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### Latest snow report

**Updated: 12.30pm Monday 14 December 2015**

With five days to go until the main Christmas week departures, snow conditions in the Alps are less than ideal.

We are at great pains to point out that this does not mean that it isn't possible to find some decent on-piste skiing. However, we cannot escape the fact that snow depths across the Alps are considerably below where they should be for mid-December, with little if any (natural) snow at all in the south.

Most ski resorts in the Alps are at least partially open, despite the modest (or non-existent) natural snow cover. Resorts in the southern Alps, and a good number of the lower resorts further north, are generally reliant on artificial snow.

The best snow conditions are in the higher resorts of the northern and western Alps (such as **Val d'Isère**, **Val Thorens**, **Zermatt** and **Engelberg**), where above 1600m or so it does at least still look like winter.

A little snow is expected across some northern and north-eastern parts of the Alps this week (mostly in Switzerland and Austria), but any accumulations will again be modest and mostly above 1800m. We are unlikely to see any widespread or significant snowfall in the Alps before Christmas.

If it is powder you are looking for, head to the western US or Canada where ski resorts are generally in much better shape.

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#### Austria

Glaciers aside, snow cover is very modest across the Austrian Alps, especially at low altitude where it is still mostly green.

That said, Austrian ski resorts have been working very hard to open their areas, many of which are heavily or almost entirely reliant on artificial snow. For example, the **Ski Welt** area (including resorts such as **Söll** and **Ellmau**) has about half of its 91 lifts open despite having just 30cm of settled snow on its summit.

Further west, **Lech** (35/40cm) looks a bit more wintry, but even here snow depths are way below where they should be for mid-December.



Little Schröcken in the Austrian Vorarlberg has more snow than many resorts at this altitude - Photo: warth-schroecken.com

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#### France

The northern French Alps (roughly north of **Les 2 Alpes**) have half reasonable snow cover, at least at altitude, and offer some of the best options in the Alps right now.

**Val d'Isère** and **Tignes**, for example, are about 70% open with settled snow depths of 30/80cm depending on altitude. **Val Thorens** (50/90cm) is another

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Skiing in June? Yep, there are plenty of good options in the Alps! [tinyurl.com/llt6xzy](http://tinyurl.com/llt6xzy)



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good bet, with most of the local runs now open, as well as links to other parts of the **3 Valleys**.

The southern French Alps have much less snow, but even here many ski resorts are partially open, including **Isola 2000** where the 30cm upper base is entirely artificial.



The higher resorts of the north-western Alps, such as Tignes (pictured) offer the best snow conditions right now - Photo: tignes.net

### Italy

Italy is the most snow-starved of the four main Alpine countries, with virtually no natural snow at all below 2500m in central and eastern regions (e.g. **Livigno, Selva**) and only modest cover further west (e.g. **Cervinia, La Thuile**).

However, thanks to their highly impressive snow-making capabilities, a surprising number of ski resorts are at least partially open.

In the **Dolomiti Superski** area, for example, 266 of the 460 lifts are open today, including the main Sella Ronda circuit in both directions. **Selva** has an entirely artificial base of 20/30cm depending on altitude.

The best snow conditions in Italy though are in **Cervinia**, where the upper base is over 1m deep and you have access to about 137km of pistes shared with **Zermatt** in Switzerland.



Thin cover at mid-mountain in Cervinia, but at least there is some snow! - Photo: cervinia.it

### Switzerland

The northern and western Swiss Alps still have some of the best snow cover in the Alps right now, though it is still much thinner than it should be for mid-December.

**Engelberg** (35/155cm) has most of its ski area open, and some of the deepest upper snow depths in the Alps at the moment. Further south, **Zermatt** (5/125cm) is another good option, thanks to its super-high altitude terrain and extensive glacier.

By comparison, the far south east (Engadin) is struggling, although **St Moritz** (0/15cm) can still offer a decent selection of runs thanks to artificial snow.



This is how Les Crosets on the Swiss side of the Portes du Soleil looks right now - Photo: idelec.ch

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### Rest of Europe

The Pyrenees have also been unseasonably mild and dry over the past couple of weeks. However, the higher ski resorts can still offer a good array of pistes thanks the heavy snowfalls back in November.

Spain's **Baqueira Beret** has most of its 35 lifts spinning and a respectable 40/80cm of settled snow depending on altitude. All resorts in Andorra are also partially open, with 20/40cm base depths in **Soldeu**.

Up in Scandinavia, good conditions are reported in **Geilo** (Norway) where there is 70cm of snow lying on the mountain. By contrast, Sweden's premier resort **Åre** (0/20cm) is still mostly reliant on artificial snow.



Surprisingly decent snow cover in the little resort of Formiguères in the French Pyrenees - Photo: formigueres.fr

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### USA

Snow conditions are generally much better in the western US than they are in the Alps.

**Aspen** (Colorado) has a little fresh snow and respectable upper base depths of around 1m. Further west, **Mammoth** (California) has seen nearly 1m of new snow at altitude in the last few days and has 76/137cm of snow packed down on its runs.

Utah is getting in on the action after a relatively slow start to the season. It's snowing today in **Snowbird**, where the mid-mountain base is about 70cm deep but growing.

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Not much to complain about in Aspen (Colorado) yesterday - Photo: Clare Roberts

### Canada

Snow conditions are superb in most western Canadian resorts.

Nearly all the lifts are open in the **Banff/Lake Louise** area where there is fresh snow and the mid-mountain base is around 115cm.

Further west, **Whistler** (186cm upper base) has seen a huge amount of snow in the last couple of weeks, with even more in the forecast.

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**Next full snow report will be on Thursday 17 December 2015, but see [Today in the Alps](#) for regular updates**