

OUR 10 MOST EXCLUSIVE SKI RESORTS AROUND THE WORLD

Whether you're a skiing pro or yet to master the slopes, it can be distracting to try and get to the bottom with any kind of grace when the mountains are overcrowded. That's why we've put together this list of ski resorts that are more exclusive than the traditional tourist traps, so you can enjoy a more peaceful piste.

TRAVEL

1

Whistler

CANADA

The resort that hosted the Winter Olympics 2010, Whistler really does have it all. With plenty of mixed terrain and varied runs, this resort gets some impressive snowfall, making for a longer-than-usual ski season and an incredible view no matter where you stand on the mountain.

The celebrities love Whistler, perhaps because they have the option to arrive by helicopter. This is a popular transportation choice for visitors making the short trip from Vancouver airport to the mountain. In fact, you can spend your whole visit in a helicopter if you like, with Heliski taking you to the most pristine runs on the mountain, with little traffic and the freshest snow. It doesn't get more exclusive than that!

And when it comes to deciding where to stay, you can't go wrong with the Four Seasons Hotel, where you can soothe tired muscles with heat treatments in the luxurious spa.

Courchevel

FRANCE

Of course, you can't have a list of exclusive ski resorts without mentioning Courchevel. A favourite destination of the A-list, there are so many trails to explore and some truly breath-taking views to discover from the peaks. It's a great choice for beginners and experts, with some lovely gentle slopes to practice on and some off-piste runs to challenge those with more experience.

And the food in the area is divine too, but you will have to book to have a hope of eating in any of the best establishments. You have to try one of the incredible desserts at Cedric Grolet, and of course, because it's France, you'll need to find a good raclette or a tartiflette.

If you want to experience Courchevel like the royal family then you need to stay at their favourite spot, Les Airelles. This decadent, palace-style hotel is the most luxurious spot in the mountains.



Photo: Kevin Oliveri-Hiver

Niseko

JAPAN

Niseko is less well-known than many of the other ski resorts on our list, which automatically makes it a little quieter than the rest. It might not stay that way for long though, as this is definitely an up-and-coming destination.

There are four ski resorts on the mountain, collectively known as Niseko United. To enjoy the most luxurious ski experience, you'll want to stay at the Higashiyama Niseko Village. It doesn't matter which room you stay in, you'll get incredible views of one of the surrounding mountains. One of the views comes courtesy of the hot spring bathtub, bringing you true relaxation in privacy.

Niseko Village is a small resort compared to some of the others, but it offers gentle runs for beginners and some long, steep slopes for more experienced skiers. And if you do find yourself running out of snow, your ski pass gives you access to the other resorts too, so you can spend weeks exploring if you like!



Photo: Niseko Tourism

Lech

AUSTRIA

Lech is a great resort for those just starting to get their ski legs. There are no black runs here, only blue and red, so you can relax a little as you make your way down the slopes. If you are an experienced skier, however, you will find lots of off-piste trails to follow, adding a little excitement to your visit.

This is another resort that offers heliskiing, something you really should try for the most exclusive experience. But it is the food that might sway your booking decision, with several Michelin star restaurants in the area's many boutique hotels. Nothing tastes quite as good as the dinner you've earned after a hard day on the slopes and these establishments have attracted many a famous diner.

And those famous guests usually stay at Severin's Alpin Hotel. This luxury resort offers premium suites worthy of royalty and a wellness area that will help bring your muscles back to life.



Klosters

SWITZERLAND

Another resort set in the Swiss alps, Klosters is always alive with celebrities, royals and millionaires. It's a relatively small resort compared to others, and is situated right next to the bigger, more popular Davos, but that's what makes it such a great place for a quiet ski retreat. Let the tourists flock to the flashier resorts and enjoy a little exclusivity in Klosters.

This is the home of "stealth wealth". You won't find big designer boutiques or fancy five-star hotels, but you might stumble across a member of the royal family as you make your way onto the slopes. They particularly like to stay at Chalet Eugenia, an 11-bedroom escape that is the epitome of quiet luxury.

Klosters has 300km of slopes for you to slide down, but if you do find yourself yearning for a little more action, it's easy to pop over to Davos for a day, giving you the best of both worlds in one ski trip.



Destination Davos Klosters. Photo: Matthias Paintner

Verbier

SWITZERLAND

The World's Best Ski Resort (according to the World Ski Awards in 2021 and 2022) is part of the Four Valleys in Switzerland, all of which offer incredible ski opportunities, but there's something a little special about Verbier. With amazing views of Mount Blanc and the Matterhorn from the highest peaks, this is a wonderful resort for more experienced skiers looking for a challenge. There's plenty of off-piste powder to entice thrill-seekers, but not so much for beginners.

The apres-ski scene is lively, with plenty of excellent bars, restaurants and nightclubs to distract you from the slopes. You are almost guaranteed sun and fluffy snow during the ski season, due to the altitude of the resort, making it popular with the rich and famous. Some of these celebrities have stayed at the Hotel Farinet, a beautiful accommodation with a lively atmosphere and easy access to the Verbier resort.



Photo: four valleys

Val D'Isere

FRANCE

Offering one of the longest ski seasons in Europe thanks to its high altitude, Val D'Isere is all about the ski scene. There's something for all abilities to enjoy, including the 1992 Olympics Men's Downhill slope for you to test your skills on – could you be an Olympic skier one day?

This Alpine resort is just a short distance from the French/Italian border, giving you the opportunity to ski into another country if you head over to Tignes. With over 90 lifts in the area, you are unlikely to exhaust all your ski options – there is plenty to explore, including a lot of off-piste powder! Those with a little more ski-skill under their belt might want to check out one of the two glaciers, which are sure to test your courage!

And where to stay while you're there? Le K2 Chogori is a relatively new boutique hotel that's only open during the ski season. It is perfectly set-up for skiers, with a range of wellness facilities that will make your stay feel like a dream.

So, where are you off to on your next ski trip? There's plenty of incredible resorts to choose from.



Aspen

USA

Possibly the most famous ski resort in the world, these four mountains tower over Colorado, enticing celebrities and snow-lovers from near and far. This ski resort is so extra that it even has its own airport, so you can fly right into the snow, making transfers easy.

Full of fine dining, art galleries and designer boutiques, you might struggle to find time to ski! But if you do make it to the slopes, you'll be treated to heated gondolas and mid-piste champagne bars. With plenty of ski opportunities to choose from, spread out over Aspen Mountain, Snowmass, Buttermilk and Aspen Highlands, you certainly won't get bored at this resort!

And for the most luxurious way to start and end your days, you'll want to book in at The Little Nell. It is right at the center of all the ski action, allowing you to ski out of the front door, but it also offers world-class comfort.



Photo: Olivia Klein

Cortina

ITALY

Regular skiers need to put Cortina on their bucket list because this is the ultimate ski resort. With incredible views, amazing food and a fabulous apres-ski scene, there are over 1000km of slopes to ski down, keeping you busy for a good while!

There are some great ski tours to enjoy too. History buffs will love the Great War Tour, which allows you to ski through snow-covered heritage sites, while the Super 8 tour even incorporates a horse-drawn stretch as you explore the wonders of the nearby mountains.

If you'd rather seek thrills, there are 13 black runs to explore. Are you brave enough to try them all?

And there's no better place to relax after your adventures than at the five-star Grand Hotel Miramonti Majestic, which is close to the ski action but far enough away to feel like a retreat.



Photo: @manazproductions

Gstaad

SWITZERLAND

The celebrities love Gstaad for skiing and it is easy to see why. Gstaad Palace is the hotel of choice, and has been for over 50 years, ensuring patrons live in the absolute lap of luxury after a hard day on the slopes.

From here, the best ski spots are Wispile and Wasserngrat. Wispile is perfect for family skiing, with plenty of nursery slopes to help you get your piste legs, while Wasserngrat is where you'll find The Tiger Run, the steepest run in Gstaad which is also quite long – great for thrill-seekers!

The resort sits in the centre of four valleys. Wispile and Wasserngrat are in one direction, but if you really want to take your time to explore the area, you have three other routes to choose from! Take the gondola from the edge of the village to the top of Saanen, or head over to the valley that comprises Schönried, Saanenmoser and Zweissimen. The choices are endless, and each one is more beautiful than the last!



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