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## Ski holidays are more expensive than ever – these are the best value options

With lift pass prices breaking the €400 barrier this season, we reveal where to ski to make your budget stretch further

By Abigail Butcher and Lucy Aspden-Kean

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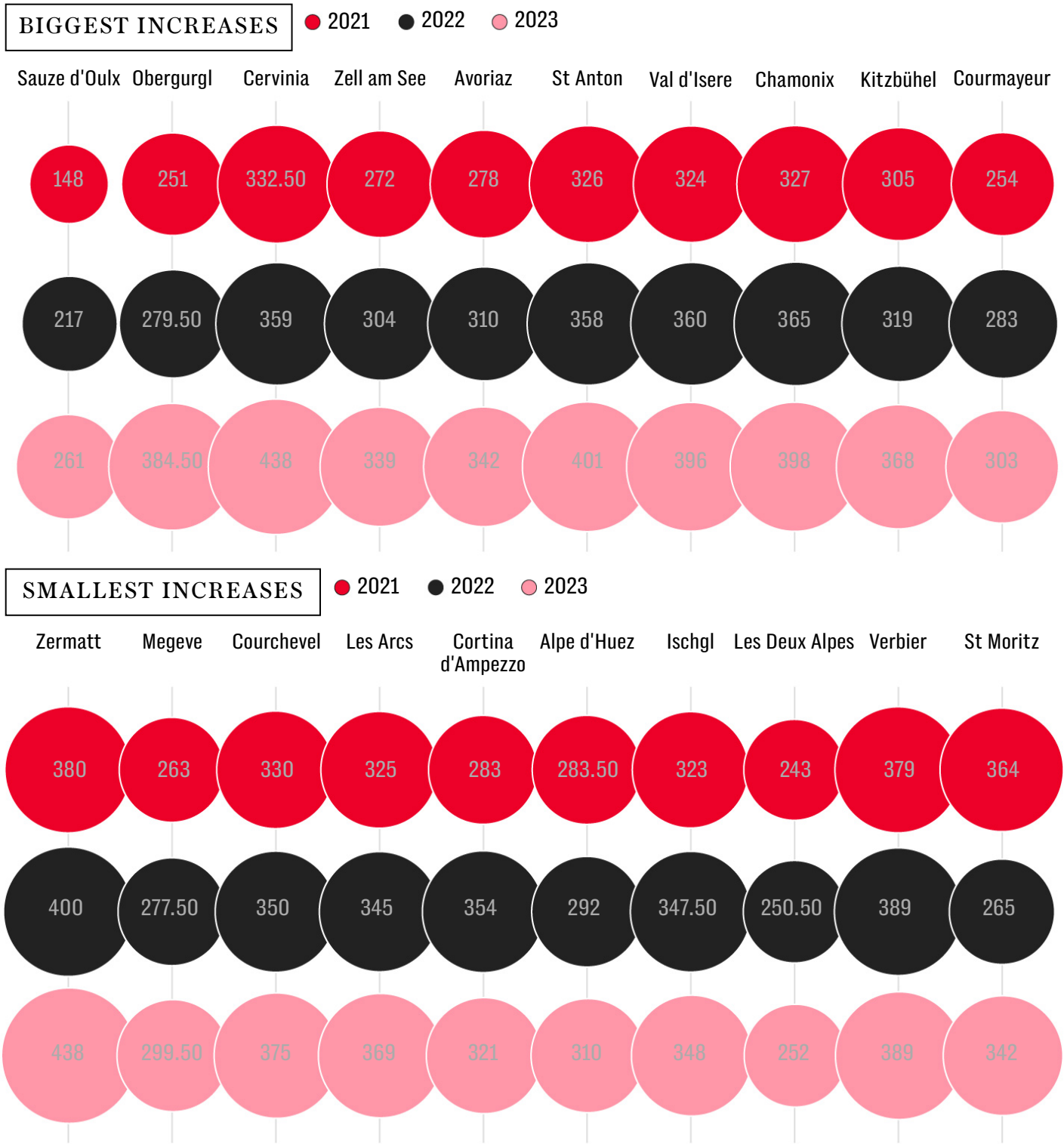
Getting the best value ski holiday has never been more important than this winter. As the cost of living crisis deepens, lift passes in Europe are topping €400 for the first time and getting up the mountain in some resorts is now more expensive than travel or accommodation – or both.

Heavy investment in state-of-the-art snow preparation (cannons and grooming) along with rising energy prices and wages has meant ski resorts worldwide are increasing lift pass prices, with only the odd exception.

After crunching data from Telegraph readers' 20 favourite ski resorts, The Telegraph discovered that while Verbier, Switzerland, and Les Deux Alpes, France, have only raised lift ticket prices by two-three per cent since 2021, others like St Anton, Austria, and Avoriaz, France, have added 20-30 per cent onto pass prices (the former sees its six-day lift pass surpass €400). In Obergurgl, Austria, tickets have risen 53.19 per cent from €251 to €384.50. Sauze d'Oulx, however, tops the bill for the biggest increase. A six-day pass in the Italian resort is this winter priced €261, up from €148 in 2021 and €217 in 2022 – a dizzying incline of 76.35 per cent.

# Lift pass prices in Europe's top 20 resorts

Prices in Euro; Swiss prices in CHF.



Prices quoted by tourist boards ahead of season start date. Subject to change.

SOURCE: SUNWEB

A spokesman for Sauze d’Oulx told The Telegraph prices had risen “in line with Italian and world inflation rates,” adding: “However, Vialattea [the Italian-French ski region of which Sauze is part] has invested many millions of Euro, mainly in snowmaking.”

Lift passes have always been more expensive in North America compared to Europe, but most resorts in America and Canada operate dynamic pricing – meaning prices fluctuate according to demand rather than simply high- and low-season differentials. When purchased early, the multi-resort Ikon and Epic Passes can offer great value to skiers planning trips both sides of the pond.

## Lift passes in North America – how are they different to Europe?

Prices in the US and Canada have long been substantially higher than in Europe — in Vail, no...

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Back in Europe, an expensive lift pass doesn't always mean great skiing. Research from operator Sunweb that measured the cost of lift passes against the size of ski areas found that Dolomiti Superski and the Portes du Soleil both offer the best value. A pass costing €373 buys access to 1,200km of skiing across 12 resorts in the Italian Dolomiti Superski area, offering €0.31 per skiable kilometre. In the 600km French-Swiss Portes du Soleil region, a €292.50 pass offers €0.49/km, while in the French Three Valleys, €375 buys you access to the same 600km – €0.62/km.

Winner of the cost-per-kilometre race goes to Erciyes in Turkey, where a seven-day pass for its 112km of slopes costs an incredible £7.38 – a whopping 0.06 pence per km.

There is some good news though: among the 20 resorts analysed by The Telegraph, one has reduced its lift pass according to historical data provided directly by the destination. In St Moritz, a six-day pass this winter falls to CHF342 from CHF364 in 2021 (6.04 per cent) – in general, Swiss passes have the lowest increases of any of the countries surveyed.

## How to save money on your lift pass

With some research and planning, there are many ways to save when buying a lift pass.

### Bag a deal

Operators and agents run regular lift pass offers, including freebies and two-for-one deals. These companies include Mark Warner, Ski Line, Crystal, Inghams, Ski Solutions, Iglu Ski, Sno.co.uk, Le Ski, Peak Retreats and Skiworld.





Look out for special deals from operators and agents who run regular lift pass offers | CREDIT: Justa Jeskova Photography

Current stand-out offers include a free six-day Three Valleys lift pass (€375pp) with Ski Line on selected chalets in Méribel, during January and March. Iglu Ski and Inghams have free six-day passes in Livigno for the week before Christmas.

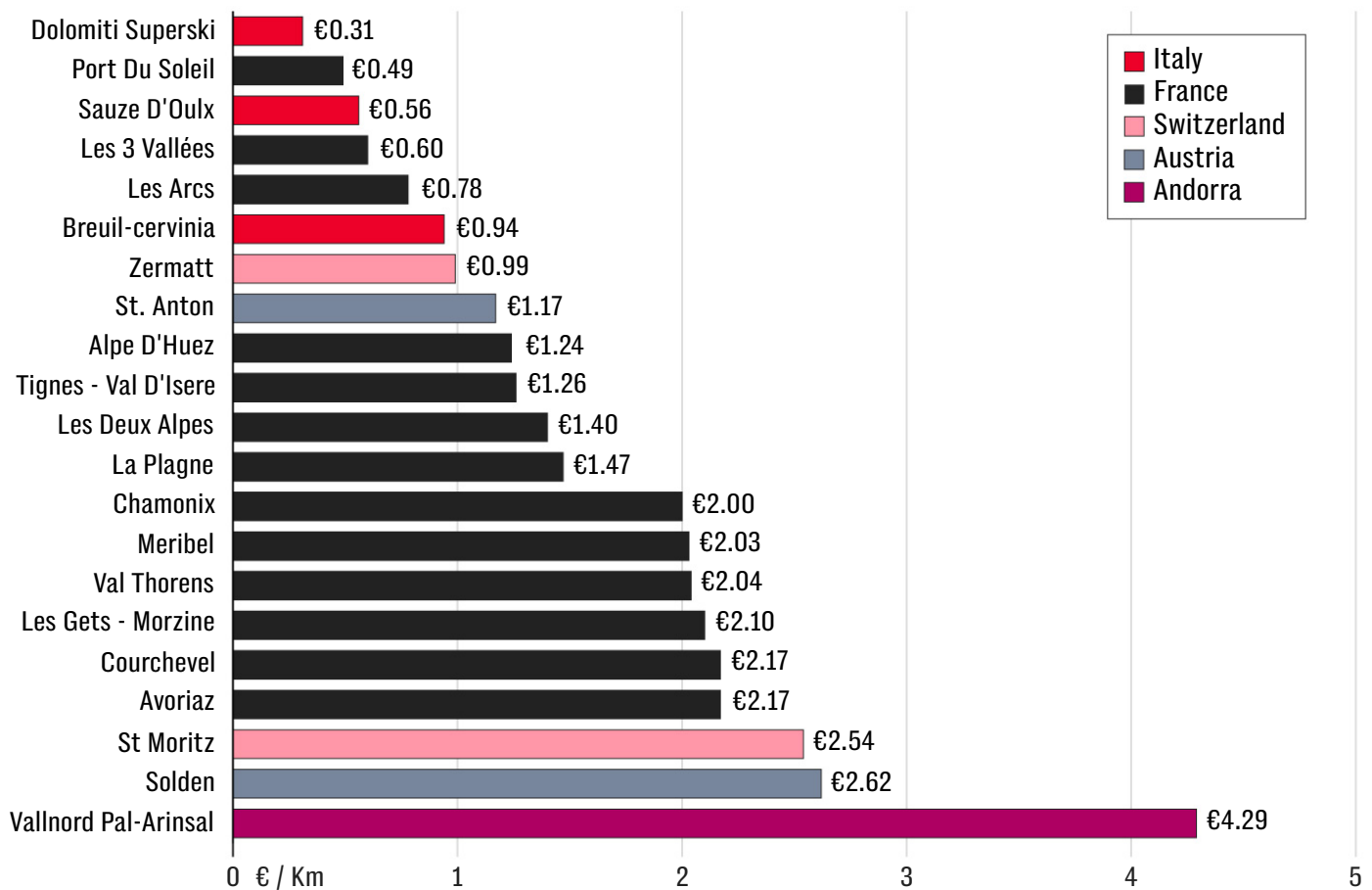
Ski resorts offer deals, too. La Norma and Val Frejus in France's Haute Maurienne Valley currently have a great-value joint six-day family ski pass (two adults, two children) for €723.90 if booked online (€762 in resort). Skiers travelling by train to Morzine and La Rosière qualify for discount packages, including 10 per cent reductions on passes.

### Stick to local slopes

The linking of ski resorts has undoubtedly pushed up the cost of passes, but who actually skis the full distance every day? Buying just a local pass and extending it for one or two days can be a lot cheaper. A six-day lift pass for Cervinia-Valtournèche in Italy, for example, costs €311 for 150km of slopes, substantially less than the €438 for the alternative pass that covers Zermatt in Switzerland. With the lift link often shut in high winds, a local pass on a sunny day in Zermatt costs €50/day for adults and €25 for juniors.

## The best value places to ski in Europe

### Price per Km of skiing



SOURCE: SUNWEB

### Discounts for beginners, children and seniors

In most resorts, lift passes are free for children under five and discounted for juniors and adults over 65(+). But do your homework and you can eek a little more out. Some resorts, such as Ischgl in Austria, give free passes to children up to eight years of age.

Many resorts have free lifts on selected nursery slopes for every age – Courchevel and Anzère, for example. As beginners progress, there are often cheap passes on dedicated slopes – Les Menuires has a €33 Easy Rider pass and La Plagne has €35 Coolski Zones (prices are per person, per day).

### Book all-inclusive and during low season

Going all-inclusive with a company such as Club Med – which includes everything but equipment hire in its packages – takes the sting out of the price rises, and nails down any fluctuations in exchange rates as your holiday draws near.

Choosing a savvy departure date can also help you save. Verbier offers lower prices during quieter periods, in addition to 10 per cent off any pass booked online. Most offer better rates during low season. In the Haute Maurienne, discounts of up to 58 per cent are

available on select dates in Aussois and Val Cenis, which was the first ski resort in Europe to operate dynamic pricing.



In North America, multi-resort lift passes cover resorts including Vail

### Skiing a lot? Buy a multi-resort season pass

Originating from North America and perhaps still offering the best value to those who live in the US, the Epic and Ikon Passes are worth considering for anyone skiing stateside and planning a European trip, too. Passes are cheaper each spring when released for the next winter. Pricing is complicated, depending on the days you want to ski and where, but the full-access Ikon Pass currently costs \$1,309 (£1,083) for adults and the Epic Pass \$969 (£802). Ikon offers access to over 50 resorts including [Aspen](#), [Jackson Hole](#), Zermatt and [Chamonix](#) while Epic offers Breckenridge, [Whistler](#), Three Valleys and Verbier — plus accompanying discounts on accommodation, ski hire and clothing.

In Europe, the Magic Pass offers access to 69 ski resorts across Switzerland for CHF549 and the Top4 Ski Pass offers up four regions in the Bernese Oberland including Mürren, [Wengen](#) and Gstaad for CHF850. In Austria's Tyrol region, the Snow Card Tirol offers access to 90 resorts, including [Kitzbühel](#), for the entire season for €1,050, and in Salzburgerland the SuperSkiCard costs €940 for a season, giving access to 87 resorts. Alto.Ski is a pay-as-you-go system (offering the best rate available on the day) in a handful of resorts including La Thuile-La Rosière, Les Deux Alpes and Livigno. The card is €10 and linked to your bank account, taking funds at the end of your skiing day.