

The Railjet journey (left) from Zurich to St Anton am Arlberg in Austria tracks along the historic Arlberg Railway, through snowy valleys and over dramatic Alpine passes

For skiers looking to reduce their carbon footprint, travelling to the Alps has never been quicker or easier. Here are 12 ski resorts you can reach by train

Fast track to the slopes

Words: Daniel Elkan and Robert Thorne

Speeding effortlessly towards the slopes by train, you might wonder why you ever flew to a ski resort. On paper, it seems a short hop by plane; in reality, airport queues, cramped flights and long transfers can mean the journey eats up a whole day.

Measured door-to-door, daytime rail travel from London can be as fast as flying, while taking a sleeper train gets you extra time on the slopes. And with Alpine glaciers suffering significant loss of snow cover as global temperatures rise, rail travel constitutes the biggest emissions saving a skier can make.

An exciting recent development is the arrival of a dedicated sleeper train for skiers, the Travelski Night Express (TNE), launched last winter and with an additional new route for the coming one. Each carriage has couchette berths, but the train's crowning glory is its large, speakeasy-cafe-bar-restaurant, with retro decor, soft lighting and music – you get the romance of overnight rail travel with the potential for two extra days' skiing thrown in.

The TNE has two routes: one from Paris, the other from Amsterdam and Brussels, going out on Fridays and returning on Saturdays. Both routes access Moûtiers, Aime-la-Plagne and Bourg-Saint-Maurice – stations in the popular Tarentaise region of the French Alps. UK-based skiers can connect to the TNE by Eurostar to Paris or Brussels.

Overnight journeys to Austria are also possible, with a Eurostar to Paris or Brussels and then a Nightjet sleeper train to the Salzburgerland region; or, for Innsbruck and the Tirol, a Nightjet from Amsterdam and Cologne.

An array of resorts in France and beyond can be reached every day by taking the Eurostar to Paris Nord, getting a taxi or the RER for the short transfer to Gare de Lyon, and from there catching a fast TGV train south.

The most direct daytime option is Eurostar's flagship ski service, Eurostar Snow, which carries snowboards and skis free of charge on top of the usual luggage allowance. Skiers take it from London to Lille, then switch to an adjacent platform for the onward train to Bourg-Saint-Maurice.

Unfortunately, the final outbound departure for this coming season is on 20 February, leaving the ski industry frustrated. Eurostar's explanation is that it needs to "deploy rolling stock to where it best meets customer demand. Historically, March has not always been the strongest period for Eurostar Snow."

Iain Martin, founder of sustainable ski-travel campaign Ski Flight Free, says: "It's ridiculous for Eurostar to curtail their flagship service and blame lack of demand. If Eurostar worked effectively with the ski industry and ski tour operators to market the train, they could sell it out many times over."

Ski tour operators are certainly hungry for more train seats. "We're keen on promoting rail travel to the French Alps and we know clients want this," says Alison Willis, managing director of French ski specialist Peak Retreats. "While changing in Paris is straightforward, we know that direct services are an even more compelling alternative for those who usually fly."

It's a view echoed by ski tour operator Inghams, which has increased its range of rail-inclusive packages to include 75% of its French destinations, as well as some in Switzerland, Italy and Austria. "There's a genuine appetite among skiers to travel to the mountains by train," says head of sustainability Krissy Roe. Here are 12 resorts you can reach easily by rail.

St Anton am Arlberg, Austria

"The cradle of skiing", St Anton is consistently ranked among the best resorts in the world. While its slopes are known for being challenging and exhilarating (the mighty Valluga being the pinnacle), there are plenty of gentler areas, too. St Anton isn't just about skiing, either: this delightful village offers a host of activities, including swimming, bowling, indoor rock climbing and some of the best toboggan runs in the Alps. Completing its ski-hard, party-hard image, the resort is renowned for its après-ski, with a long list of celebrated terraces where visitors can dance to live music while knocking back schnapps.

By train: 10h 30min
Depart London St Pancras on the 07.31 Eurostar to Paris Gare du Nord; transfer to Paris Gare de Lyon and take the 12.22 TGV to Zurich; then the 16.40 Railjet to St Anton, arriving at 19.01.

Where to stay
Ski Solutions offers seven nights at the Hotel Post from £1,870pp half-board, including return rail travel.





Alpbach's Alpine coaster (above), a toboggan on rails. St Anton am Arlberg (left), also in Austria, is rated one of the best ski resorts in the world

Alpbach, Austria

Comprising antique, chocolate-box chalets, Alpbach is perhaps the prettiest village on this list, with fantastic skiing to boot. Despite its low altitude, the resort's north-facing slopes protect fresh powder, with the best off-piste and snowboarding terrain being on the far side of the Wiedersbergerhorn. Alpbach has gone to great lengths to preserve its rustic character. The main lifts are a short shuttle ride away from the village, and you'll find gorgeous Tyrolean dishes at mountain hut restaurants such as Böglalm, torchlit walking trails, horse-drawn carriage rides and an Alpine coaster (pictured above). Pick up a free Alpbachtal Card for access to local activities.

By train: 16h 49min
Depart London St Pancras on the 15.04 Eurostar to Brussels-Midi; then catch the 18.25 ICE to Cologne; get on the 21.45 Nightjet to Jenbach, arriving at 08.53. From there, it's 20 minutes by bus or taxi.

Where to stay
STC Ski offers the four-star Hotel Alphof, with doubles from £955pp for seven nights' half-board.

'A hidden gem': Sainte-Foy-Tarentaise in France



HARALD EISENBERGER; JOHANNES SAUTNER/SHOOTANDSTYLE.COM; ROGER CRACKNELL/GETTY IMAGES

Sainte-Foy-Tarentaise, France

Sainte-Foy, the smallest resort on this list, is highly regarded among ski writers as a "hidden gem". Just 25 minutes from Bourg-Saint-Maurice station, it has retained its cosy, quiet ambience, thanks to bigger nearby names drawing the crowds. Yet Sainte-Foy has truly excellent skiing: powder that lasts on its untracked, north-facing slopes, and fantastic provisions for children and beginners. Despite some development, the village has remained rustic, with traditional dishes served in 16th-century farmhouses and glasses of local rosé downed on sunny terraces. The quiet pine woods are perfect for snowshoeing, while adrenaline junkies can try their hand at paragliding high above the Tarentaise.

By train: 7h 58min
Eurostar Snow departs London St Pancras at 09.01 to Lille Europe; switch to the 11.35 Eurostar Snow continental train to Bourg-Saint-Maurice, arriving at 17.45. From there, it's 25 minutes by bus or taxi.

Where to stay
Premiere Neige offers seven nights' self-catering in the three-bedroom Panorama apartment from €600pp, based on six people sharing.

La Rosière, France

Commanding spectacular views of the Tarentaise valley, La Rosière is as beautiful as it is convenient. Its position on the Franco-Italian border allows skiers to choose between south- and north-facing slopes (in neighbouring La Thuile), while its two core villages are relaxed and compact, in classic chalet style. La Rosière has kept up an excellent pace of development, exemplified by the new high-speed Petit-Bois chair, ensuring a high-quality experience all-round. Sledging is popular, including the new sunset toboggan run from the top of the Les Eucherts lift. While fairly quiet, you'll find some decent après-ski and DJ sets at Le Comptoir, too.

By train: 7h 44min
Eurostar Snow departs London St Pancras at 09.01 to Lille Europe; switch to the 11.35 Eurostar Snow continental train to Bourg-Saint-Maurice, arriving at 17.45. From there, it's 40 minutes by bus or taxi to the resort centre.

Where to stay
Traditional chalet-hotel L'Accroche-Cœur has double rooms from €240 a night B&B.

Les Menuires, France

Part of the famous Three Valleys, Les Menuires is one of the best value-for-money resorts in the Alps: 600km of piste but without the high price tag of Méribel or Courchevel. Unsurprisingly, it's very popular with families who love the resort's early-access ski patrol lessons with ESF Club Piou-Piou. Dining is similarly family-oriented: expect hearty, locally sourced Savoyard meals at restaurants such as Chez Pépé Nicolas. Finally, in March, Les Menuires hosts a seasonal silly slalom, Complètement à la Masse, open to all ages.

By train: 13h 5min
Depart London St Pancras on the 17.31 Eurostar to Paris Gare du Nord; transfer to Paris Gare de Lyon and take the 22.52 Travelski Night Express to Moûtiers, arriving at 07.36. From there it's 45 minutes by bus or taxi.



Where to stay
Travelski offers seven nights at Hôtel Les Menuires Les Bruyères from £1,356pp B&B, including rail travel from Paris, transfers and seven-day ski pass. The Eurostar to Paris needs to be booked independently.

Montgenèvre, France

France's oldest ski resort, Montgenèvre was the stomping ground of the Parisian set before British skiers started arriving in the 90s, attracted by its bargain prices and easy access to Italy. Pleasantly old world and fully pedestrianised, "Monty" is the ideal family resort, with an extensive beginners' zone and affordable accommodation. Intermediates will enjoy the network of red and blue runs, while experts can plough through off-piste powder in the Gondrans bowl and off the Col de l'Alpet. Over the past year, the resort has extensively redeveloped its lift system to dramatically improve speed and ease – in time for hosting the 2030 Winter Olympics.

By train: 8h 20min
Depart London St Pancras on the 08.01 Eurostar to Paris Gare du Nord; transfer to Paris Gare de Lyon and take the 12.46 TGV to arrive at Oulx at 17.21. From there it's 35 minutes by bus or taxi.

Where to stay
Peak Retreats offers seven nights B&B in a suite in Hôtel Anova from £1,046pp, including rail travel, based on four sharing.

Peisey-Vallandry, France

Peisey-Vallandry occupies a prime position between Les Arcs and La Plagne, connecting to both via the immense Paradiski domain. Its sunny, west-facing piste offers something for everyone: a high-altitude beginners' area, picturesque intermediate tree runs to the Chapelle Notre-Dame, and two challenging blacks (plus some fairly gnarly freeriding). Thanks to its golden child, Olympic champion Éric Perrot, the resort has a strong reputation for cross-country, including a new Nordic centre, shooting range and 43km of high-quality trails. For something more unusual, try Summit Bike's electric snow-biking sessions or skijoring (putting on skis and being pulled across the snow by a horse).

By train: 7h 47min
Eurostar Snow departs London St Pancras at 09.01 to Lille Europe; switch to the 11.35 Eurostar Snow continental train to Landry, arriving at 17.34. From there, it's 25-35 minutes by bus or taxi.

Where to stay
The ski-in-ski-out, fully renovated Hotel Émeraude has doubles from €130 B&B.

Villars-sur-Ollon, Switzerland

Villars is one of French-speaking Switzerland's quieter and (relatively) affordable resorts, perfect for an active holiday. Its respectable 130km of piste spreads across neighbouring Les Diablerets and Gryon, providing something for all ages and abilities, as well as cross-country, touring and toboggan trails. Plus, there's a spectacular 1,500-metre off-piste descent from Les Diablerets glacier to the village. After a long day's skiing, book in for a spa massage at Les Bains de Villars or a dip in the hot springs at Lavey, before a night of music and malt whisky in the bar at Les Mazots du Clos.

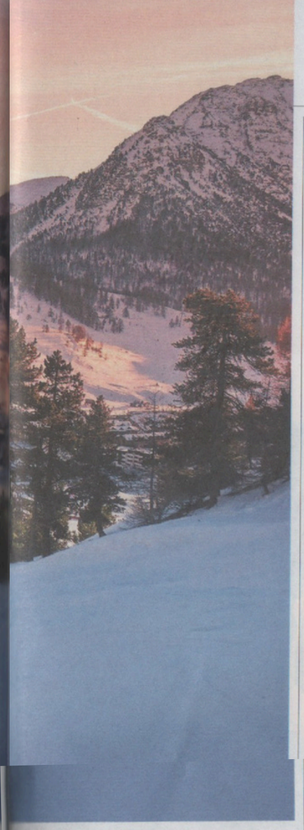
By train: 8h 49min
Depart London St Pancras on the 09.31 Eurostar to Paris Gare du Nord; transfer to Paris Gare de Lyon and take the 14.18 TGV to Geneva; then the 18.05 InterRegio train to Aigle, arriving at 19.20. From there, it's 20 minutes by bus or taxi.

Where to stay
Alpe Fleurie Hotel & Residence has double rooms from £193 B&B.





Peisey-Vallandry, in France, offers a wealth of activities, including skijoring (left). Les Bains de Villars (below) in Villars-sur-Ollon, Switzerland



The French resort of Montgenèvre is ideal for families

Grandvalira, Andorra

Andorra's duty-free status makes Grandvalira particularly attractive to visitors looking for shopping and high-quality, low-cost accommodation. Spread across three high-altitude villages, the resort is by far the largest in the Pyrenees, with 215km of piste best suited to intermediates. The village of Pas de la Casa has garnered a reputation for its après-ski, while further along, Soldeu is home to some swanky four- and five-star hotels. The ace up Grandvalira's sleeve, however, is its unique Catalan cuisine, quite unlike traditional Alpine fare, with an emphasis on flame-grilled meats and hearty vegetable stews.

By train: 15h 12min
Depart London St Pancras on the 17.31 Eurostar to Paris Gare du Nord; transfer to Paris Gare d'Austerlitz and take the 22.14 Intercités de Nuit to Andorre-L'Hospitalet, arriving at 09.43. From there, it's 35-55 minutes by bus or taxi.

Where to stay
Alpine Answers offers seven nights in a double room (with balcony) at the four-star Sport Hotel Village, from £1,030pp B&B.

Val Cenis, France

Val Cenis recently invested €25m in sustainable development and infrastructure, and the results are showing. The resort has successfully created a second "recycled" chairlift, Combe de l'Ours, using secondhand seats, pylons and cables to reduce new materials tenfold. A new panoramic treetop walkway and energy-efficient gondola will greet guests this winter, giving easy access to its 125km of high-quality, north-facing piste. As a year-round working community, the resort comprises several well-stocked villages with a wide variety of shops, restaurants and bars, as well as a bowling alley. Off-piste snowshoeing in the spectacular Vanoise national park is a popular activity; locals Thierry Bardagi and Hélène Degano offer a combined snowshoeing and mountain refuge package, with a cooked breakfast overlooking the mountain sunrise.

By train: 7h 47min
Depart London St Pancras on the 08.01 Eurostar to Paris Gare du Nord; change to Paris Gare de Lyon and take the 12.46 TGV to arrive at Modane at 16.48. From there, it's 30 minutes by bus or taxi.

Where to stay
Erna Low offers seven nights' self-catering in a one-bedroom apartment in Les Balcons de Val Cenis Village, from £132pp, based on four sharing, travel not included.

Saint-Gervais-les-Bains, France

Saint-Gervais has been a popular tourist destination since the middle ages, owing to its natural hot springs. Today, the resort's state-of-the-art thermal baths are still a huge draw for skiers seeking the ultimate wellness holiday. Combined with more than 455km of quiet piste and the best views of Mont Blanc in France, Saint-Gervais is a must-visit. In 2022, the resort opened a world-class indoor climbing facility, Le Topo. Dining, meanwhile, remains suitably traditional, including Savoyard platters, fondue and local craft beer. It's also perfect for holidaying by rail, with a station-to-village gondola, Le Valléen, plus the Mont-Blanc tramway, one of the highest in Europe.

By train: 8h 45min
Depart London St Pancras on the 09.31 Eurostar to Paris Gare du Nord; transfer to Paris Gare de Lyon and take the 14.18 TGV to Bellegarde; then the 17.15 TER to Saint-Gervais-les-Bains, arriving at 19.16. From there, it's five minutes by the Valléen gondola to the village centre.

Where to stay
Seven nights' self-catering in a two-bedroom apartment in Les Sources de Canopée in Saint-Gervais, with Peak Retreats, costs from £645pp, including rail travel, based on four sharing.

Sestriere, Italy

Europe's first purpose-built ski resort remains cheap and cheerful, catering best to families and young adults on a budget. Sestriere's slopes are some of the best in the Via Lattea domain (which includes France's Montgenèvre and neighbouring Sauze d'Oulx), ranging from sprawling nursery meadows to the steep Col de Sises Olympic giant slalom. Local amenities are well-organised and non-ski activities abundant, including a sizable leisure centre and swimming pool, open-air ice rink and dog-sledding. Après-ski is also surprisingly lively for a family-focused resort, with several popular pubs in the centre of town, alongside a good, old-fashioned *discoteca*, Tabata.

By train: 8h 20min
Depart London St Pancras on the 08.01 Eurostar to Paris Gare du Nord; transfer to Paris Gare de Lyon and take the 12.46 TGV to arrive at Oulx at 17.21. From there, it's 35 minutes by bus or taxi.

Where to stay
Inghams offers seven nights at Grand Hotel Sestriere, from £1,134pp, including rail travel and transfers.

Accommodation prices are for the 2026/27 season and were correct at the time of publication



Le Topo, a climbing facility in Saint-Gervais-les-Bains, France

Readers' travel tips
Small ski resorts

Winning tip

Budget skiing in Bavaria
Oberstdorf in Germany continues to be my go-to for a quiet and restorative ski week away. There are 80 miles of pistes for all levels, stacks of Bavarian restaurants, a wide variety of mountain huts, plenty of hotels for all budgets and family sizes, and the novelty of skiing into and out of Austria daily. Neuschwanstein Castle is a short hop away for a day off. Unbeatable value. **Daniel Stephens**

Family fun in the Austrian Tirol
Our family of four loved **St Johann in Tirol**. It's a comfortable and traditional Austrian village with Christmas markets, picturesque churches and gorgeous frozen valley walks – with little marmosets and weasels to look out for along the river. Wherever you stay, you can walk to a gondola. It's really near to Salzburg airport too. In Austria, kids get all-day lessons, which is a big bonus and means parents can kick back or wander around and have a gluhwein or two. Prices were very reasonable, given we were there in the Christmas holidays. **Nick**

Off-piste heaven in Norway
About 30 miles from Ålesund, **Strandafjellet** has excellent pistes, as well as some of the best off-piste skiing in Norway. Strap on a pair of *randonnée* skis and you can use the lifts to access spectacular backcountry skiing in the Sunnmøre Alps. The views down to the fjord make this truly special. Pistes are illuminated for evening skiing. **Graham**

Les Trois Vallées charmer
Saint-Martin-de-Belleville, in the French Alps, is low at about 1,500 metres, so go mid season. The single run ends smack in the centre of the village, which has retained its historical features along with small, friendly bars and places to eat. But it is also part of Les Trois Vallées, the largest interconnected ski area in the world – absolutely amazing from one small but beautiful village. There are plenty of choices for accommodation, both expensive and cheap. **Russell Walker**

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