

# LUXURY

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# Summertime Ski

The good news: It is always snowing somewhere. So plan now to double up on winter.

by Irene Rawlings

Some 150 years ago, no one went to Switzerland in the wintertime. Rolling green hills and swimming lakes lured travelers to the Alps, which were avoided altogether once the weather turned cold. But then a hotelier with a bold invitation welcoming Londoners to see St. Moritz in the snow changed everything, and now high season runs from December to March.

Today the paradigm shift sees residents of the Northern Hemisphere seeking snow while it's warm at home. In the era of breaking tradition and convenient, spontaneous, go-now travel, there are more options than you might realize to ski in June, July, and August. From snowy New Zealand to South America's powder-sprinkled Andes, Europe's high-mountain glaciers to the backcountry of North America to Arctic Iceland, have your pick among all-inclusive packages at top resorts; weekend stays at no-frills, family-run hotels; and à la carte lift tickets close to big cities with plenty award-winning gourmet restaurants. ▶

The northern lights appear in Iceland all year round, but during the summer months, they can best be seen in late August. *Opposite:* Northern Patagonia's Cerro Bayo, on the border with Chile, offers lots of powder June through October.

Thorsten Heim



## South America

**H**igh in the Chilean Andes, **Portillo** (the summer base of the US Ski Team) has it all: killer steeps, wide-open alpine terrain, and long, groomed runs accessed by chairs and drags. Beyond its 1,235 in-bound acres, access off-piste faces and hike-to backcountry areas with untracked powder. There isn't a town, just Hotel Portillo and surrounding chalets and lodges that altogether can accommodate 450 people (read: crowd control). Enjoy evenings with live music and pisco sours in the bar. From \$2,350/person/week, all-inclusive. **SEASON: June–October.** [skiportillo.com](http://skiportillo.com)

Famous for 50-degree chutes and reliable, ultra-dry powder, **Las Leñas** in Argentina is a 90-minute flight from Buenos Aires. Expert skiers and snowboarders take the Marte Chairlift to the highest point on the 7,400-foot mountain for 3,000-foot vertical runs and access to a huge range of backcountry terrain—gullies, ridges, bowls, and waist-deep powder—all above tree line. Go with a guide for Out of Track and Extreme Expedition programs. **SEASON: Early June–mid-October.** [laslenas.com](http://laslenas.com)



*Clockwise from left: Portillo in the Chilean Andes is crowd-free; the hot tubs at Portillo are a popular evening spot; Cerro Bayo is on the Argentina-Chile border; Valle Nevado features runs for all levels.*



**Les Tres Vallées**—three massive ski resorts less than 40 miles from Santiago, Chile—can be a quick getaway for North American powder hounds and is a favorite of wealthy Chileans. **Valle Nevado** has 23 miles of piste with routes for all levels. **La Parva**, the steepest of the Three Valleys' resorts, attracts risk-takers with deep powder bowls, cornices, and gullies, as well as steep chutes and walls, like the heart-pounding La Chimenea. Recognized by pros as having the best terrain park in South America, **El Colorado** maintains long, rolling groomers (great for families) and an accessible backcountry that's raved about by expert skiers and snowboarders. Get the Interconnect Pass to all three ski areas—7,000 skiable acres, 40 chair lifts, and four base villages *en total*. **SEASON: Mid-June–October.** [chileski.com](http://chileski.com)

Other Argentinian resorts favored by locals offer thigh-high powder and some of South America's best off-piste opportunities. Northern Patagonia's **Cerro Bayo** (a hidden paradise on the rugged border with Chile), **Cerro Chapelco** (pristine Patagonian glaciers, deep and steep bowls, and carefully groomed runs), **Cerro Catedral** (1,480 skiable acres with more than 40 lifts), and **Cerro Castor** (at the end of the world—where the last continental mountains meet the Southern Ocean's Beagle Channel at Ushuaia) can be combined during a bespoke itinerary by outfitter Naya Traveler. From \$1,200/day. **SEASON: June–October.** [nayatraveler.com](http://nayatraveler.com) ▶





Clockwise from Top Left: Peggy Eggleton, Julian Apse, Aedan O'Donnell



## Down Under

New Zealand's 13 ski areas are small but guarantee glorious alpine scenery and mostly gentle slopes with enough difficult terrain to entertain serious skiers. Olympic hopefuls and World Championship ski teams from Japan train here during their off season. The North Island's **Mt. Ruapehu** ([mtruapehu.com](http://mtruapehu.com)) is a skiable volcano with two ski areas (called "ski fields" in Kiwi lingo): Whakapapa has more than 1,300 acres of groomed runs and Turoa has 1,200. On the South Island, the season starts in June with a three-day Winter Festival in Queenstown, the base for four ski fields. Drive 20 minutes to **Coronet Peak** ([coronetpeak.co.nz](http://coronetpeak.co.nz)) for wide blue and red runs and, for those with skill and stamina, the 1.5-mile M-1 groomer. **The Remarkables** ([theremarkables.co.nz](http://theremarkables.co.nz)) feels relaxed and comfortable and features a snow tubing park, making it great for families. **Treble Cone** ([treblecone.com](http://treblecone.com)) keeps steep, challenging terrain and some of the best freeriding areas in New Zealand. **Mt. Hutt** ([mthutt.co.nz](http://mthutt.co.nz)) isn't very big with around 25 trails, but it's worth the trip for the double-black chutes and excellent hike-to terrain with great views of both the Pacific and the Southern Alps. **SEASON: North Island, late June–late October; South Island, late June–mid-October.**



Clockwise from far left: New Zealand's Mt. Ruapehu is a skiable volcano; Australia's Thredbo has one of the most challenging un-groomed trails with a near-vertical drop middle section; the 25-trail Mt. Hutt in New Zealand features excellent hike-to terrain.

**Thredbo has the most vertical terrain in Australia—as well as natural wind lips, powder bowls, and tree skiing.**

**Perisher** in Australia's Snowy Mountains is vast, with more than 3,000 acres and four lift-linked resorts: Perisher Valley, Blue Cow, Smiggin Holes, and Guthega. Wide cruisers are perfect for newbies and intermediates, and difficult black diamonds (appropriately named Chance and Kamikaze) challenge serious shredders. The resorts also host night skiing and maintain cross-country trails, seven terrain parks, and Australia's only half-pipe. Snow-tubing runs, sledding hills, and a well-regarded ski school attract families. Owned by Vail Resorts, so the annual Epic Pass is good here. **SEASON: June–end of September.** [perisher.com.au](http://perisher.com.au)

**Thredbo** has the most vertical terrain in Australia, as well as natural wind lips, powder bowls, and tree skiing. One of the most challenging runs, Funnel Web, is an essentially un-groomed trail notorious for its near-vertical middle section. The resort is a new member of the Ikon Pass, with access to US resorts, including Aspen and Deer Valley, and Canada's Revelstoke and CMH Heli-Skiing. **SEASON: Early June–early October.** [thredbo.com.au](http://thredbo.com.au) ▶



**In summer, Iceland has nearly 24 hours of daylight, so skiing is possible from breakfast until well after dinner.**



Clockwise from Top Left: Colleen Genemann; Erin Jorgensen; Pascal Gertschler; Diejun



## Europe

European ski areas with enough snow to remain open through the summer are high on glaciers. People ski in T-shirts and jeans, and the daring few show off in just a bikini. Some of the world's greatest skiers train here in the off season with their national teams.

Switzerland's **Zermatt-Matterhorn** is the largest and highest summer ski area in Europe and continues to offer an "absolute snow guarantee." Expect perfectly groomed pistes and fast runs. Ski teams from 22 countries train on the glacier to get a jump on the winter season. Freestyle fans play on the Zermatt Snowpark's boxes and rails. For truly customized itineraries with stays in exquisite chalets, contact the luxury ski specialists at Leo Trippi ([leotrippi.com](http://leotrippi.com)). Adding to its charm, Zermatt is a car-free village. **SEASON: Year-round.** [zermatt.ch](http://zermatt.ch)

**Saas-Fee's Allalin Glacier**, with 12 miles of pistes and a hair-raising superpipe in the freestyle park, is accessed via cable car and funicular. The car-free village of Saas-Fee is worth a visit for the incredible views from a revolving mountaintop restaurant at 11,500 feet. Stay at the still-grand 1893 Metropole Hotel. Lower on the mountain, follow via ferratas and hiking and biking trails. **SUMMER SEASON: Mid-June–mid-October; SKI SEASON: mid-July–mid-/end of April.** [saas-fee.ch](http://saas-fee.ch)



*Clockwise from far left:* Iceland's Raven Hill Lodge; Arctic Heli Skiing picks up skiers on the shores of the Arctic Ocean; Switzerland's Zermatt is a car-free village; The Hintertux gondola in Austria shuttles skiers to perfectly groomed, snow-sure runs 365 days a year.

A funicular transports skiers to Mont-de-Lans Glacier's eight mostly blue runs (served by chairlifts and drags) in **France's Les Deux Alpes**. For freestylers, a vast terrain park (big air, tables, kickers, and rails, plus a half-pipe and a smaller pipe for beginners) makes it an essential stop. At lower elevations on the mountain, participate in typical summer fun—hiking, biking, playing tennis, and enjoying long lunches in open-air cafés. **SEASON: June–September.** [summer.les2alpes.com](http://summer.les2alpes.com)

Austria has eight glacier-ski regions. **The Hintertux**, with 12 miles of perfectly groomed, snow-sure runs, is the only one open 365 days a year. The area is popular for its challenging terrain, long descents, and freestyle park with an FIS snowboard superpipe. Ski to the Tuxer Ferner Haus to grab a quick bite, order a bowl of homemade soup in the full-service restaurant for lunch, or sit in front of the fireplace with a warming drink. Hosts world-renowned racing camps for kids and a lively après-ski scene in the Zillertal Valley. **SEASON: Year-round.** [hintertuxergletscher.at](http://hintertuxergletscher.at)

Norwegians are practically born on skis and have won more Winter Olympic medals than any other country. So it is no surprise that they can potentially ski on a snow base of more than 25 feet at a handful of ski centers and glaciers. The downside: Epic snowfalls often block access roads, delaying the start of the summer season. The upside: For 60 days during summer, the sun hardly sleeps (except above the Arctic Circle when it doesn't sleep at all), so ski areas stay open until 9 p.m. or later. **Folgefonna Glacier** is an easy trip from the country's second largest city Bergen and well known for its soft, carvable snow and a challenging snowboard park. Ski onto the glacier and then take a dip in the fjord. **SEASON: May–September.** [folgefonna.com](http://folgefonna.com)

Seemingly endless daylight, plenty of 3,000-foot descents with barely another soul in sight, and the possibility of seeing the elusive summer aurora make skiing Northern Iceland worth the trek. **Arctic Heli Skiing** drops skiers via helicopter on mountaintops for first tracks in coastal snowpack. When conditions allow, the pickup point is right on the shores of the Arctic Ocean. In summer, Iceland has nearly 24 hours of daylight, so skiing is possible from breakfast until well after dinner. On no-fly days, skiers can fish for cod, haddock, pollock, or Atlantic catfish or soak in one of many accessible hot springs. Spend nights at the rustic-cozy Klængshóll Lodge (Raven Hill Lodge) eating country-style meals. From \$8,400/person/four days/all-inclusive. **SEASON: March–June.** [bergmenn.com](http://bergmenn.com); [arctichelisking.com](http://arctichelisking.com) ▶



## North America

**M**id-summer can be a magical time for skiing in Alaska. Take a floatplane from Anchorage to the alpine-modern **Tordrillo Mountain Lodge**, which is basically a summer camp for grown-ups. Expect T-shirt skiing on corn snow in the morning and fishing for king salmon in the afternoon. And there's still plenty of daylight for waterskiing, stand-up paddling, and kayaking around glassy Judd Lake. Après-ski, relax lakeside in a hot tub with margaritas made with 2,000-year-old glacier ice while chef makes dinner and selections are pulled from a 500-bottle wine cellar. \$12,000/five days. **SEASON: Mid-June to early July.** [tordrillomountainlodge.com](http://tordrillomountainlodge.com)

Almost 11,000 feet high, **Beartooth Basin** in Wyoming's Shoshone National Forest can't be reached until after the plows have bulldozed through epic 40-foot walls of snow in late May. Steep headwall and cornice skiing as well as easygoing lower snowfields attract die-hard skiers and riders. Just two Poma lifts and seemingly endless hike-in backcountry skiing. No-frills accommodations in nearby Red Lodge, Montana. **SEASON: June–July.** [beartoothbasin.com](http://beartoothbasin.com)



Top Left: Stockstudio/Stock; Top Right: Poby



Because of its challenging runs and terrain parks, **Timberline** on Oregon's Mt. Hood, home to the Palmer Snowfield, is popular with freestyle enthusiasts and advanced skiers and snowboarders. And it's the only year-round ski area in North America. In summer, skiers and snowboarders come up for two iconic summer camps: Windells and High Cascade (both with access to a full-sized Olympic half-pipe and two private snowboard parks). Stay at the historic 1937 Timberline Lodge. **SEASON: Year-round.** [timberlinelodge.com](http://timberlinelodge.com)

For a practically perfect summer shred, locals head to the slopes of Washington's massive **Mt. Rainier**. Hike or skin (depending on snowpack) up to Muir Camp on Rainier's southeast flank; then take slow, wide turns through the Muir Snowfields' summer corn snow. More strenuous is the descent from the top of Mt. Rainier to the Nisqually River Bridge—possibly the most classic line in the Northwest. **SEASON: May–July.** [visitrainier.com](http://visitrainier.com)

Just across the border in Canada, **Whistler Blackcomb's Horstman Glacier** is open only to intermediate and advanced skiers and boarders. The Public Park, one of five parks, has a surfy quarter-pipe and Momentum Ski Camp attracts World Cup skiers and X Games medalists. Spend afternoons at lower elevations taking a downhill bike ride (May–October), playing a round of golf (the sun doesn't set until nearly 9:30 p.m.), or grabbing a brew at the new Roundhouse Lodge Umbrella Bar. Overnight and dine in the huge but charming Whistler Village. **SEASON: Mid-June–end of July.** [whistlerblackcomb.com](http://whistlerblackcomb.com) ♦



*Clockwise from top far left: Warm-weather skiing in Alaska; the summer half-pipe on Oregon's Mt. Hood; after a morning of skiing, fish for king salmon in the afternoon at Tordrillo Mountain Lodge; alpine hiking at Canada's Whistler.*