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Snow report

Updated: 6pm Monday 29 December 2014

This week's snow report is a largely positive one with recent snowfalls improving the situation in most Alpine resorts. The big story was Saturday's storm which dumped 25-40cm of snow at 1200m across the northern French and western Swiss Alps (e.g. **Val d'Isère, Avoriaz, Verbier**) and 40-70cm at 2000m.

The eastern Swiss and Austria Alps saw less intense precipitation but have benefited from several smaller snowfalls, allowing even the lowest resorts top to bottom cover, even if it is still relatively thin. With some exceptions, Italian resorts have seen the least snow over the last few days but here too there is plenty of good skiing to be found, especially at altitude.

A little word of caution - while there is no doubt that conditions are, generally speaking, much better than they were before Christmas, snow depths remain (with some exceptions) modest for the time of year and much more snow is still needed at lower elevations to ensure a really solid base for the rest of the season.

This week will start bitterly cold with further (mostly light) flurries across some northern and eastern parts of the Alps. However, most places will remain dry with the best of any sunshine in the southern Alps. The weather should settle down everywhere as the week progresses with increasing amounts of sunshine and recovering temperatures.

There have also been big snowfalls elsewhere, notably in the Pyrenees and western USA (see our main report)...

Austria

Austria may have missed the heaviest of the weekend dumps but continues to offer improving conditions thanks to several smaller snowfalls over the last few days. This combined with a massive drop in temperatures means that dozens of low-lying resorts such as **Kitzbühel** (10/45cm) and **Söll** (15/35cm) now at least look the part, even if their base depths remain extremely modest.


One area that has seen more snow than most is the Arlberg, where **Lech** (60/80cm) and **St Anton** (30/115cm) were threadbare in the run up to Christmas, but have improved beyond recognition with the majority of their ski area now open.




Kitzbühel is starting to look the part, even if snow depths remain relatively modest - Photo: salsa.at


France

Conditions have greatly improved since we last reported thanks to the weekend's big snowfalls. Among the most relieved resorts will be those in the Haute-Savoie, where high profile **Morzine** (40/70cm) and **Megève** (30/50cm) remained closed


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through Christmas, but have now managed to open a good proportion of their runs.

The best skiing, however, remains in the higher resorts such as **Val Thorens** (100/140cm) where all 31 lifts are in operation, and **Val d'Isère** (60/100cm) where after a slow start to the season around 70% of its pistes are now open.



Val d'Isère is getting close to being fully operational following the recent heavy snowfall - Photo: valdisere.com

Italy

Generally speaking, Italian resorts missed the heaviest of the weekend snow though conditions remain good at altitude thanks to the storms back in November. **Cervinia** (25/160cm) and nearby **Monterosa Ski** (5/200cm) are skiing as well as anywhere right now, even if they only saw a few cm of new snow over the weekend.

Further east there is also good skiing in the likes of **Livigno** (30/130cm) and **Passo Tonale** (40/350cm), both of which offer high altitude terrain but lower down the situation is not quite so convincing. Thanks to artificial help there are plenty of pistes open in **Selva di Val Gardena** (5/45cm), for example, but below 2000m natural cover remains wafer thin.



Looking more wintry in Courmayeur following the weekend's snowfalls, but cover is still thin - Photo: regione.vda.it

Switzerland

For much of the early season period the best conditions were in the higher resorts of the southern Swiss Alps. However, with the heaviest of the recent snow in the north and west – and falling to low altitudes – the situation has evened itself out somewhat.

In the west, **Verbier** (50/130cm) is one big name that did particularly well from the weekend's storm with 50 to 70cm of new snow falling across the **4 Valleys** area. Further north, **Engelberg** (60/250cm) is another that can now boast excellent top to bottom cover.

In the southern Swiss Alps, **Saas-Fee** (35/185cm) saw lighter falls, but remains in top shape thanks to the deep upper base laid down in November.



Gorgeous wintry scenes in the Swiss Graubünden this morning. This is Fanas - Photo: fanas.ch

Rest of Europe

The Pyrenees also saw big snowfalls over the weekend, 50cm + in places, which has greatly improved skiing prospects in France, Spain and Andorra. **Arcalis** in Andorra now has 85/130cm of settled snow depending on altitude, **Baqueira Beret** in Spain has 75/150cm.

Good skiing can also be found in Scandinavia with an 80cm upper mountain base in **Hemsedal** (Norway), and a 50cm upper base for both **Levi** (Finland) and **Åre** (Sweden).

Bulgarian resorts got off to a slow start to the season but are also improving, with fresh snow in **Borovets** where the base is 40/50cm depending on altitude.



Heavy weekend snowfall for many Pyreneean resorts too. This is Luchon-Superbagnères - Photo: luchon.com

USA

The American Rockies have seen lots of new snow in the second half of December – 157cm of the stuff in the last two weeks claims **Vail**, where the settled mid-mountain base is now 122cm.

Utah and Wyoming are also wallowing in the white stuff with 74cm of new snow since our last report in **Alta** (196cm mid-mountain base) and 68cm falling in **Jackson Hole** (178cm upper mountain base).

By contrast, there has been little or no new snow in California in recent days, but there is still plenty of good piste skiing on offer in **Mammoth**, where the base is 76/122cm depending on altitude.



Over a metre and half of new snow in Vail since 14 December - Photo: facebook.com/vailmtn

Canada

Most lifts are open in **Whistler** (123cm mid-mountain) where there has been 5cm of new snow in the last 48 hours, but the weather has now settled down for the foreseeable future.

Further east, the **Banff/Lake Louise** area is also fully open with good early season conditions and settled snow depths of around 100cm at altitude.

Next full snow report will be on Thursday 1 January 2015, but see [Today in the Alps](#) for daily updates