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Snow report

Updated: Thursday 12 December 2013

After the euphoria of late November, conditions across the Alps are much closer to average for mid-December. The problem we have at the moment is that a huge area of high pressure is stuck across western Europe and doesn't look like shifting any time soon. This means that the Alps are experiencing (almost) wall to wall sunshine and relatively mild temperatures at altitude, with no significant snow in the forecast for at least a week.

It's not all doom and gloom, not by any means, and there is still plenty of excellent piste-skiing to be had, particularly at altitude (try telling anyone skiing in **Val d'Isère** or **Zermatt** that there's anything wrong right now). For many low resorts, however, these are anxious times in the run up to Christmas – particularly given the dry looking forecast.

Don't forget though, things can change very quickly and although there is no chance of any significant snow in the immediate future it is difficult to look much past 7 days with any degree of certainty.

Austria

Austrian resorts have seen the most recent fresh snow (some parts of the eastern Austrian Alps had 40cm+ last weekend) and are generally in good condition.

Glaciers aside, two resorts that stand out right now are **Obertauern** (100/140cm) where all 26 lifts are open and **Obergurgl** (70/165cm) both of which have excellent cover and superb on-piste skiing.

Lower down, the cover is thinner but there is still decent (if hard-packed) skiing to be had in the likes of **Ellmau** (10/50cm) and **Kitzbühel** (10/70cm). The settled weather looks set to continue for the foreseeable future. Fog may plague some of the lower valleys at times, but at altitude it looks like wall to wall sunshine for some time to come.



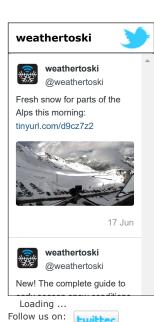
Zell-am-See, Austria – Photo: foto-webcam.eu

France

Snow conditions are generally still good in the high resorts of the northern Alps – more variable at lower altitude and in the southern Alps.

The best skiing right now is in the likes of **Val d'Isère**/ **Tignes** (40/140cm), **Val Thorens** (64/105cm), **Courchevel** (34/80cm)and **Les 2 Alpes** (15/170cm) all of which have good cover and are skiing well on-piste. Off-piste however, opportunities are more limited and more snow would be welcome.

More snow is also needed in lower villages such as **Megève** and **Les Gets** which are yet to open. Both these resorts still have reasonable cover up top, but are less than convincing lower down - and with no new snow in the medium term forecast will be feeling the pressure in the run up to Christmas.



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E: info@weathertoski.co.uk

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Val d'Isère, France - Photo: valdisere.com

Italy

Snow conditions are variable across the Italian Alps. Cervinia (40/185cm) is the outstanding resort right now offering both the best snow and (with its links to Zermatt) the greatest extent of skiing.

Good piste skiing can also be found in **Sestriere** (60/100cm) and **Champoluc** (50/110cm) in the Monterosa region.

Further east, snow conditions are more erratic – **Selva** (10/40cm) for one could certainly do with more snow, but even here most of the pistes are open with a mixture of natural and mad-made snow. It's a mostly sunny forecast for all Italian resorts over the next few days.



Kronplatz, Italy - Photo: kronplatz.com

Switzerland

Like everywhere else in the Alps there is plenty of good piste skiing to be found at altitude, but there is limited fun to be had off-piste and many low altitude resorts are in dire need of more snow.

Zermatt (40/190cm) is our pick of the resorts right now, but Saas-Fee (25/260cm), Verbier (20/90cm), Andermatt (35/200cm) and Engelberg (25/175cm) are also in pretty good nick given the time of year.

Little or no snow is expected over the next week at least.



Villars, Switzerland - Photo: villars.ch

Rest of Europe

The best skiing in Europe right now is in the Pyrenees thanks to massive late $% \left\{ 1,2,\ldots ,n\right\}$ November snowfalls. The powder has long been tracked out in Andorra, but snow cover in the principality is exceptional for mid-December (90/160cm in Soldeu for example) and on-piste at least conditions are excellent.

Most resorts in Scandinavia are also now partially open. **Hemsedal** (28/60cm) is typical of conditions in Norway where depths are modest but most pistes are skiing well.

Scotland is completely out of action at the moment due to the mild weather over the UK.



Les Angles, France - Photo: lesangles.com

USA

Practically all western US resorts are in excellent shape at the moment thanks to a succession of snow storms in recent days. $\,$

Telluride (109cm mid-mountain) is as good as anywhere in Colorado, but **Jackson Hole**, Wyoming (116cm) and **Mammoth**, California (76cm) are also in great shape and the overall picture is a much happier one than this time last year.

Canada

Conditions are excellent across the western Canadian resorts, both in coastal areas and in the interior.

Some of the most impressive snow depths are in **Fernie** (146cm upper mountain) and **Revelstoke** (104cm) but "coastal" BC resorts such as **Whistler** (79cm) are also skiing well. Here the off-piste is largely tracked out, but further moderate snowfalls are expected this weekend.



Sun Peaks, British Columbia – Photo: sunpeaksresort.com

Next full snow report will be on Friday 20 December 2013, but see <u>Today in the Alps</u> for daily updates