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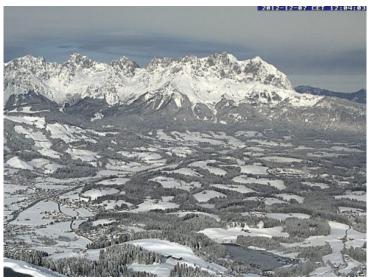
Latest snow report - Friday 7 December 2012

Huge snowfalls are again underway across the north-western Alps today where snow depths are fast approaching record levels for the time of year. Particular care is needed in these regions this weekend with the avalanche risk likely to hit the maximum 5/5. Most other parts of the Alps are also above par and there is no sign of winter easing its grip with more snow forecast next week.

Austria

The build-up to the main season has been steady rather than spectacular for most Austrian resorts, but things are now gathering pace. Lech (75/100cm) had to push back its opening date until 6 December but now has masses of snow and is skiing superbly at all levels. 18 of its 23 lifts are open today with 35/79 open in the Arlberg region (that includes **St Anton**).

Obertauern (50/80cm) is another resort that looked a bit threadbare until recently but is now vastly improved with 21 of its 26 lifts now open. Glaciers aside, however, the best skiing in Austria right now is in Ischgl (170km of pistes, 85cm upper base) and **Obergurgl** (80km, 157cm). Light snow is expected in most Austrian resorts over the next 48hrs with some heavier falls likely next week. It will also remain very cold.



The weather is more clement in the eastern Alps (including Kitzbühel, pictured) today

France

Many resorts in the northern French Alps have seen over 1 metre of snow this week and it's dumping again today. Generally speaking, southern French resorts have seen less snow but here too cover is very impressive for the time of year.

Alpe d'Huez (106/220cm) opened yesterday and has 15 pistes available today (there would be more open if not for the bad weather today). Val d'Isère/Tignes (85/140cm) and Val Thorens (135/200cm) are also already open and more big names are due to join them tomorrow including M'eribel(70/225cm) and ${\bf Courchevel}$ (92/259cm). Countless smaller resorts are also planning to open this weekend to take advantage of the incredible early snow, but avalanche danger will be very high so off-piste skiing is not recommended.





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Got a burning question about weather or snow conditions in the Alps?

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It's snowing heavily across most of the French Alps today, including Val d'Isère (pictured) - www.valdisere.com

Italy

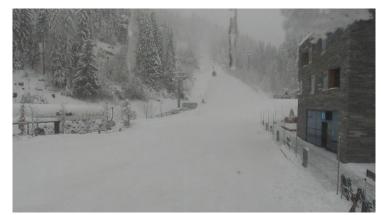
Generally speaking Italian resorts have missed the heaviest of the snow this week, but this has been great news for anyone lucky enough to be skiing here as there has been little of the disruption from avalanche danger that we have seen further north. The Dolomite resort of **Alta Badia** (35/95cm) opened last weekend and offers 48km of perfectly groomed pistes. **Livigno** (22/154cm) is also in excellent condition with 22 lifts running today whilst **Cervinia** (75/260cm) continues to lead the way further west even if bad weather is hampering the operation at altitude today. **Courmayeur** opens again tomorrow and offers a lower, more sheltered alternative.



Some light snow is expected in the Dolomites later today - www.funiviecampiglio.it

Switzerland

All Swiss resorts have seen snow this week, the heaviest of which has fallen in the western half of the country. **Verbier** (50/140cm) is only partially open but has masses of snow at all levels with more falling today. **Zermatt** (65/125cm) is also well above par for the time of year with skiing now possible on all 3 main mountains (though the Klein Matterhorn is closed today due to bad weather). **Davos** (25/75cm), **Engelberg** (35/170cm) and **St Moritz** (15/110cm) are just three of many alternatives further east with more resorts opening all the time.



It's snowing in Laax today, but not as heavily as further west - www.laax.com

Rest of Europe

All Andorran resorts are now up and running. There isn't nearly as much snow as in most of the Alps but there is fresh snow and conditions are still good for the time of year with 70cm on the upper slopes of **Arcalis** and **Soldeu**. The best skiing in Scandinavia is still in Norway where over half of **Hemsedal**'s 54 pistes are open on a 55cm upper base. It is bitterly cold however, just as it is in Sweden's premier resort, **Åre**, where only 4 runs are open on a 24cm base. More terrain is promised here soon.

A special mention to Scotland, where a lot of snow has been falling, and snow cover is excellent for the time of year. **Cairngorm** (25/65cm) and **Glencoe** (15/45cm) have already opened this season, and (weather permitting) **Nevis Range** hopes to join them this weekend.



The snow is building up nicely in Glencoe (Scotland) - www.glencoemountain.com

USA

Most Colorado resorts have seen a dusting of snow but much more is needed. **Vail** (46cm mid-mountain) and **Aspen** (56cm) are below par for the time of year and still reliant on artificial help. The good news here, however, is that more significant snow is expected this weekend. No such worries for Californian resorts which have seen plenty of snow recently. **Mammoth** continues to lead the way with 175cm of settled snow on its upper slopes and promises to be 100% today (Friday).

Canada

Western Canada continues to offer excellent conditions with most major resorts now open. It's snowing again in **Whistler** where the mid-mountain base is now a very impressive 168cm. **Banff/Lake Louise** have 127cm on their upper slopes and are also in great shape - as are **Fernie** (108cm), **Big White** (113cm) and **Revelstoke** (154cm) which all opened last weekend.

Next full snow report on Wednesday 12 December, but see <u>Today in the Alps</u> for daily updates