

Travel Ski special

20 great ski trips

The best way to do ten classic big-name resorts, plus ten secret ski spots to try. By Sean Newsom

Hold on to your ski helmets, it's a Winter Olympics season. In February we'll wake up to the start of the Milan-Cortina 2026 Games and a fortnight of some of the most breathtaking sporting performances on the planet. The Italian resorts of Cortina d'Ampezzo, Bormio and Livigno will host the downhill skiing, snowboarding and freestyle events, and if the thought of Marco Odermatt, Mikaela Shiffrin, Zoe Atkin and co gets your muscles tingling, well, do some skiing or snowboarding yourself.

Here to help you with your planning we've gathered some of the best ski holidays going, in A-list resorts and underrated spots. Get your ski holiday right and it will light your path all the way to spring.

ALPE D'HUEZ, FRANCE

Alpe d'Huez is full of stern, steep challenges at the top and bottom of its ski area. But it's the broad sweep of gentle slopes in the middle that makes it exceptional – and if you've got friends who want to build their confidence skiing them then you won't find better-placed digs than Chalet Le Manoir, a wooden base with six bedrooms next to the resort's main hub of lifts, pistes and ski school meeting points. It's near the famous Folie Douce bar too in case you want to burnish your après-ski skills as well.

Details Seven nights' self-catering for 12 from £713pp (skifrance.co.uk). Fly to Grenoble

ST ANTON, AUSTRIA

St Anton is no fun at all if you're mid-level skier, on account of its crowded pinch points and often slushy home runs. But once you are bouncing over bumps and pitching down steep blacks, it turns brilliant, with the vast Mooserwirt mega-pub beckoning when it's time to celebrate. If there's fresh snow in the forecast, book at least one day with the guides at Piste to Powder (£147pp; pistetopowder.com), and for the quickest possible start each morning check into the Skihotel Galzig next to the key lifts.

Details Seven nights' B&B from £1,420pp, including flights (crystalski.co.uk)

CORVARA, ITALY

Corvara is not a party town. It's a place for sybaritic skiing – gliding between mountain restaurants on the Pralongia plateau and muttering awestruck expletives as you go. Why? Because if there's one thing more delicious than the speck cream and bufala ricotta tortelli they serve at the Rifugio Utia Bioch, it's the sight of the Dolomites that surround it. Book the ski-in, ski-out Sporthotel Panorama for a well-placed launchpad into all this loveliness.

Details Seven nights' half-board from £1,609pp, including flights (igluski.com)

CERVINIA, ITALY

Zermatt in Switzerland may get all the celebrity guests but its Italian neighbour Cervinia – which shares the same ski area – has the better intermediate-level pistes. Admittedly, high winds and white-out conditions can

sometimes make skiing all but impossible, so book into the swish VRetreats Cervino down in the valley so you can sit out any storms in the comfort of its spa. Then, when the skies clear, jump

in the free shuttle to the slopes and ski Red 7. This swooping top-to-bottom slope serves up gob-smacking Matterhorn views from start to finish.

Details Seven nights' half-board from £1,799pp, including flights (inghams.co.uk)

TIGNES, FRANCE

With the slopes emptying and summer beckoning, skiing with your kids at Easter can be a joyful end-of-season experience, or it can be a slush pit. To be sure it's the former, head uphill to Tignes, where the lift system rises to 3,456m and the snow can shrug off all but the very warmest spring thaw. Its long, broad pistes are perfect for improving, and for energetic families – as are the apartments in the piste-side Village Montana. Its takeaway pizzas will save you when you're too tired to cook.

“Halfway down, Val's signature descent bares its teeth”



From top: on the slopes in Tignes; Experimental Chalet in Val d'Isère; Corvara, Italy

Details Seven nights' self-catering for four from £645pp, including flights (crystalski.co.uk)

MÉRIBEL-MOTTARET, FRANCE

Don't rush into the Three Valleys too early in your skiing career, otherwise you won't do justice to its magnificent, mind-boggling extent. Wait instead till you're skiing red-rated pistes with relish and book yourself into the ski-in, ski-out Hôtel Le Mottaret in the higher of Méribel's two villages. Here, you're slap-bang in the middle of the domaine, with the sense that you could, more or less, ski for ever. Provided that you're there in a quieter mid-January week, of course.

Details Seven nights' B&B from £791pp (skifrance.co.uk). Fly to Geneva

VAL D'ISÈRE, FRANCE

Val d'Isère is a ski resort you save up for, marshall not just your money but your skill, fitness and courage. Then, when no piste seems too intimidating, it's time to tackle La Face. Halfway down, Val's signature descent bares its teeth with a sudden, plunging left-hand turn and it doesn't let up till you're at the bottom, awash with adrenaline and disbelief. Nearby, the fresh-faced and unfussy Experimental Chalet hotel is a canny base camp. A short walk from the lifts, it'll serve a very moreish mocktail on the night before you ski the Face – and something stronger afterwards.

Details Seven nights' B&B from £2,195pp, including flights (skisolutions.com)

NISEKO, JAPAN

Like any weather system, the interaction of Siberian winds, ocean humidity and

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Hokkaido's extinct volcanoes is not a constant. But when it does work, oh my. Don't go until you love skiing powder and focus on the three ski areas above bustling, cosmopolitan Hirafu Village, where the M Hotel is a central and unfussy base for seven nights (you'll also have two nights in Tokyo). Off-piste skiing is permitted provided that you're properly equipped and use the backcountry gates, while English-speaking instructors are commonplace and – if your luck holds – the lightest, softest snow falls daily.

Details Nine nights' B&B from £2,600pp, including flights (skisafari.com)



VERBIER, SWITZERLAND

Two kinds of skier or boarder will love Verbier: those who can do justice to the quality of its superb, lift-serviced off-piste terrain, and those who wish they could. The former must book a mountain guide (one day's guiding for four £808; guideverbier.com). The latter will benefit from a five-day, all-terrain ski course with the Warren Smith Ski Academy (£751pp; warrensmith-skiacademy.com). Both should stay close to the key Médran lift at the no-frills, family-owned Hôtel de la Poste, a relatively affordable base.

Details Seven nights' half-board from £988pp (hotelposteverbier.ch). Fly to Geneva

JACKSON HOLE, WYOMING

For athletic and ambitious skiers and snowboarders who are ready to tackle trickier terrain, Jackson Hole's snowy climate and plunging, go-anywhere terrain should make a transatlantic trip worthwhile. Book a four-day Steep and Deep camp for the full effect (£1,704pp; jacksonhole.com). Its energetic instructors should soon have you catching air, dodging trees and diving down short rocky chutes. Stay at Hotel Terra, close to the key Aerial Tram lift, and enjoy the Wild West feel to the town each night.

Details Seven nights' room only from £3,836pp, including flights (ski-i.com)

THE SECRET RESORTS

HINTERTUX, AUSTRIA

Hintertux is not a conventional ski resort but if you want to get a head start on winter, this high-altitude area – and its long tail of hotels in the valley below – is hard to beat for a pre-Christmas weekend. You can ski on its two glaciers already but wait until mid-November and

(hopefully) the first proper winter snow, and a sizeable area opens up, brimming with upper-intermediate pistes. In the valley below, the rooftop pool at the four-star Hotel Tirolerhof is the place to stretch your muscles afterwards.

Details B&B doubles from £162 (tirolerhof-tux.at). Fly to Innsbruck

MADONNA DI CAMPIGLIO, ITALY

Will the chic new Casa Cook hotel finally open British eyes to Madonna di Campiglio? It certainly should. Beneath a crinkle-cut wall of Brenta Dolomite peaks, this small, friendly ski town is a place of fabulous scenery and feisty, tree-lined pistes. Skiers who like their groomed snow steep and their lunches served in family-owned restaurants will have a cracking three or four-day trip here, especially in midwinter. The hotel is adults-only, with 50 stylish rooms, a spa and yoga classes.

Details B&B doubles from £301 (casacook.com). Fly to Bolzano or Verona

VAL CENIS, FRANCE

Why are holidays in Val Cenis so much cheaper than those in Courchevel, ten miles

northwest of it? Over there, ski school classes can cost double what you'll pay here, in the home of L'Escargot, France's longest beginner run (six morning lessons from £132pp; esf-valcenis.com).

Meanwhile, more experienced skiers get plenty of on-piste variety, as well as a day's free skiing in three neighbouring resorts, courtesy of their six-day lift pass. So book a self-catering Alpapes de Val Cenis apartment, bring your own car and get day-tripping.

Details Seven nights' self-catering for four from £1,066, including Eurotunnel with a car (peakretreats.co.uk)

EAST TYROL, AUSTRIA

This forgotten ski region lies south of Austria's highest mountain, the Grossglockner – and by Alpine standards it is blissfully undeveloped. So buy a Skihit pass that unlocks all its slopes (six days £280pp; osttirol.com), base yourself in the soothing Hotel Strasserwirt in Strassen and have yourself a ski safari, exploring its six tiny areas. The village of Obertilliach is the prettiest, Kals-Matrei the most modern. And if you're a mid-level skier who's grown tired of overcrowded pistes, you'll love them all.



ELIAS BACHMANN; ARTWORK: BROWN/LAMP; JONAS SCHWARTZ/DER ANCHER; CHIEL YANCHU/GETTY IMAGES



Details Half-board doubles from £218 (strasserwirt.com). Fly to Innsbruck or Bolzano

DREI ZINNEN, ITALY

Word is spreading about this mid-sized, multifaceted ski area close to the Austro-Italian border. After all, it's set beneath some of the most photogenic rock faces in the Dolomites. But it's unlikely to hit the big time in the way Corvara has for the simple reason that you have to drive past too many other tempting ski areas to reach it. As a result its broad pistes remain quiet and its prices reasonable, even for cosy hostels such as the Berghotel in Sesto, which also has a highly rated restaurant and an indoor pool.

Details Seven nights' half-board from £1,286pp, including flights (crystalski.co.uk)

INNSBRUCK, AUSTRIA

Innsbruck is nobody's secret – except when it comes to the city's pocket-sized ski areas. Because although thousands of people start their holidays at its airport, they're

immediately whisked away to more specialised resorts. That leaves two very special areas eerily quiet – the broad, intermediate-friendly Igls and the mind-blowing Nordkette. At the top, the Nordkette's unpisted bowl is so high and steep it feels as though you might land on your back in the middle of the city if you fall. Stay at the four-star Das Innsbruck for transport links to both – a great option for a weekend or short break.

Details B&B doubles from £157 (hotelinnsbruck.com). Fly to Innsbruck

ARE, SWEDEN

It's a rare thing to look up from a European ski resort and see nothing but long, white, whale-backed hills rolling off into an almost uninhabited distance. But that's the view that edges Are – and it gives every turn a thrilling edge-of-wilderness buzz. Two hours' drive from Trondheim, it's popular with Stockholmers, and you can sense the city's influence in its chic shops and restaurants. The ego-boosting pistes are, however, all its own. Stay in the no-frills Brunkulla apartments for quick access.

Details Seven nights' self-catering for four from



£3,048, including flights (skisafari.com)

ZINAL, SWITZERLAND

Not far west of Zermatt, the high, hanging Val d'Anniviers is sometimes talked up as the next big thing in skiing. It has never quite made it, but come and you'll find Grimentz and Zinal – two interesting, interlinked ski areas with an underdeveloped network of pistes and a lot of entry-level free-ride terrain in between (provided you're equipped with avalanche safety gear). Stay in one of the crisp, wood-panelled apartments at the Swisspeak Resort in Zinal to be close to the best of it.

Details Seven nights' self-catering for four from £974 (swisspeakresorts.com). Fly to Geneva

From far left: Niseko in Japan; Obertilliach in East Tyrol, Austria; alfresco dining in Innsbruck, Austria; Madonna di Campiglio in Italy

REVELSTOKE, CANADA

Getting to this far-flung British Columbian resort is half the fun because you can turn it into a road trip that starts in Calgary and ticks off some humdinger ski terrain en route – notably in Kicking Horse. But don't get too distracted. Further west, Revelstoke offers lift-serviced pistes and a vast heli-skiing reserve. Base yourself at the ski-in, ski-out Sutton Place Hotel and plan at least one day in a chopper (£1,008pp, selkirk-tangiers.com).

Details Seven nights' self-catering for four from £7,591, including flights and car hire (ski-i.com)

ALAGNA, ITALY

Wedge up against the 4,634m Monte Rosa, Alagna is the off-piste hub of Italy and offers very little groomed snow. So bring your A-game, book the Tre Alberi Liberi B&B, and hire a mountain guide (one day's guiding from £522 for four; alagnaskiguides.com). Pray for at least a day of calm weather too. That way you can upgrade to some heli-skiing (one day's heli-skiing from £1,262 for four, alagnaskiguides.com).

Details Five nights' B&B from £259pp (trealberiliberi.it). Fly to Milan