



28 of the most enchanting ski chalets in the Alps

From a slick Austrian retreat with a private chef and a wine cellar to a cosy self-catering retreat in France, these are the most distinctive stays to book now

“Where have all the ski chalets gone?” It’s a common refrain among British skiers these days as they scramble to find a catered Alpine property in which to gather family and friends. And with good reason. Brexit, Covid, the energy crisis ... it’s been a tumultuous few years for the British ski companies that supply chalets. Faced with staffing shortages and rising costs, many have thrown in the towel or sharply reduced their programmes. That’s not to say the chalet era is over, as you’ll see from this selection of new and revamped properties. They range from glittering house-party palaces — step forward Chalet La Tene in Val d’Isère — to barns and storehouses that have been reborn as cute and creaking mountain refuges. Consult the websites of specialist travel agencies such as Snowfinders, Ski Solutions and Sno and you’ll find plenty more. It is true, however, that the chalet scene is changing. Least affected by the turmoil is the top end of the market, where newly built trophy homes are satisfying a global craving for trophy holidays. It’s not just well-heeled Brits who like the privacy and convenience of a ski chalet. The Americans, the Dutch, the Swedes, the Belgians and the French are acquiring a taste for them too. Meanwhile, at less extravagant levels, it’s a time of innovation as daily housekeeping and food delivery services take the place of chalet staff (who can no longer be seconded from the UK and are more expensive to house and employ). These days, many properties are let on a self-catering basis, with a menu of supplementary services that you can pay extra for. If you’re prepared to cook and look beyond the big-name resorts, you’ll find that stunning Alpine venues are not reserved for the super-rich. For anyone who loved the simplicity of the old-style chalet scene, the good news is that some of the specialist companies have survived. They’re still offering cooked breakfasts, tea and cake in the afternoon and dinner on six nights as part of Atol-bonded, flights-inclusive packages. They’re revamping their properties too. Yes, peak-week prices have also jumped, but if it’s a sociable, carefree base you’re after, this kind of holiday is hard to beat. As Nick Morgan of the chalet specialists Le Ski points out: “The catered chalet concept is one which is often written off, but the fact is that guests love it.” *Denotes that the chalet can be booked room-by-room as well as exclusively for a whole group • 18 of the best family ski resorts in Europe

FRANCE

1. **Le Mazot du Var, La Clusaz** A cosy storehouse built from ancient timber, sleeps 6 Mazots are the huts where Savoyard farmers used to keep their food safe from rodents. Opened this year after a sympathetic makeover, this one is now ready to store six skiers, rather than grain, amid ancient, creaking timbers and groovy pendant lights. Walk across a snowy meadow to the nearest piste or drive down to the Bossonet lift for access to La Clusaz’s feistiest terrain, on the Aiguille and Balme massifs. Back at base, quiet, away-from-it-all evenings begin in the chalet’s sauna. Details Five nights’ self-catering for six from £1,304 (maisons-des-aravis.com). Fly to Geneva
2. **Chalet Alouette, Les Arcs*** All the benefits of Arc 1950 without having to cook for yourself, sleeps 6 Arc 1950 is one of the success stories of modern resort design. A well-proportioned village that wraps around several snowy plazas, it has shops and restaurants on the ground floor and ski-in, ski-out access to Les Arcs’ intermediate-friendly slopes. Most of the flats here are self-catering, but check into the newly refurbished three-bedroom Alouette and you’ll find not just a crackling fire in the living room but one of Ski Beat’s hosts cooking dinner six times a week. What’s more, the company — now 35 years old — is one of the few chalet specialists still offering packages with flights. Details Seven nights’ half-board from £1,156pp, including flights (skibeat.co.uk)
3. **Chalet Apartment Little Bear, Méribel** A pick-and-mix menu of services and a prime location, sleeps 8 Take a posher-than-



most four-bedroom apartment, add a housekeeper and rent it out on a self-catering basis, but with a menu of extra services on tap if needed, and you have Little Bear. Among those services: morning deliveries of croissants, oven-ready dinners at night, yoga classes and babysitting. Opened last year, Little Bear lives in a prime Méribel location, close to the Rond Point bar and the plunging Rhodos piste. Adventures beckon in every direction. Details Seven nights' self-catering for eight from £4,971 (fandptravel.com). Fly to Chambéry or Geneva or take the train to Moûtiers 4. Chalet Azel, Val d'Isère* Sleek new riverside property between La Daille and the Front de Neige, sleeps 8 Le Ski's newest property is a classic of the modern genre. Each bathroom has its own polished-rock basin and a slate-lined walk-in shower, while the sitting room is warmed by an extra large wood-burning stove. Meanwhile, the catering — honed over 41 years of chalet-hosting — includes champagne and canapés before dinner. Outside, the Isère River gushes, while morning and afternoon shuttle buses will whisk you to and from Val's world-class slopes. They're not just world class for advanced and off-piste skiers, by the way. Less-confident skiers will love the higher intermediate runs too. Details Seven nights' half-board from £1,655pp, including flights (leski.com) 5. Chalet Arda, Val d'Isère Contactless catering and a tactile sense of style, sleeps 8 During the pandemic Ski France developed a contactless catering service for its chalets, pre-cooking dinners in a central kitchen and delivering them to each property, along with breakfast ingredients, cakes and pre-dinner nibbles. All you needed to do was warm up the food. The formula is also perfect for now, as staffing costs are spiralling — and it's on offer in this four-bedroom new-build in the Petit Alaska suburb. The decor is as much about texture as colour, with plenty of knobby wood and weathered granite. Meanwhile, a morning and afternoon shuttle service will whisk you to and from the slopes. Details Seven nights' half-board from £1,124pp (skifrance-premium.co.uk). Fly to Geneva or take the train to Bourg St Maurice • 13 of the best ski resorts in Italy 6. Les Logis des Amoureux et des Amis, Megève* Savoyard stunner with a stellar restaurant attached, sleeps 8 When it comes to chalet catering this winter, no one's going to match lauded chef Marc Veyrat's new venture in the middle of Megève. Technically, it's a restaurant with rooms, but it's set in a pretty Savoyard house, right in the middle of posh, easy-skiing Megève. And its four bedrooms offer a pretty mix of raw wood, embroidered headboards, arty rugs and coloured tiles. So who's going to quibble about the definition? Dining in Veyrat's restaurant is not essential by the way, which may be a relief (Veyrat is one of the Alps' most decorated chefs, and dinner costs £375pp). Details B&B doubles from £627 (marcveyrat.fr). Fly to Geneva or take the train to Sallanches 7. Chalet d'Elé, Serre Chevalier 21st-century luxury and underrated slopes, sleeps 15 Built last year, Chalet d'Elé is exciting for all sorts of reasons. Yes, it looks a treat, with its weathered beams and its soaring, double-height living room. It's got all the mod cons too — indoor pool, cinema room, free-standing baths — as well as a dorm under the eaves for the kids. But just down the road you also get a little bit of rustic, old-fashioned France in the narrow streets of La Salle des Alpes. Even better, 500m away by shuttle bus there's a lift to whisk you on to Serre Chevalier's eternally underrated slopes. Energetic intermediates will love it. Details Seven nights' self-catering for 15 from £6,600 (cimalpes.com). Fly or take the train to Grenoble 8. Chalet Cristal 2, Val d'Isère* A richly textured chalet with quick access to the slopes, sleeps 9 Ski Beat's catered Cristal chalets have long been a canny choice in Val d'Isère. Warmed by cute ceramic wood-burners, they're spacious, relatively inexpensive and close to the lifts in the suburb of La Daille. Sure, that means you'll need to ride a bus to reach the middle of town. But balance against that the quick access to the intermediate-friendly slopes of neighbouring Tignes as well as the Folie Douce's famous après-ski parties. What's more, all the chalets have been refurbished. Cristal 2 is one of the last to be done: with acres of fragrant, richly textured wood panelling. Details Seven nights' half-board from £1,404pp, including flights (skibeat.co.uk) 9. Chalet La Tene, Val d'Isère A glittering, jewel box of luxury, sleeps 16 Trophy hunters, look no further. The newly built, seven-bedroom Chalet La Tene is the place to celebrate a good year with friends and family, provided that your guests are all



ready to ski hard and make the most of the pool, hammam and sauna. The nearest piste runs right past the property, and leads to two of Val d'Isère's key lifts — as well as epic après-ski sessions at the Cocorico bar. Though you might prefer to wind down back at base in the private cinema, where everyone gets their own armchair. Details Seven nights' half-board for 12-16 from £1,556pp (firefly-collection.com). Fly to Geneva or Chambéry, or take the train to Bourg St Maurice 10. Chalet Ancolie, St Nicolas de Véroce A careworn barn is reborn, sleeps 16 St Nicolas de Véroce offers lift access to some of the snowiest pistes of the sprawling Evasion Mont Blanc ski area (which it shares with Megève and St Gervais les Bains). It also offers gobsmacking top-to-bottom views of the Mont Blanc massif. But its short ribbon of farmhouses is nothing like your average French ski resort. Here, in 2019, the five-star Armancette planted a flag for high-end, gastronomic hotel-keeping, and last season it extended its empire by transforming a rugged barn into a spacious, characterful and richly textured refuge for ten adults and six children. Chefs can be hired in from the hotel for blowout meals. Details Seven nights' self-catering for 16 from £12,426 (almae-collection.com). Fly to Geneva or take the train to St Gervais. 11. Chalet La Ferme d'Edouard, St Martin de Belleville Live your film-star fantasy, without paying a film-star price, sleeps 14 Get your five-star Three Valleys fix at the new Ferme d'Edouard. This recently launched top-to-bottom farm conversion has all the bells and whistles: indoor pool, sauna, hammam and giant open-plan living room — and it will comfortably sleep ten adults and four children. But because it's in low-key St Martin de Belleville rather than glittering Courchevel it can be rented at a fraction of the price you'd pay there. Yes, you still have access to the world's largest properly interconnected ski area. But here you also get a proper Savoyard village on the doorstep. Details Seven nights' self-catering for 14 from £12,440 (cimalpes.com). Fly to Geneva or Chambéry, or take the train to Moûtiers 12. Chalet Pégase, Val Thorens* Top-of-the-world location with skiing to match, sleeps 12 Talk about a primo spot. The Pégase occupies the top two floors of a ski-in, ski-out chalet building that's just below the central Place du Caron. So not only can you launch yourself straight out onto some of the most snowsure, intermediate-friendly slopes in the Alps, but you're only a few steps away from Le Board, Val Thorens' recently opened indoor pool and sports centre. The six-bedroom catered chalet has just had a full refurbishment, complete with soothing colours and a giant sofa, and its long open-plan living/dining room comes with enticing mountain views. Breakfast on a sunny morning will be bliss. Details Seven nights' half-board from £999pp, including flights (skivertigo.co.uk) 13. Chalet Le Grizzly, Les Gets A wood-panelled chalet amid pretty, tree-lined pistes, sleeps 14 It can be a bit of risk, snow-wise, at the beginning or the end of the season. But come in the middle of winter and low-ish Les Gets can be a gorgeous place to ski — blessed with a village atmosphere and brimming with broad, tree-lined pistes. Brand new, six-bedroom Le Grizzly is sure to add to the pleasure, with stylish touches such as pendant fireplaces, raw-wood panelling and a private sauna. And if you don't fancy cooking yourself, Chalets 1066 works with a range of independent caterers. Three-course dinners start from £45pp. Details Seven nights' self-catering for 14 from £6,180 (chalets1066.com). Fly to Geneva 14. Chalet Ukiyo, Chamonix Never mind the minimalism. Check out the Mont Blanc views, sleeps 13 The interiors may be decked out in a minimalist, Japanese-flavoured style. But there's nothing restrained about the size of this six-bedroom building in Les Praz, the upmarket suburb of Chamonix. Look out of the giant, double-height windows and the feeling of grandeur intensifies as you gaze up at Mont Blanc, western Europe's tallest peak. Now, all you have to do is match this magnificence with some nifty skiing. The intermediate-friendly pistes of La Flégère are three minutes' drive away, while some of Europe's best off-piste skiing awaits nearby at Argentière. Details Seven nights' self-catering for 13 from £16,135 (lecollectionist.com). Fly to Geneva 15. Chalet Parenthèse, Samoëns A proper sense of style and a very reasonable price, sleeps 15 For many skiers, nothing beats a ski-in, ski-out location. But if you want to house a big, sociable posse of friends — for the same price as a series of small apartments next to the slopes — consider the OVO



network. Newly built Chalet Parenthèse is typical of OVO's portfolio. Sure, it's ten minutes' drive from the nearest ski lift, in the lesser-known, intermediate-friendly Grand Massif. But in return for a short commute you get acres of chic indoor space, as well as big slouchy sofas, a cinema room, sauna and seven bedrooms: all for £218pp in a quiet January week. Details Seven nights' self-catering for 15 from £3,273 (ovonetwork.com). Fly to Geneva • 10 of the best ski chalets in France 16. Chalet Mouria, Courchevel 1650 A rarity: a catered chalet for short breaks, sleeps 21 Here's a tempting prospect: a pretty and characterful chalet in a prime location that you can book for a short break as well as a week (transfers, but not flights, are included in the price). Sleeping 18-21 people, it's just had half a million euros spent on its refurbishment. Expect a new fireplace, a new hot tub and an airy, high-ceilinged lounge that's open to the rafters. Courchevel 1650's quiet and easygoing pistes are just across the road. Details Three nights' half-board from £588pp (skiweekends.com). Fly to Geneva, Chambéry or Lyons, or take the train to Moûtiers ITALY 17. Heritage Carrel, Valtournenche Cool, one-of-kind conversion with links to Cervinia, sleeps 6 This new-build three-bedroom refuge has inserted itself into the ruin of an ancient farmhouse, and makes the most of its setting with glass-walled interiors that look straight onto the ancient stone. There's also chic furniture, a cinema room and a glass-walled sauna in the garden. And you can expect all manner of Italian treats at dinner, such as Sicilian swordfish, Aosta Valley fondue, risotto, grilled radicchio — as well as stellar skiing. Valtournenche shares its lift pass with Cervinia and Zermatt. Details Seven nights' half-board from £2,264pp (leotrippi.com). Fly to Geneva or Turin 18. Chalet Milé 2, Ortisei Cosy wellness haven in the Dolomites, sleeps 6 At Chalet Milé 2 you can follow your skiing with a busy session in the gym (shared with Chalet Milé 1 next door). Then again, you might prefer to slip into the private sauna instead — after sampling the Dolomiti Superski's vast, 930-mile network of pistes, your legs will probably need a break. This newly built chalet has a five-star sense of style, with a flickering fireplace, raw wood in the bedrooms and a cute wellness area in which to drift gently into sleep. And when your legs have recovered there's a shuttle service available to whisk you back to the slopes. Details Seven nights' self-catering for six from £7,257 (leotrippi.com). Fly to Bolzano or Innsbruck 19. Chalet Vilaiet, Ortisei World-class style from a World Cup champion, sleeps 7 OK, this one opened two years ago. But cut me some slack here, because the three-bedroom Chalet Vilaiet belongs to one of the greatest Italian skiers of the past 30 years, the World Cup downhill champion Isolde Kostner. And judging by its floor-to-ceiling windows, she has an eye for visual drama as well as an iron will. Set beside a long, sinuous piste that drops down to Ortisei, it makes a big fuss of the view and adds some magnificence all of its own, with an outdoor heated pool, a private spa and wraparound balconies that catch the afternoon sun. Details Seven nights' half-board from £2,805pp (firefly-collection.com). Fly to Bolzano or Innsbruck 20. Chalet Snostorm, Valtournenche Magnificent views and your own chef, sleeps 12 Here's another come-hither property that puts Valtournenche on the chalet map. Chalet Snostorm is just down the road from Heritage Carrel (see above) and close to the highly rated Foyer des Guides mountain restaurant. It comes with its own chef as well as five bedrooms and one bunkroom (for two children). The style is a little bit Scandi and a little bit Santa Fe, with rugs and bentwood chairs in abundance. But there's no mistaking where you are — just look out of the window. The views are so magnificent they'll make your hair curl. Details Seven nights' half-board from £2,135pp (alpineanswers.co.uk). Fly to Geneva or Turin • 10 of the best all-inclusive ski resort hotels AUSTRIA 21. Apartment 3, Chalet Marmotta Culm, St Anton St Anton on your doorstep, sleeps 6 It's hard to imagine a better location in St Anton. Book into one of the three serviced apartments in the traditionally styled Marmotta Culm building and you'll be at the bottom of St Anton's home run, next to its two main lifts. You may get the odd old-timer peering in, wondering where the Underground Bar went (the Marmotta Culm has taken its place). But that's not likely to lessen the sense of comfort and convenience as you relax into your cosy, wood-panelled rooms. The top-floor, three-bedroom apartment No 3 is the pick of the pads, with daily breakfast deliveries part of



the service. Details Seven nights' B&B from £1,613pp (marmotta-chalets.com). Fly to Innsbruck or take the train to St Anton 22. Chalet Frieda, St Anton Close Nasserein's lifts but away from St Anton's famous après-ski, sleeps 8 New this winter, Chalet Frieda is an extension to Kaluma's Chalet 47 that can be booked separately as a four-bedroom bolt hole with a considerable sense of style. Think hushed tones of charcoal and raw wood in the bedrooms downstairs, and a sprawling, open-plan living/dining room on top, with a balcony outside for the warmer days in March and April. The Nasserein lift into St Anton's fun, challenging ski area is nearby. Thankfully the noisier bars are out of earshot. Details Three nights' half-board from £1,091pp (kalumaski.com). Fly to Innsbruck or take the train to St Anton 24. The Mountain Chalet, Warth am Arlberg Squirrel yourself away in the Arlberg's secret village, sleeps 9 Ski into Lech and St Anton from neighbouring Warth and you can't help but feel smug. There they all are, your fellow skiers, bustling about together and paying a premium for the privilege, while you know that on the far side of the Karhorn mountain there's a secret, barely developed village offering peace, serenity and lower prices. Stay in the Mountain Chalet at the Lech Valley Lodge and that smugness is sure to deepen. A snug, wood-panelled sense of privacy awaits with faux-fur throws for extra comfort and access to a hotel restaurant and spa. Details Seven nights' self-catering for six from £6,650 (lech-valley.com). Fly to Zurich 25. The Barn, Lech Forget the name, this Arlberg bolt hole is anything but rustic, sleeps 14 Clearly they were laughing when they called this place the Barn; the latest addition to Lech's roster of deeply luxurious chalets is anything but rustic. Covering 1,000 sq m, it offers seven bedrooms, an indoor pool, a chef, a wine cellar and ski-in, ski-out access to the Arlberg ski area that Lech shares with Warth, Zürs and St Anton. Generally speaking this is at the gentler end of the lift system, but off-pisters will be salivating all the same. Neighbouring Warth has the highest average snowfall of any Alpine resort. Details Seven nights' half-board from £4,312pp (peppercollection.com). Fly to Innsbruck 26. Chalet Monte Vera, St Anton* A stalwart of British skiing gets a makeover, sleeps 14-16 Skiworld is another survivor from the pre-Brexit era of flights-inclusive chalet holidays and, as a mark of its confidence in the future, it has just upgraded one of its long-established chalets, the Monte Vera. The seven bedrooms are all suites and are unusually spacious for a mid-market chalet, while its wellness area features a hybrid sauna/steam room called a sanarium. The only drawback is that it's 800m from the lift at Nasserein (but that's no bother if you leave your skis and boots in the lockers at one of the rental shops each night). There's a bus stop outside if you don't fancy the walk. Details Seven nights' half-board from £1,459pp, including flights (skiworld.co.uk) • Read our full guide to Ski Holidays SWITZERLAND 27. Chalet Ranch, **Verbier** Bring your A-game for the slopes as well as your glad rags for dinner, sleeps 8 Up high, the revered peaks of Mont Fort, Mont Gelé and Attelas provide some of the world's best lift-serviced off-piste terrain. Meanwhile, down below, you'll find what's probably the world's biggest gathering of posh ski chalets. New this year, Chalet Ranch is by no means the grandest, but it's typical of the resort's understated style. Set on the western edge of town, a shuttle-bus drive from the key lifts, it's open to the rafters on the top floor, and is home to a big convivial sitting/dining room as well as four plush bedrooms, a sauna and private cinema. Outside, a hot tub awaits your aching muscles. Details Seven nights' self-catering for eight from £26,895 (lcollectionist.com). Fly to Geneva or take the train to Le Châble 28. Chalet La Rochette, **Verbier** Ski down to the Medran lifts each morning, sleeps 10 **Verbier**'s suburban sprawl means that almost everyone has to ride a bus or private shuttle to the key Medran lift. But not if you're booked into this new, quietly luxurious retreat. Just walk along the Chemin de Clambin for three minutes and you'll hit a piste that leads straight to it. Back at Chalet La Rochette, the liberal use of granite, sheepskins and reclaimed timbers roots the building firmly in the Alps. Expect plenty of mod cons too, with a hammam, cinema room and sauna, although in low-season weeks the chalet is let without a chef. Details Seven nights' self-catering for ten from £31,375 (brambleski.com). Fly to Geneva or take the train to Le Châble Become a subscriber and, along with unlimited digital access to The Times and The Sunday Times, you can



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