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## Why spring is the season to go skiing

Spring offers a mix of sun and snow without the peak-time queues and prices – here's where to go for the last weeks of the ski season

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Not booked a ski holiday yet this year? Or perhaps you are desperate to cram in another before the lifts close? Don't panic: there is still time and, as the four-time winter Olympian and Ski Sunday presenter Chemmy Alcott says below, there are lots of reasons to enjoy a late-season break.

Recent years have seen a pattern of heavy snowfalls in March and April, even after relatively modest conditions throughout January and February. So, with any luck, late-bookers may get that magical, perfectly timed combination of sun and snow – and the chance to revel in some of the best conditions of the ski season.

Travel to the mountains in spring and you will avoid the queues, hectic slopes, crowded restaurants and airport chaos that define the winter's peak. And if you are travelling with [children](#), you will save money: the weeks around Easter are much cheaper than a February half-term break, while the (usually) warmer weather is much kinder to beginners and younger skiers. Meanwhile, experienced skiers who like to maximise their time on the slopes will find that the lighter evenings mean lifts are open much later and off-piste touring is more accessible.

So, when should you book and where should you go? The key strategy is to [head high](#). At altitude it is more likely to be below freezing at night if the pistes need topping up with artificial snow-making – so, if you do hit a warm spell, you stand a better chance of decent skiing, especially if you catch the lifts first thing in the morning.

It is also easy to forget that North America has some excellent options at this time of year. The strong dollar may have pushed up prices a little, but, as Victoria Mclean of operator Ski Independence points out, the snow in the Rocky Mountains has been phenomenal this year. If you want to travel as late as possible in the season, there will still be skiing in places such as Mammoth in California and Banff Sunshine Village in the Canadian Rockies into late spring, with other resorts extending their dates thanks to favourable snow depths.



Long lunches in the sunshine are popular in spring | CREDIT: Andy Parant/Tignes

We have crunched the numbers and picked 15 excellent options to help you make the most of the last few weeks of the season. The resorts we have chosen have some of the [best records for late snow](#), and they still have good availability for March and April this year.

We have suggested a package for each, but you might also find some great late deals – especially if you pick the right weeks. Daniel Woodley of Ski Line says that, apart from the first week in March, which is always busy, there is good availability generally in mid and late March. And if you are thinking of the Easter holidays, Jenny Nicholls of Inghams says it still has plenty of options for departures on April 8.

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## The best resorts for a late-season ski holiday

### Tignes, France

#### Best for skiing into summer

With lifts operating to above 3,400m, [Tignes](#) has a season that runs into May, followed by summer snow sports on its Grande Motte glacier. It comprises five villages, at altitudes ranging from 1,550m to 2,100m, and off-piste activities include tobogganing, dog-sledding, horse-riding, snow-tubing, ice-floating and mountain biking.

**Book it:** Peak Retreats (02392 839310; [peakretreats.co.uk](https://peakretreats.co.uk)) offers stays in Kalinda residence, at the foot of the Boisses telecabine in Tignes 1800, with indoor pool and spa, from £422 self-catering, based on four sharing a two-bedroom apartment, including Eurotunnel crossing with free upgrade to FlexiPlus. Departs March 25





Tignes has access to the snow-sure Grand Mötte glacier | CREDIT: Andy Parant

## Mayrhofen, Austria

### Best for partying

Well-known for its high-octane après, the Austrian resort of [Mayrhofen](#) rounds off the season with the popular Snowbombing Festival, this year taking place from April 10-15, featuring five days of music, comedy and partying. At a relatively low 630m, the resort can be bathed in warm spring sunshine but still with plenty of opportunity for skiing and snowboarding as slopes rise to a snow-sure height of 2,500m.

**Book it:** Momentum Ski (020 7371 9111; [momentumski.com](http://momentumski.com)) offers a five-night stay at the four-star Neuhaus Zillertal Resort, near the Penken lift, with spa and views of the Zillertal valley, from £1,189 including rail transfers. Departs April 10

## Geilo, Norway

### Best for young families

Late season snow has always been one of the key strengths of Norway's northern resorts and two advantages of visiting in March or April are that the days are longer and temperatures are more bearable than the region's usual freezing conditions, which can be challenging earlier in the year.

Geilo's gentle slopes are best suited to beginners and improving intermediates who also want the option of trying other activities, including fat biking, ice fishing, sleigh rides and tobogganing.

**Book it:** Crystal Ski (020 3451 2821; [crystalski.co.uk](http://crystalski.co.uk)) offers the Vestlia Resort, with spa, pool and waterslide by the slopes, from £1,280. Departs March 26

## Chemmy Alcott | Why now is the time to put a spring in your ski-step

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This winter I will end my ski season on April 23 – long after the Easter bunny has come and gone, the cameras for Ski Sunday have stopped rolling and most people would ever think of going skiing.

Spring ski holidays have a committed and loyal fan base, who join together as the season comes to a close in search of stress-free adventures. Expectations are lower once the mercury begins to rise in the mountains – there is less pressure on conditions being perfect and every turn, every ski tour, every unexpected powder day (they are more frequent than you think) makes you feel like you have hit the jackpot.



With their workload slowing and the finish line in sight, locals and seasonaires come out to play and daily events ignite a party atmosphere – it is a time when ski resorts really have a spring in their step. A highlight of mine is the World Monoski Championships held in April in Val d'Isère – single-ski fans gather, donning their favourite retro one-piece, and race head to head. Most resorts have closing parties, including the hilarious-to-spectate and thrilling-to-compete-in activity of pond skimming. Vail in Colorado is renowned for the highly anticipated World Pond Skimming Championships at Golden Peak in April – anyone brave enough can apply. Non-skiers relish the appeal of spring at altitude too, when the line-up of music festivals – Snowbombing, Snowboxx, Rise, Tomorrowland and Zermatt Unplugged to name a few – grows every season.

Ski touring also gets its moment in the spotlight – earning your turns on an early-morning ascent becomes the go-to way to rise and shine. Lighter days and warmer temperatures entice tourers to skin up to the highest peaks to enjoy the pink hues of the rising sun bouncing off the empty pistes below.

But nobody will judge you if you après too hard and miss the early alarm at this time of year. In the long, warm spring afternoons the slope sides are filled with as many people deeply sunk into deckchairs, faces white with suncream, sipping on fresh, cold Aperol Spritz cocktails, as there are people on the pistes.

Among those committed to making the most of every last turn there is a love of slushy spring snow. Once the overnight melt-freeze cycle has warmed by the afternoon you are left with forgivingly fun, wet snow. Be warned though, there is a heavenly twilight zone before the snow turns impossibly heavy.

Spring is a bittersweet time of year – it signals the end of winter and the start of the long wait until the next season, but it is also a celebration of being able to experience the mountains in all their magical madness.

## Cervinia, Italy

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### Best for intermediate cruising

This Italian resort never really closes thanks to its glacier and a top station that stands at a lofty 3,480m. [Cervinia](#) village itself is high too (just over 2,000m), so the snow is often still covering the roofs of the hotchpotch mix of upmarket hotels and apartment blocks until early May.

Long cruising pistes are fun for intermediates (a highlight is the 11km-long Ventina run) and the link with Zermatt in nearby Switzerland offers advanced skiers and snowboarders more variety than the local terrain

**Book it:** Elegant Resorts (01244 897581; [elegantresorts.co.uk](http://elegantresorts.co.uk)) offers stays at the five-star Saint Hubertus Resort, with spa, pool and gourmet restaurant, from £5,580 based on a deluxe room. Departs March 20

## Val Thorens, France

### Best for an extensive ski area

Not only the highest resort in the huge, 600km Trois Vallées area, but also in Europe, [Val Thorens](#) (at 2,300m) has lifts that continue to operate into early May (this season closing on May 8). Purpose-built, it has a good choice of ski-in/ski-out accommodation and plenty of slopes suitable for all abilities, from beginner to expert.

**Book it:** Erna Low (020 7584 2841; [ernalow.co.uk](http://ernalow.co.uk)) offers stays at four-star Le Hameau du Kashmir, a ski-in/ski-out residence with two restaurants and pool, from £522, self-catering, based on four sharing a two-bedroom apartment, including Eurotunnel crossing. Departs April 15





Skiing in Val Thorens carries on until May | CREDIT: JEFF PACHOUD/AFP

## Whistler, Canada

### Best for serious snowfall

Benefiting from this season's excellent snowfall across the pond, the linked mountains of [Whistler](#) and Blackcomb in western Canada's Coast Mountain range offers a vast ski area of more than 8,000 acres with slopes for all abilities of skier and snowboarder – intermediates keen to progress will particularly thrive. Off-piste activities include snowshoeing, zip-lining, tobogganing and the chance to try a four-man bobsleigh. It is also a good option for party animals as the après scene is among the best in North America.

**Book it:** Frontier Ski (020 8776 8709; [frontier-ski.co.uk](http://frontier-ski.co.uk)) offers the Delta Whistler Resort in Whistler Village North, with kitchenettes provided in suites and bedrooms, from £1,759, room only. Departs April 6

## Livigno, Italy

### Best for freestyle fun

In a remote region near the Swiss border, Italy's snow-sure resort of [Livigno](#), with slopes split across either side of the valley, is best suited to beginners and improvers. The village

spreads around 4km, with all parts of the resort linked by a free bus service. It has a good reputation for English-speaking ski schools and has an excellent terrain park, which has been selected to be the venue for freestyle and snowboarding events at the 2026 Winter Olympics. The resort's 2023 closing date is set for May 1.

**Book it:** Ski Line (020 8313 3999; [skiline.co.uk](https://skiline.co.uk)) offers the four-star Hotel Intermonti, with sauna, steam room and pool, from £1,448 half board. Departs Manchester on March 25

#### Q&A

### A guide to spring skiing

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#### Is it safe to go off-piste?

Spring is traditionally when the snowpack is at its most stable. As the weather gets warmer...

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## Avoriaz, France

### Best for short breaks

[Avoriaz](#) is the highest of the dozen resorts that make up the Portes du Soleil area, and, with a transfer time of under two hours from Geneva, is one of the best snow-sure options for skiers and snowboarders looking for a quick fix before the season ends. Situated at 1,800m and with slopes rising to 2,225m, its purpose-built, car-free centre is strong on ski-in/ski-out accommodation – which helps to further maximise time on the pistes when schedules are tight.

**Book it:** Flexiski (01962 587777; [flexiski.com](https://flexiski.com)) offers a three-night stay at Chalet Renard Blanc, a chalet with private chef, from £641 half board including transfers. Excludes flights. Departs March 20

## St Anton, Austria

### Best for saving money

Situated in Austria's Arlberg ski region, [St Anton](#) is one of Europe's snowiest resorts, with fast links to neighbouring Lech and particularly popular with experts. The slopes stay open until the end of April, and in the last weeks skiers and snowboarders can save money on lift passes. This year, prices drop from €358 to €307 (£315 to £270) for "sun ski weeks"

April 1 to 14, and then to €252 (£222) for “crystal snow”, April 15 to 23. Early spring sunshine sees the resort’s outdoor après bars ratchet up the tempo as well.

**Book it:** Ski Solutions (020 7471 7761; [skisolutions.com](https://www.skisolutions.com)) offers the four-star Hotel Banyan, with Asian-style interiors, pool and sauna, from £1,690. Departs April 1



Experts love St Anton's ski area | CREDIT: Henry Georgi/Getty

## Les Arcs, France

### Best for travelling by train

With easy connections to Bourg-Saint-Maurice, the purpose-built resort of [Les Arcs](#) is a good bet for travellers looking for a good value break by train this spring. Another resort with plenty of ski-in/ski-out self-catering options, the high point, Aiguille Rouge, reaches 3,225m. There are plenty of runs suiting all abilities at 2,000m and higher, so snow conditions remain reliable until the season closes, this year on April 29.

**Book it:** Travel Ski Express (0800 260 5082; [uk.travelski.com](https://www.uk.travelski.com)) offers Apartments Nova 3, near the shops, slopes and ski school, from £657, self-catering, based on four sharing a two-room apartment, including train fares, transfers and lift pass. Departs March 17

## Banff, Canada

### Best for long-haul value



Western Canada has experienced spectacular snow this year, and spring skiing in Alberta's Rocky Mountains offers great conditions without the biting chill of the winter months. Banff Sunshine Village, part of the SkiBig3 region, claims the country's longest non-glacial ski season with lifts running until May 22, while Lake Louise Ski Resort welcomes visitors until May 7 and Mt Norquay until mid-April. [Banff](#) itself is a lively base with plenty of restaurants and bars, and regular shuttle buses serving the other ski areas.

**Book it:** Virgin Holidays (0344 472 9646; [virginholidays.co.uk](http://virginholidays.co.uk)) offers stays at three-star Banff Caribou Lodge & Spa from £1,549 room only, including complimentary Banff Roam bus pass. Excludes transfers. Departs April 11



Banff has three ski areas | CREDIT: Grant Gunderson

## Les Deux Alpes, France

### Best for families with teenagers

Even in the worst of seasons, the slope height of 3,600m means the purpose-built French resort of [Les Deux Alpes](#) can always be relied on for good snow coverage. It can also be relied on for a vibrant après scene, in part thanks to its excellent snowpark facilities, which attract youthful snowboarders and freestylers. There are also plenty of organised events, including Easter fun, for families.

**Book it:** Inghams (01483 319450; [ingham.co.uk](http://ingham.co.uk)) offers three-star Hotel Ibiza, near the resort centre and 300m from the Super Venosc lift, with indoor pool and spa, from £1,179



half board. Departs April 8

## Breckenridge, USA

### Best for high-altitude America

With a top lift rising to a giddy 3,915m – the highest in North America – and a resort height of 3,000m, this Colorado resort, which extends over five peaks, requires a head for heights. The upside is that its high-altitude location means the old-style buildings and streets are usually dusted with snow until the season closes (this year May 30). A new, high-speed chairlift has also speeded up access to the beginner and ski school area on Peak 8.

**Book it:** Iglu Ski (020 3553 6327; [igluski.com](http://igluski.com)) offers stays at the four-star Beaver Run Resort, by the ski lift, with two pools and nine hot tubs, from £2,175 room only. Departs April 8

## Zermatt, Switzerland

### Best for charm

It is possible to ski all year round on the highest slopes of [Zermatt's](#) Matterhorn glacier at 3,883m, but the main season for this Swiss resort runs into late April (lifts are scheduled to be open until April 23). In the early spring sunshine, the pedestrianised centre of Zermatt's atmospheric town centre buzzes with outdoor life and street-side cafés and bars fill up.

**Book it:** Ski Independence (0131 243 8097; [ski-i.com](http://ski-i.com)) offers stays at the four-star Hotel Mirabeau Zermatt in the resort centre, with a spa and mountain views, from £2,525 based on a standard room and transfers by rail. Departs April 8



Zermatt is one of the most charming resorts in Europe | CREDIT: Getty

## Val d'Isère, France

### Best for all abilities

[Val d'Isère's](#) Pisailas glacier, beneath the summit of the Pointe du Montet, rises to a lofty 3,400m. This, combined with equally high peaks in the linked resort of Tignes, means the season remains snow-sure until the end of April. While it is best suited to intermediates and experts, there are also gentle beginner-friendly slopes in the Solaise sector, easily reached by cable car.

**Book it:** Purple Ski (01885 488799; [purpleski.com](https://www.purpleski.com)) offers stays at Chalet Genepy, sleeping 10 (additional bunkbeds for up to four children), with indoor pool, steam room and private chef, from €2,936 half board (including a late booking discount of 15 per cent and complimentary transfers). Excludes flights. Departs April 2

*Unless otherwise stated, prices are per person, based on two sharing, including breakfast, flights from London and transfers and are subject to availability.*

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