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Latest snow report

Updated: 12.30pm Monday 7 December 2015

Snow conditions in the Alps are less than ideal as we move to within 12 days of Christmas week, the beginning of the high season period.

That's not to say that there isn't some good piste skiing around, most notably at altitude across the north-western half of the Alps. However, even here, conditions have been deteriorating in the warmer weather.

In this region, the best snow conditions can be found in the likes of **Val d'Isere**, **Tignes**, **Val Thorens**, **Chamonix** in France, and **Verbier**, **Mürren** and **Engelberg** in Switzerland. That said, snow depths in these areas are now mostly a little below average and, with no new snow for some time, the pistes are often hard.

However, as we have heard from many of our colleagues across these resorts, it is still perfectly possible to experience some enjoyable skiing. Just don't expect any serious off-piste opportunities.

The area with the least snow is the southern Alps, especially Italy, where with one or two exceptions there is very little natural snow indeed. That said, the colder weather at the end of November did allow their impressive snow-making systems to operate on an industrial scale, which has allowed a surprising number of recent openings (e.g. the **Sella Ronda** resorts), almost entirely on man-made snow.

The extreme southern French Alps (e.g. **Isola 2000**), the far south-east of Switzerland (e.g. **St Moritz**) and parts of southern Austria are in a similar position to Italy.

The rest of Austria is "somewhere in between". The glaciers, as you would expect, are doing fine but elsewhere snow is rather thin or patchy. The Arlberg resorts (e.g. **Lech**, **St Anton**) have just about enough snow to open a decent selection of pistes. However, the lower resorts of the Tirol and Salzburgland are generally still threadbare, and need more snow in order to look forward to anything like a convincing start to the winter season.


Snow conditions are generally much better across the pond, especially in Canada, where **Whistler** has serious quantities of new snow at altitude.


Austria

Glaciers aside, **Ischgl** (10/30cm) and **Obergurgl** (30/50cm) are the best bets in Austria right now thanks to their high altitude slopes and state of the art snow making. However, forget any serious off-piste for the moment.

The Arlberg resorts of **Lech** (30/35cm) and **St Anton** (5/50cm) are also now open, though here snow bases also remain very modest.

Elsewhere in Austria, bits and pieces are open but much more snow is needed.


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Skiing in June? Yep, there are plenty of good options in the Alps! tinyurl.com/llt6xzy



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Hard and fast pistes in the Austrian Vorarlberg. This is Warth-Schröcken - Photo: warth-schroecken.at

France

The best snow conditions in France are in the high resorts of the northern Alps, such as **Val d'Isère/Tignes** (28/90cm) and **Val Thorens** (85/115cm), both of which already have a good selection of pistes open.

A number of other big name resorts partially opened last weekend, including **Courchevel** (31/78cm), **Méribel** (20/50cm) and **Les 2 Alpes** (5/60cm). Once again, some decent on-piste skiing is possible here, but the general consensus is that more snow would be very welcome, especially lower down.

Further south there is less snow but, with artificial help, a selection of resorts are also open including **Montgenèvre** (20/30cm) and **Isola 2000** (10/30cm).



Val Thorens remains one of the better options in the Alps right now - Photo: valthorens.com

Italy

Many Italian resorts have a serious lack of snow right now. That said, they do have the best snow-making in the Alps, which has allowed a number resorts such as **Selva** (10/30cm) and **Corvara** to open a surprising number of runs – even if it is a case of skiing on ribbons of white among the green fields.

The most natural snow in the Italian Alps is in the far north-west, in resorts such as **Cervinia** (20/125cm), but even here they are now considerably behind the curve for early December and more snow would be very welcome.



Almost no natural snow in the Sella Ronda region. This is Alta Badia - Photo: holimites.com

Switzerland

The greatest extent and variety of skiing in Switzerland is in **Zermatt** (5/140cm), even if it missed the heaviest of the snowstorms back in late November.

Elsewhere in Switzerland, there are lots of partial openings, with the best snow in the western and northern resorts, such as **Verbier** (15/50cm) and **Engelberg** (40/160cm), though off-piste opportunities remain limited.



Reasonable snow cover still in the northern Swiss Alps. This is Wengen - Photo: wengen.ch

Rest of Europe

There are several possibilities for skiing in the Pyrenees, though it has also turned much milder here after a very snowy end to November. Among the better options right now are Spain's **Baqueira Beret** (60/100cm) where most lifts are open, and France's **Cauterets** (40/100cm).

Snow depths in Andorra are generally more modest, but all ski areas are partially open, with 20/40cm of settled snow depending on altitude in the **Grand Valira** region.

Scandinavia reports generally quite good conditions, even if the skiable terrain is still quite modest in extent. In Finland, **Levi** is operating 11 lifts and has a 40cm upper base. Further south in Norway, **Geilo** reports 25cm of fresh snow and an upper base of 70cm.



25cm of fresh snow in Geilo, Norway - Photo: planetski.eu

USA

Most western US resorts haven't seen a huge amount of snow over the last week but, on-piste at least, snow conditions are still pretty good for the time of year in the big name Colorado resorts of **Vail** (64cm mid-mountain base) and **Aspen** (54/81cm).

Further north, it's snowing in **Jackson Hole** (74cm) with significant accumulations expected here over the next couple of days.

Over in Utah, snow depths are still below par in **Snowbird** (51cm mid-mountain base) but snow is forecast here too, especially towards the end of the week.

Canada

Snow conditions are generally excellent in western Canada.

Whistler (126cm mid-mountain) has seen 55cm of new snow in the last couple of days, with plenty more to come.

Further east, the **Banff/Lake Louise** area is not expecting quite as much new snow, but is still in excellent shape with around 95cm of settled snow at altitude.



Excellent snow conditions in Sun Peaks - Photo: sunpeaksresort.com

Next full snow report will be on Thursday 10 December 2015, but see [Today in the Alps](#) for regular updates