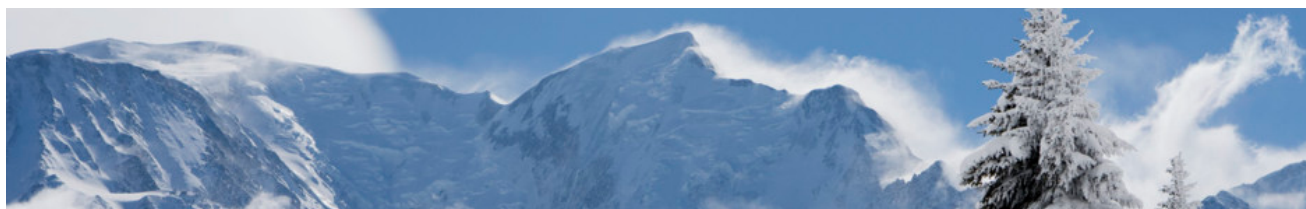




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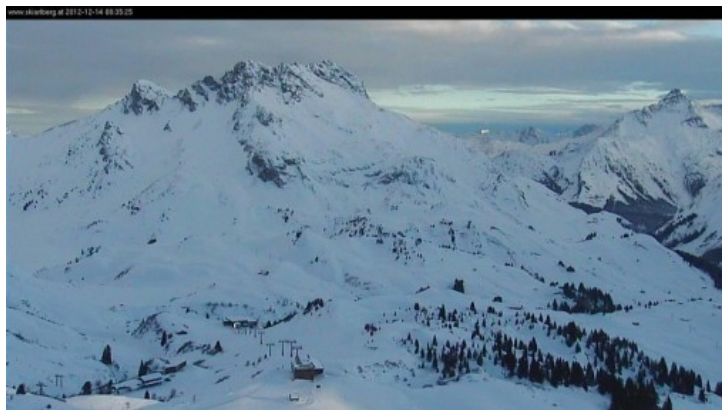
Snow report - Friday 14 December 2012

Early season conditions are exceptional with near record snow depths for the time of year in the northern French Alps. Most of Switzerland (away from the far south-east) also has masses of snow, as does (more recently) western Austria. Elsewhere, snow cover is less exceptional but still generally good, helped by the recent cold. However, the weather is now turning milder as Atlantic air sweeps in from the west. This will bring further snow for some over the next few days, but at higher altitudes than we have been used to.

Is this the best ever start to the ski season? See our [blog](#).

Austria

There has been lots of fresh snow in western Austria this week, especially in the Vorarlberg where **Lech** now reports 100-130cm (depending on altitude). **Obergurgl** (78-185cm) and **Ischgl** (40-100cm) also have plenty of snow, the latter continuing to offer the greatest extent of skiing in the country (190km). It's not only the high resorts that are in good shape though - **Kitzbühel** (50-95cm) is one of just dozens of low-lying villages that have been skiing superbly this week, though lower down the snow may soften up a little with the milder weather expected this weekend.



It's still bright above Lech this morning thanks to the Foehn - www.skiarlb.org

France

Snow depths are excellent in the French Alps – exceptional in the north with 150/230cm for **Val Thorens** and an incredible 75/260cm for **La Clusaz** which opens properly this weekend. Southern resorts are also in good shape with heavy overnight snow for **Isola 2000** (90/150cm) and **Serre Chevalier** (60/190cm), opening for the season on Saturday. Further snow is expected at times over the next few days, but it's milder than of late so there will be also be some rain lower down.

Italy

Italian resorts have missed the heaviest of the snow in the last couple of weeks but depths are still good for the time of year, especially in the west. Most resorts should also see a modest top up in the next day or two, particularly at altitude. **La Thuile** (40/180cm) might be a good choice this weekend given the iffy weather (lots of trees) with good skiing also available further east in **Madonna di Campiglio** (40-80cm).

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8h

Italian village breaks world 24hr snowfall record!

[#snow](http://tinyurl.com/o4u6lmb)

pic.twitter.com/JqVV9dRD5C

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10h

Colder with some snow in the far eastern Alps. Mostly fine elsewhere.

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snow-wise
SKI HOLIDAY EXPERTS

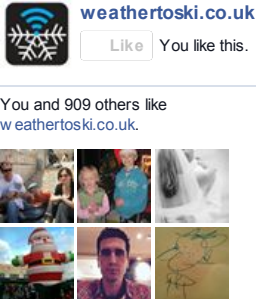
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Still plenty of snow in Sestriere with more forecast today - www.vialattea.it

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Switzerland

The resorts of western and northern Switzerland have masses of snow right now, none more so than **Engelberg** where there is an incredible 110cm in the village and 250cm up on the glacier. The Jungfrau region (**Wengen**, **Grindelwald**, **Mürren**) is also open, with good cover at all levels and over 150cm up top. In the far south-east of Switzerland, **St Moritz** (15/110cm) has missed most of the recent snow but is still in decent condition for the time of year. Most places will see some new snow over the next few days, at least at altitude, but it is milder so rain is also a threat lower down.



Still bright at Rigi near Lucerne (northern Swiss Alps), again thanks to the Foehn wind - www.rigi.ch

Rest of Europe

Andorran resorts are enjoying decent early conditions with most lifts open in the Grandvalira region (**Soldeu/Pas de La Casa**) where the snow is 40/80cm deep depending on altitude. Over in Sweden, there's fresh snow at last in **Åre**, where the base is now 34cm and 12 runs are open. The best conditions in Scandinavia, however, remain in **Hemsedal**, Norway with 27 runs and 60cm up top.

The Bulgarian ski season is now underway with fresh snow in **Bansko** (25/70cm, 4 runs open), but a special mention goes to Scotland where 4 out of 5 resorts are open – a very rare event indeed this early in the season. **Cairngorm** has 35/75cm of settled snow, but there is also good cover at the **Lecht**, **Glencoe**, and **Nevis Range**. Only **Glenshee** remains closed to date but they also hope to open soon.



Plenty of early snow in Scotland. This is the Lecht - www.lecht.co.uk

USA

Recent snowfalls have greatly improved conditions in Colorado but more snow is needed to get base levels up to where they should be for this time of year.

Winter Park has 29 trails open on a 79cm upper-mountain base, **Breckenridge** has 13 on just 46cm. Further north, **Jackson Hole** (Wyoming) has fared better so far this season and now has 73 trails open and 178cm up top. However, the greatest extent of skiing in the US right now remains in **Mammoth** where over 150 trails are open, there's fresh snow and the snow pack is over 2m deep.

Canada

The excellent early season conditions continue across western Canada where **Whistler** has 158cm of snow mid -mountain with more forecast in the next few days. Further inland most major resorts are also open and in great shape including **Revelstoke** (157cm upper mountain) and **Banff/Lake Louise** (120cm).



Great early season conditions continue in Lake Louise - www.skilouise.com

Next full snow report on Wednesday 19 December, but see [Today in the Alps](#) for daily updates