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Latest snow report

Updated: 1.30pm Thursday 24 November 2016

Generally speaking, conditions in the Alps have deteriorated since the exceptional November snowfalls we witnessed just 10 or so days ago.

It's not all bad news, however! Some higher parts of the south-western Alps (e.g. Cervinia, Monte Rosa) have seen significant new snow above 2200m in recent days, and it is today snowing heavily at altitude close to the French-Italian border, including in resorts such as Val d'Isère, Val Cenis, Montgenèvre, Sestriere and Isola 2000.

By contrast, the northern side of the Alps has been plagued by the Foehn this week, with exceptionally mild temperatures and a rapid loss of low-lying snow.

Snow conditions in the Alps are therefore very mixed right now and will remain so this weekend. For Val d'Isère, the timing could not be better for its opening on Saturday, with masses of new snow and improving weather. The top halves of Zermatt, Saas-Fee and the Monte Rosa region should also be skiing superbly, as will anywhere with skiing available above 2200m in the south-western quarter of the Alps.

Further north and east is a different story, however. Ischgl opens today and can offer a reasonable amount of piste skiing, but the snow quality is fairly average and conditions on the Austrian glaciers will be hard-packed, thanks to recent wind.

Across the pond, snow conditions are now improving after a protracted mild spell, which forced many western US resorts to postpone their opening.

Austria

Most Austrian ski areas have been suffering from mild Foehn winds this week, which has led to a rapid loss of snow at low altitude. Higher up the cover is still ok, even if the snow quality is less than perfect right now (generally humid below 2300m and windblown/hard-packed above).

The big news this week is today's opening of non-glacial **Ischgl**. It may only have a 40cm upper base but with 112km of pistes it is easily the most extensive open area in Austria, perhaps even the Alps. Among the best of the rest are **Sölden** (10/123cm) and **Hintertux** (25/105cm) which have 80km and 50km of pistes open respectively.

Generally speaking, however, lots more snow is needed in the next two or three weeks if the majority of resorts are going to be in decent shape in the run up to Christmas.



Opening day for Ischgl - 24 November 2016 - Photo: ischgl.com

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As mentioned earlier, it is currently snowing heavily at altitude in **Val d'Isère** (5/95cm) which opens on Saturday, joining neighbouring **Tignes** (30/100cm) which has offered skiing since 1 October. Expect better weather and excellent conditions this weekend.

Val Thorens (80/130cm) is the only other major French resort open on a daily basis. A handful of others will join the fray this weekend, including **Montgenèvre** (40/70cm) - where there will also be plenty of fresh snow at altitude- and **La Clusaz**, which hasn't seen much fresh snow but has enough on its *La Balme* sector to offer some reasonable piste skiing.



Heavy snow at altitude in Montgenèvre this morning - 24 November 2016 - Photo: [montgenevre.com](#)

Italy

The best snow conditions in Italy are at altitude in the western Italian Alps, where there has been fresh snow. **Cervinia** (40/150cm) will again be our pick this weekend, once the weather quietens down, with plenty of fresh snow and top to bottom skiing.

Parts of the **Monte Rosa** region are also expected to open this weekend and, at altitude at least, should also be in fabulous condition.

There has been less new snow further east but a number of resorts are partially open, including **Passo Tonale** (40/80cm) and **Cortina** (0/25cm).



Snowing heavily in Sestriere, though the resort isn't open yet - 24 November 2016 - Photo: [vialattea.it](#)

Switzerland

The best snow conditions in Switzerland remain at altitude in the far south, where **Zermatt** (0/110cm) and **Saas-Fee** (20/120cm) have both seen fresh snow above 2300m, even if it hasn't been as much as initially forecast.

There are a number of partial openings elsewhere in the country this week, including **Davos** (0/30cm) and **Grimetz** (20/60cm). However, many resorts are suffering from the mild and Foehny conditions that have prevailed across most of the country this week.



A handful of pistes open at altitude in Grimentz, under Foehny-looking skies - 24 November 2016 - Photo: valdannierviers.ch

Rest of Europe

There is still not a great deal open in Europe beyond the Alps. The recent mild weather has also affected the Pyrenees, with snow cover still patchy in many resorts. However, **Cauterets** (France) should be open by 3 December.

Some skiing is possible in in Finland, though mainly on artificial snow – **Ruka** now has a base 13-30cm deep depending on altitude. You can also ski in a limited capacity in both Sweden and Norway, with **Hemsedal** (50cm upper base) reporting 10cm of fresh snow on Tuesday and skiing as well as anywhere in Scandinavia right now.

Scotland has some snow again, but not quite enough (at the time of writing) to open any lifts.



Snow on the Cairngorms, though not quite enough to open any runs yet - 24 November 2016 - Photo: winterhighland.com

USA

Conditions are improving in the western US, with new snow for many resorts earlier this week and more forecast later this weekend. Lots of resorts are now partially open, with more set to join them over the next few days, even if the extent of terrain on offer remains limited.

In California, **Mammoth** (95cm upper base) currently has 13 trails open, while Colorado's **Breckenridge** (45cm upper base) has just three.



Decent, if limited, piste skiing in Keystone, Colorado - 24 November 2016 - Photo: kestoneresort.com

Canada

Whistler (126cm upper base) opened a day early yesterday, with **Blackcomb** following suit today, as scheduled. You can't ski back to resort yet, but higher up there is good snow cover for the time of year, with plenty more in the forecast.

The most extensive open ski area in western Canada, however, remains **Sunshine Village** (79cm upper base) and **Lake Louise** (56cm upper base), with 70 and 74 open trails respectively.

**Next full snow report will be on Monday 28 November 2016,
but see [Today in the Alps](#) for regular updates**