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### Latest snow report

Updated: 2.40pm Thursday 15 December 2016

Snow conditions in the Alps remain less than ideal as we approach the busy Christmas period. That said, they are not (generally speaking) as bad as this time last year and on-piste at least, there is still plenty of good skiing to be had.

The areas offering the best natural snow cover are still the higher resorts of the western/south-western Alps, including Val d'Isère, Tignes, Val Cenis, Montgenèvre, Pila, Cervinia and Sestriere (to name just a few). The areas with the worst natural snow cover are the lower resorts of the north-western Alps such as Morzine, Megève and Villars. These are the sorts of resorts (namely the north-western resorts where most of the skiing is below 2000m) that should be most concerned in the run to Christmas, as snow-making has not been working as efficient as it has been further east.

However, thanks to artificial snow, the vast majority of Alpine resorts should be able to offer a decent amount of piste skiing in time for the festive rush (if they are not already) even if off-piste possibilities remain extremely limited. Some places may also see some new snow next week (especially the far south-western Alps) though there is still considerable uncertainty over this at this time.

Meanwhile, across the pond, snow conditions are generally much more favourable, with cold temperatures and regular snowfalls, particularly in the western US...

### Austria

Some areas saw a little fresh snow earlier in the week (5-20cm), mostly in the north and east, which temporarily freshened up conditions in resorts such as **Obertauern** (30/60cm) and **Saalbach** (30/50cm). However, it wasn't significant in the big scheme of things and (glaciers aside) most resorts are still heavily reliant on artificial snow.

**Ischgl** (0/40cm) and the **Ski Welt** (20/45cm) - including resorts such as **Söll** and **Ellmau** - are among the most extensive options, though off-piste opportunities remain very limited or non-existent

A dusting of new snow is possible in places later in the weekend, but no significant dumps are expected anytime soon.



Patchy snow cover low down in Zell-am-See - 15 December 2016 - Photo: zellamsee-kaprun.com

### France

The best snow cover in France is still at altitude and in resorts close to the Italian border, especially from **Val d'Isère** (30/135cm) southwards, including **Val Cenis** (30/200cm) and **Montgenèvre** (70/180cm).

Elsewhere in the French Alps, resorts are more reliant on artificial snow, even completely so below 2000m or so where resorts such as **Les Gets** (0/40cm) and

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**Megève** (0/35cm) are only expected to open a limited number of slopes this weekend.

Some resorts close to the Italian border (especially from **Val d'Isère** southwards) may see some snow early next week, but most areas will have to wait at least another week before there is any chance of a significant dump.



Excellent snow cover in Montgenèvre – 15 December 2016 – Photo: montgenevre.com

### Italy

The best natural snow cover in Italy remains at altitude in the western Italian Alps, including resorts such as **Cervinia** (30/160cm), the **Monte Rosa** region (0/220cm), **Pila** (20/200cm) and **Sestriere** (40/120cm).

The further east you travel, the more artificial snow is a factor. Nowhere is high quality snow-making on an industrial scale more evident than in the Dolomites, where the **Dolomiti Superski** area (e.g. **Val Gardena**, **Alta Badia**, **Cortina**, **Kronplatz**) has nearly 700km of runs up and running almost entirely on man-made snow.

Some snow is likely for most Italian resorts next week but it is too early to say exactly who will get the most and in what quantities.



Excellent snow cover at altitude in the western Italian Alps. This is Bardonecchia – 15 December 2016 – Photo: bardonecchiaski.com

### Switzerland

The best snow cover is at altitude in the southern Swiss Alps - particularly in **Zermatt** (0/105cm) and **Saas-Fee** (0/120cm) - though even here off-piste opportunities are extremely limited.

Elsewhere in the country, cover is very poor for mid-December with most resorts heavily reliant on man-made snow. That said, there is some surprisingly extensive piste skiing available in a number of resorts including **St Moritz** (0/40cm), **Davos** (0/30cm) and **Verbier** (0/80cm).

Very little new snow is expected over the next week or so, perhaps with the exception of the far south (including **Zermatt** and **Saas-Fee**), but this is far from certain.



Desperately short of snow in the lower reaches of the Portes du Soleil. This is Morgins – 15 December 2016 – Photo: telemorgins.ch

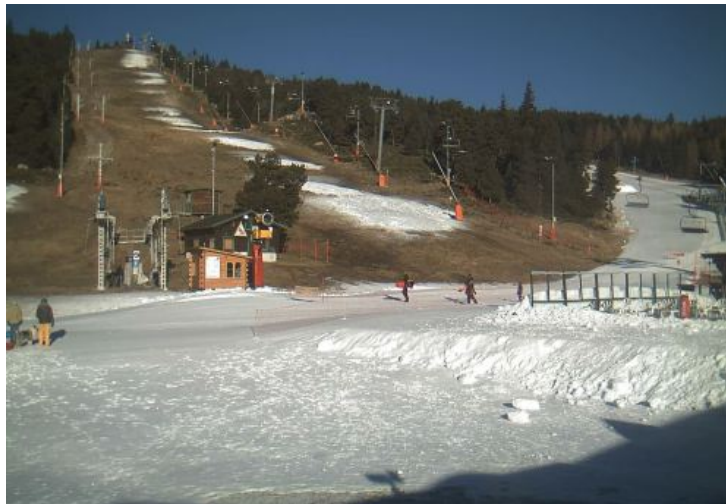
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### Rest of Europe

The snow drought affecting the Alps is also affecting the Pyrenees, where you also have to aim high to find some reasonable piste skiing. Andorra's **Soldeu** has 20/50cm of settled snow depending on altitude, while Spain's **Baqueira Beret** has 5/25cm.

Scandinavian ski resorts haven't seen a huge amount of snow recently either, but there is some good piste skiing to be enjoyed in both Norway's **Lillehammer** (5/50cm) and Sweden's **Åre** (43cm mid-mountain base).

Skiing in Scotland remains on hold due to lack of snow.



There is also a lack of snow low down in the Pyrenees. This is Font Romeu – 15 December 2016 – Photo: font-romeu.fr

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### USA

Snow conditions are generally excellent in the resorts of the western US, with plenty more snow in the forecast.

**Jackson Hole** (170cm upper base) in Wyoming is doing particularly well right now with heavy snow falling today and tomorrow before skies clear on Saturday. Over in Colorado, snow depths are generally more modest but conditions are still excellent in **Winter Park** (96cm upper base) with more snow expected over the coming days.



Superb snow conditions right now in Jackson Hole – 15 December 2016 – Photo:  
[facebook.com/jacksonhole](https://www.facebook.com/jacksonhole)

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#### **Canada**

Snow conditions remain excellent in **Whistler** thanks to the big storms earlier this month. Right now the weather is cold and sunny and the mid-mountain base 163cm deep.

Conditions are also very good further inland, where there is 130cm of settled snow at altitude in **Fernie** and more snow is expected later this weekend.

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**Next full snow report will be on Thursday 22 December 2016,  
but see [Today in the Alps](#) for regular updates**