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Snow reports and top resorts – how to plan the ultimate ski holiday this season

From giant ski areas to luxury trains, we reveal this winter's top headlines and share the early snow forecast to help you plan your break

By Patrick Thorne *and* Lucy Aspden-Kean, COMMISSIONING EDITOR

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With the mercury plummeting and the British weather taking a wintry turn, thoughts are shifting to the upcoming season. It's only a matter of time until someone asks the inevitable question: "Are you going skiing this season?"

With roughly 1.2 million Britons taking an annual pilgrimage to the slopes, the next few weeks are key. It's the time when resorts are chosen, holidays are booked, kit is dragged out of the attic and snow reports become the most important item on your newsfeed.

It's also when resorts, operators and experts share their biggest news and exciting developments for the winter ahead. From money-saving tricks to discovering under-the-radar resorts, now is the time to do your research.



La Plagne in France is set to be popular this season | CREDIT: Jour Blanc Studio

Make sure you're clued-up with our inside track on all the latest pre-season news, advice and forecasts.

Will it be a white season?

Those hoping for early signs of a snowy winter should look away now. The record-breaking September heat has been keenly felt in the Alps. Les Deux Alpes was to open the French season on October 21, but now says it's sticking to mountain biking instead for a while longer.

Searching for positives, things have turned much colder over the past week with some light snowfalls and heavier snow forecast. Eight glacier ski areas are already open – over half in Austria's Tirol region, alongside Saas-Fee and Zermatt in Switzerland.

It's too soon to worry but what early signs there are, aren't promising. Weather agencies predict new record-high temperatures for 2024, with the warming El Niño factor peaking

this winter. The main clues will come by mid-November, when forecasters will be hoping for more sustained wintry conditions.



For a successful ski holiday, look for ski areas with plenty of high terrain | CREDIT: Matt Power

To ensure your holiday isn't a washout, look for ski areas with plenty of high terrain, above 2,000m, or look to northern Europe. There's been October snowfall in Scandinavia, and Finland's Levi and Ruka, have both already opened for their seven-month seasons, using snow recycled from last winter.

For extra security, Crystal Ski Holidays, Inghams and Club Med now have policies that guarantee against poor snow cover and closed slopes. The latter, in its most recent customer survey, found that 81 per cent of people would be more likely to book a holiday with an operator offering a snow guarantee. Under these terms and conditions, customers are offered the chance to move their plans to an alternate (open) resort, to ensure they can ski, or to cancel and claim credit towards a later departure.

Receive weekly snow updates and the latest forecasts straight to your inbox throughout the season with The Telegraph's snow and ski newsletter. [Sign up here.](#)

Patrick Thorne



Off-the-beaten-track specialist Ski Safari is launching in Norway at the resort of Gausta | CREDIT: Gausta/Ski Safari

What's new this winter?

There's plenty to be excited about this season, whether it's news of ski area expansions, new lift connections or historic anniversaries. We reveal the biggest headline to help you stay ahead of the pack.

Growing ski areas in North America

Among the top headlines is news from across the pond, where American favourite Aspen is opening its first new terrain since 1985 – in the process increasing its ski area by 20 per cent. The new area – named Heroes – includes a new high-speed quad chairlift and terrain expansion on Aspen Mountain, with 1,220 vertical feet and more than 150 acres of new chutes, glades and trails,

Neighbouring resort Steamboat is making waves, too, with the final stages of a \$200 million (£165 million) investment – one of the biggest in history – including a transformation of its base area, new learning zone and 650 acres of new expert terrain, making it the second largest resort in Colorado.



Steamboat is on track to become the the second largest resort in Colorado | CREDIT: Steamboat

New connection and slopes in Europe

Yet European resorts aren't to be overshadowed. This winter will be the first chance skiers get to cross the Italian-Swiss border on the Matterhorn Alpine Crossing – a game-changer for those looking to clock up big mileage between the resorts of Cervinia or Zermatt.

On the slopes there are exciting changes in store too. Les Deux Alpes has set its sights on the next generation of skiers in the redeveloped Vallée Blanche sector, while experts will be exploring the newly opened touring itinerary in Cortina d'Ampezzo, which takes in the Torri ski area from Mount Lagazuoi to Tofane – highlights of Italy's north-eastern Dolomites.

In France, La Plagne is enticing keen intermediates. Improvers looking for more of a challenge can take advantage of the resort's newly opened Glaciers gondola, which ascends from Roche de Mio and gives faster access to the resort's snow-sure red and black slopes just below the Bellescôte summit.



La Plagne's newly opened Glaciers gondola gives faster access to the resort's red and black slopes | CREDIT: La Plagne

Luxurious renovations and openings

It's not just on the slopes that ski holidays are advancing, with rejuvenation in Alpine hotels and chalets at the forefront this winter.

Skiers will be able to relax in an innovative glass-bottomed rooftop pool at the Das Central Hotel in Sölden and guests will return to the storied halls of Grace La Margna – one of the most historic five-stars in St Moritz. If your budget is on the larger side, you can indulge in a stay at the new Six Senses Crans-Montana, enjoy the all-inclusive delights of Club Med's new resort in Kiroro, Japan.



Push the boat out with a stay at the new Six Senses Crans-Montana | CREDIT: Six Senses Crans-Montana

New destination, trains and planes

Operators are also making moves to keep ski holidays enticing. While Eurostar's ski train will return this winter – albeit on an indirect route – Inghams is leading the way by launching rail-ski packages, including to resorts beyond France. In the skies, new jets will fly between London and Bolzano, operated by SkyAlps, as skiers seek out the value of the Italian slopes.

Off-the-beaten-track specialist Ski Safari is branching out in Norway to the resort of Gausta, and French self-catering experts Peak Retreats is adding further lesser-known resorts to its portfolio. The Ski Club of Great Britain, which celebrates its 120th anniversary this season, is reintroducing its popular reps service in French resorts for the first time since 2015.

Crystal Ski has expanded its beginner-only holidays to now cover Andorra, and in the luxury market, the Orient Express will operate a dedicated service to the Alps. The anticipation for winter really is palpable.

Lucy Aspden-Kean

Do you have any plans to go skiing this season? Where are you heading to?
Join the conversation in the comments section below

