Lake City's light-rail network is free for passengers as it weaves through downtown. Riders can get to and from major attractions such as Temple Square, City Creek Center, Salt Lake City Library, Energy Solutions Arena and the Gateway for free. An extension leading to the airport is expected to open this spring, but trips on that section will cost riders.

The last trains run anywhere from 11:30 to midnight Monday through Saturday and up till about 9 p.m. on Sundays.

## SALT LAKE CITY LIBRARY

Making this library more than a place to read was the goal of renowned architect Moshe Safdie.

"My ambition was for it to be the best library in the world," he said.

Safdie designed a six-story crescent of concrete and glass with vaulted ceilings is a place that invites people to linger. It has a cafe, shops, high-speed Internet connections, art exhibits that turn over every six weeks, film lectures and occasional live music.

The \$65 million building, with a roller-coaster look, has a 360-degree view of the city and mountains and a rooftop garden. A curving ramp — the library's signature outdoor feature — winds up to the garden.

## UTAH MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Recently ranked Utah's best museum, it's a four-time recipient of funding from the Andy Warhol Foundation. The museum is now featuring works by up-and-coming Utah artists Siren Bliss and Megan Geckler, and other exhibits by Jonathan Horowitz.

The second Saturday of each month the museum hosts a family arts event in which children and parents are led through creative art projects by trained artists. The museum has a gallery devoted to local artists, and an artist-in-residency program that allows artists to hone their craft while gaining inspiration from the art around them. A new exhibit called "Analogital" is set to open on Jan. 18. The collection looks at art forms that have emerged during the culture's conversion from film grain to computer pixel. It will feature artists such as Eva and Marco Mattes and Christian Jankowski.

Visitors can see most of the works in 30 minutes, but museum spokeswoman Sarina Ehrgott recommends an hour so that people can take the time to spend time and understand each piece. "It's really quite thought-provoking if someone were to take the time," Ehrgott said.