13 ways to make family ski holidays affordable again

Our expert reveals where to go, how to book and the tricks to taking your tribe to the slopes without breaking the bank

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Skiing is undeniably expensive (especially with children in tow), but there are ways to make savings Credit: Richard Bord

A family ski holiday has never been cheap, but ever-rising costs have had a significant impact on families wanting to hit the slopes in recent years.

According to research from the Mountain Trade Network (MTN) in Oct 2025, increased accommodation prices and airfares, not to mention the cost of living crisis at home, have dramatically affected family ski trips.

“What we’re seeing is families who used to take two or more ski holidays a year now only taking one,” says James Gambrill, the founder of MTN. “So while families are still the largest cohort of the market at 60 per cent, this number has decreased from 68 per cent over the last two years.”

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There’s no denying that ski holidays come with some unavoidable cost – lift passes are essential once you’ve mastered snowplough – but there are ways you can save money, whether that’s driving to the mountains instead of flying or renting kit rather than buying new.

If you’re planning for the season ahead, here are our top tips to save money, including alternative resorts to consider and why it pays to book early.

1. Pick the right resort

If you’re still finding your ski legs, forget big-name Alpine resorts and head somewhere less well-known.

France’s Haute Maurienne-Vanoise offers six-day ski passes from €181/€148 per adult/child, which gives you access to six resorts and 350km of slopes.

An equivalent pass in a mega ski area like Les Portes du Soleil (including resorts such as Morzine, Avoriaz and Les Gets) costs from €345/€259 per adult/child.

Ski passes in resorts such as Avoriaz (pictured here) are expensive – in other resorts, they’re much cheaper

If you do want to tackle a big resort, you can save money by staying in a satellite village.

For example, La Tania, with a car-free centre and dedicated nursery skiing area, provides an affordable back door into Les 3 Vallées while the Austrian resort of Stuben provides easy access to the vast Ski Arlberg domain (covering St Anton and Lech) and has a dedicated beginner’s slope in the resort.

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With over 200 ski days a year, Ruka in Finland is good for beginner families with the added benefit of reindeer safaris to enjoy after a day on the slopes. Crystal Ski Holidays offers seven nights in a self-catering apartment from £561pp.

How to find the perfect family ski resort

The 10 things you should prioritise when booking a family ski resort

- Pick a destination that is snow-sure
- Choose a resort with family-friendly slopes; look for designation kids' areas and green slopes for young learners, or a varied piste map for families with more experience.
- Pick a place with good-value family accommodation (a bonus if it is ski-in/ski-out)
- Consider the price of ski passes; some resorts offer free passes for children below a certain age, or discounted family passes.
- Avoid resorts with big crowds and long lift lines
- Choose a place in the sun; warm kids are happy kids
- Find a resort size that works for your family: small is good if you are with toddlers, but teenagers might want somewhere with more going on
- Look at the transfer time from the airport or train station; shorter transfer times are always a winner with young kids
- Explore what non-ski activities are available

2. Choose Easter over February half term

All skiers know that New Year and February half term can be eye-wateringly expensive. Choose Easter instead and enjoy cheaper flights, accommodation and lift passes, as well as shorter lift queues.

"Easter is a great time to ski as a young family," says Phil Wright, Iglu's head of sales and service. "The air temperature is a bit warmer so no biting cold, and resorts tend to get lots of fresh snow around this time too."

Easter is a cheaper time to ski with young children compared with New Year and February half term Credit: Family Veldman

3. Rent your kit

If you don't have friends to lend you salopettes, consider renting instead, especially when children are still growing. Sustainable skiwear rental service EcoSki offers junior bundles from £75 per week. Peer-to-peer marketplace WhoSki is another good option.

Booking your skis and boots in advance via Intersport or Skiset can save you up to 50 per cent.

4. Forget flying

Not only is driving greener than flying, but it's typically cheaper – and you don't have to navigate airports with kids in tow.

Go electric and you can save even more: we drove from London to Morzine as a family for £72 after signing up with Ionity. Ski packages booked with Peak Retreats include a return EuroTunnel crossing.

If you don't feel comfortable navigating winter mountain roads, then go by train, which is an easy and fun way to travel with children.

Instead of flying, it can be cheaper to drive to Morzine or travel by train Credit: VTL Photo

Daniel Elkan of SnowCarbon recommends using a rail-booking expert such as Railtrail or Trainseurope to find the best options at the best prices.

Train travel can save you money in resorts too; the Morzine-based chalet company Alikats offers discounts of up to 20 per cent for guests who travel by train. Saint-Gervais-les-Bains also rewards train travellers, offering 10 per cent discounts on one-day ski passes.

5. Consider child care options

If you can't persuade grandparents to babysit, look at operators such as the Family Ski Company, who offer fully catered chalet holidays with qualified British childcare staff.

VIP Ski has a range of childcare options, including their Bear Cubs and Polar Bears, with a five-day package starting at around £300 for kids aged four months to 12 years old.

In Vaujany, France parents can take advantage of the local daycare centre that accepts children from six months to four years. A six-day package costs €214.15.

6. Find family-friendly après-ski

In France, the Famille Plus label marks resorts including Arc 1950 and Les Menuires as particularly good for kids.

Both deliver free family activities during the school holidays.

Family-friendly Swiss resorts such as Nendaz and Wengen offer free kids' areas for children to learn the basics, and both Austria and Italy have plenty of family-approved resorts, including Serfaus-Fiss-Ladis in Austria and Alta Badia in Italy.

Plenty of resorts have additional child-friendly activities and spaces Credit: Richard Bord

Further afield in Canada, Big White and Sun Peaks in British Columbia are known for their family activities, including tubing parks and giant ice rinks.

7. Pack a picnic

Buying lunch up the mountain can be extortionate, particularly with hungry kids in tow. Forget €25 slopeside burgers and pack a picnic instead.

Some resorts, such as Stöten in Sweden and Serre Chevalier in France, have outdoor grill areas for a lunchtime DIY barbecue.

8. Take advantage of free lift passes for kids

Lots of ski resorts offer free ski passes for younger children, which can save around £222 per child, according to research by Iglu Ski.

In France, kids ski free up to the age of eight and in Italy the cut off age is nine, but in the Stubai Glacier in Austria, the age limit is 10. Across the pond in Steamboat, Colorado, lift passes are free for children under 12.

During FamilySkiWeeks in the SkiWelt Wilder Kaiser – Brixental, kids can ski free until the age of 15 and in Switzerland's Jungfrau region, up to three children (six to 15 years) can ski for free on Saturdays when accompanied by a full-paying adult.

And in Sainte Foy, in France's Tarentaise Valley, dynamic pricing rewards those who book early and ski at non-peak times.

Thanks to dynamic pricing, skiing outside of peak times at Sainte Foy is much cheaper Credit: Nadine Carle

9. Don't scrimp on ski lessons

Trying to save money by teaching your kids to ski is a recipe for disaster. Group lessons are cheaper than private ones, but if you are travelling with friends then it may be more economical to hire an instructor and split the cost.

10. Bring friends

"If you're looking to keep the price per person down, think about holidaying with another family or friends, or your extended family," said Chris Thompson, the director of chalet rental specialist OVO Network.

The Chalet Lydie in Manigod, part of the OVO Network of chalets, has seven nights rental in Jan 2026 at €1,990 for up to eight guests and it comes with child-friendly facilities.

Chalet Lydie (sleeps eight) has four bedrooms and two bathrooms and is available for seven nights in Jan 2026 for €1,990 Credit: Vanessa Fisher

11. Save money on accommodation

Data from MTN shows that the number of families staying in four-star hotels has dropped dramatically from 39 per cent in 2023/2024 to 28 per cent last season.

Self-catering is one option, but if you don't want to cook, the good news is that catered chalets are back. Ski Weekends have new catered chalets in Val d'Isère with prices starting from £565pp for three nights, including transfers from Geneva Airport.

If you prefer a hotel experience, save money by going all-inclusive. Research by Iglu Ski suggests you can save £500pp by booking all-inclusive over half-board.

7 affordable family ski holidays

Austria

The traditional Austrian village of Niederau is ideal for the kids' first week on snow and great value too. SNO (020 7770 6888; sno.co.uk) offers seven nights half board at Hotel Pension Hannes from £598pp.

Andorra

Arinsal's high-altitude nursery slopes mean good snow conditions for learners and there are lots of gentle greens and blues too. Inghams (01483 319 610; inghams.co.uk) offers seven nights half board at Hotel St Gothard from £4,306 for a family of four, including flights and transfers.

Italy

Snow-sure Passo Tonale is popular with beginners and intermediates and has 100km of slopes and zippy lifts. Iglu Ski (020 3993 8766; igluski.com) offers seven nights half board at Hotel Delle Alpi from £1,123pp based on four sharing, including flights and transfers.

Switzerland

Family-friendly Meiringen is perfect for young beginners and wobbly intermediates and has cracking views of the Jungfrau to boot. Heidi (0117 457 6000; heidi.com) offers seven nights self-catering at the SWISSPEAK Resorts Meiringen from £707pp, including flights and transfers.

Canada

One of the best ski resorts in Canada for families, Panorama offers free lift passes for children up to 17. Ski Solutions (020 3918 6583; skisolutions.com) offers seven nights in a two-bedroom condo at Upper Village Condos from £1,495pp, including flights.

France

Small but perfectly formed with 50km of downhill ski slopes, Arêches-Beaufort sits in the heart of the Savoie region. Peak Retreats (023 9283 9310; peakretreats.co.uk) offers seven nights self-catering at the La Clé des Cimes from £342pp based on four sharing, including a return Eurotunnel Le Shuttle crossing.

Norway

Norway's adventure sports capital, Voss, is also great for family skiers with 45km of slopes including gentle runs from the top of every lift. Inghams (01483 319 610; inghams.co.uk) offers seven nights B&B at the Scandic Hotel in Voss from £2,958 for a family of four, including flights and transfers.

12. Look for deals

Early bird discounts and instalment plans can help to spread the cost of the trip; Heidi allows customers to pay as little as £99pp as a deposit.

Peak Retreats also has a range of early booking offers that could save a family up to £650 on their holiday. Most resorts offer discounts on ski passes if booked before a certain date.

It pays to look for early bird booking deals and to opt for payment plans to spread the cost Credit: Arthur Bertrand

13. Use technology

The Heidi app uses clever technology to help families find good deals in more than 350 resorts across Europe.

It matches accommodation choices with the best flight options and airport transfers for your chosen dates, and allows families to filter by criteria like price and proximity to the slopes.

About the expert

Katja Gaskell learned to ski soon after she learned to walk and has been lucky enough to ski in resorts around the world. A mum of three, she loves nothing better than a family ski holiday.

Plan the perfect ski holiday

The Telegraph's ski section has everything you need to hit the slopes this winter, including expert guides of the world's best resorts – from Austria and France, to Japan and Canada – the latest snow reports, top winter holidays, booking tips and gear guides.

Whether you're planning a family trip to the Alps or a bucket-list powder tour of North America, our ski experts are here to help you plan the perfect trip to the mountains.

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NM Join the conversation, Nicola Moss

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PR **Peak Retreats** · 1 MIN AGO

We're huge fans of satellite resorts - fantastic ski villages that link into larger ski areas which present fantastic value for money. For example Samoëns in the Grand Massif, Peisey Vallandry in Paradiski and St Martin de Belleville in the 3 Vallees. Also lesser-known resorts such as Les 7 Laux and Sainte Foy which our clients hope we won't tell anyone else about as they love the quiet slopes and no lift queues!

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DM **Dale Moore** · 14 HRS AGO

Train is by no means cheaper than flying

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It can be especially for peak dates like half term where flights have become very expensive.

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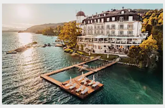
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