

## Top 10 Ski Resorts in the World

### 1. Chamonix Mont Blanc, France



Chamonix is on the top list of contenders for the title of "world's most famous ski resort". Located at the foot of Mont-Blanc, it's the highest peak in the Alps and was the host of the world's first Winter Olympic Games in 1924. It is famous for its lift-served vertical drop of 9209 feet and for having one of the world's longest runs (Vallée Blanche), at 13.7 miles. This is an outdoor enthusiast's paradise where the mountain scenery surpasses one's wildest expectations. One of Europe's highest cable cars and cog railways take you on a journey through a beautiful alpine town and traditional villages. The valley has a variety of terrain with gentle family runs through the trees, spectacular cross country pistes, amusing snow parks and amazing glacier descents. The activities list includes ski touring, ice climbing, paragliding, winter hiking and snowshoeing trails, a tremendous sports complex including indoor heated pools, an ice rink, fitness and spa facilities, tennis/squash courts and indoor climbing walls.

### 2. Cortina, Italy



Cortina is the leading resort of the magnificent Dolomite Region, in fact, whole of Italy. This historic village has become one of the classiest and costliest of all European resorts with its sophisticated charm and its location in a magnificent mountain range. There is a wide variety of slopes for all abilities, matched with an abundance of off-snow activities that makes it a popular winter getaway for rich Italians. Cortina is nestled in the Ampezzo valley near Italy's northeastern border with Austria. All of Cortina's slopes are open to snowboarders and there is a fun park with a half-pipe. Seventy-three miles of trails are dedicated for cross-country skiers. Fun non-ski activities include

Cortina's Olympic Bobsled at 75 miles per hour and also the resort's sledding runs. Eating, drinking, shopping and enjoying life are a way of life at Cortina.

### 3. Courchevel, France



Courchevel is simply the best of The Three Valleys resorts. This northern gateway to The Three Valleys offers the most varied terrain from long gentle blues to steep couloirs, and superb skiing both above and below the tree line, for beginners as well as experts. The lift system is also very modern, fast and efficient. Ski schools abound and offer classes in 8 languages for every standard and discipline, from snowboarding to telemark. Though ski holidays in Courchevel are known to be luxurious and expensive, it is also possible to enjoy ski holidays here on a budget. Many visitors never leave the Courchevel sector; but there is good access to the rest of the Three Valleys, too. Courchevel 1850, the highest of the five components of this big resort, is the favorite Alpine hangout of the Paris jet set, who fly directly in to the mini-airport in the middle of the slopes. Its top hotels and restaurants are among the best in the Alps and the most expensive.

### 4. The Arlberg, Austria



The 'Arlberg' is the name given to five picturesque towns in western Austria and the many lifts and scores of runs that link them. This fascinating place is the birthplace of alpine skiing. Skiers from all over the world love the flair of the famous mountain villages and the top quality holidays these provide. The Arlberg is among the first regions in the Alps for guaranteed snow. There are hiking trails through the snowy landscape, stunning cross country skiing trails, wild sledding tours and horse sleigh-rides. St. Anton, one of the most famous resorts in the world, is the biggest of the towns in the Arlberg. This is popular with aggressive skiers and snowboarders. Then there is the Valluga with the

most challenging terrain of the lot, St Christoph, a small and tranquil resort, Stuben with an authentic atmosphere and lower hotel prices, Lech and Zurs with their unparalleled beauty, and Oberlech, a satellite resort above Lech for families.

#### **5. Aspen, Colorado, USA**



Aspen is known as the ski location of the elite, and with good reason. This fine ski vacation destination has beautiful resorts, plentiful snow and challenging trails for intermediate to expert skiers. The panoramic views from four ski areas and over 70 kilometers of groomed cross-country ski trails are world famous. Other than skiing, Aspen has world renowned restaurants, art galleries, shops and nightlife. There are many other entertaining activities and fun events. You can also enjoy snowmobiling, sleigh rides, ice skating, hot air ballooning, indoor paintball and even tubing in Snowmass' very own Tube Town. Cultural events in Aspen are widespread including many winter concerts with big name shows like Big Head Todd & the Monsters. ESPN holds the Winter X Games in Aspen. Aspen can be a luxury vacation, but it's worth going at least once.

#### **6. Whistler Blackcomb, British Columbia, Canada**



With one of the longest vertical drops on the continent, and an enviable snow record, Whistler-Blackcomb is the largest ski resort in North America. The variety of terrain ranging from beginner areas to chutes and trees and groomed cruising runs to alpine bowls heaped with powder after a fresh snow fall, offers something for everyone. It also has four terrain parks, a snow cross track and a superpipe. The surrounding beautiful valley and a group of tiny lakes mirror the mountains rising high

above paint a pretty picture. The skiing is spread over two mountains, Whistler and Blackcomb. There are three neatly arranged pedestrianised bases - the Upper Village (at Blackcomb), Whistler Village proper, and fast-developing Creekside. Along with Vancouver, Whistler will play host to the 2010 Winter Olympics, holding the alpine and cross-country skiing, biathlon, ski jumping, bobsleigh, skeleton and luge events.

### 7. Jackson Hole, Wyoming, USA



Jackson, Northwest Wyoming, is the gateway to two of the United States' best-known national parks, Grand Teton National Park and nearby Yellowstone. Many famous people have vacation homes in and around this area. The combined elements of beautiful mountain scenery, Old West heritage, tourist traps and celebrity residents give this small town a unique atmosphere. Jackson Hole is actually the name of the ski resort rather than a town. The resort offers visitors one of the best ski and snowboard experiences in the world. Known for the steep terrain, consistent fall line, deep and light powder and endless backcountry, Jackson Hole also allows beginners and intermediates to excel at their own pace on a variety of groomed runs and open bowls. It is easily on a par with European resorts in terms of variety of terrain, pitch and vertical descent and typically exceeds them in annual snowfall, receiving an average of over 400 inches each winter.

### 8. Vail, Colorado, USA



The Vail Ski Resort is located in Eagle County, Colorado next to the town of Vail. Vail Mountain is the largest single mountain ski resort and the most popular snow sports destination in the US. Combined with a yearly average of 346 inches of snowfall and 300 days of sunshine, Vail is a skier's paradise. Off the slopes, Vail Village has world-class dining, shopping, galleries, après ski, nightlife and spas all

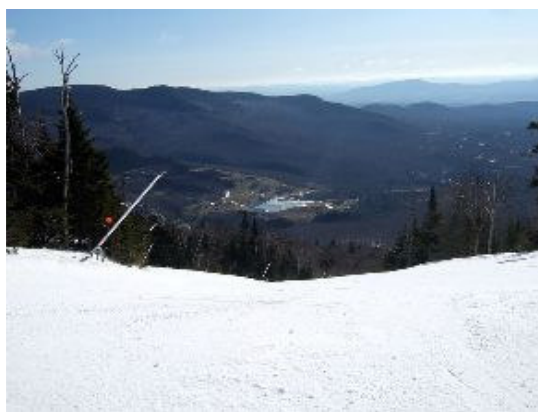
just steps from a range of accommodations. Vail boasts three distinct areas of the mountain, each with their own features and fortes, including three terrain parks, seven bowls and 5,289 acres of freeride terrain. At seven miles wide, finding fresh tracks is very easy. Vail's immense lift system includes 14 high-speed quads, a gondola and a network of 18 other chair lifts to assure easy access and minimal lift lines.

### 9. Deer Valley, Utah, USA



Rated one of the top three ski resorts in North America for the past 8 years in a row by the readers of SKI magazine, Deer Valley is one of the worlds top ski destinations. It offers luxurious amenities such as ski valets, groomed-to-perfection slopes, on-site child care and gourmet dining in three elegant day lodges. Deer Valley provides to its guests a bounty of 300 annual inches of powder snow backed up by state-of-the-art snowmaking. Exceptional customer service, consistent quality and attention to every detail are all part of the Deer Valley experience. In addition to that, the skiing is spectacular with 1100 groomed acres on three mountains laid out in 67 runs that follow the natural contours of the rolling landscape. Family as well as intermediate and advanced terrains are available throughout its many peaks. The accommodations are superb and dining memorable. Park City's shops, night life and variety of restaurants are only a mile away and the Salt Lake City Airport is nearby.

### 10. Stowe, Vermont, USA



Stowe is one of New England's oldest and most exclusive resorts. This historic town was established over 200 years ago and was one of the first ski resorts in America. The town is hugely popular all year round, as there is much to attract non-skiers as skiers. Stowe Mountain Resort offers 116 trails, 13

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lifts including an inter-mountain transfer Gondola, a halfpipe, several terrain parks, and a growing number of slope side lodging units. Spread out across the highest peak in Vermont, Mount Mansfield, the resort classifies its trails as beginners, intermediates and advanced & expert riders. On the slopes, the three sectors of the mountain have a good range of terrain, offering a fun and challenging ski break. Stowe's après ski is less lively than the large European resorts but has a relaxed and family feel. Eating out in and around Stowe is excellent - there is a great choice of world cuisine to be found.