WHERE TO GO FOR GUARANTEED SNOW THIS WINTER: 2025'S BEST SKI RESORTS

TRAVEL

From Michelin star après-ski to greener travel options, these are the best trips for powder hounds and beginners alike

MARY NOVAKOVICH | VICKY JESSOP

6 DECEMBER 2024

Ski season is here with resorts including Verbier, Ischgl, Les Deux Alpes and Val Thorens now open. Cue envy-inducing pictures of smooth white peaks on social media. So if you haven't already it's time to book your next trip to the slopes.

If you're worried about your carbon footprint, check out some of the tour operators offering a range of rail travel options. Inghams has launched new train packages to 22 resorts across France, Italy, Austria and Switzerland – and they're competitively priced against air travel. Or try French company Travelski, which offers packages to Val Thorens, La Plagne, Les Arcs, La Rosière, Tignes, Val d'Isère, Courchevel, Les Menuires, Méribel and Les Deux Alpes that include rail travel, transfers, accommodation and ski passes. You are required to change trains at Lille, but it's a relatively painless way to start off your ski holiday.

However you decide to travel, put these ski resorts on your wish list.

Megève, France

SHUTTERSTOCK / ANSHAR

Best for: shopping-happy skiiers

The scene: This endlessly chic resort caught the eye of Netflix producers some years ago, and it was duly brought to the small screen in the latest series of Emily in Paris. That gives a good indication of what to expect: it was built as a high-end resort to rival St. Moritz, and its town square, abutted on all sides by traditional wooden chalets, leads into a village that's bursting with shops selling cashmere, high-end designers and some of the best eating to be found anywhere in the Alps.

ADVERTISEMENT

BLACK
0% OFF
PANDORA
Up to 30% OFF
UP TO 30% OFF BLACK FRIDAY + Don't miss our DAILY deals.
SHOP NOW
Carbon-Neutral Ad
Inspired by invibes

Even better, the resort is just an hour's drive from Geneva: perfect for those wanting to hit the slopes immediately. And with 325km of pistes, there's a lot of ground to cover, from the gentle runs of Mont d'Arbois to the more challenging Mont Joly. Head to Côte 2000 for the most reliable snow.

Book: Hidden in the shadow of its older sister Méribel, there are still good deals to be found in Megève. Book Chalet Christophe & Elodie for £443 per person including a lift pass. *sunweb.co.uk*

GAISLACHKOGLBERG 3.040m
ÖTZ TAL SÖLDEN

DAS CENTRAL

DAS CENTRAL

Sölden, Austria

Best for: fans of long runs at high altitude.

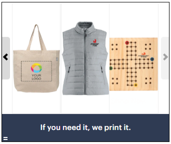
The scene: intermediates looking for Bond gadgetry and glamour.

Anyone who has seen James Bond in Spectre will remember the cubeshaped Ice Q restaurant perched at the 3,048m summit of Gaislochkogl mountain that doubled as the film's sinister clinic. The views are as divine as the cuisine — not surprising, as the same owners run the luxurious five-star Das Central in the heart of Sölden.

While you're at Gaislochkogl, you'll have to pop into 007 Elements, a sleek, futuristic museum which delves into the world of Bond via compelling cinematic installations. Even if you're not a Bond fan, Sölden has plenty to keep you entertained. Not one but two glaciers ensure you'll have plenty of snow even during drier periods, and its 145km of pistes have enough to keep everyone happy. The village is bookended by gondolas serving the Gaislochkogl and Giggijoch sectors and their large networks of cruisy blues and some steep reds.

Once you're in Giggijoch, you can carry on even higher to the Tiefenbach and Rettenbach glaciers that go up to 3,249m. To get the best views of the ski area — and if you've got about four hours to spare — follow the Big 3 Rally route that winds its way for 50km between Giggijoch and Gaislochkogl. Intermediates who want a thigh-busting run can tackle the 15km piste from the top of the glacier and down a 1,880m drop. If it looks familiar, it's because that run also had a starring role in Spectre.

If you stay for at least three days, you automatically get a lift pass that includes the ski areas in neighbouring Obergurgl-Hochgurgl, which is within the same Ötz Valley as Sölden. But you'll want to make certain you're back in the village in time to enjoy Sölden's famed après-ski parties and lively night life. The hottest place to stay is the newly renovated Das Central, with its beautifully done rooms and suites in modern Alpine style. But the hotel's big show-stopper is the Summit Spa, which offers wellness up in the clouds, and has a rooftop Infinity pool that provides a panorama of peaks as you swim in the clouds.



Book: Das Central Hotel, Sölden, Austria offers double rooms from €365 per person per night. *centralsoelden.com*

British Airways flies from London to Innsbruck from £203pp in December. *britishairways.com*

Alta Badia, Italy

ALEX MOLING

Best for: Food fanatics.

The scene: Stylish Italians including chef Giorgio Locatelli.

Foodies flock to the gourmet capital of the Dolomites every winter for Alta Badia's mouth-watering culinary calendar, A Taste of Skiing. Come on 9 December and join the Gourmet Skisafari, skiing from hut to hut as Michelin-starred chefs show off their skills.

The skiing is just as divine in this glorious setting – and you're right on the Sella Ronda ski circuit. Experts will love the Gran Risa black run, one of the most challenging on the World Cup circuit. Corvara is the buzziest of Alta Badia's six villages, and don't miss the twice-weekly late-night party in Club Mortizino at the top of Piz La Ila.

Book: SNO offers a week's half-board in the centrally located Hotel Table, with prices from £1,279pp including flights and transfers. *altabadia.org*

Les Arcs, France

LES ARCS BOASTS FANTASTICALLY VARIED TERRAIN TO EXPLORE

WE ARE MEROI

Best for: Mileage-hungry intermediates.

The scene: Everyone from families to green-minded rail buffs.

With a funicular railway leading directly from Bourg-St-Maurice, Les Arcs is one of the easiest ski resorts to reach by train. If you don't fancy the futuristic architecture of Arc 1600, 1800 or 2000, head over to the more traditional-looking Arc 1950, which is celebrating its 20th birthday this winter. Wherever you stay, you'll have 200km of fantastically varied terrain to explore – and double that if you include La Plagne on your lift pass.

No one is left out here: there are challenging black runs around the forbidding peak of Aiguille Rouge, sheltered tree-lined runs around the Peisey-Vallandry area and some superb freeride terrain. Party animals will want to hang around Arc 1800 at Chez Boubou and La Folie Douce, while Arc 1950 has Le Parvis des Arcs and O'Chaud for classy cocktails.

Soft-Touch LED Torch with Keyring

75 for £ 162.00

Shop Now

If you need it, we print it.

Book: Inghams offers a week's self-catering at Arc 1950 Le Village Apartments from £589pp, including rail travel from London St Pancras. *lesarcs.com*

STAY SELF-CATERED IN LES ARCS AT THE VILLAGE APARTMENTS

PETE WEBB

Lech, Austria

Best for: Luxe-loving intermediates.

The scene: A fashionable crowd following Euro royals and Sebastian Vettel.

Lech's serene air of understated luxury has always been a draw for skiers who like a bit of sophistication on the slopes. It's also one of the snowiest parts of Austria, and a decent bet if you want a white Christmas in this scenic corner of the Arlberg region.

LECH IS THE PERFECT PLACE FOR SKIERS IN SEARCH OF SOPHISTICATION

ADOBE IMAGES

Intermediates in particular will love the sunny slopes that lead up to the pretty hamlet of Oberlech, and there's always the option to ski over to boisterous St Anton. But there's plenty of off-piste action in Lech itself, and the après-ski at the lively Schneggarai hits the sweet spot.

Book: Iglu Ski offers a week's half-board at the five-star Hotel Berghof in the centre of Lech, with prices starting at £2,871pp including flights and transfers. *lechzuers.com*

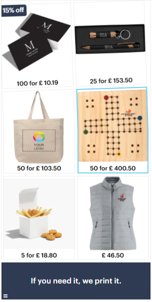
La Rosière, France

Best for: Border-hoppers.

The scene: Families and Italophiles.

You get two countries for the price of one in La Rosière, part of the Espace San Bernardo ski domain. Its family-friendly, south-facing slopes are directly linked to La Thuile over in Italy's Aosta Valley, so you can ski across the border and have lunch on a sunny Italian mountain. And you can go heli-skiing in Italy, which is illegal in France.

While the skiing in La Rosière is more suited to beginners and intermediates, there's also the Mont Valaisan sector, a huge playground of freeride terrain and a network of red runs. It's definitely not a party resort – more a place to relax and take in sublime views of the Tarentaise Valley while diving into a cheese fondue at Le Flocon or in the Igloo Village.



Book: Mountain Heaven offers catered holidays at the five-bedroom Chalet Valeriane, which is opposite Les Eucherts's main chairlift, sleeps 10 and features an outdoor hot tub. A week costs from £8,990, which includes breakfast, afternoon tea and dinner. *larosiere.net*

Jackson Hole, US