



[Latest snow report](#)

[Latest snow forecast](#)

[Season progress report](#)

[Who got the most snow 2014-15?](#)

[Who got the most snow 2014-15 - N America](#)

[The snow quality equation](#)

[What is the Foehn?](#)

[Avoiding rain](#)

[Avalanche awareness](#)

[Who got the most snow 2013-14?](#)

[Who got the most snow 2013-14 - N. America](#)

[Who got the most snow 2012-13?](#)

[Who got the most snow 2012-13 - N. America](#)

[The winter of 2012-13 in pictures](#)

[Archive](#)

[2015-16](#)

[2014-15](#)

[2013-14](#)

[2012-13](#)

Snow report

Updated: 5.40pm Thursday 1 January 2015

There has been a lot going on in the Alps over the last week or so but, generally speaking, this week's snow report is a favourable one.

First we had the "big storm" which dumped 40-70cm of snow across the western Alps last weekend, paralysing many road networks on the busiest transfer day of the season.

That was followed by four to five days of near continuous snow in the north-eastern Alps which led to accumulations of 1m or more in some parts of north-eastern Switzerland, northern Austria and southern Germany.

The Italian resorts have largely missed out, but it has been cold which has at least allowed their considerable snow-making capabilities to be deployed at full capacity.

In the short-term then the best snow is now in the northern half of the Austrian Alps (e.g. **Lech, Lermoos, Seefeld, Söll**), the north-eastern Swiss Alps (e.g. **Braunwald, Flumserberg**), and Bavaria (e.g. **Oberstdorf, Garmisch**).

The areas struggling most are the lower Italian resorts (e.g. **Courmayeur, Foppolo, Selva**) though even here there is some reasonable piste skiing thanks to artificial help.

Most other regions, including the French and western Swiss Alps, are skiing well (on-piste at least) but it is important to note that snow depths are still (in most cases) behind where they should be at this time of year.

Across the pond the news is also generally good...

Austria

The best conditions are now in the northern Austrian Alps (Vorarlberg, North Tirol, Salzburgerland, Upper Austria) thanks to four days of more or less continuous snow that only ended on Wednesday.

Low-lying **Söll** now has consolidated base depths of 65/100cm depending on altitude, while **Lech** has 75/115cm. However, snow depths quickly become more modest the further south you go with just 10/35cm for **Mayrhofen**, and 20/40cm for **Bad Kleinkirchheim**.

Some snow is expected this weekend, heaviest again in the north.



Fabulous conditions in the Austrian Vorarlberg right now. This is Gaschurn (Montafon) - Photo: hotel-nova.com

France

Thanks to last weekend's big dump, on piste-conditions in France are pretty good right now, even if snow depths are generally still a bit below where they should

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be for the time of year. Off-piste is a different story – often dangerous and/or limited due to relatively modest cover, especially lower down.

High altitude **Val d'Isère** has 60/100cm of settled snow depending on altitude, while **Les Gets** has 40/70cm.

Some snow is expected in places this weekend but, with milder air in the mix, there is also the risk of rain for a time lower down.



Great piste skiing in Tignes/Val d'Isère, but snow depths are still a little below where they should be for this time of year - Photo: tignes.net

Italy

Having led the way for much of the early/pre-season period, Italian resorts are now, on balance, probably the least snowy of the four main Alpine countries. That said, there is still a lot of good skiing around, especially at altitude in the likes of **Cervinia** (45/160cm), **Monterosa Ski** (5/200cm) and **Livigno** (28/127cm).

Lower down snow depths are very modest, but the Italians have some of the best snow-making facilities in the world so base depths of 5/45cm in **Selva** (Dolomites) are perfectly adequate for it to open most of its pistes.

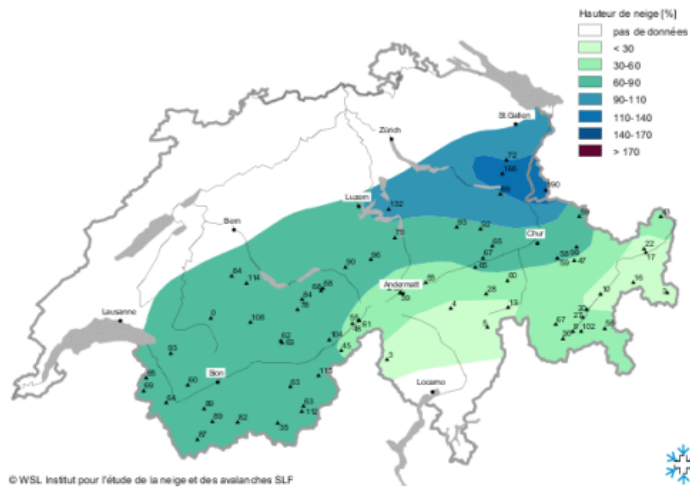
A little snow is likely in places over the weekend, but the lion's share will again be on the northern side of the Alps.



Decent piste skiing in Madonna di Campiglio, but snow depths in the Dolomites are generally very modest - Photo: funiviecampiglio.it

Switzerland

The freshest snow in Switzerland right now is in the lesser known resorts of the north-east, such as **Unterwasser** near Liechtenstein where there is now 130cm of consolidated snow up top.

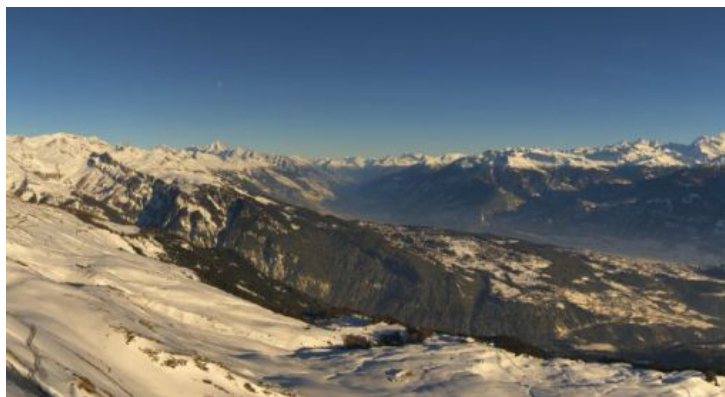


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Snow depths in Switzerland expressed as a percentage of their long term average. Note that only the north-east is above normal right now - Image: slf.ch

Elsewhere there is still some excellent skiing to be had (especially on-piste), but snow depths in the likes of **Verbier** (40/92cm) and **Zermatt** (6/95cm) are below where they should be for early January.

Some snow is expected in most parts this weekend but it will turn milder for time, with rain also a risk at lower altitudes, especially in the north and west.



Looking towards Crans Montana from Anzère today (Thursday) - Photo: anzere.ch

Rest of Europe

The Pyrenees saw big snowfalls last weekend, especially at altitude. Andorra's **Pas de La Casa** (80/120cm) and Spain's **Baqueira Beret** (75/150cm) are skiing as well as anywhere with respectable depths for the time of year.

New snow has improved conditions in Bulgaria after a sluggish start, with 10/110cm of settled snow in **Bansko** depending on altitude.

There is also good skiing in Scandinavia with base depths of 70/75cm in **Hemsedal** (Norway) and 30/45cm in **Åre** (Sweden).

Scottish resorts have suffered a recent thaw, and it remains to be seen how much will be open when the current stormy weather settles down.



New snow has improved conditions in Bulgaria. This is Borovets - Photo: bulgaria-hotels.com

USA

Most big-name Colorado resorts are in excellent shape following significant snowfalls over the festive period. **Vail** has 119cm snow packed down at altitude, while **Breckenridge** has 132cm.

Jackson Hole (178cm upper base) in Wyoming and **Snowbird** (196cm upper base) in Utah are also in great condition.



Excellent conditions in Breckenridge, Colorado - Photo: breckenridge.com

Canada

Whistler hasn't seen much new snow in recent days but on-piste at least conditions are still good with 119cm of settled snow mid-mountain.

It's a similar story further east in the **Banff/Lake Louise** area where most runs are open and base depths are close to 1m both high and low.

Next full snow report will be on Monday 5 January 2015, but see [Today in the Alps](#) for daily updates