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Snow report

Updated: Friday 20 December 2013

Some resorts woke up to significant quantities of fresh snow today, but for many parts of the Alps there was little or no snow to speak of and the "drought" continues.

The resorts that have done best from this storm are those of the southern French and western Italian Alps. Elsewhere it has been much more hit and miss, mostly miss for large parts of Switzerland and virtually all of Austria, where modest cover and hard-packed pistes are still the order of the day.

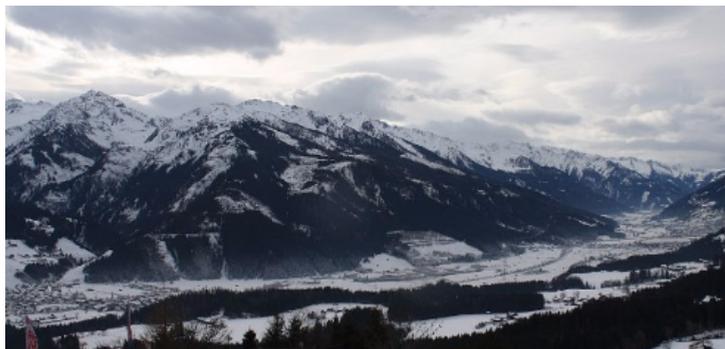
Another storm is to hit the Alps by the middle of next week but, as things stand, it is again the southern Alps that are likely to do best. Watch this space...

Austria

Austrian resorts have missed out on most of the recent snow, with only a few insignificant flurries here and there. This means that runs remain predominantly hard-packed with few if any off-piste opportunities.

Glaciers aside the best cover is probably in **Obertauern** right now (100/140cm) though lower resorts such as **Ellmau** (30/50cm) and **Kitzbühel** (15/70cm) are skiable to resort, despite their modest bases.

One thing is clear - more snow would be welcome in all Austrian resorts - but they will have to wait until after Christmas (at the very least) before they see anything significant.



Pass Thurn near Kitzbühel, Austria – Photo: kitz.net

France

After a long wait, most French resorts have seen some fresh snow in the last 24 hours, but in hugely varying quantities. The heaviest snow has been in the southern French Alps with 35cm reported in **Serre-Chevalier** and 40cm+ confirmed by Météo France on the higher slopes of **Orcières-Merlette** (30/70cm settled snow). This will transform the piste skiing in these resorts, but much more is needed before any serious off-piste opportunities become available.

The far northern French Alps have also done well with 30cm of new snow at 2000m in the Portes du Soleil, but many Tarentaise resorts (e.g. **Val d'Isère** – 40/83cm) have had little more than a dusting – perhaps 10-15cm max. at altitude.

For most big name resorts then, not much has changed. The pistes may be fresher and the cover is still reasonable above 2000m. The lower slopes of the likes of **Megève** (30-60cm) and **Morzine** (10-40cm), however, are still very precarious and more snow would be very welcome.

A new storm is forecast around and just after Christmas, but at this stage is again looks likely to favour the southern Alps.

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Fresh snow for parts of the Alps this morning:
tinyurl.com/d9cz7z2



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Avoriaz, France – Photo: avoriaz.com

Italy

Western Italian resorts have done exceptionally well from the latest storm, including **Sestriere** (70/120cm), **Courmayeur** (40/70cm) and **Cervinia** (50/140cm), where 35cm of new snow has fallen at resort level and 50cm up top. These resorts will now be among the best bets over the Christmas period.

Some snow has also fallen further east, but in increasingly variable quantities. **Selva** (10/40cm), for example, is still relying on its (superb) snow-making capabilities and more snow would be welcome.

The good news for all Italian resorts is that heavy snow is on the cards around the middle of next week.



Sestriere, Italy – Photo: sestriere.it

Switzerland

Most Swiss resorts have missed the heaviest of the recent snow with just a few cm here and there. One exception to this is **Zermatt** (40/200cm) where although only 5cm fell in town, much more fell up in the border areas with Italy and the skiing is excellent right now.

Elsewhere in Switzerland the snow cover is generally below par for the time of year with lots of hard-packed pistes. Typical of these conditions are **Klosters** and **Wengen** which have about 15cm of settled snow lower down and 50cm up top with much more needed to really open up any serious off-piste opportunities.

The weather will turn unsettled again by the middle of next week, but it remains to be seen just how much snow Swiss resorts will get as it is the southern Alps that look most favoured at this stage.



Findeln, Zermatt, Switzerland - Photo: apartment-zermatt.ch

Rest of Europe

Fresh snow has fallen in the Pyrenees where snow depths remain impressive in the run up to Christmas. **La Mongie** (70/140cm) has up to 30cm of fresh snow and is just one of many resorts skiing superbly right now.

Snow depths are more modest in Scandinavia but fresh snow is expected in most resorts in the run up to Christmas, including in **Hemsedal** where the upper depths are around 50cm.



La Mongie, France - Photo: grand-tourmalet.com

USA

It's been a quiet couple of weeks for most western US resorts, but there is still plenty of good skiing to be found in Colorado with fresh snow forecast this weekend. Currently the most impressive depths are in the south and west of the state - e.g. **Aspen** (122cm upper slopes).

Further north in Wyoming, snow depths are about where they should be for late December in **Jackson Hole**, (111cm upper mountain) with snow also forecast over the next few days.

Over in California, however, more snow is badly needed and there is no sign of any serious dumps any time soon. **Mammoth** has a selection of runs open thanks to artificial help, but off-piste opportunities are very limited for the time being.

Canada

The most impressive snow depths are in Alberta and interior BC where the likes of **Fernie** (155cm upper slopes) and Kicking Horse (117cm upper slopes) are in good shape right now.

Further west, cover is on the thin side in **Whistler** (88cm upper mountain) for late December and, although there is some reasonable piste skiing in places, more snow would be very welcome.



Lake Louise, Alberta – Photo: skilouise.com

Next full snow report will be on Thursday 26 December 2013, but see [Today in the Alps](#) for daily updates