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Latest snow report

Updated: 12.15pm Thursday 28 January 2016

With very mild air in place, snow conditions are quite variable across the Alps right now. There is still plenty of good skiing to be had, particularly at altitude, but lower down it has felt decidedly spring-like this week.

If you want your snow to remain "cold" and "wintry" all day long, then you really have to be in a resort with plenty of north-facing terrain above 2200-2400m. Below this level, and above on slopes exposed to the sun, there is something of a freeze-thaw cycle in progress, with afternoon slush developing lower down.

That said, the sun is still too low in the sky to cause any major headaches and good piste preparation has, in most cases mitigated the worst effects of the warmer weather. In short, there is still plenty of good skiing to be had in the Alps, particularly on-piste.

A quick word on snow depths though - these remain below average across most of the Alps, particularly in the Italian Alps, Austria (away from the far west), the south-east of Switzerland and the south of France. They are closer to normal in the northern French Alps, and the far west of Austria, even a little above normal in parts of western Switzerland (e.g. **Crans Montana, Gstaad, Morgins**).

The weather will remain mild over the weekend with a little snow at altitude on Sunday, but also the risk of some rain lower down, particularly across the north-western Alps.

Across the pond conditions remain good to excellent across most of North America, particularly in the western US where there have been heavy snowfalls...

Austria

With the milder weather this week, the best snow conditions in Austria have been at altitude in resorts such as **Obergurgl** (15/145cm) and **Obertauern** (70/100cm).

At low altitude, conditions are more variable, but there is still plenty of snow in the likes of **Ellmau** (40/70cm) thanks to last week's storms.

Expect it to stay mild over the weekend with some snow possible on Sunday, but also the risk of some rain at lower down.



Snow clinging on at lower levels in Austria, despite the mild weather. This is Zell-am-See - Photo: foto-webcam.eu

France

There is still lots of good skiing to be had in the French ski resorts, though milder air has made for somewhat spring-like conditions at times lower down.

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Les Gets (60/120cm) is one resort where spring-like conditions have been reported, but snow cover at least remains good for now.

For more "wintry" snow you need aim for resorts with plenty of north-facing slopes above 2200m, such as **Val d'Isère** (97/178cm) and **Val Thorens** (120/195cm).

It will remain mild over the weekend with a little snow likely at altitude on Sunday, but also some rain lower down.



Good snow cover but variable snow quality in the Haute Savoie. This is La Giettaz near Megève - Photo: valdarly-montblanc.com

Italy

Snow depths remain way below par across most of the Italian Alps, where snow-making has been crucial this season to help open and maintain the pistes.

For now, there is still lots of good piste skiing on offer, despite the milder weather, but concerns are growing as to how things will pan out later in the season - unless there is significant snow soon.

One exception to this rule is the far north-west, where **Courmayeur** has very respectable snow depths of 110/180cm. On the other side of the country, however, **Selva** has just 20/30cm, most of it artificial.

It will remain mild over the weekend with no significant snow in the forecast.



Snow cover still very thin across much of Italy. This is Livigno - Photo: valtline.it

Switzerland

Western Switzerland has some of the best snow cover in the Alps right now, even if the milder weather has made snow conditions more variable in resorts such as **Villars** (50/120cm) and **Morgins** (60/100cm). For the best snow quality you need to head for the higher resorts, such as **Zermatt** (25/180cm) and **Saas-Fee** (45/208cm).

While the rest of the country has generally decent snow depths, one area that is struggling is the south-east, especially the far south east where **St Moritz** has an unusually low 29/44cm of settled snow.

Expect it to stay very mild for a few days yet with some snow at altitude on Sunday, but also some rain low down.



Reasonable snow cover in Lenzerheide in eastern Switzerland - Photo: lenzerheide.com

Rest of Europe

The Pyrenees haven't seen much snow in the last week, with base depths below par for January across the board. Spain's **Baqueira Beret** (70/125cm) probably offers the best conditions right now. Meanwhile, to alleviate problems later in the season, more snow would be welcome in Andorra - **Soldeu** currently has 40/70cm of settled snow depending on altitude.

Bulgarian ski resorts haven't seen much snow in the last week, but snow conditions remain decent enough with 65/100cm in leading resort **Bansko**.

The resorts of western Norway are expecting big snowfalls this weekend. **Voss** currently has settled snow depths of 45/90cm, but could see up to 1m of fresh at altitude in the next few days.

No such good news for Scotland, where all five main ski resorts are closed at the moment following the recent mild spell. Although it has now turned colder, the weather is still too volatile to allow a realistic chance of anything opening anytime soon.



The pistes are just about adequate in the French Pyrenees. This Les Angles - Photo: lesangles.com

USA

Snow conditions remain excellent across most western US resorts.

Snowbird (224cm mid-mountain) is skiing as well as anywhere right now, with 40cm of fresh snow last Tuesday and lots more in the forecast.

Big snowfalls are also expected this weekend in **Mammoth**, California, where the upper base has already surpassed 3m, and in Colorado resorts such as **Breckenridge** where the mid-mountain base is 130cm deep.

Canada

Snow is forecast at altitude in **Whistler** (200cm mid-mountain) today, and to lower elevations over the weekend, which will freshen things up nicely.

Further inland, **Fernie** is also in excellent shape, with upper base depths of 250cm and more snow also forecast.



A mixture of snow and rain in Whistler this week - Photo: facebook.com/whistlerblackcomb

**Next full snow report will be on Thursday 4 February 2016,
but see [Today in the Alps](#) for regular updates**