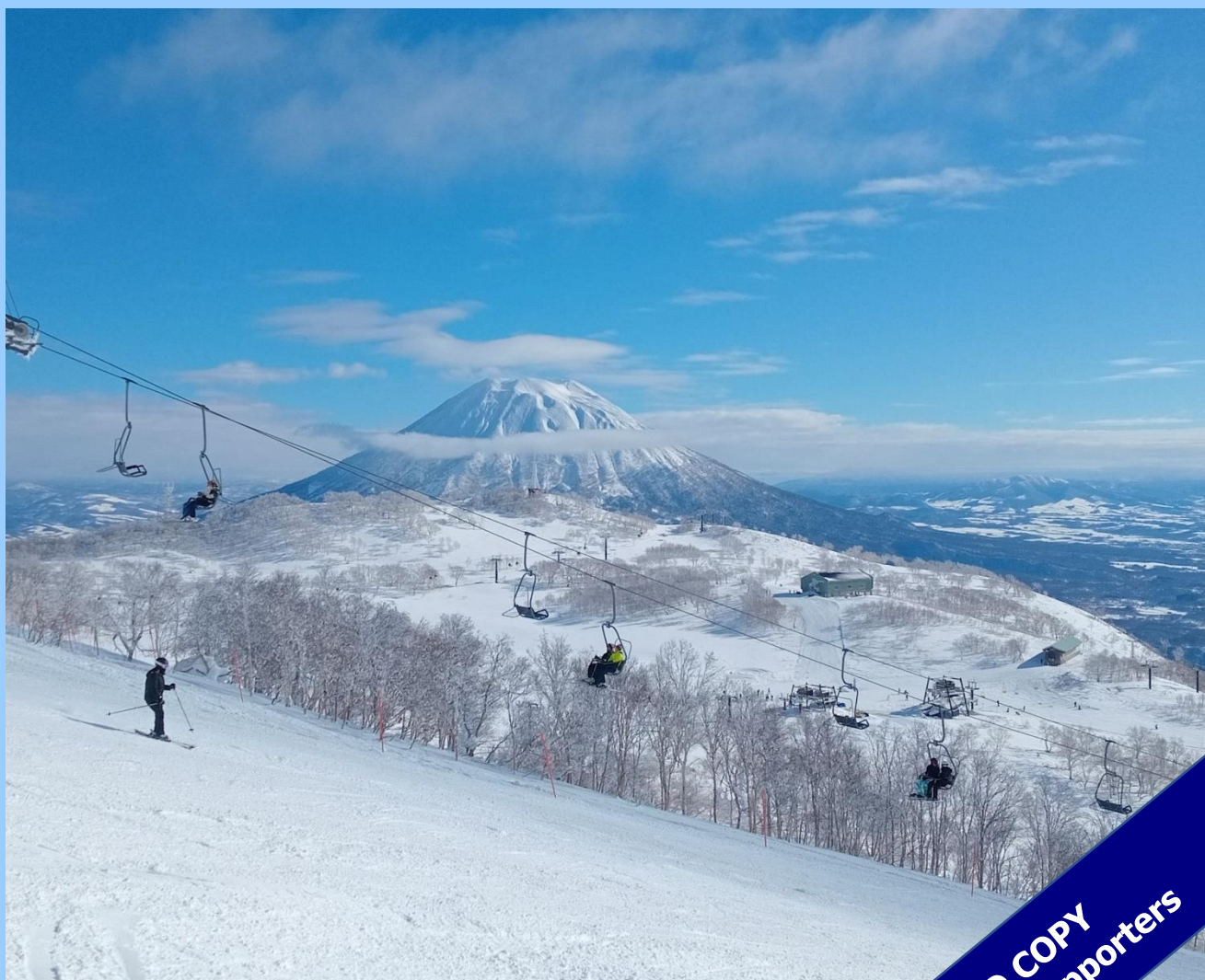


2025 International Report on Snow & Mountain Tourism

*Overview of the key industry
figures for ski resorts*



Laurent Vanat

17th edition - April 2025

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Contributors and supporters

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Laurent Vanat is an international expert in ski business and ski resort management. He gained his experience first in Switzerland, benchmarking the largest resorts and starting a comprehensive collection of visitation data in 2004. His work resulted since winter 2004/05 in the Swiss end of season report. In order to benchmark Swiss ski resorts with their fellows in the Alps and North America, the Swiss report initially gave a very short overview of these respective markets.

The demand for international benchmarking data was however growing, as the demand for extending the scope of countries covered. Thus, starting in 2009, a broader overview of international ski markets was presented in a dedicated report. The latter grew from the initial 7 countries reported in the 2009 issue to 72 since 2020.

Today, the **International Report on Snow & Mountain Tourism** is acknowledged worldwide as the reference for ski industry figures. Since 2016, it has been translated several times into Chinese and 2018 saw an exceptional French version, to mark for the 10th issue of the report. Data from this report has already been presented at numerous international meetings, including the OITAF congress in Rio de Janeiro, those of UNWTO in Andorra, Almaty, Tbilisi and Ulsan, ALPITEC / ISPO in Beijing, Mountain Planet in Grenoble and meetings of FIS, BOCOG and many other organisations. It has been quoted by numerous press articles, reports and other media and has been a reference in several conferences and TV interviews.

Laurent Vanat has his own consultancy practice specialising in ski business reviews and planning.

Disclaimer

The present document compiles data provided by numerous sources, together with estimates done in the absence or insufficient reliability of available statistics. Not all the information set out in this report has been systematically verified. The author is not responsible for any inaccuracy, nor is he liable for any damage whatsoever, direct or indirect, from using this document or its contents.

The contents of this document are updated on a yearly basis with the goal of continually improving accuracy. Therefore, readers of past editions should be aware that some data might have been amended in line with this objective. Since new and more reliable statistics are made available every year, some data changes must be interpreted carefully. Unless clearly specified and presented with historical series, some variances from one edition of this report to the next are not necessarily significant (increases or decreases). It may be only modification due to use of sources that are more reliable. Unaware comparisons with former editions of this report may thus lead to inadequate conclusions.

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¹ Available at following address:
<https://de.cdn-website.com/64e34689550d402aa147af5bbc27524d/files/uploaded/tarif-WR-data-2025.pdf>

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Glossary²

Aerial lift: A lift where skiers hang in a carrier over the ground (which is held to the cable by fixed or detachable grips). This includes chairlifts, gondolas, combined lifts (chairs & gondolas, also called telemix or chondolas), cable cars, funitels, 2S lifts, 3S lifts.

Alpine country³: Those countries that are part of the European Alps (Austria, France, Italy, Lichtenstein, Slovenia and Switzerland). Often, reference in this document is limited to the 4 majors.

Beginners' lift: any type of short surface lift that is used in beginners' areas.

FIS: International Ski Federation, based in Switzerland. It was founded in 1924 and now comprises 118 national ski associations. Its mission is to promote and direct the development of ski and snowboarding activities worldwide, and oversee competition.

Hourly lift output (skiers/hour): The manufacturer's rated number of skiers per hour that a lift can transport to the top of the lift. Total country capacity is the sum of all the individual lift capacities.

Lifts (ski lifts, ropeways): General term to designate any aerial lift, surface lift or funicular. Beginners' lifts and magic carpets are usually not included in the lifts' count because they may be numerous but without much value added to the VTMH and thus would bias ratios.

Magic carpet (moving carpet / conveyor lift): a conveyor belt installed at the level of the snow. Passengers slide onto the belt at the base and stand with ski or snowboard facing forward. The moving belt pulls the passengers uphill.

Number of skiers transported: The number of passengers transported per lift; one skier taking the same lift 5 times accounts for 5 skiers transported, also referred to as *frequencies*.

National participation rate: Domestic skiers as a percentage of the total country population. This represents the total number of nominal skiers without any consideration for the frequency of visits to a ski resort. Thus, this rate includes skiers that did not ski during the latest season⁴.

Ski area: A designated place where one skis (in some countries, these areas may not have lifts). Usually, one ski destination where several distinctive companies operate lifts is accounted for a single ski area (or ski resort).

Ski resort: In this report, a ski resort is considered as an organised ski area with more than 4 lifts.

Skier: One person participating in skiing, snowboarding or other downhill sliding activity, independent of the frequency of his visits to ski resorts. Thus, the wording also covers *nominal* skiers that do not ski each season.

Skier visits (or skier-days): One person visiting a ski area for all or any part of a day or night for the purpose of skiing, snowboarding, or other downhill sliding

activity. Skier visits include full-day, half-day, night, complimentary, adult, child, season pass and any other type of ticket that gives a skier/snowboarder the use of an area's facilities. A skier skiing for a whole week at a resort accounts for 7 skier visits (for example). The figures indicated in this report for countries or individual resorts usually refer to the last 5-year average.

Skier visits per inhabitant: Ratio of domestic skier visits divided by the population.

Skier visits per foreign visitor: Ratio of skier visits of foreign visitors divided by the total number of foreign visitors.

Surface lift: Any kind of ski lift where the skiers remain standing on their skis, pulled or pushed on the ground. This includes draglifts, rope tows, tow lifts, platter lifts (or button lifts), J-bars, T-bars and magic carpets. Beginners' lifts and magic carpets are usually considered separately and are not included in the lifts' count.

Vertical Transport Meters per Hour (VTMH): Product of each individual lift's hourly capacity multiplied by its vertical drop (the figure is usually expressed in thousands).



² A French / German / Chinese glossary is available at the end of the report.

³ Despite Germany is also part to the Alpine Convention, the alpine range covers only a very limited part of its territory and the Alpine area of the country only hosts a fraction of the German ski resorts. Thus, Germany has not been consolidated with the Alpine countries in this report but with the rest of Western Europe.

⁴ Some countries, like the US and China, calculate a specific participation rate for each season, which only covers the related season's active skiers and may vary considerably from the nominal participation rate.

Foreword



2025 heralds a new milestone in the collaboration between the Mountain Planet international mountain development exhibition and the International Report on Snow & Mountain Tourism. For this year's edition and subsequent versions, Mountain Planet and Laurent Vanat have signed a partnership agreement with the aim of stepping up efforts to promote and disseminate the International Report on Snow & Mountain Tourism.

Nothing could be more natural than the close ties that have developed between the largest international show focused on driving mountain development and the only annual report in the world that has been listing and analysing data from close to 2'000 ski and mountain areas across 68 countries for the last 17 years.

As mountain resorts and communities gear up to face a wave of major changes and at a time when tomorrow's challenges will be defined by today's actions, it seemed the obvious choice to lend our support and take part in distributing this 250-page document which, every year, scrutinises and drills down into the skiing, snow and mountain industry and its trends in an effort to develop strategic discussions and foster real debate on the issues involved.

We look forward to seeing you at Grenoble ALPEXPO on 21 April 2026 to open the doors of the next Mountain Planet exhibition and present the 2026 edition of the International Report on Snow & Mountain Tourism.

Jérôme Riff

Director of Mountain Planet and Managing Director of the Grenoble ALPEXPO exhibition centre

Introduction

This **17th issue** of the **International Report on Snow & Mountain Tourism**, covering the **2023/24 winter**, is the first one, post-covid-19, to present a season without direct impact of the pandemic, as China still suffered from its effects during former season. In fact, no big reset happened and despite the general climate looks more adverse, the ski industry is still able to perform. We look far away from the end of the story that so many mainstream media love to describe for tomorrow. In fact, figures demonstrate that the ski industry worldwide confirms its consolidation after the pandemic.

Business as usual – season 2

With more than **366 million skier visits**, despite a global 1.3% decrease in global attendance compared to former winter, ski season 2023/24 demonstrated for the third time in a row that the ski industry is healthy. The average worldwide visitation to ski resorts for the 3 post-covid-19 years is even higher than average visitation of pre-covid-19 years of the current century. Winter 2023/24 was indeed again a *business as usual* season.

In fact, attendance at ski resorts continues basically to be shaped by the snow and weather conditions. By analogy to Herzberg hygiene-motivator management theory, snow is rather a driver of dissatisfaction if it lacks while sun is a driver of satisfaction when it shines. Climate change impacts rather negatively the first when it impacts rather positively the second. If there is sufficient snow, a sunny day will motivate skiers to hit the slopes, and record visitation days experienced at some resorts still demonstrates it. Although climate change obviously impacts the operation of ski resorts, it seems at this stage not to have a substantial impact on global visitation.

Highlights of the 2023/24 season confirm that ...

- Ski business currently demonstrates a strong resilience to climate change, with limited impact on attendance over last 20 years;
- Even if in limited numbers, there are still new ski resorts appearing throughout the world;
- It is still possible to realise all time visitation records in mature markets such as Italy and Chile, which made their best ever season;
- China has resumed its growing path with a new record season;
- International skiers' flows are subject to unexpected changes;
- Geopolitical issues may have increased influence on the ski business in the future;
- Industry consolidation currently stabilised;
- After more than 20 years of promises, the digitalisation still does not deliver easy access to the slopes and poorly contributes to customer journey improvement.

As already mentioned in previous issues of this report, it is no surprise to the industry that season's weather and snow conditions are a major driver of visitation and, part of *business as usual*, some countries experienced

favourable conditions when other had to face a more reluctant mother nature. Again in 2023/24, this made close to a zero-sum game. Compared to pre-covid-19 5-year average, the 2023/24 ski season features highs and downs depending on the countries.

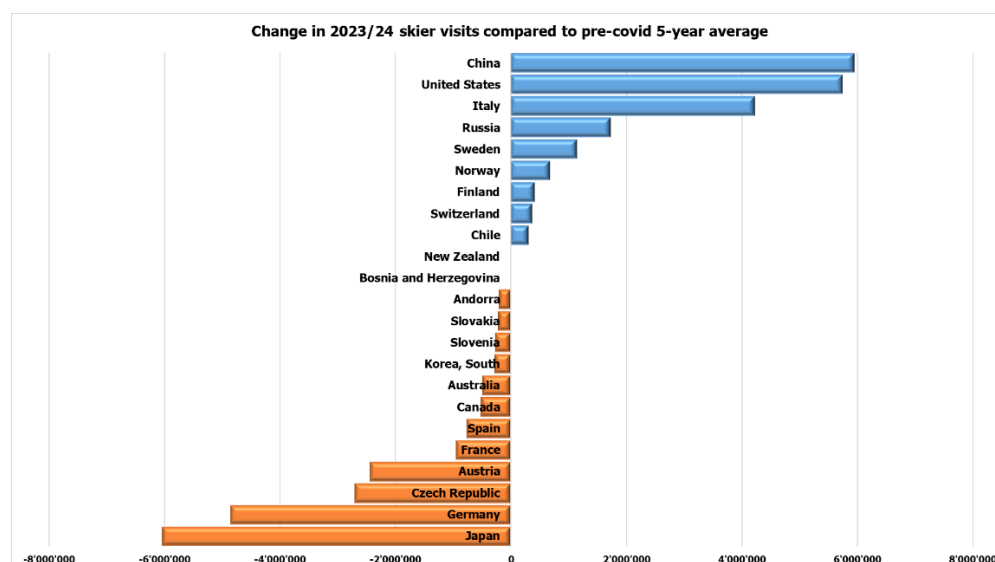


Figure 1: Change over pre-covid 5-year average

With its first season of full recovery after the pandemic, China now leads the podium of the countries that did better than their historic pre-covid 5-year average. Most of the other countries that outperformed already initiated this trend over former season, such as the United States, Italy, the Scandinavian countries and Russia.

Beside Japan and Germany that experienced historical low levels of visitation, France and Austria still did not yet manage to fully recover pre-covid levels.

Embracing anticipation

Looking towards the future, major ski areas associations have initiated over recent years various studies and projects in order to better assess future impact of climate change, consider mitigation measures that can be taken both to reduce carbon footprint and secure snow on the slopes in the future and improve the focus of future investments.

In the US, conditions for effective snowmaking have been analysed. The first step is maintaining slopes, as pre-formed terrain requires less snow for coverage. Regional differences impact snow requirements; for instance, grassy slopes may open with just 50 centimetres of snow, whereas resorts with rocky terrain might need up to one meter. Understanding these variations helps operators plan more effectively. The next step involves planning and

prioritizing snow coverage based on terrain type, natural snowfall variations and contingency strategies for low-snowfall seasons. Operators should assess different parts of the mountain separately, such as terrain parks versus groomed slopes, to optimize resource use. Measurement and adjustment are critical throughout the season, using advanced snowmaking technologies, GPS and smart grooming. These tools allow ski areas to monitor snow depth and adjust coverage as needed, ensuring the right amount of snow is produced without excess waste. Technology plays a crucial role in modern snow management. Snow blankets help preserve snow in targeted areas like half-pipes, while techniques like grooming and snow storage reduce melting. Innovations in energy-efficient snow guns and enhanced control systems further improve sustainability by minimizing resource consumption.

French ski resorts have committed to an environmental roadmap with 16 eco-commitments aimed at preserving mountain ecosystems. Their main goal is to achieve carbon neutrality by 2037. A key focus is on energy and climate. Since 95% of ski resort emissions come from diesel-powered grooming machines, hydrogen has been identified as the best alternative for extreme conditions, with prototypes in development. Energy efficiency measures include training staff in eco-driving to reduce fuel consumption, optimizing lift operations, and implementing low-carbon technologies such as HVO fuels. Water management is another priority, as snowmaking depends on water availability. Ski resorts are regulating water use by storing it and optimizing snow production through real-time snow depth measurement. During droughts, they also share water reserves with local farmers and for firefighting or drinking water needs. To protect biodiversity, ski operators conduct environmental assessments and update them in areas of construction. Landscape preservation efforts include restoring vegetation after infrastructure projects using only native plant seeds. Ski resorts are also accelerating the removal of obsolete ski lifts. Finally, waste management initiatives involve annual clean-up events at each ski resort and educational programs to raise awareness among skiers and hikers about reducing waste, in collaboration with environmental organisations.

To better anticipate future snowfall and optimize decision-making, ski resorts are leveraging advanced climatological modelling tools. These tools provide long-term projections, extending to the end of the century, offering scientific and data-driven insights to guide investment and tourism strategies. One such tool, CLIMSNOW, was developed in France, combining scientific research with expertise in mountain tourism engineering. CLIMSNOW relies on extensive meteorological and snow data to establish a baseline before generating climate projections under 3 greenhouse gas emission scenarios. These data are processed through a supercomputer, allowing precise estimations of future snow cover at different time horizons up to 2100. The model accounts not only for natural snowfall but also for the effects of grooming, snowmaking (considering variables such as snow gun type, temperature, and wind speed), as well as slope and trail orientation. Each mountain range is analysed individually, with detailed calculations based on altitude bands of 300 meters. The results are delivered to ski resorts in comprehensive reports, enabling them to assess the long-term viability of different areas within their domains. With this information, they can make informed

decisions on strategic investments in snowmaking infrastructure or begin adapting their tourism offerings to future climate realities.

In Switzerland, the climate trends pose significant challenges for ski resorts at low and mid-altitudes, where natural snow reliability is decreasing, and snowmaking is becoming more constrained. A project has been launched on the basis of climate projections incorporating different emission scenarios. The project aims to provide insights into future natural snowfall levels across various regions and altitudes. This information will help assess to what extent a potential decline in snow cover can be offset through improvements in winter sports infrastructure, such as snowmaking, slopes maintenance, optimization of slope orientation and facilities, and adjustments to season durations. Additionally, it will analyse the dependence of businesses and jobs in tourist regions on snow sports. Finally, adaptation strategies will be outlined, and ideas for modifying tourism offerings and products will be gathered and presented.

No doubt ski areas will be in the future better equipped to address the challenges of climate change and maintain further the high level of resilience the industry has demonstrated until now.

Methodology

Although data collection within the industry is not always well-organised, various organisations and entities usually collect ski resort data at a national level. This information has been compiled to produce an international overview of the key figures for the industry⁵. For some countries, since data is lacking or incomplete, some research has been conducted in order to either collect or consolidate detailed national data or to extrapolate figures based on known benchmarks. Numerous sources were checked to ensure the highest accuracy of the figures. Some general information was also provided from global directories or statistics. Although some definitions may vary from one country to another, they do generally not involve large bias in the benchmarking of the key figures for the industry⁶ presented in this report.

Under the country review sections, a summary of individual country data is presented in the blue margin, including, when available, charts with 10-year evolution of skier visits (in addition to yearly data, they also feature the evolution of the 5-year average - blue line - in order to help understanding the long-term trend for each of these markets). The latter are limited to countries where attendance is consolidated yearly at national level or where sufficient data is available in order to make the necessary estimates.

⁵ See sources and acknowledgments section at the end of this report for a listing of the available sources.

⁶ Please refer to the Glossary at the front of the document for detailed definitions of the terms employed. See also the Disclaimer, in relation to reliability of the figures and possible changes over the years, from one issue of the report to the next.

The world ski market



which no longer have any organised ski area in operation but used to offer skiing facilities: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bolivia and Colombia.

100 countries offer skiing?

Famous ski journalist Patrick Thorne (Snowhunter) published in a 2013 press release his count of countries where it is possible to ski. He concluded that 100 countries across all continents have reliable snow coverage for all or part of the year, or artificial surface slopes, to allow snow sports. How does this figure reconcile with the data published in the *International Report on Snow & Mountain Tourism*?

The *International Report on Snow & Mountain Tourism* full inventory features reports on **72 countries**. 68 having at least one ski area with lifts and 4 additional countries that once had one or more ski lifts, but these are no longer in operation (Algeria, Afghanistan, Bolivia and Colombia) despite still offering unorganised skiing opportunities. **14 others countries** offer some permanent or temporary snow coverage in some mountains, making it technically possible to ski:

- **Bhutan**, with snow covered mountains in winter;
- **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, with a glacier and occasional snowfall on the highest peaks;
- **Ecuador**, with glaciers and occasional snowfall on the highest peaks;
- **Ethiopia**, with occasional snowfall on the highest peaks;
- **Indonesia**, with some small quickly-melting glaciers;
- **Kenya**, with occasional snowfall on the highest peaks;
- **Moldova**, featuring some unequipped hills with limited vertical, where the locals use to go skiing;
- **Myanmar**, with high snow-covered mountains at the Himalayan border, and even a projected ski resort;
- **Nicaragua**, with the highest volcano receiving snow every few years;
- **Peru**, with tropical glaciers and snowfall in the mountains in winter, and possibly even some temporary lifts;
- **Syria**, with snow in the mountains in winter (a ski resort was in planning before the civil war);
- **Tanzania**, with a glacier and occasional snowfall on the highest peaks;
- **Uganda**, with a glacier and occasional snowfall on the highest peaks;
- **Venezuela**, with a snowfield at the top of the Merida lift, not usually used for skiing.

With these, the total reaches 86 countries where outdoor skiing is possible on snow⁹. **There are a further 15 countries offering either indoor ski centres or outdoor dry slopes**, bringing in fact the total to 101.

⁹ Issue has also been raised to know if Turkmenistan was to be included in this listing. Despite rumours of a ski resort project, it has not yet materialised. The very scarce snowfall in the country would require 100% snowmaking and does not seem to allow enjoying any skiing in natural conditions. Saudi Arabia is also pointing out of the ground with its Trojena project in the mountains of Neom, where some trial on snow have already been conducted.

Ski resorts and infrastructure

According to the latest inventory, **5'898 ski areas** have been identified worldwide (equipped outdoor ski areas covered with snow). As some only offer rudimentary equipment, with a limited number of lifts, a threshold has been set for the purpose of this report. Those **1'803** areas that feature more than 4 lifts are qualified as **ski resorts**.

Based on the latest situation, the key figures for the ski resorts' market and their equipment are presented in following tables. The colour of each bar/slice matches with that of the geographical area shown on the above map, when relevant.

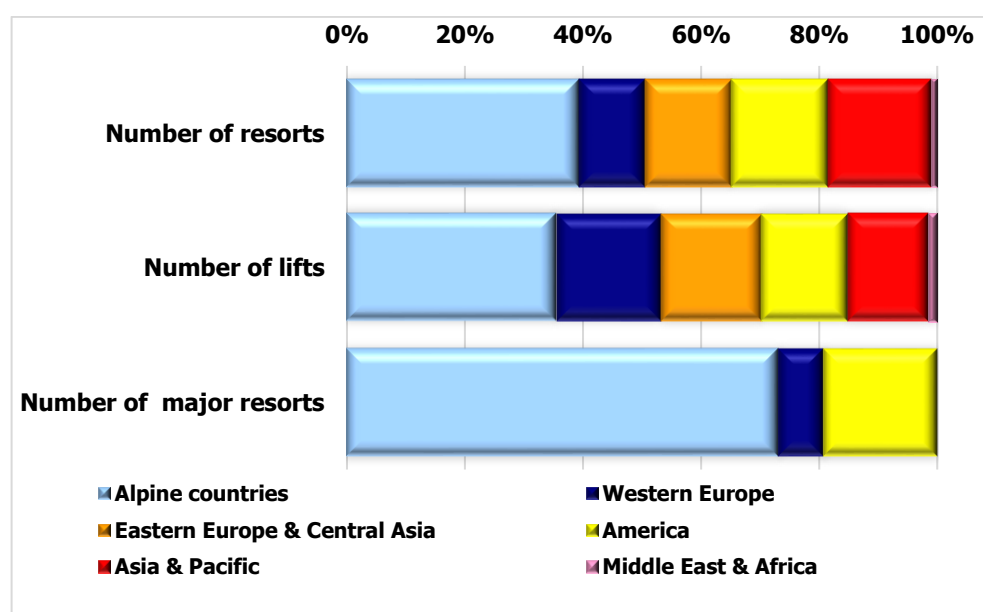


Figure 2: Regional weight of global ski resorts' offer

The share of the Alpine countries in the global ski industry is emphasised by its weight in the distribution of:

- **Number of ski resorts worldwide (1'803 resorts):** 39% of all ski resorts are located in the Alpine countries.
- **Number of lifts worldwide¹⁰ (23'203 lifts):** With 36% of the lifts, the Alpine countries feature the double of lifts than the next largest region.
- **Number of major resorts worldwide (52 resorts):** There are a limited number of major resorts worldwide¹¹. 73% of them are located in the Alps.

¹⁰ This figure is not including all beginners' lifts and magic carpets / conveyors.

¹¹ A resort is considered as major if its attendance reaches over 1 million skier visits per winter season.

The major ski resorts worldwide have been ranked below based on their average annual skier visits¹² during the last 5 winter seasons, ending 2023/24¹³.

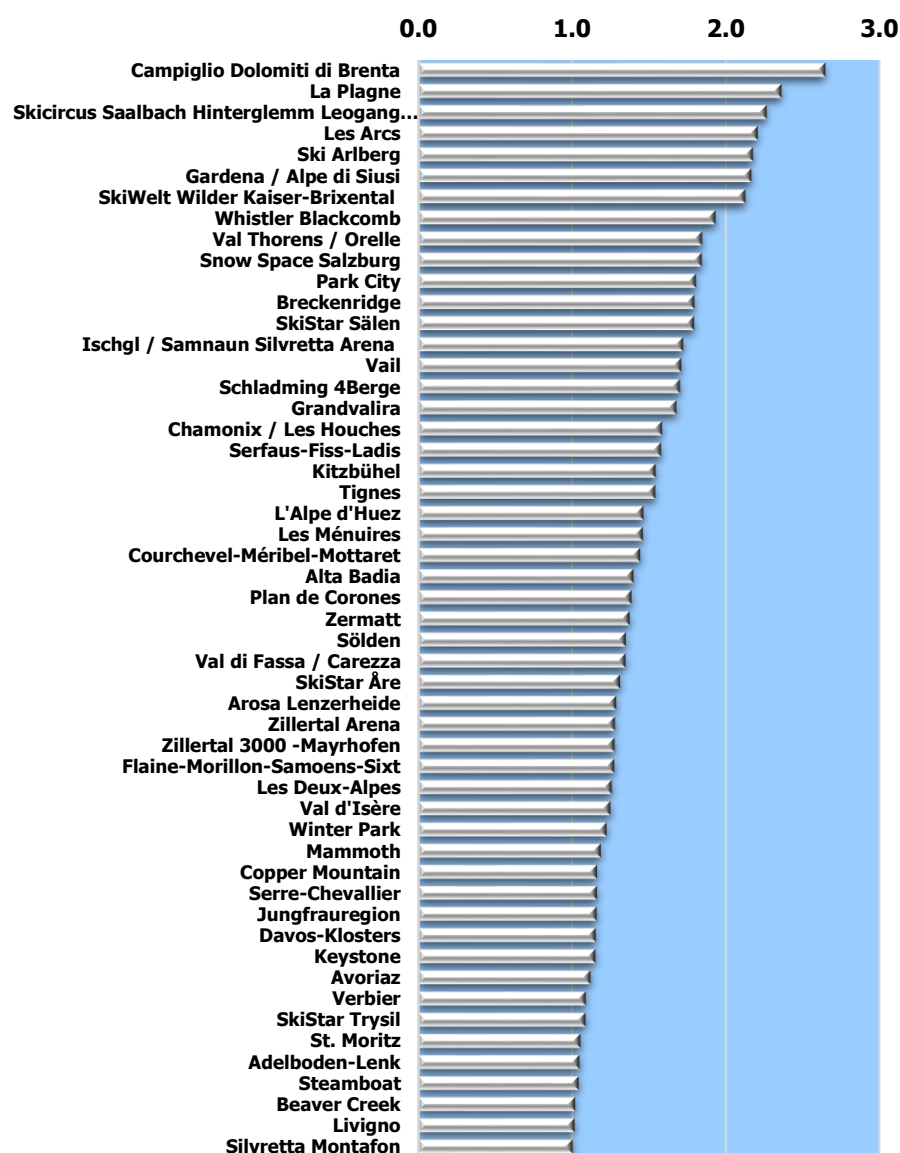


Figure 3: Top world resorts in millions of skier visits

Although often important at a regional level, the altitude of a ski resort is not really an important benchmark worldwide, since at some places around the globe one can ski at sea level, whereas in other countries, one needs to be at much higher elevations to access decent snow conditions.

¹² Publicised data or estimates when required; based on the operating company or marketing operator.

¹³ Due to the full closure of some alpine resorts during winter 2020/21, this season has not been taken at all into account in the computation.

Distribution of ski areas

Most of the industry business is concentrated around the **730** resorts that generate more than 100'000 skier visits per year (**large** and **major** resorts). Even if they only account for 13% of the ski areas, they account for 73% of all skier visits worldwide. The other resorts with more than 4 lifts (**medium** resorts) represent 18% of the ski areas' number but only 9% as far as attendance is concerned. The **small** ski areas up to 4 lifts are the more numerous (69% of the total), but only make 18% of worldwide skier visits.

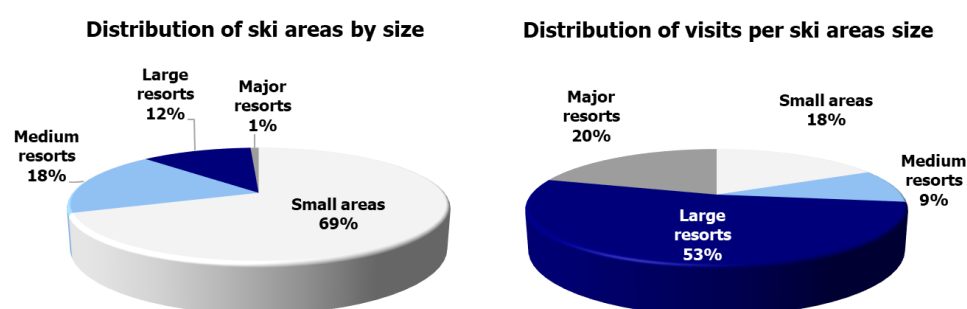


Figure 4: Distribution by ski area size

The distribution of ski areas varies substantially from one region to another. In the Alps, where most of the major resorts are located, the share of resorts clocking more than 100'000 skier visits in a season is higher than in the other regions. But even there, small areas and medium resorts are the more numerous.

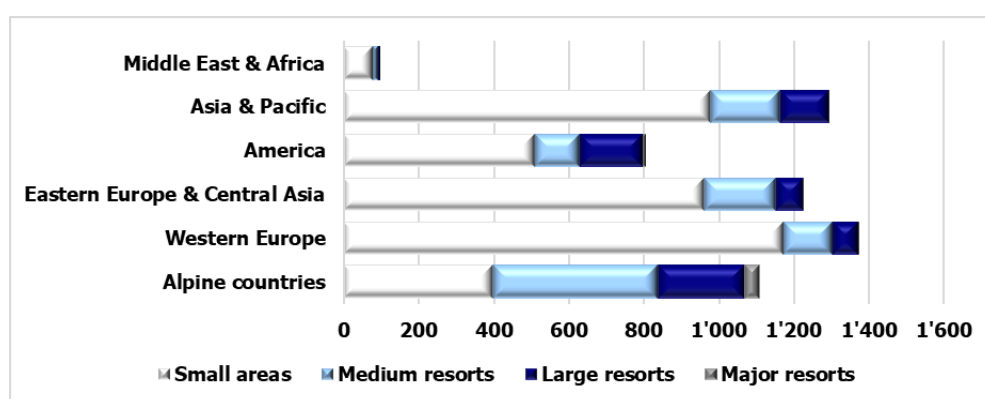


Figure 5: Distribution of ski areas by size and region

The view on the share in total skier visits changes completely the perspective in some regions. In mature markets, over 65% of skier visits are recorded in resorts over 100'000 skier visits (large and major resorts). In the Alpine

countries, this share even reaches 90%, with major ski areas capturing nearly 40% of attendance.

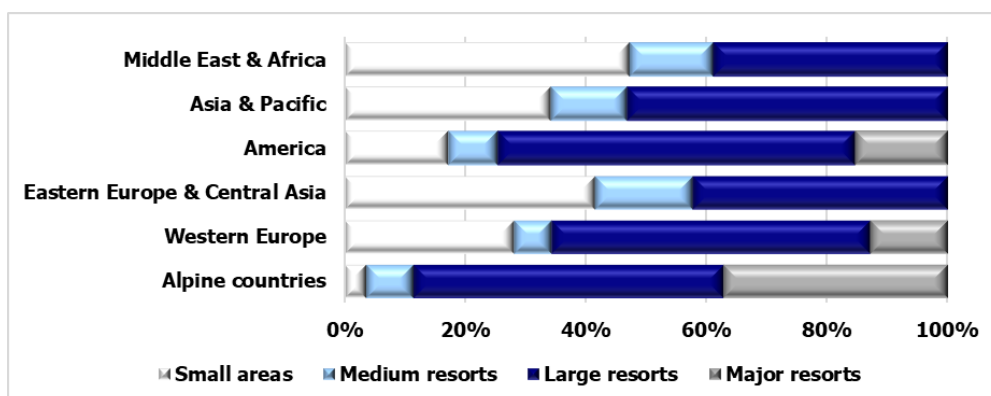


Figure 6: Distribution of skier visits per ski area size and region

Evolution of worldwide skier visits

Since beginning of 2000s, yearly visitation to ski resorts varies mainly due to weather and snow conditions and has been fluctuating between 322 and 392 million skier visits worldwide¹⁴ in normal years (out of covid-19 winters). The total figure has been rather stable, as major mature markets experienced reduced growth (when not experiencing a dramatic decline as with Japan), while other markets were emerging.

The chart hereafter reflects the evolution of skier visits distributed by regions since winter 2000/01¹⁵. Only bad weather and snow conditions of winter 2006/07 involved an abrupt decline in visitation nearly such as did outbreak of covid-19 for the 2019/20 season, with sudden closing of the resorts over the world in March 2020. However, Alpine countries' lockdown during winter 2020/21 generated the most dramatic shortfall in visitation over the period, with only 203 million skier visits recorded. The subsequent winter seasons returned to some normality and winter 2023/24 clocked a total of **366 million skier visits**, 1.3 % down compared to previous season.

¹⁴ Adding visitors to indoor ski centres and dry slopes, the figure reaches an average of 400 million, which has been for a long time an approximate overall draw.

¹⁵ The chart features the total estimated skier visits per regions. It includes estimates for the countries where the data are not available. Data however exclude visitation in ski domes for most countries (except China, where they are included in total national visitation numbers).

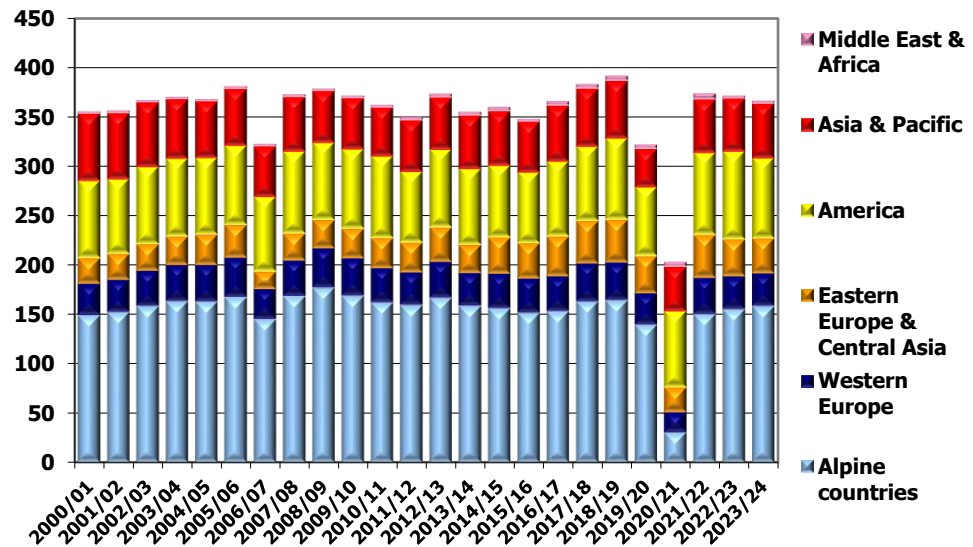


Figure 7: Evolution of skier visits per region (millions)

Market share in worldwide skier visits

The relative importance of the major destinations is showed in the pie chart hereafter. Clearly, the Alpine countries are the biggest ski destination in the world, capturing 39% of skier visits (as the chart is based on 5-year average, the impact of lockdown is noticeable, with still some market share loss compared to pre-covid times). The second biggest destination is America (mostly North America), accounting for 24% of skier visits worldwide.

Asia & Pacific used to have the same market share as America. However, the continuous decline of the industry in Japan has still not been replaced by the growing ski market in China.

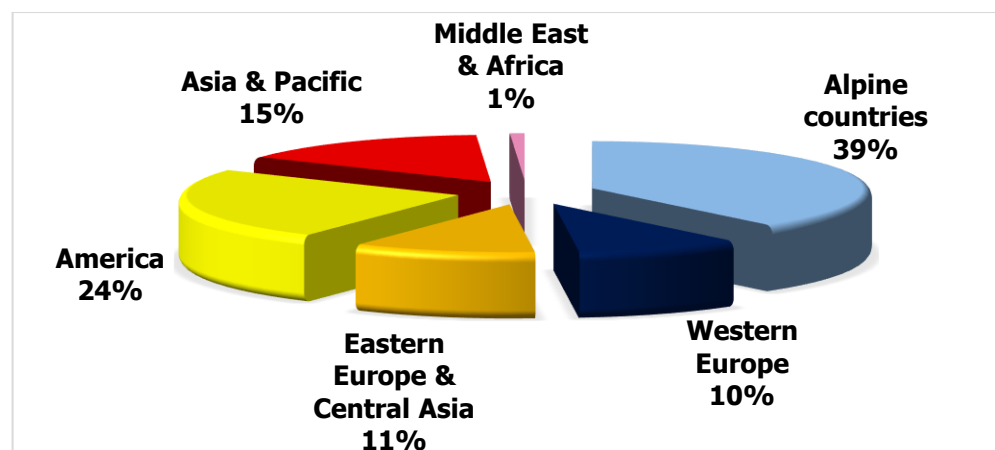


Figure 8 : repartition of skier visits worldwide

Northern, Southern and Western European non-Alpine countries (grouped under the label of Western Europe) also attract 10% of the market, even if skier visits are spread primarily over a large number of small resorts.

Number of skiers in the world

The total number of skiers worldwide was estimated based on both the number of skier visits in the various countries as well as on the national rates of participation¹⁶. The figure is currently estimated to be around **150 million** and seems to be growing, thanks to the development in Eastern Europe and Asia. Although some countries have no ski areas (in some instances only ski domes), they have skiers who ski abroad. For example, this is the case with the Netherlands, which accounts for about 1 million outbound skiers.

Over the former issues of the International Report on Snow & Mountain Tourism, efforts have constantly been made in order to improve the reliance of data and restate them in case more accurate sources where found. This phenomenon can explain part of the variation in the number of global skiers published from one issue to the next. However, over the years, there has been a noticeable upwards trend in this figure which also results from change in actual numbers and not only restatements. From 2009¹⁷ to 2023, the total number of skiers worldwide has been growing by 30 to 40 million, reaching around 150 million. The evolution can be analysed as follows:

Before 2009	2009 to 2023	After 2023 (outlook)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is believed that over 2 preceding decades, the number of skiers has been rather stagnant, as skiing concentrated on traditional western markets. Despite the population increase in these markets, the number of participants was not growing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The expected decline of the number of skiers on western market did not really happen as expected, with ageing Baby-boomers keeping on skiing, even if it is less frequently. The development or redevelopment of ski areas in Eastern Europe and Central Asia had little impact on the global number of skiers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numerous issues remain unclear regarding the future trend. It is however clear that the Baby-boomers will sooner or later start to decline stronger than until now. Growth pattern of the Chinese market will be the major medium term driver, but it is currently unknown.

¹⁶ It must however be stressed that the number of days actually skied per potential skier may vary significantly from one country to another. Skiers are considered independent from their frequency of visit to ski areas – see glossary.

¹⁷ 2009 is the first issue of the International Report on Snow & Mountain Tourism.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China experienced a spectacular growth in the number of skiers, as skiing was just adopted by the general public since the start of the millennium. However, the growth of the global Asian market was mitigated by the decline of Japanese skiing population. 	
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Interestingly, this is not reflected in the evolution of skier visits, as the participation rate of new entrants is still lower than those of declining skiing populations, and China is producing lots of one-time skiers. Thus, the total skier visits numbers tend to remain rather flat over the time.

Various approaches to skiers' number

The number of national skiers in a country is often a topic for debate. Each survey ends up with different conclusions, depending on how the questions are asked. In fact, few countries have yearly statistics about the number of actual skiers in a given season. Only the US end of season report publishes yearly data series and China Ski Industry White Book presents an estimate for the season. For instance, despite the number of skiers in the US is estimated to be over 25 million, the last Kottke End of Season report indicated for winter 2023/24 a number of unique snow sports participants estimated to 10.6 million.

A meta-analysis conducted in France by Willy Fux, from Moving Minds market research agency (f.k.a. LHM-Conseil), allows for a better understanding of this range of figures. Based on the pre-covid-19 seasons, it appeared from the research that, on a total population of 67 million, 24 million had already had a ski/snowboard experience at least once in their life. About 10 to 12 million had actually skied/snowboarded at least once in the last 4 years, but only 6 million had actually skied/snowboarded in the last 12 months¹⁸.

International Report on Snow & Mountain Tourism use the middle metric to estimate the skiers' market size. It is commonly accepted that there are only 60 to 70 million active skiers/snowboarders in a given winter season, when the total figure featured in this report amounts to the double. The fact that 50% of skiers do not ski in a given season may be the bad news for the industry, but also a big opportunity!

¹⁸ Within those 6 million, approximately 2,5 to 3 million ski literally every single year, the others go out less frequently.

Skiers per region of origin

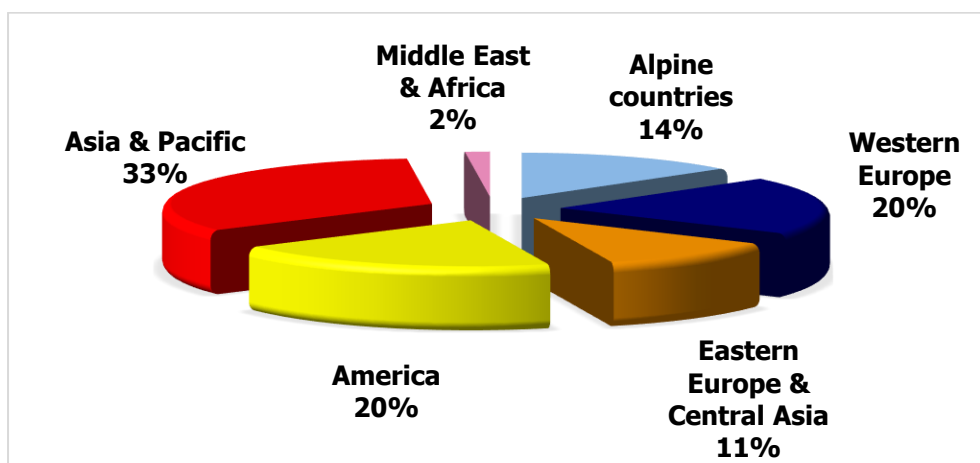


Figure 9: distribution of skiers by region of origin

This chart, comparing to skier visits, clearly shows the regions that are exporters of skiers and those that are recipients. The Alpine countries is the most internationally visited ski destination, attracting most of the inbound-ski travel. Even though it hosts 39% of skier visits, it only produces 14% of the skiers. No other region has such a high proportion of foreign visitors.

International skiers' flows

The international flows of skiers are primarily concentrated within Europe. The number of skiers using long haul flights to go skiing is rather small. For instance, overseas skiers represented only 3.5% of total skier visits to US ski resorts in 2016/17 (including Latin American visitors). The weight of international customers is limited for most ski destination countries. Moreover, the international catchment areas are also limited, due to various issues such as market size, transportation, travel time and costs, and possible saturation of airports at ski destinations in Europe.

Worldwide, in a global perspective, the share of foreign visitors in the number of skiers is limited to about **8% of total participants**. There are few big players both in the inbound and in the outbound markets. Skiing is mostly based on the domestic markets and the national customer base is very strong in most of the big playing countries. Often, foreign visitors are concentrated in a few top international resorts.

There are only 2 big outbound markets, Germany and the United Kingdom, providing skiers to a few inbound markets. Most of the outbound countries have few to no ski areas but a ski culture. This is an important issue, as

countries with no ski culture are not likely to be major suppliers of international skiers, even if they have huge populations. The major international skiers' flows concentrate on a very limited number of destinations. The table hereafter ranks the flows for over 200'000 yearly international skiers.

Inbound country	Outbound country					
	Germany	United Kingdom	Netherlands	Denmark	Switzerland	United States
Austria	1	6	4		9	
France		3	7			
Italy	2					
Switzerland	5					
Norway				10		
Canada						8

Outbound European markets are not increasing but may be spread over more destinations in the future. For instance, British customers familiar with the Alps and Andorra now also have other destinations to choose from such as Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, etc. It is also foreseeable that the new markets will supply themselves at a regional level. The recent growth of skiing in Asia will feed resorts in Japan and South Korea, before eventually, if ever, benefiting resorts in the European Alps or North America.

Future trends

On the western markets, the high competition to ski activities combined with the demographics and the stagnation or even decline of the middle class do not provide for substantial development perspectives. In addition, with the exception of a few resorts in Canada, no new resorts have been created in the traditional markets since the start of the century.

As it appears from figures 8 and 9, the regions of Eastern Europe & Central Asia and Asia & Pacific provide 44% of the skiers worldwide, but only produce, at this stage, 26% of skier visits. These regions clearly represent the future growth potential of the market. Besides, a look at new deliveries of lifts confirms that Eastern European and Asian countries are building up at a higher rate than the more traditional ski regions, if the figures are analysed in relative terms.

In Eastern Europe & Central Asia, the growth is however still partly to be expected. It does not materialise as quickly as the prospects of the early 2010s were promising. The renewal and introduction of new lift infrastructure does not seem to have brought large effects yet. Even if Poland, Slovakia and Czech Republic have pretty well modernised their resorts, attendance still seems rather stagnant. There are however some exceptions, with Bosnia & Herzegovina and likely Romania, where attendance has been on the rise.

Other Eastern European countries where the industry was less developed did not either achieve to build all the ski areas that they had planned. Several big resorts development projects have been put on hold or did not materialise to the extend originally planned. This lowers somehow the future growth expectations that could be placed on this region. Unfortunately, some projects had unrealistic expectations of international visitation and the concern for getting domestic clients has been underestimated.

In China, consumption patterns of skiing still need to be improved, so that skiers show a higher commitment to the sport and visit more often the ski areas than currently. Despite the growth perspective of the number of skiers in China still remains, their impact on ski area visitation will highly depend on the dedication to skiing that Chinese skiers will gain.

Therefore, even if the growth potential of the Eastern Europe & Central Asia and Asia & Pacific regions remains, it is not clear when and up to which level it will actually be materialised in the skier visits statistics.

World Indoor Snow Centres Guide

A new edition of The World Indoor Snow Centres Guide from IndoorSnowNews.com has been published, the first full update in 2 years. The Guide was first published in 2002 when there were less than 50 indoor snow centres, most of them in Europe.

The new edition details more than 190 indoor snow centres across nearly 50 countries on 6 continents, and over 100 more planned centres that never happened and all the issues connected with indoor snow and the companies involved. There are tables showing the biggest, longest, oldest, highest centres around the world and construction trends over the past 4 decades.

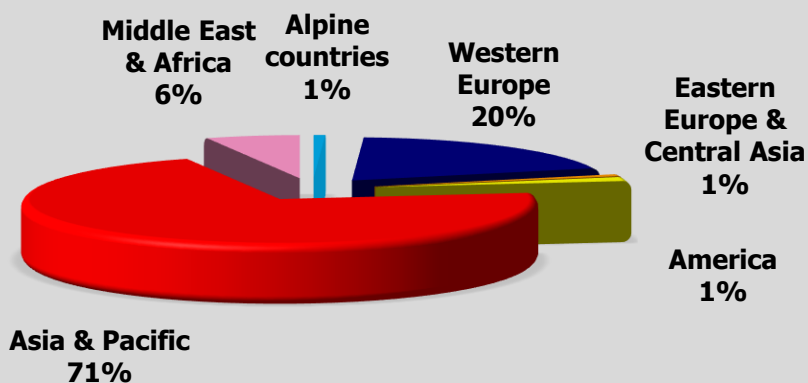
The Guide is compiled by the full-time, year-round, snow travel writer Patrick Thorne who has been reporting on indoor snow centres worldwide for more than 30 years.

Main changes in the 2025 Edition:

- More than 20 new indoor snow centres added and detailed, the majority in China.
- Features grouped into themed sections including Statistics Tables, Environment Issues, History and Impact on Winter Sports Industry Worldwide.
- The number of currently operating indoor snow centres worldwide has passed 150 for the first time – operating in more than 30 countries on 6 continents.
- The number of indoor snow centres built in the past 40 years, including those that have since closed again, has reached 193 and looks set to top 200 by the end of 2025.
- New world's largest indoor snow centres (by various criteria) have opened over the past year, with centres set to beat these again due to opening in the next 12 months.
- China passing 60 indoor snow centres open in 2025 (less than 50 had opened in the previous edition), all detailed over 133 pages on the new edition which also lists centres by province and city as well as by opening date.

The report is available via: <https://indoorsnownews.com/products/>

Distribution of indoor ski centres



Country benchmark - top 20

The current section explores the largest players in the industry, considered on various criteria. Although the ranking is usually done on all the market players, or at least those presenting significant data, the charts hereafter generally only show the top 20 countries ranked.

Italy, the United States, Austria and France have the most **ski resorts** (not included are small ski areas with 4 lifts or less – see glossary).

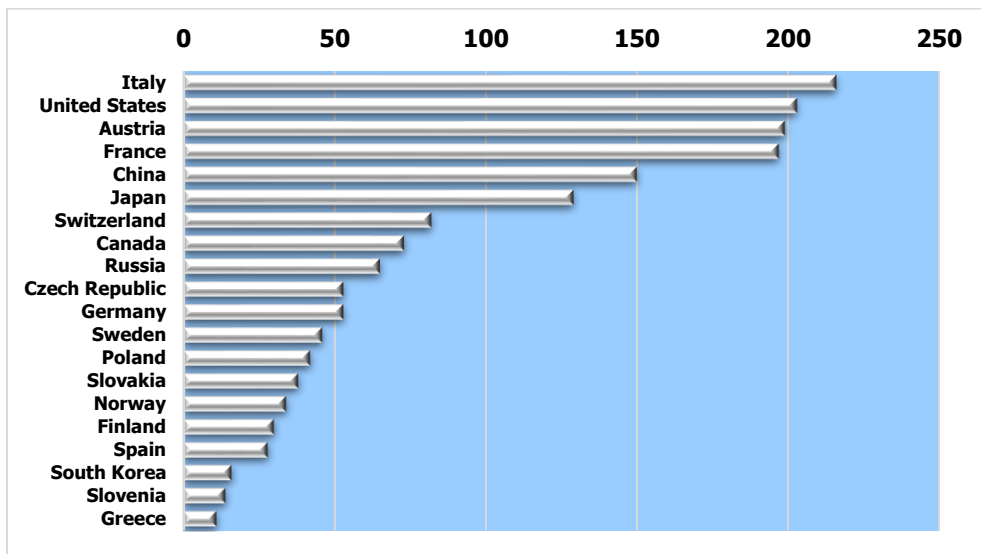


Figure 10 : Number of ski resorts with more than 4 lifts

If Germany also shows a significant number of ski areas, most of them are very small ones that are not considered as ski resorts under the definition used in this report. Japan also features a very high number of ski areas, but a large part are small ones.

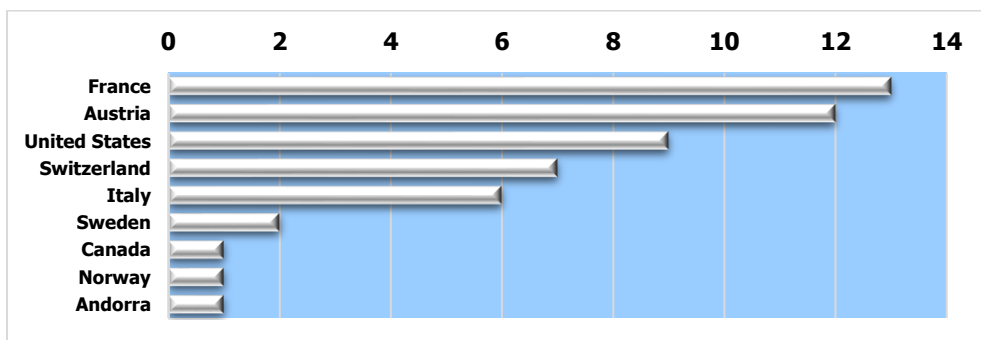


Figure 11 : Number of ski resorts with more than 1 million skier visits

Only France and Austria have more than 10 **resorts that generate over 1 million skier visits per season**. Thanks to recent lift-interconnections between ski resorts, Austria now accounts nearly as much as France, which used to host the highest number of very large ski resorts for a long time.

France and Austria top the list of countries with the most **lifts**, with more than 2'500 each.

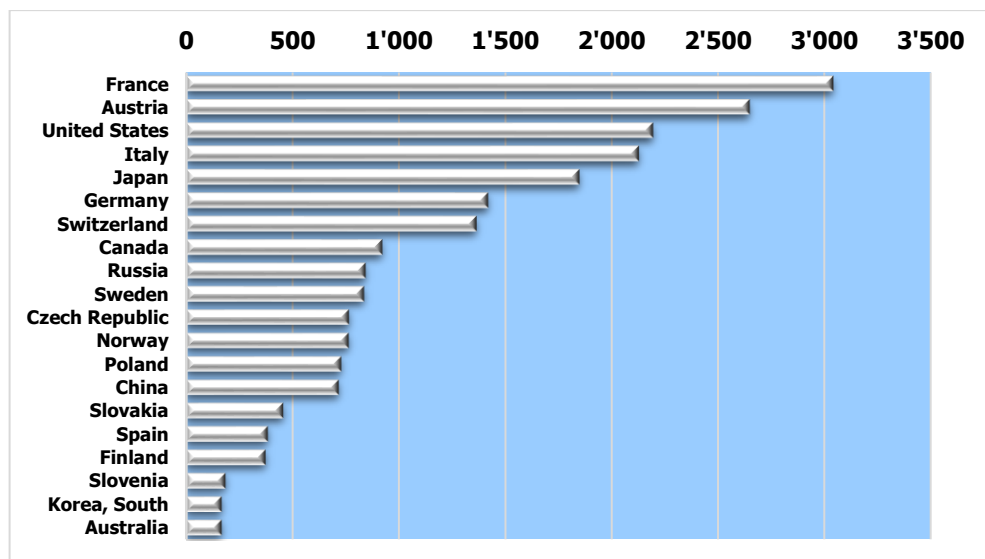


Figure 12 : Number of lifts per country

After the United States, they are also the countries posting the highest **5-year average skier visits** figures, despite the score of Austria and France has been severely damaged by their national lockdowns in 2020/21. Over recent history, the first rank often changed between the top-3 players. United States have now been back on the first rank for a few years.

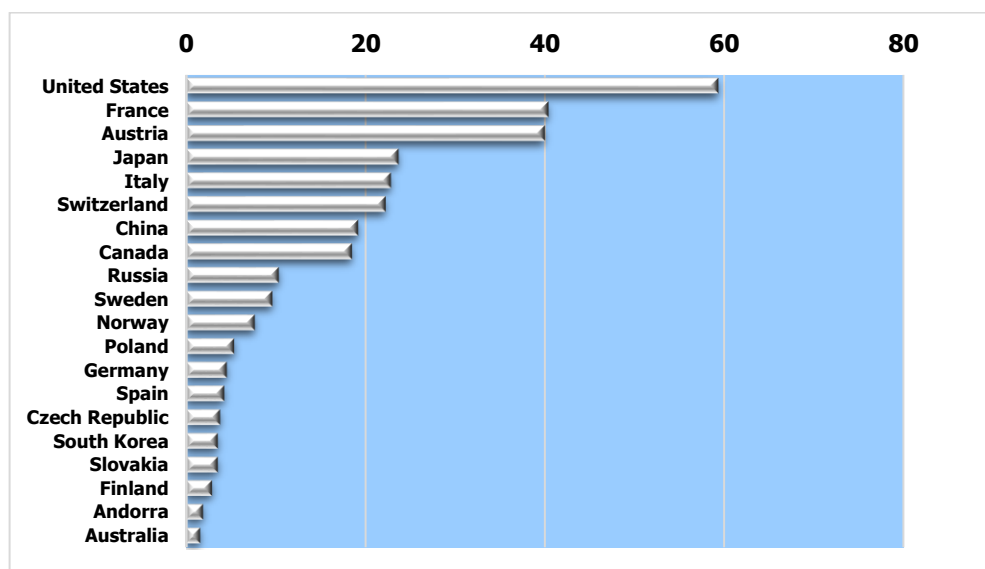


Figure 13 : Skier visits per country (5-year average, in millions)

When most of the other countries feature lower numbers, South Korea, Canada and the United States reach over 20'000 **skier visits produced per**

lift¹⁹. This reflects the difference in business model from Europe where an emphasis is placed on lift mechanics and sophisticated infrastructure.

With more than 1'300 million inhabitants, the biggest **national market** of the sample is China, far greater than any other. However, at this stage, the size of the ski industry is not proportional. India, which is now deemed to account even more inhabitants, still has a very low number of skiers. The United States represent the largest mature market, with a population of over 300 million inhabitants.

The Liechtensteiners, Swiss and Austrians are the populations with the highest nominal **participation rates**, with more than 30% of the population participating in skiing.

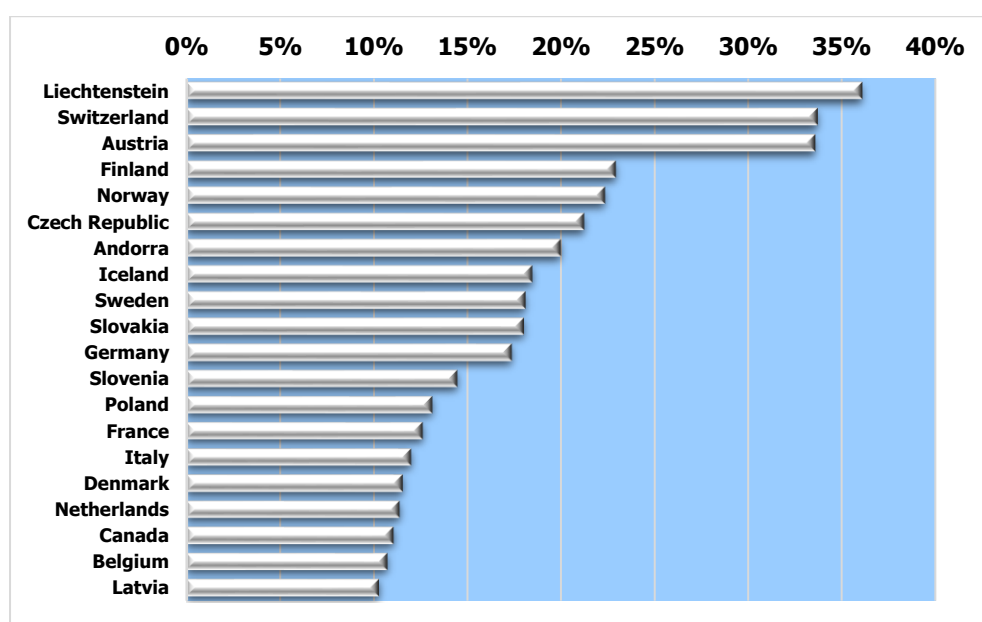


Figure 14: Participation rate of the population (nominal)

However, since they benefit from much larger populations, China, the United States and Germany account for the highest **number of national skiers**. China is rather new on the first rank further to the continuous growth of participants' numbers. Formerly, Japan occupied the 3rd rank but is now losing some ageing skiers.

¹⁹ China also features an impressive figure. However, it is difficult to compare as in some ski areas, skiers are mostly or solely using magic carpets of beginners' lifts, which are not taken into account in the number of lifts. Thus, the total number of lifts indicated for China cannot be compared.

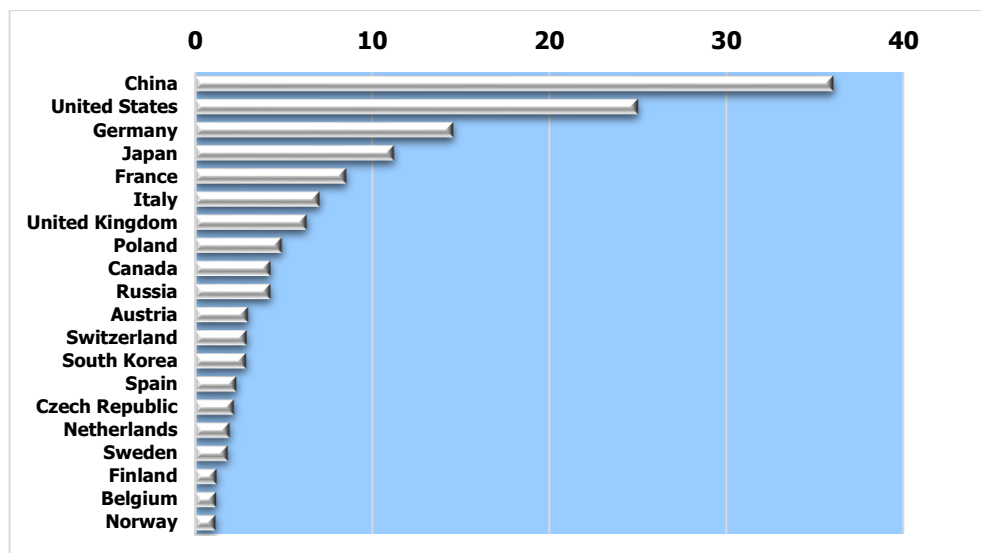


Figure 15: Number of national skiers (nominal - in millions)

France, the United States and Spain are the **countries with the most foreign tourists**, but it is only in France that they provide a noticeable benefit to ski resorts. Most foreign visitors, however, do not come to ski. For the 2 other countries, foreign tourists only marginally contribute to the number of visits to ski resorts.

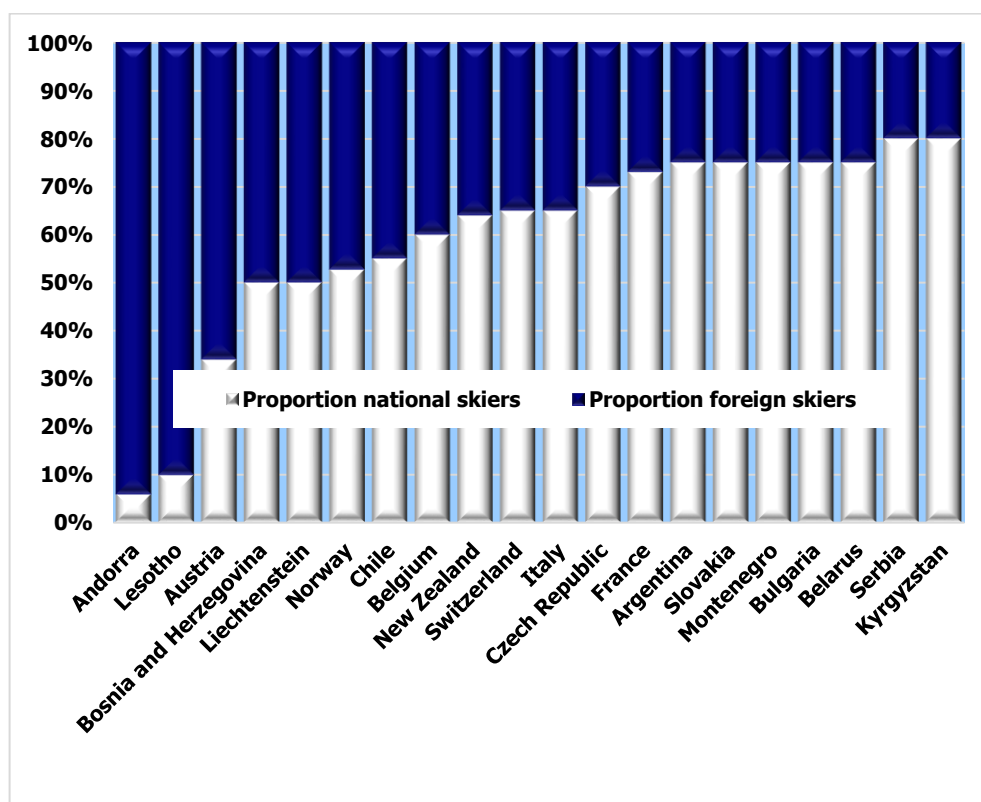


Figure 16: Proportion of national and foreign skiers

In nearly every country, the main portion of skier visits consists of **domestic skiers**. Apart from some anecdotic small ski destination countries, there are only 2 major markets worldwide where **international customers** represent more than half of skier visits. In Andorra and Austria, foreign customers represent respectively 94% and 66% of all skier visits. Besides posting a record proportion of foreign skier visits, these countries also have the highest ratio of skier visits per inhabitant and per foreign visitor of the sample, clearly showing the importance of winter tourism. All ski destinations countries that are not shown in above chart have only 20% or less international visitors in their ski areas.

Summer ski options

Currently up to 8 glaciers open at some point between June and September in Austria (although half of these close at the start of June and do not re-open until late September), 3 in Italy, 3 in France, 3 in Norway, 2 in Switzerland and 1 each in Canada and the United States.

In the 1980s and 1990s, up to 40 resorts, primarily in the Alps, opened for summer skiing with famous resorts including Verbier, La Plagne, Zugspitze, Val Thorens, Monterosa and Marmolada offering this option. While many of these resorts stopped offering summer snow sports at the start of this century, the numbers have remained relatively constant for the past decade.

The maximum number of ski areas open in July and August is now a dozen, although Hintertux in Austria, Zermatt in Switzerland and Timberline in Oregon, United States, are usually open more-or-less year-round (except for weather/maintenance breaks).



Source: Snowhunter

The World's 6 Summer-Only Ski Areas

There is a short time window each year when the 6 ski areas that only open during spring or summer are all open at once. Because of unpredictable snow conditions some years.

The *summer only* areas are different to those winter resorts that stay-open, or re-open, offering high altitude glacier skiing in the summer like Zermatt or Val d'Isère; and they are not Southern Hemisphere ski areas.

They are Northern Hemisphere ski areas in locations, which are often cut off by snow in winter, or too cold and dark to operate in the winter season. The 6 are **Beartooth Basin** on the Wyoming/Montana border in the United States; **Passo Stelvio** in Italy, **Gassan** in Japan and 3 glacier ski areas in Norway, **Stryn Glacier**, **Folgefonn** and **Galdhøppigen**.

Despite receiving unseasonable early summer snowfalls, which sometimes blocks access to the slopes, Beartooth Basin says its operation is on a day-to-day basis as summer thawing means rocks are increasingly appearing through the snow.

A seventh mostly-spring-skiing area, **Riksgransen** in Sweden, usually opens from late-February to late May. It traditionally opens for 3 days of skiing and boarding around Midsummer, offering the novelty of snow sports under the midnight sun in its northerly location within the Arctic Circle where there is 24-hour daylight at this time of year.

Source: Snowhunter

Alpine countries

The Alpine countries are by far the largest inbound ski market on the planet, capturing 39% of worldwide attendance. It is also the most intensely equipped region of the industry, totalling over 8'000 lifts. Unsurprisingly, it is home to 4 of the major players in the ski industry. Although geographically part of Western Europe, the Alpine countries have been treated as a separate group in this report, due to their importance in terms of market share.





Austria



Part of the Alps, Austria is covered mostly by mountains. 68% of the country is located above 500 meters. Only the eastern side of the country partly consists of lowlands. The Alps cover 62% of the land area, culminating with the Grossglockner at 3'798 meters above sea level. Thus, contrary to the other Alpine countries, Austria does not feature any summit above 4'000 meters.

Winter sports already appeared in Austria at the end of the 19th century. There are records of a ski race organized in Kitzbühel's as

early as 1895. The Arlberg was one of the first vacation spots where tourists came for skiing. In 1901, 3 friends founded the Ski Club Arlberg. Skiing was in its early stages, with participants wearing loden and controlling wooden skis with a single pole. Some ski competitions were organised starting of 1904 and the first ski schools emerged in 1906. The *Arlberg* ski teaching method appeared and was soon the standard at that time. Initially attracting an international, predominantly British audience, Kitzbühel started hosting international ski races and gained popularity. The famous Hahnenkamm cable car was built in 1928, followed by the first Hahnenkamm races. In the 1930s, ski schools and ski clubs were founded in several locations. In 1936, the first surface lift was installed in Ebensee and in 1947, the first chairlift in Wildschönau. Together with the slope preparation, they contributed to making winter sports increasingly popular. Many of farmers' villages in the mountains discovered the opportunities winter tourism offered, and after Second World War, it progressively developed into a major industry. After a brief post-war stagnation, winter sports thrived from 1949 onwards, leading to ongoing construction booms. However, most of the villages managed to keep their local character and limit the number of secondary homes. In Tyrol, especially restrictive laws were passed in this regard. Therefore, Austria is the alpine country with the highest capacity of hotel accommodation in the ski resorts, and also with the highest proportion of guest staying in such accommodations.

Since most of the hotels are family-owned²⁰, they still have a rather conservative approach to marketing, but benefit from loyal returning customers. The owners invest very regularly to maintain rooms and infrastructure up to date, resulting in a very good price/quality ratio for most of the accommodations. This seems to be successful with both the domestic and the large German and Dutch customer base (respectively 12%, 47% and 14% of

²⁰ The same families also often own shares in the lift companies.

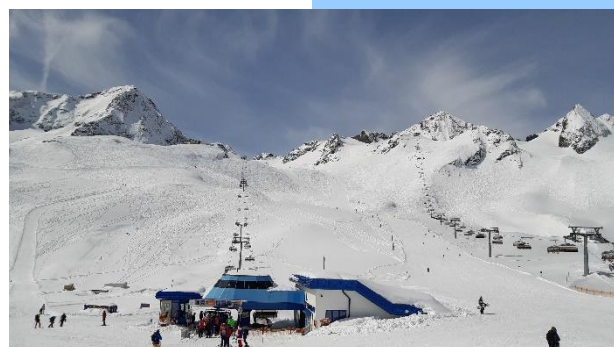
overnight stays²¹). In fact, the country is a big importer of skiers: Austria is the country in the world that welcomes the highest number of foreign skiers. The level of traditional German clients has been rather stagnant for about 30 years now, and Russian clients showed a sharp decline already after Winter 2014, which reduced even further after the Ukrainian war. However, Austrian ski resorts benefited from a global increase in foreign guests till covid-19 outbreak. Most nationalities were up – possibly a switch from Switzerland due to the rise of the Swiss currency. Winter 2022/23 and 2023/24 not yet fully recovered to pre-pandemic levels of international guests. Domestic customers remain stable. Austria has a strong ski culture and remains the only country where schools still go on ski weeks on a regular basis.



Ski resorts have never ceased to improve. With more than EUR 6 billion spent during the last decade, Austrian operators have been massively investing, showing the most updated lift infrastructure of the industry. 746 new lifts²² have been installed over the period 2000 to 2020. To some extent, or when measured to other countries' standards, the infrastructure in some places even tends to be luxurious, with equipment such as 8-seater detachable chairlifts with heated seats, bubbles and automated underground parking. It is worth noting that the economic sustainability of such a high level of investment is still difficult to demonstrate, when more than 50% of revenues have been reinvested for several consecutive years.

The industry now also covers more than 60% of the slopes with snowmaking. A yearly average of EUR 140 million has been invested in snowmaking over the last decade.

A couple of Austrian resorts have a very strong market positioning. Even before being connected, they have joined marketing efforts, showing an example of a new dynamic. Despite the fact that it was not possible to ski between each of the resorts, the benefits of using common brands have appeared, for instance by allowing higher pricing and joint advertising actions. **SkiWelt Wilder Kaiser – Brixental** is an illustration. Collaboration initiatives began in the 1970s, introducing joint tickets in 1973/74, which culminated in the formation of SkiWelt in 1977. This unified ski area, once known as *Skigroßraum Wilder Kaiser – Brixental*, offered winter sports enthusiasts a single ticket to access the entire region. Over the years, the number of interconnected resorts has been growing and Austria surpassed France in the number of resorts welcoming more than 1 million skier visits in a winter season since 2015. Currently, France however recovered its first rank. The race to become Austria's biggest interconnected resort seems to be still open!



There are a total of 8 glaciers in Austria that have been developed into ski resorts. With high elevation, mostly

²¹ Figures from the 2022/23 winter season, Statistik Austria, Tyrol, Salzburg & Vorarlberg.

²² Including lift renewals.

exceeding 3'000 meters, natural snow was guaranteed almost year-round in the past. These areas enabled winter sports enthusiasts practicing from autumn to late spring. However, because of global warming, only one still manages to be open year-round (or nearly). In Tyrol, there are **Kaunertal Glacier** (up to 3'113 meters), welcoming skiers from October to May, especially famous for its snowpark, hosting popular snowboarding events, **Pitztal Glacier** (up to 3'440 meters), renowned for its high altitudes and stunning views, offering around 70 kilometres of slopes and varied off-piste options from September to May, **Sölden Glacier** (up to 3'340 meters), operating from September to May and featuring a Gletscher-Testcenter, **Stubai Glacier** (up to 3'210 meters), Austria's largest glacier ski resort, open from October to May and **Hintertux Glacier** (up to 3'250 meters), Austria's only year-round ski resort, offering 20 kilometres of slopes in summer). **Kitzsteinhorn Glacier** (up to 3'029 meters) is located in Salzburg region, open from October to May, including freeride routes and snowparks. In Carinthia, **Mölltal Glacier** (up to 3'122 meters) is a smaller yet accessible resort operating up to 320 days a year from September. It's a training hub for Austrian and German ski teams. Finally, Upper Austria / Styria, features **Dachstein Glacier** (up to 2'700 meters).

In the western part of the country, Tyrol is likely to be the most densely ski-resort populated area in the world. With 79 ski areas and 480 major lifts²³, Tyrol captures 49% of Austrian skier visits. Large ski resorts can also be found in Vorarlberg, Salzburg and Carinthia. The smaller ski resorts in the eastern regions are visited by guests from the Vienna area and neighbouring Slovakia and Hungary, mostly just for day trips.



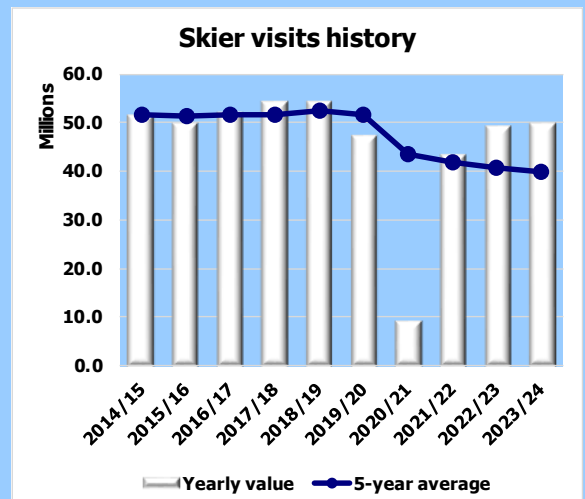
Austrian ski resorts are working to improve their climate-friendliness. A large number of projects are continuously improving the share of renewable energies. In the area of mobility, the industry is relying on a strong cooperation with ÖBB Railtours (products such as *In the Nightjet to the Snow* for instance).

²³ Not taking into account the surface lifts.

With an average yearly increase of 2.25% since beginning of the century up to the record 56.9 million skier visits in 2008/09 season, Austria's best ever season, the country had been continuously growing its attendance. Then, yearly figure began to decrease, and plateau at a lower level, as with other Alpine destinations. Due to poorer figures in France and the United States, Austrian ranked first on the winter 2017/18 skier visits podium for the first time in recent history. Despite good attendance also in 2018/19, top of the podium was recovered by the United States that over performed. Season 2019/20 was cut short by the covid-19, with a decrease in visitation of 13.0% compared to former one. Winter 2020/21 was simply catastrophic in terms of attendance, as commercial overnight accommodations were under lockdown. The business was overall down by 90%, with large resorts that relied on international visitors hardest hit. Smaller resorts that had a local client base not requiring overnight accommodation saw however a smaller drop. The start of the 2021/22 season was delayed in Austria because of some covid-19 concerns. Over the season, operation progressively returned to normal, despite some alerts. Ski conditions were good in February and March, allowing some recovery. Due to late start, the season was however 17% below pre-covid 5-year average. Despite challenging weather conditions and reduced amounts of snow, Austrian ski resorts had more operating days during 2022/23 winter season and managed to record a total of 49.5 million skier visits, still below pre-covid 5-year average. Due to weather and snow conditions, some ski areas did not reach their full potential. Destination guests supported the season.

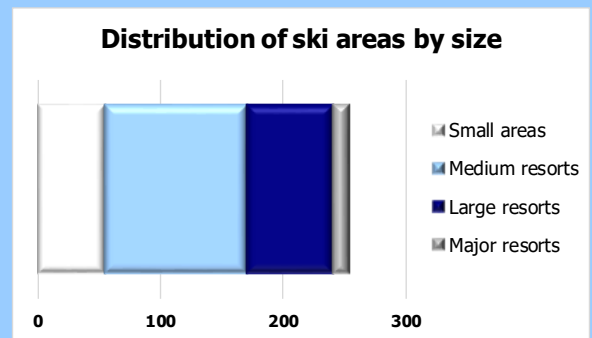
2023/24 season's highlights

The ski season in Austria began promisingly with heavy snowfalls in November and December, especially in higher-altitude resorts. However, smaller ski areas below 1'000 meters faced significant challenges due to warm weather from January onwards. Many of these lower-lying resorts could only open for a few days. Despite these difficulties, smaller resorts reported strong attendance when conditions allowed, and overall, the season was considered economically solid for most operators. Total **skier visits reached 50.1 million**.

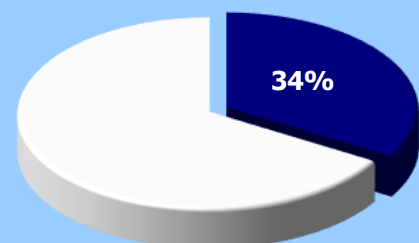


Austria

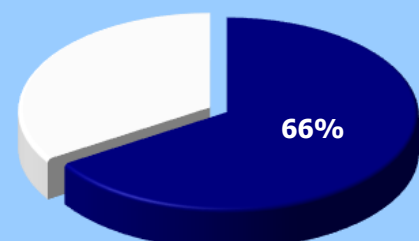
Ski areas	253
Lifts	2'648
National skiers	3'038'184
Skier visits per lift	15'098
Average skier visits	39'980'000
Skier visits per national skier	4.47
Skier visits per inhabitant	1.50
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.99



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers



The largest ski resorts of Austria, based on attendance, are **Hochzillertal-Hochfuegen-Kaltenbach**, **Ischgl / Samnaun Silvretta Arena**, **Kaprun-Kitzsteinhorn**, **Kitzbuehl**, **Schladming 4Berge**, **Serfaus-Fisshadis**, **Silvretta Montafon**, **Ski Arlberg** (including Lech, Zurs-Warth, St. Anton, St. Christoph and Stuben), **Skicircus Saalbach Hinterglemm**, **Leogang Fieberbrunn**, **SkiWelt Wilder Kaiser-Brixental**, **Snow Space Salzburg** (including Flachau-Wagrein-St. Johann), **Soelden**, **Stubai Gletscher**, **Zillertal 3000 – Mayrhofen** and **Zillertal Arena**. Most of them are based in Tyrol.





France hosts, together with Italy, the highest summit of the Alps (Mont Blanc, topping at 4'808 meters above sea level). There are 24 Alpine peaks that reach over 4'000 meters in France. If the ski resorts in the French Alps are the largest and most well-known, several other mountain ranges in the country have ski resorts: the Jura, the Pyrénées, the Massif Central and the Vosges. There is even a ski area in Corsica Island.

In the French Alps, the alpinist Henri Duhamel introduced skiing on the slopes of Chamrousse. This led to the creation of the Grenoble Ski Club in 1895. Beyond this local initiative, it was the military, specifically the Alpine hunters, who truly introduced skiing to the French Alps, already before World War I. Subsequently, young soldiers volunteered to teach this new discipline after their military service. Gradually, doctors and postal workers started their rounds on skis, and children went to school while gliding. The enthusiasm for skiing was confirmed at the first international alpine skiing competition, organized jointly by the military and the French Alpine Club in 1907 in Montgenèvre. Skiing was no longer just a means of transportation; it had become a game, a sport, and even a fashion phenomenon. Further competitions were organized. France saw the first Winter Olympic Games, held in **Chamonix** in 1924. At that date however, they did not include downhill skiing competitions.

Ski began to develop in France in the 1930s and Chamonix was joined by other mountain villages, like **Mégève**. In Isère, Jean Pomagalski, a Polish-born mechanical engineer, invented the first mechanical lift system with pulleys, cables, and poles in 1935. The first one was installed on the Ecloze hill in Alpe d'Huez. This invention gradually conquered the mountains that were slowly being developed. After a first development phase of ski areas around existing villages, which experienced a new economic boost, French developers began to build resorts from scratch. It first started with village-like resorts such as **Courchevel** and then moved to high altitude densely urbanised integrated resorts, which saw construction of big housing blocs in the mountain in the 1960s and 1970s.

A true turning point came in 1968 when Grenoble hosted the Winter Olympics. This event not only showcased the region's natural beauty and excellent ski conditions to a global audience but also spurred a rapid expansion of ski resort infrastructure. The exposure generated by the Olympics brought skiing into the mainstream, attracting enthusiasts from around the world and elevating skiing to a fashionable and sought-after activity. With its *Plan neige*,



the French Government highly supported the development of these suburb-looking mountain towns, such as **La Plagne, Val Thorens, Avoriaz, les Arcs, Tignes** and others. Last and most recent development phase returned to more village-like lower altitude resorts, smaller and better integrated in the environment.

Some of the major French resorts that were created from scratch, initially as integrated operations, were later on dismantled in the 1980s and lift operations were distributed among numerous actors, giving birth to the Compagnie des Alpes, which has been for a long time the world's largest ski resort operator²⁴. France is the only European country with such a dominant operator who runs nearly all the major resorts (12 large Alpine resorts totalling around 15 million skier visits are operated fully or partly by Compagnie des Alpes). There are also a few other smaller operators that manage lifts for several ski areas, such as Labellemontagne and Altiservice. Savoie Stations Participation is a public / private company that holds interests in 17 ski areas but do not operate them directly. In France, ski lifts are still considered a public service, and some of the operating companies are either partially owned or even directly managed by municipalities.

Another particularity of French resorts, especially in the big purpose-built resorts, is the extremely high proportion of apartment housing. Hotels are quite rare and most customers spend their ski week in what is called a *Résidence de tourisme*, which are to some extent the French equivalent of the North American condos, with much less surface area per guest, and with a level of comfort in many cases still based on the standards of the 1970s. This latter issue is even becoming a problem, as it generates a decrease in the number of beds that can be properly marketed.

Although France is the number one destination in terms of arrivals in world tourism, the ski industry is still primarily driven by domestic demand. However, the domestic market is very mature, with a number of skier visits that has been showing a slight declining trend for several years. On the other hand, there are about 2 million foreign skiers who visit France each winter season and their number used to tend growing and compensate the retiring domestic customers. The British represent one quarter, followed by the Italians, Belgians, Germans. Russians also used to attend French slopes before rubble went down and embargos were installed and further increased with the Ukrainian war.

French ski resorts had experienced a continuous growth of skier visits 5-year average for numerous years before arriving at an inflection point in winter 2012/13. This season was the best of the last decade, with 57.9 million skier visits recorded²⁵. It was followed by 4 seasons in a row with decreasing numbers before winter 2017/18 and 2018/19 showed slightly better figures. In 2019/2020, further to covid-19 outbreak and anticipated closure mid-March

²⁴ Before this leading position was overtaken by Vail Resorts in 2021.

²⁵ All-time record in France was winter 2008/09, with 58.6 million skier visits.

2020, the ski resorts visitation ended 15.9% down over former season. Winter 2020/21 was unfortunately non-existent in France, further to governmental decision to lockdown lifts at the beginning of the season. Decision to release the lockdown was always postponed till the end of the winter. 2021/22 winter season ended fairly well, with 53.9 million skier visits, a level of attendance higher than the 4 seasons preceding covid-19 outbreak. The start of the 2022/23 season was difficult in many regions of France. It is considered that in the Northern Alps, snowpack level had never been so poor since winter 1963/64. Skier visits were 5.5% down on former season.

2023/24 season's highlights

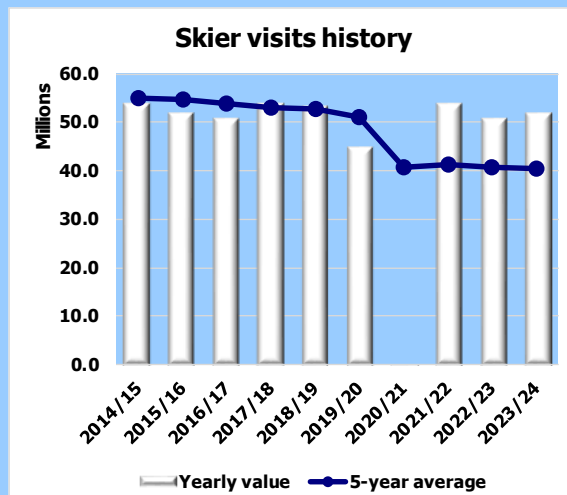
With **51.9 million skier visits**, the ski season in France saw a 2% increase in overall skier visits compared to the previous winter. The weather in March remained mild and unstable, benefiting ski resorts in the Alps, while those in the Pyrenees, Jura, and Vosges faced more challenges in keeping their slopes open. The Massif Central experienced a late-season boost in early March, but this was not enough to reverse earlier trends of lower attendance.

There were significant disparities in the Alps due to a high rain-snow limit caused by persistent mild weather. Cooler weather returned at the end of February, bringing snow above 1'000 meters in the Pyrenees, Southern Alps, and the Massif Central. In contrast, the Vosges and Jura experienced almost no snow throughout the season.

The 5-year flattening skier visit average for several years highlights the overall trend in Europe. Both domestic and foreign customer bases are flattening and it will be imperative in the very near future to find new ways to introduce massively new clienteles to skiing.

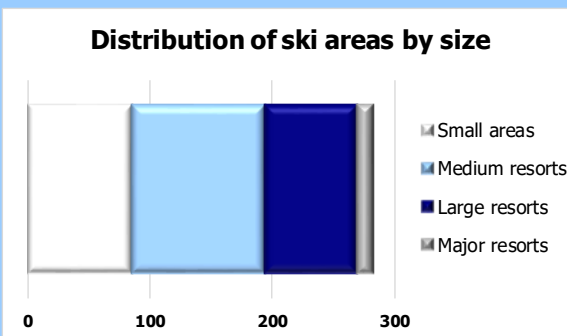
The largest and most attended ski resorts in France are mostly located in Savoie and Haute-Savoie, beside 3 spread between Isère and Alpes du Sud. Savoie totals on average 40% of national attendance, and Haute-Savoie 23%.

All of the following resorts have average winter visitation over 1 million skier visits: **Avoriaz, Chamonix / Les Houches, Courchevel-Méribel-Mottaret, Flaine-Morillon-Samoens, La Plagne, L'Alpe**

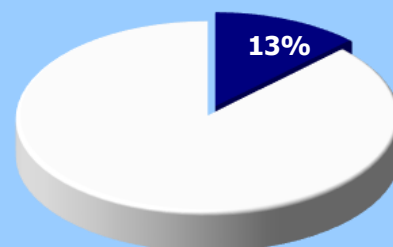


France

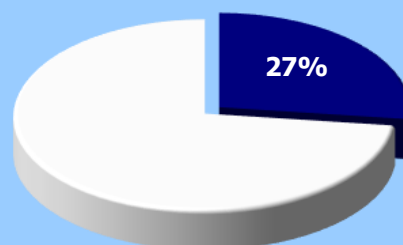
Ski areas	282
Lifts	3'001
National skiers	8'573'709
Skier visits per lift	13'451
Average skier visits	40'367'024
Skier visits per national skier	3.44
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.43
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.13



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers



d'Huez, Les Arcs, Les Deux-Alpes, Les Ménuires, Serre-Chevallier, Tignes, Val d'Isère, Val Thorens / Orelle.



Record investment level in France

In 2024, French ski resort operators invested a total of EUR 568 million (nearly 34% of their revenues), which is 9 % above the 10-year average. This significant reinvestment underscores their commitment to enhancing both snow-based and non-snow experiences for all visitors. The investment strategy is also guided by CLIMSNOW studies, which simulate snow conditions in 2050 and 2080 to help resorts adapt to future climate challenges.

A large portion of the budget is dedicated to major ski lift projects, including the completion of the Jandri gondola in Les 2 Alpes, the TransArc renovation in Les Arcs, and the new Valléen and Alpin gondolas in Saint-Gervais.

This year is also marked by a record number of new conveyor belts, with 36 magic carpets built to improve beginners' areas. This investment reflects the growing number of beginners in mountain tourism, particularly among young people. Recent data from Atout France's *Mountain Winter Barometer* reveals that young adults are increasingly present in ski resorts, with 18-24-year-olds growing by 4 percentage points and 25-34-year-olds by nine points.

Investment in leisure facilities has been consistently increasing, up 24% compared to the 5-year average and 56% over the past decade. Over the last 10 years, EUR 109 million has been allocated to leisure developments, more than doubling the previous decade's total of EUR 44 million. This diversification aligns with the evolution of lift usage, which is now designed for both winter and summer, enabling easier access to mountain areas for pedestrians and summer activities such as mountain biking.

Source: Alternative Media



Italy



A share of 35% of Italian territory is made of mountains and a further 42% is covered by hills. 2 major mountain chains cross a large part of the country and are linked together. The highest one, the Alps in the North, ranging from East to West, culminates at 4'808 meters above sea level with the Mont Blanc, on the border with France. The second range, the Apennine, crosses the country from Liguria to Calabria. It is not so high as the Alps but longer, as it extends over 1'500 kilometres. Its highest point, Corno Grande, in the Gran Sasso, reaches 2'914

meters above sea level. The Etna volcano, which by the way hosts a ski area, culminates over island of Sicily at 3'340 meters above sea level. Italy shares also with Switzerland the 4'478 meters high Matterhorn, one of the most iconic summits of the Alps (12th highest in the Alps).

Although most of the ski resorts are concentrated in the northern regions of Piemonte, Valle d'Aosta, Lombardy, Trentino, Alto Adige (South Tyrol) and Veneto, there are minor ski resorts throughout most of the country, including on the islands of Sicily and Sardinia.

Despite some older traces of skiing in Italy, it seems that modern skiing was introduced in 1897 in the region of Torino. In 1901, Ponte Nossa and Torino ski clubs were the first ones in Italy. They concentrated at the beginning mostly on the promotion of backcountry skiing. The first ski race was organised in Italy in 1904 in **Bardonecchia**. Italian Ski Federation was founded in 1913. First World War gave an impulse in Italy to train 88 Alpine battalions.

The erection of **Sestriere** was started in 1930, as the first purpose-built Alpine resort. **Cervinia** completed its first Breuil - Plan Maison cable car in 1936. The lift was built within 2 years of the founding of Cervino in 1934, and played a crucial part in the resort becoming one of the most important ski resorts in Italy.

Corvara, in Val Badia, was the first place to introduce dedicated ski lifts in Italy. It started in 1938 with a sledge-lift, cable-dragged across the snow. Then the first chairlift was built in 1946. It was a single seater with wooden towers. Its huge success led to expanding the area with other lifts over the next year, creating the famous *Skicarosello Alta Badia*. In 1956, the Winter Olympics were held for the first time in Italy, in **Cortina d'Ampezzo**. 50 years later, the 2006 Winter Games returned to Italy, in Torino.



The Italian ski industry is similar to the Austrian model in the South Tyrol and eastern regions, and shares some similarities with the French resorts in the West. Some players are very dynamic, like the *Dolomiti Superski* area, (featuring 450 lifts and 1'200 kilometres of trails, representing about 35% of all Italian skier visits), and offer a high level of infrastructure, state-of-the-art lifts and snowmaking facilities under a common brand name. This packaging is, however, formed by a multitude of small operators²⁶. The evolution of some other areas has been slower, contributing to stagnation in skier visits for a while.

The Italian ski industry is quite fragmented, with no major operator. It relies primarily on domestic customers and for about one third on European outbound markets. Large international resorts are popular for guests from Germany, United Kingdom, Netherlands and Poland.

Italy is the only major market that does not supply proper national yearly attendance statistics. Skier visits figures rely on estimates²⁷.

From 2002 up to 2009, 20% of the lifts were removed and a further 20% have been renewed, for a total of 445 new lifts. Although Italian operators have been investing quite heavily in the beginning of 2000s, attendance started to decline. Even if the market recovered a bit till 2010/11 season, Italy showed then a trend towards declining skier visits and yearly figures stabilising at a low level for 6 winters in a row.

Seasons 2017/18 and 2018/19 showed again a positive trend. In 2019/20, ski areas were stopped right in the heart of a season that would have been record in the North. With the abrupt closure, the global attendance figures for 2019/20 season ended up 12.6% down over former winter. Lifts remained closed during winter

2020/21 further to governmental lockdown. Italian winter season 2021/22 clocked 25.4 million skier visits, which was close to the level of pandemic shortened winter 2019/20 but still did not reach pre-pandemic numbers. In 2022/23, Italy featured a record number of skier visits, never reached over the last 20 years. It reflected a strong rebound after a period of restrictions due to health concerns. Most ski areas showed double-digit increases in visits. Proximity tourism brought new clients to mountain areas, or stimulated those with vacation homes to make better use of them. Resorts managed to attract skiers by adapting their offerings, improving their snowmaking efficiency and snow management, and skiers adapted to changing conditions.

²⁶ *Dolomiti Superski* is a federation of 130 lift companies

²⁷ The present report does not rely on the officially communicated estimates.

2023/24 season's highlights

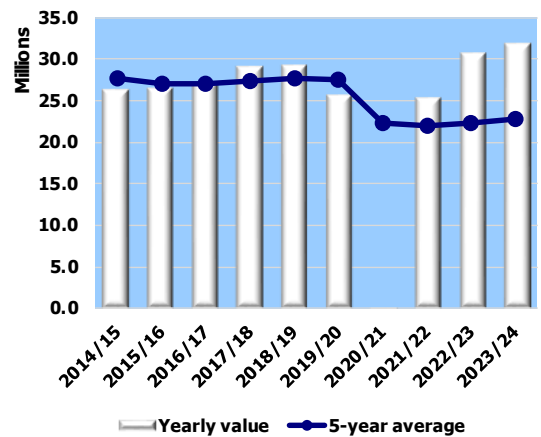
It looks the favourable trend showed during former season continued, as Italian ski resorts recorded **32.0 million skier visits**, 4.0% over previous winter. In some large ski areas, the growth in visitation was driven by a combination of favourable early-season weather conditions and strategic pricing and promotional initiatives. Early snowfall and stable winter temperatures ensured excellent skiing conditions, attracting both local and international visitors. Additionally, significant investments in snowmaking infrastructure guaranteed reliable snow coverage. Marketing efforts targeted a broader audience, with notable increases in visitors from Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, and the US, aided by the mega passes. Promotions such as early booking discounts, family-oriented deals, and flexible ski pass options further boosted attendance, particularly among families and international skiers.

The growth in the number of skiers in the Italian Alps can be attributed to several key factors. One major reason is the lower cost of lift tickets compared to Switzerland and other ski destinations, making Italy a more affordable choice for both domestic and international visitors. Additionally, the Italian government and regional authorities have made significant investments in modernizing ski infrastructure, upgrading facilities, and improving slopes and lifts, which has enhanced the overall experience. Another important factor is the improved marketing strategies adopted by Italian ski resorts, leveraging digital platforms and international outreach to attract more visitors. Furthermore, the hospitality sector has seen a qualitative boost, with higher standards in accommodations and services, while Italy's renowned culinary scene adds to the appeal, offering skiers an exceptional combination of sport and high-quality dining. These elements together have contributed to the increasing popularity of the Italian Alps as a skiing destination.

Currently, **Alta Badia, Campiglio Dolomiti di Brenta, Gardena / Alpe di Siusi, Livigno, Plan de Corones, Sestriere Via Lattea, Val di Fassa / Carezza** are the ski resorts in Italy with the highest visitation numbers. They are located in the provinces of South Tyrol, Trentino, Piemonte and Lombardy.

Italy has international ski areas interconnected with France (**Sestriere Via Lattea** and **La Thuile**), with Switzerland (**Cervinia-Valtournenche** and with Slovenia (**Sella Nevea**). Strangely, despite there are some large ski resorts on either sides of the border with Austria, there is none with cross-border slopes or lifts reaching the other side of the border. In fact,

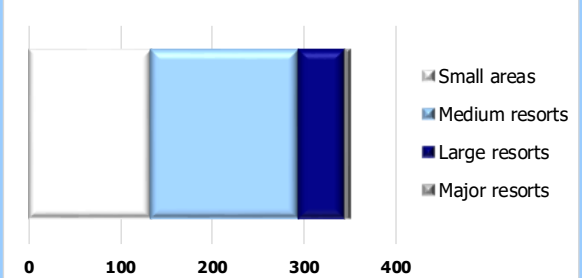
Skier visits history



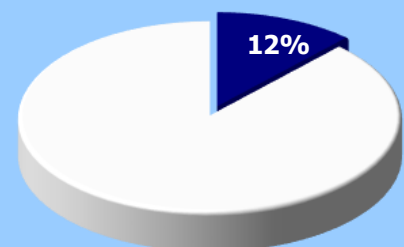
Italy

Ski areas	349
Lifts	1'047
National skiers	7'062'822
Skier visits per lift	21'748
Average skier visits	22'769'902
Skier visits per national skier	2.10
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.25
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.16

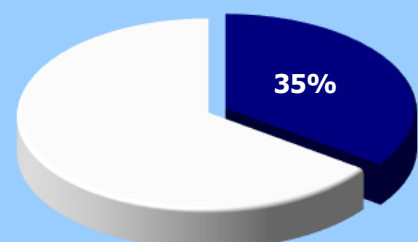
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers



cross boarder lifts are very rare. In 2003, when the Furggsattel chairlift was built in Zermatt over the Theodule Glacier, its top station was located in Italy. In 2009, the border was adjusted²⁸ and the lift is now fully located in Switzerland.



²⁸ Above 3500 meters in altitude, the watershed line is used as the border. It can shift over time, partly due to glacier melting. The border was adjusted according to the retreat of the Theodule Glacier.



Liechtenstein is a small Alpine principality in Central Europe bordered by Switzerland to the West and South and by Austria to the East and North. The majority of its 162 square kilometres is mountainous, with the highest summit topping out at 2'599

meters above sea level (Grauspitz), making it a destination for winter sports, although the small country only accounts one single ski resort, **Malbun**.

Malbun is pretty close to the capital, Vaduz, but the road up to the resort can be an intimidating one for inexperienced mountain drivers, with steep gradients and sharp corners.

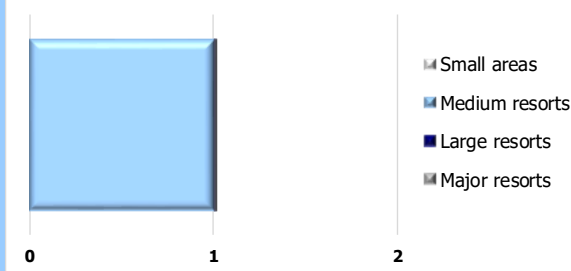
Skiing in Malbun appeals to the nostalgia of the days before the sport became industrialised, with package tours and lift queues. It is not a place to ski record vertical, or to spend a lot of money on après-ski. However, Malbun is the perfect resort for a romantic getaway to remind oneself what a ski vacation was once all about. Like the country, the resort is tiny, with only a handful of hotels amongst the private chalets and houses. It is only equipped with 5 lifts that rise to a maximum altitude of 2'000 meters. The snow conditions normally remain pretty good.



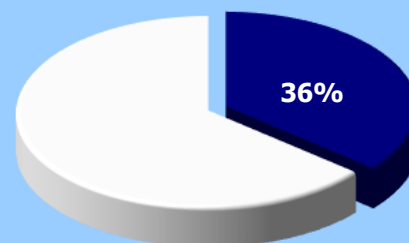
Liechtenstein

Ski areas	1
Lifts	5
National skiers	14'201
Skier visits per lift	20'000
Average skier visits	100'000
Skier visits per national skier	3.52
Skier visits per inhabitant	1.27
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.88

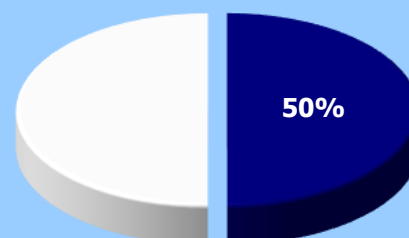
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





Slovenia



Slovenia has 28 peaks over 2'800 meters high. The highest one, Triglav, culminates at 2'864 meters above sea level. The Alps, including the Julian Alps, the Kamnik-Savinja Alps and the Karavanke mountain range, tower above Northern Slovenia along its long border with Austria and Italy.

In the 17th century, skis were already used there as a means of transportation. The year 1910 is considered to be the beginning of Slovenian alpine skiing. In 1922, the Yugoslav Winter Sports Association

was founded in Ljubljana and a book was already written there about skiing in 1924. The first ski lift was installed in 1948, starting the ski resort of **Kranjska Gora**. The first World Cup event in Slovenia was held there in 1968. Nowadays, Slovenia has 46 resorts with a total of about 200 ski lifts. It offers a very good price/performance ratio, modern ski runs, cross-country skiing, good infrastructure, snowmaking, and well-equipped holiday apartments and hotels.

Hiking and trekking are among the most preferred sports in Slovenia. Thanks to attractive winter resorts such as **Kranjska Gora**, **Rogla** and **Krvavec**, skiing has developed into a major sport in the past few decades, even though other European winter sport destinations are strong competitors due to higher altitudes and the guaranteed snow. Tourism is the highest growing economic sector in Slovenia and is increasingly competitive.

Ski resorts have been regularly upgraded over the years, with 26 new lifts delivered over the last 2 decades. Even if most of the customer base is domestic, Italian, German and British skiers are also visiting Slovenian resorts. Several ski areas are for instance promoted by British tour operators, selling Slovenia as a game-changer for beginners, with compact ski areas easy to get around, gentle nursery slopes and the possibility to stay in historic villages with a fairy-tale feel.

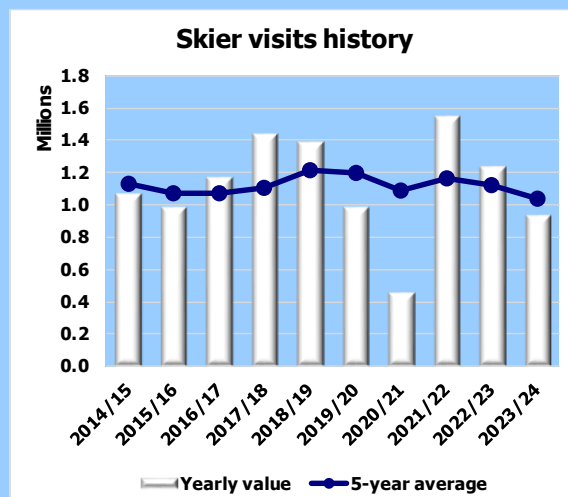
The evolution in skier visits reveals a strong dependency on snow conditions. After a substantial growth in the beginning of the 2000s, several seasons have shown a declining trend in attendance. It has however been reversed starting from winter season 2016/17, with a return to higher visitation figures. 2018/19 was unusually warm and ski areas, overall, posted declining skier visits numbers. With the pandemic early closure, skier visits declined again in 2019/20, with a 28.8% shortfall over former season. 2020/21 was even worse, as various lockdowns prevented resorts to operate for long periods.

With 1.5 million skier visits at Slovenian ski areas, the winter 2021/22 was considered as very good. Attendance was at a level unreached for 12 years. With 1.2 million skier visits, Slovenia's 2022/23 ski season saw a 20% drop in attendance compared to the previous year. The season was challenging, with warm temperatures and lack of snow in December and January and Slovenian skiers resuming their travel to ski abroad.

2023/24 season's highlights

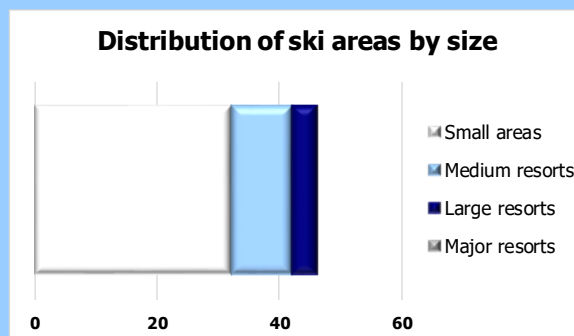
Attendance was limited to **0.9 million skier visits**, as Slovenian ski resorts experienced a second difficult season in a row, with mild temperature appearing early in the season and limited snowfall. The season was short, as it involved early closure of several resorts.

Mariborsko Pohorje is one of the most well-known Slovenian resorts. It hosts an alpine World Cup ladies' downhill event every year. 43 kilometres of ski runs, modern spas, beautiful landscapes and being near the city of Maribor make this a very attractive destination. The resort guarantees 100 snow days per season. Another popular ski resort is **Kranjska Gora**. It hosts an alpine skiing World Cup event every year and has trails for every level, from beginners to expert skiers and snowboarders. The highest winter resort in Slovenia is **Kanin**, which is connected with the Italian resort of **Sella Nevea**. It offers 30 kilometres of ski runs, 13 lifts and snow through early spring. **Cerkno** is the most modern family ski resort in Slovenia, located on the slopes of the 1'291-metre high Črnivrh peak. This ideally situated ski area is 100% covered by an extensive snow-making system, which guarantees a minimum of 70 ski days per winter.

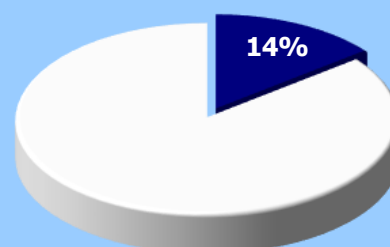


Slovenia

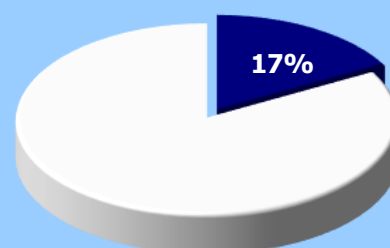
Ski areas	46
Lifts	185
National skiers	304'975
Skier visits per lift	5'593
Average skier visits	1'034'654
Skier visits per national skier	2.82
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.41
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.06



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers







Switzerland



With 49 summits that reach over 4'000 meters²⁹, Swiss Alps account the largest number of such top peaks in the whole Alpine range. The highest Swiss peak, Mount Dufour, reaches 4'634 meters above sea level and is the highest in the Alps after

the Mont Blanc. The Alpine range crosses all Switzerland from East to West and covers 62.5% of the national territory. Another 10% of land is covered by the lower mountain range of the Jura, which is also shared with France and Germany. Jura only reaches 1'679 meters above sea level at its highest point in Switzerland.

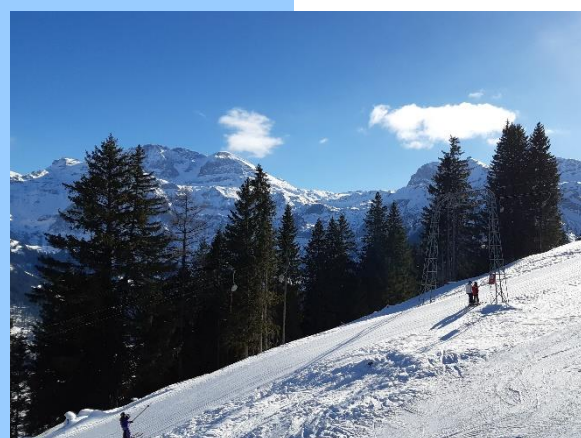
Mountain tourism developed already during the 19th century in Switzerland, in places like **St. Moritz**, **Davos** and many others. At the beginning, it was concentrated at summer time. Winter tourism in Switzerland is considered to be born in 1864 in St. Moritz. First winter sports were sledging, curling and ice-skating. Ski competitions appeared over the next century. World's first downhill race was held over the Plaine Morte Glacier in **Crans-Montana** in 1911. In 1921, the first modern slalom race was held in **Mürren**. The second Winter Olympics were held in St. Moritz in 1928 (without downhill skiing competition at that time). The first T-bar lift was installed in Switzerland in 1934 in Davos³⁰.



Therefore, Switzerland was, for quite some time during the last century, the most well-known ski destination in the world, with some places still garnering lasting recognition. The country was also once the leader in terms of lift

²⁹ Some are located on the boarder and shared with Italy.

³⁰ In fact, it was first a J-bar lift installed, that was later on converted into a T-bar.



infrastructure. However, the industry lost part of its lustre in the 1980s; too many fragmented operators fighting over the same mountains led several companies into a poor financial situation. Investment has slowed down for quite some time and Switzerland has lost part of its appeal to foreign tourists.

Since the beginning of 2000s, Swiss ski areas have been investing to upgrade their infrastructure. Over the two decades from 2001 to 2020, 327 new lifts were installed in ski resorts. Out of 181 resorts of all sizes, 89 invested in at least one new lift during this period, accounting for 95% of the industry's total market volume. On average, these resorts acquired 4 new lifts each during this time frame, although the range varies widely, from 1 to 20 new installations per resort. Most new lifts replaced existing ones. Around 20% of annual winter ticket revenue was reinvested, totalling CHF 2.75 billion for lifts alone. Overall, ski resorts spent CHF 6.2 billion in 20 years for modernization and year-round offerings, excluding accommodations and dining investments.

Despite these improvements, Switzerland has not been able to recover fully the place it had in the past on the podium of winter tourism. This has not been helped by its legendary, but not always true, reputation as being an expensive destination. However, for numerous years now, the exchange rate between the Swiss Franc, the Euro and the British Pound has been unfavourable and has led to a renewed reputation for being expensive.

Swiss ski areas used to host an important foreign customer base, made up of Germans, British, French, Italians and Dutch³¹. Over the recent pre-covid-19 years, the number of Spanish, Russian and Asian customers increased, but this has not made up for the decline of Switzerland's traditional foreign customer base. Between 2010 and 2020, winter resorts lost 1.5 million overnight stays related to the decline of the latter. Nowadays, the average proportion of foreign guests on the slopes has dropped below the 40% mark.

On top of this, the Swiss ski industry is facing the same demographics issue with its domestic and foreign customer base. Baby boomers are retiring and the new generations are less engaged in the sport. The skier visits figures presented thus a long-range declining trend, before some rebound just preceding the covid-19 seasons.

From beginning of 2000s, when skier visits were at their highest in the new century, Switzerland first experienced a period of stagnation, followed by a near to continuous decline after winter 2008/09. This happened in spite of continued efforts by Swiss ski resorts to extend snowmaking facilities and renew lift infrastructure. Winters 2017/18 and 2018/19 showed however a reversal of the trend. This improvement did not yet fully recover for the 25%

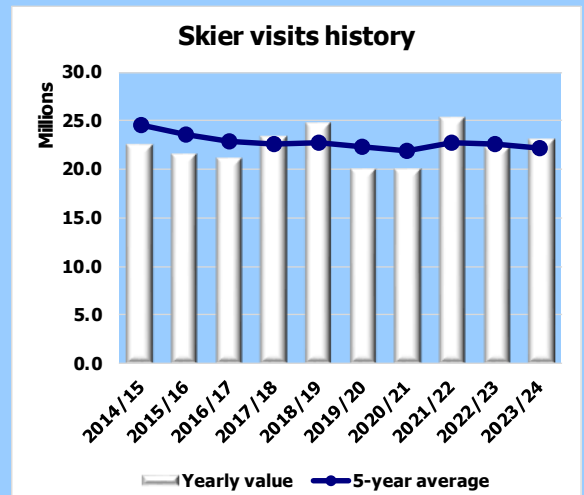
³¹ Top 5 in hotels overnight stays during the winter season in mountain regions.

skier visits lost over a 10-year period up to 2016/17. Winter 2019/20 was promising but covid-19 pandemic decided otherwise. The season was prematurely interrupted on the evening of 13 March 2020 following government order. Skier visits ended 19.0% down compared to the previous season. Despite the pandemic and the pressure of neighbouring governments not to open, resorts operated during winter 2020/21, however with restrictions. The attendance ended up at the same level than previous year. With a total of 25.4 million skier visits, a level unseen since 2012/13, the 2021/22 ski season in Switzerland exceeded expectations despite the shadow of the pandemic. Ski resorts were able to open freely at the beginning of the season and without major restrictions. The number of skier visits grew significantly, with Swiss skiers reaching a record level and foreign customers returning in almost identical volumes to pre-covid years. Some regions struggled due to a lack of snow but most regions saw good distribution of visitors throughout the season. Although season 2022/23 was the first in 4 years without travel restrictions or ski resort limitations, snow and sun conditions were subpar. Despite international visitors, excluding China, returned, especially long-haul tourists, global attendance ended up lower than former season.

2023/24 season's highlights

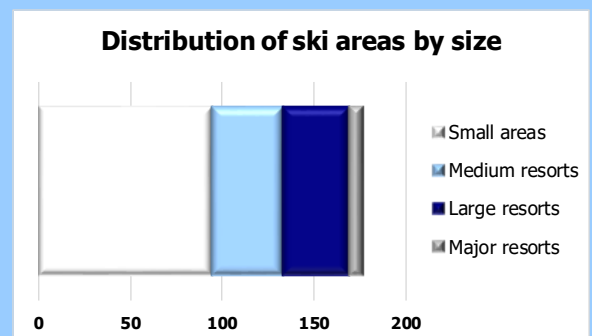
The 2023/24 winter season had a positive outcome overall. **Skier visits reached a total of 23.1 million**, 3.76% over former one. The start of the season was excellent and very promising, with early snowfall at the end of November and pleasant weather. However, as winter progressed, the weather conditions became increasingly challenging, with warm temperatures and foehn storms spreading across the country.

Over the last couple of years, several ski areas entered into disruptive pricing strategies in order to try to recover part of the clients and attract newcomers. The first one to propose heavily discounted season passes was **Saas-Fee**, with a CHF 222 offering in 2016/17. Although the resort was very successful with it on the first season and it created a lot of buzz, next season was not so bright and the initiative was soon discontinued. 25 Swiss ski areas got also together in 2017/18 to offer a multi-resort season pass called *Magic Pass*, with very interesting discounted

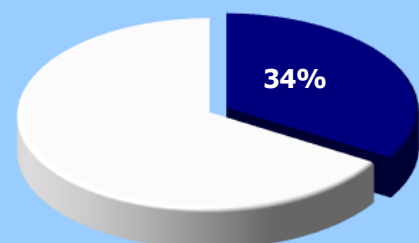


Switzerland

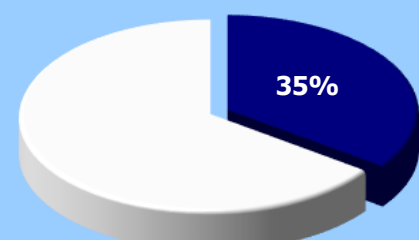
Ski areas	176
Lifts	1'364
National skiers	2'958'530
Skier visits per lift	16'293
Average skier visits	22'223'545
Skier visits per national skier	4.88
Skier visits per inhabitant	1.65
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.84



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers



price in pre-sale. They were able to globally increase their skier visits figures by 30% over the former season, which was 20% more than the Swiss average. The further seasons confirmed the success of the *Magic Pass* and it was joined by more and more resorts. Other ski areas also introduced offers of this kind and resorts are adopting increasingly dynamic pricing.

The future is still unclear and is a concern for ski area operators. For the time being, Swiss operators have not taken any considerable measures to anticipate the impact of the demographic changes in their client base. Some campaigns were launched over the last few winters to get citizens of major cities acquainted with the pleasures of skiing. Various ideas are being studied but customer knowledge still needs to be improved to develop successful CRM programs.



Further improvements to the client experience will also pass through the modernization of part of the aging hotel infrastructure, which offers very unequal quality depending on the destination. The increase in the non-skiing offer will also help the Swiss Alpine resorts to be more appealing to a larger customer base both in winter and in summer.

Currently, the largest ski areas in Switzerland by visitation numbers are **Adelboden-Lenk, Arosa Lenzerheide, Davos-Klosters, Jungfrauregion, St. Moritz, Verbier, and Zermatt**, all located in the regions of Grisons, Valais and Bernese Oberland, where the largest ski resorts are concentrated. Jungfrauregion is one of the few resorts that manage to have a balanced activity between winter and summer, together with **Engelberg-Titlis**.

Some other resorts also need to be mentioned: **Laax** is considered as the most innovative ski area in Switzerland and maybe farther away ... Innovation there is key and constant investment in mountain infrastructure aims to transform guest experiences. As a first mover in the tourism and leisure industry, it consistently demonstrates pioneering spirit, driving forward new initiatives. Environmental protection and sustainable practices, embodied in the Greenstyle initiative since 2010, drive various energy, water, waste, consumption, and biodiversity measures. **Portes du Soleil** is interconnected with a vast ski area going beyond the border with France. **Samnaun**, located

in a remote tax free zone hidden in a small valley at the top eastern end of Switzerland, is another internationally connected resort. It is linked with the vibrant Austrian resort of Ischgl. The much smaller ski area of **Moléson** is also among the few ones that feature a balanced activity between winter and summer seasons.



Impact analysis of global warming on the attendance at Swiss ski resorts

A survey over 15 years on skier visits in Switzerland shows that part of the drop in attendance is linked to resorts that have simply disappeared. Besides, Swiss ski resorts that were in operation during the period lost an average of 14% of skier visits compared to the 5-year average for 2009/10. With the average number of opening days of the season and the skier visits recorded, the reasons for the decline in attendance over the years can be analysed in more details. There are in fact 3 main causes for the reduction in the number of skier visits:

The **disappearance of ski resorts**, which is often wrongly attributed exclusively to global warming, but which in fact most of the time hides latent problems of economic viability that have been highlighted and aggravated by the shortening of the ski season or the repeated closure for lack of snow. With their disappearance, the relevant skier visits also obviously disappeared. However, this loss goes almost unnoticed, representing only 5% of the skier visits that disappeared. Indeed, these *ski resorts* were often micro-resorts, or even isolated facilities, which did not weigh heavily in the national attendance balance. Over the period analysed, this represents an annual average of 260'000 skier visits lost.

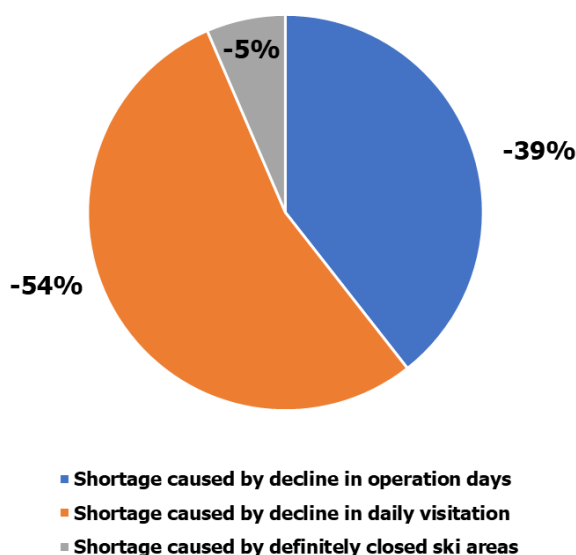
The **reduction in the number of days of winter operation**, quite clearly attributable to global warming, due to the decrease in the number of days on which snow is guaranteed. Each day of lost operation causes an average loss of nearly 200'000 skier visits at the Swiss level. On the basis of the 5-year average of operating days in 2009/10 taken as a reference, the season has shortened by an

average of 8 days over the period, without this having worsened significantly in recent seasons. This represents an average of 1.6 million fewer skier visits, or 39% of the average decline in skier visits.

The last cause of the reduction in the number of skier visits is **the drop in daily attendance**. Indeed, there is a decrease in the number of skier visits recorded in each day of operation. On average, there has been 15'000 skier visits less per day of operation than the 5-year average for 2009/10, which serves as a reference. This represents an average of 2.2 million fewer skier visits over a season, or 54% of the total loss.

Therefore, 54% of the drop in attendance is not directly related to the issue of global warming. This decline is linked to various parameters affecting the ski industry: on the one hand, the change in leisure behaviour and the multiplication of competing activities, and on the other hand, the demographic evolution of European populations and its consequences. Other factors are also frequently mentioned, such as the economic situation or the high cost of skiing, without them being able to be really correlated. The relative high cost of skiing has always existed and in the midst of the economic crisis, ski resorts were able to achieve excellent seasons. The only real economic factor impacting is the exchange rate of the Swiss franc, which has risen from an average of CHF 1.56 to the Euro for the 5-year period ended in 2009/10 to a relative parity or even less in recent seasons. It undoubtedly explains part of the decline in foreign customers, without being possible to measure it precisely. It may also partly explain the growing appetite for Swiss customers to go skiing in Austria, and consequently to desert the national slopes.

Distribution of causes for the decline in attendance at Swiss ski resorts over 15 years





Western Europe

Western Europe (except the Alpine countries mentioned separately above) is for the present time the largest outbound skiers' market. It is home to more than 30 million skiers. It is also home to more than 1'300 ski areas, an amount exceeding the Alps. However, even if most Western European countries have their own ski resorts, many skiers enjoy travelling to the Alps. Thus, attendance in Western European resorts represents only about 25% of the total Alpine skier visits.





With 62 peaks over 2'000 meters high within the country's 468 square kilometres surface area, the Principality is located in the highest part of the Pyrenees and has the largest ski area in the Pyrenees. The resorts are located at altitudes between 1'550 and 2'640 meters above sea level. Due to the southern location, the climate is milder and sunnier than in the other European ski regions. Even if susceptible to unreliable snowfall, snow conditions are generally good, enhanced by a solid snow-making system.

As the Andorran population is very small, the national customer base is insignificant. Most skiers are foreign visitors. Although there is no direct access by rail or air to Andorra, the ski areas are close to big cities from neighbouring Spain and France. They also attract other international visitors, such as British skiers (and Russian in the past, now replaced by an increase in visitors from United Kingdom, Ireland and Nordic countries). The resorts offer many hotels for all tastes and budgets. Andorra is also valued for its nightlife and shopping. The country has nevertheless to fight against increasing international competition as it lacks a domestic market.



Due to the huge portion of international customers in the number of skier visits, Andorra is the only destination in Europe that experienced a decrease in skier visits immediately after the 2008 crisis. They however quickly stabilised and showed again some trend upwards over the next years. Skier visits

have returned over the 2.5 million mark during winter 2017/18, which was the level at the beginning of the 2000s. The 2019/20 season was promising but unfortunately, resorts were forced to close as of March 14 due to the covid-19 pandemic. The 2020/21 winter saw a drop in business of about 90% and only partial lift opening, with access limited to locals. Subsequent seasons saw a return to normal conditions, with skier visits level close to pre-pandemic figures.

2023/24 season's highlights

The ski season in Andorra was challenging due to a lack of early-season snowfall and adverse weather conditions during key periods, leading to a 5.5% decrease in skier visits compared to the previous season. With **2.2 million skier visits** on record, the resorts managed to maintain operations throughout the entire winter without any full closures, thanks to significant investments in snowmaking and the effective work of their teams.

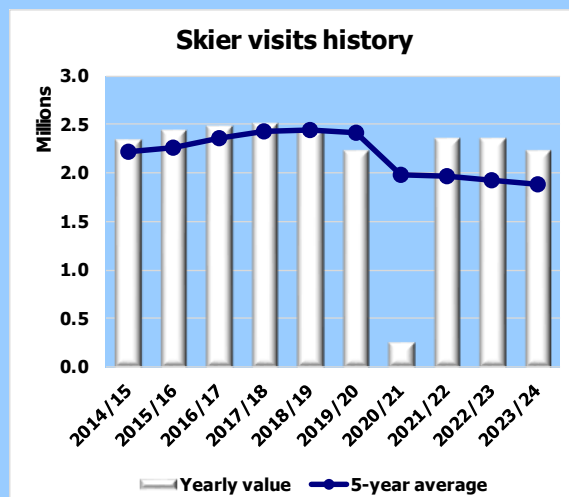
Andorran ski resorts are state of the art and offer wide ski areas. Important investments have been made over last decades to put them in a position highly competitive with the Alps. About 40 new lifts were installed between 2000 and 2020. However, despite modern infrastructure, good snowmaking, and large resorts, part of the skier market still does not consider Pyrenees resorts as attractive as those in the Alps, claiming their layout differs slightly. As for the whole Pyrenees range, there remains an image deficit to address. Villages are extensively connected over wide areas, but vertical drop is considered lower than in the major Alpine resorts.



Le Pas de la Casa-Grau Roig and Soldeu-El Tarter form the **Grandvalira** ski area. Grandvalira is the largest interconnected ski area in the Pyrenees. With its 76 lifts, 139 runs offering 210 kilometres of skiing, it is part of the exclusive club of the top 50 largest resorts in the world (over one million skier visits per year). Grandvalira benefits from an international reputation and already hosted several World Cup events. Grandvalira also operates the **Ordino-Arcalis** area, which is not directly connected to the main resort's area. Ordino-Arcalis features 16 lifts, 29 runs, for a total of 30 kilometres of skiing and is well known for freeride. It hosts every year the Freeride World Tour.

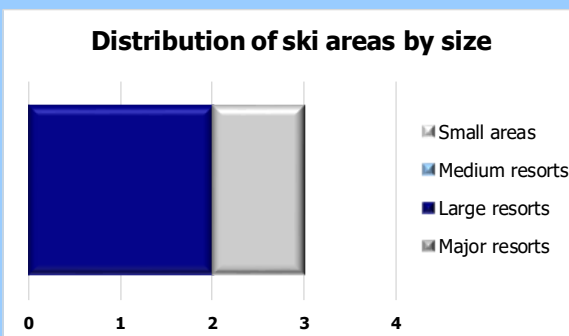
The other resort is **Pal Arinsal**. Pal and Arinsal are linked via a 50-person cable car and offer together 32 lifts, 47 runs totalling 63 kilometres.

Starting winter 2022/23, the Andorran ski pass allows access to all the Andorran ski resorts, with one common promotion and commercial organisation. There is also a project to connect both resorts with lifts and ski trails, in order to qualify for entering the Ligue of the 5 or 6 largest ski areas in the world.

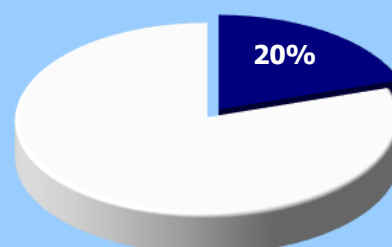


Andorra

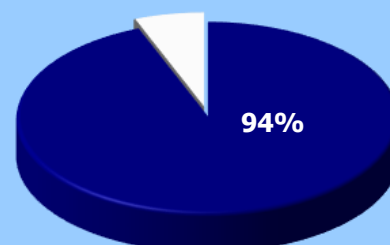
Ski areas	3
Lifts	124
National skiers	15'965
Skier visits per lift	15'246
Average skier visits	1'890'464
Skier visits per national skier	7.10
Skier visits per inhabitant	1.42
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.67



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers



Belgium



Despite Belgium being qualified as *the Flatlands*, with an average altitude less than 300 meters above sea level, the southern part of the country has some hilly terrain. The Ardennes range tops out at 694 meters (Signal de Botrange).

Since Belgians like to ski, and even though they spend most of their winter sports vacation abroad, 7 small ski areas have become popular in the Ardennes, in addition to a few indoor and dry slope facilities. Snow coverage is an issue, as good conditions are never guaranteed

during the winter. January and February are the most likely to offer snow. On average, Belgian ski areas operate between 30 and 80 days in a season.

The ski areas are small and local, offering only surface lifts. It is possible to rent skis in most places. They are suitable for families with young children as they offer mostly beginner slopes (and often a sledge run). Incidentally, several ski areas ban snowboarding for safety reasons. These areas offer a good opportunity for novice skiers to get a taste for skiing before heading to the larger ski resorts in the Alpine countries. Belgian slopes also attract neighbouring French and Dutch skiers.



The best-known ski areas are **Baraque de Fraiture** and **Mont des Brumes**. Baraque de Fraiture has the highest slopes in Belgium (reaching up to 652

meters above sea level) and also features night skiing. Mont des Brumes has been the cradle of skiing in Belgium. The place was discovered by skiers in 1946 and a ski club was founded 2 years later. The area was soon equipped with ski lifts and it was one of the early places in Europe where snowmaking facilities were installed.

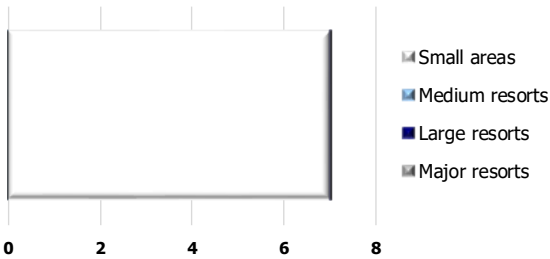
The longest trail in Belgium (1'200 meters long) is located in **Val de Wanne** ski area.



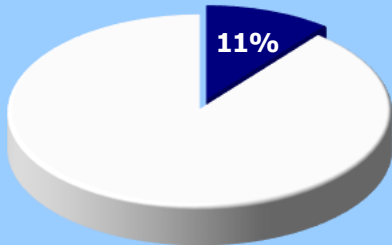
Belgium

Ski areas	7
Lifts	11
National skiers	1'253'312
Skier visits per lift	9'091
Average skier visits	100'000
Skier visits per national skier	0.05
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.01
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.00

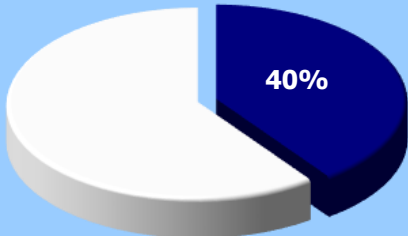
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





Denmark



Denmark is one of the flattest countries in the world, with an average altitude of about 30 meters above sea level. There are absolutely no mountains and the highest hill culminates at 173 meters. However, the country also includes Greenland, which features heights up to 3'733 meters above sea level (Fjeld Gunnbjørn). Greenland is a peculiar territory, with more than 75% of its surface covered with an ice cap and only containing 56'000 inhabitants.



On top of a lack of any terrain relief, Denmark also often lacks snow. The Danish winter is unpredictable and snowfall sporadic. It is usually mild, with an average temperature of 0 degrees Celsius in January and February. However, sometimes the winters are much colder and include snowy days, while other winters feature no snow at all, or the snow melts as soon as it falls. Sometimes several years pass between two snowy winters.

In addition to a couple of indoor ski facilities, there are a few outdoor ski areas with limited vertical drop and infrastructure. Skiing is a popular sport in Denmark and many Danes go skiing every year, travelling abroad, either to Scandinavia or to the Alps.

While the 3 ski areas in Denmark (**Hedeland**, **Kolding** and **Bornholm**) are mostly equipped with rope tows or beginners' lifts (only Bornholm features a draglift), the 2 ski areas in Greenland (**Nuuk** and **Angmassalik**) have one or more ski lifts. Hedeland is equipped with

some snowmaking facilities.

The wild mountainous areas of Greenland, covered with fresh polar powder snow, offer some exclusive spots for heliskiing. It is possible to ski 2'000 meters of vertical down to the water's edge.

A few years ago, a dry ski slope was built on the roof of CopenHill, this remarkable waste-to-energy green power plant near Copenhagen. It is over

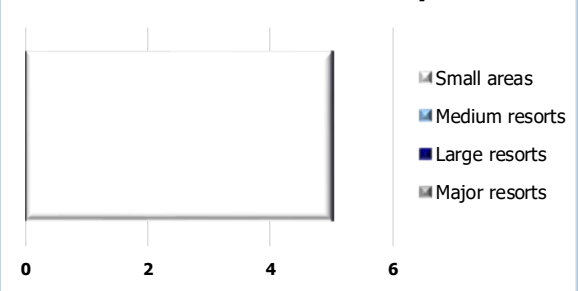
400 metres long and can also be used with natural snow, if mother nature grants the city with snowfalls.



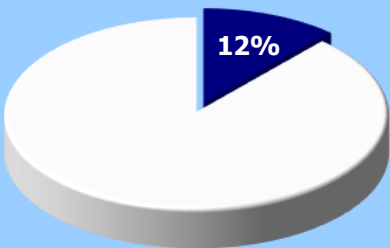
Denmark

Ski areas	5
Lifts	6
National skiers	682'195
Skier visits per lift	8'333
Average skier visits	50'000
Skier visits per national skier	0.07
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.01
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.00

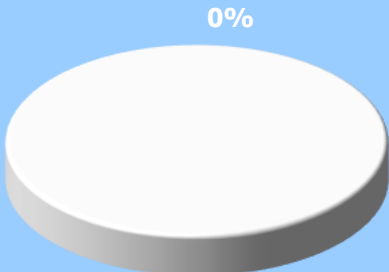
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





Finland



Despite the coastal plains and the flat terrain of Southeast Finland, the country's high point is Mount Halti, 1'328 meters above sea level, located in the mountainous region along the Finnish-Norwegian border. Even with few mountains, Finland has about 80 ski areas in the North and Lapland (22), the South (26) and in the middle of the country (28).

The longest ski trail is in Lapland (over 3'000 meters long) but the average length of a ski run in Finland is between 600 and 800 meters. Finnish lift passes are among the cheapest in Western Europe.

Skiing has been in Scandinavia for several thousand years and it is said that the Vikings already used skis as a means of transportation. If the existence of skiing is very old, its practice as a sport is more recent. It was developed after 1850, when the first races were held (mainly in Norway), and the Finnish Ski Federation was founded in 1908.

Ski season in Finland can last substantially longer than in the Alpine countries, with some resorts opening already mid of October and operating until mid-May³². However, the industry invests in green transition and year-round operations.

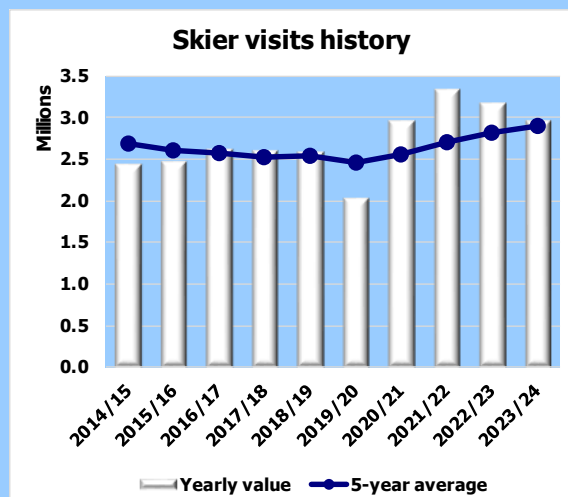


³² Ski resort of Ruka opened the 2016/17 season on October 10th, using 30'000 cubic meters of snow from former season that had been piled into 3 huge mounds. Winter 2017/18 already began on October 6th, using the same technique.

Since early 2000s, the progression of skier visits in Finland has been quite slow, but steady. With ups and downs, the long-range trend improved over the years through winter 2013/14, where attendance was down 15%. It then remained low for several consecutive seasons and reached its lowest during the first covid-19 winter, in 2019/20. Despite the pandemic, 2020/21 season saw record visitation and was very long, with some resorts clocking up a 7-month season. During 2021/22 season, the winter conditions and pandemic restrictions encouraged Finns to engage in outdoor activities, leading to an increase in ski resort attendance. The season saw a record-breaking 3.3 million skier visits, with good snow conditions across the country allowing for a long season. The 2022/23 season started already early October. Spring came a bit too early to southern parts of the country, but up in the North, season ended as late as May. Although weather conditions were not as good as previous season, the attendance was also at one of its best level in Finnish ski history.

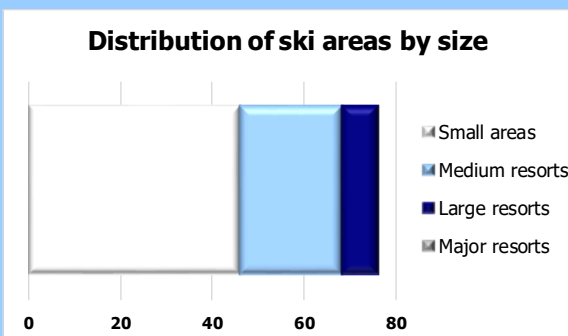
2023/24 season's highlights

The ski season got off to a strong start thanks to an early arrival of winter, with favourable snowmaking conditions allowing resorts to open sooner than usual. However, after the New Year, weather conditions became less favourable for ski resorts, with extreme cold, strong winds, rain, and cloudy days discouraging skiers. In addition to the challenging weather, the overall poor economic situation affected consumer behaviour. Despite these difficulties, the season was the third best in terms of ski days and lift ticket sales. However, following two record-breaking years, the results were seen as disappointing in many places, with **3.0 million skier visits**, 6.8% down over previous season. Rising costs also impacted the financial performance of resorts, with significant variations between different businesses.

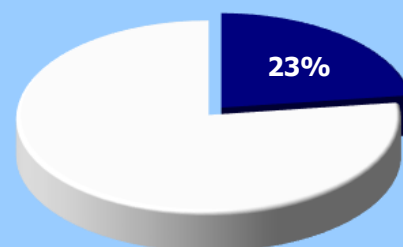


Finland

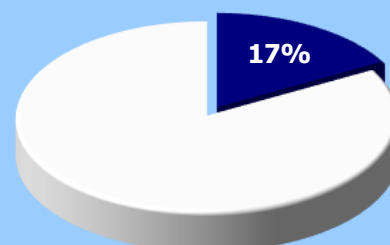
Ski areas	76
Lifts	374
National skiers	1'274'319
Skier visits per lift	7'736
Average skier visits	2'893'400
Skier visits per national skier	1.88
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.43
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.19



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers



The biggest resorts are located northern of the country and offer unique combination of alpine skiing or snowboarding and true winter wonderland (arctic circles, reindeers, northern lights, Santa Claus, pure nature and clean air ...). Finnish Lapland has recently attracted a number of new routes with direct scheduled flights from United Kingdom, Germany, France and Switzerland.



The main ski resorts in Finland are **Levi**, **Ruka** and **Ylläs**. They primarily target families, recreational skiers and people attracted to the many adventure activities they offer (excursions, etc.). **Levi** is the fastest growing ski resort in Finland. It is located in the northern part of the country, has 2 gondolas, 4 chairlifts and 17 surface lifts with a total capacity of 35'210



people per hour. Levi offers 230 kilometres of runs and 10% of them are lit for night skiing. From time to time, the resort hosts Alpine Ski World Cup races.

The **Ylläs** ski area consists of 7 peaks and 2 original Lapp villages. At 718 meters above sea level, Mount Ylläs itself is one of the highest peaks in Finnish Lapland. The Ylläs ski resort features 26 ski lifts, 61 trails, a Super-G-slope and the longest run in Finland (3.5 kilometres).



Ruka, located in Kuusamo, offers a variety of year-round activities. In winter, visitors can enjoy 41 ski slopes, serviced by 21 ski lifts, including high-speed detachable chairs and a gondola. The resort also offers extensive cross-country skiing tracks and snowmobiling routes. During summer, the area transforms into a hub for hiking, mountain biking, and water activities. The resort's pedestrian village enhances the visitor experience with convenient accommodations, restaurants, and shops, all within walking distance.

The northernmost ski area of Finland is **Saariselkä**³³. The resort features 6 lifts and 15 slopes, 7 of which are illuminated. Vertical drop is 180 meters.

There is also a great network of local ski areas around Finland. Local ski areas are very popular not only for kids and beginners but especially for expert freestyle skiers and snowboarders. In such small resorts with snow-parks and efficient lifts, it is possible to enjoy very good training conditions.

³³ The resort even claims to be the northernmost resort in Europe. However, there are a few ski lifts in Tromsø, Norway, that are more north than Saariselkä.



Germany



Germany is not really a mountainous country, with less than 15% of national territory covered with mountains. They are concentrated in the middle of the country (Mittelgebirge) and in the South, along the Austrian border. The highest point is located there, the Zugspitze (2'963 meters above sea level). Despite it is part of the Alpine Convention, the country shares only 6% of the Alps, which only covers 3% of German land.

However, there are more than 600 ski areas in Germany to satisfy the largest population of skiers in Europe:

more than 14 million. In spite of a large domestic market, nearly half of these areas only have one lift and several are getting permanently out of service over the years.

The country's main resorts are located along the southern border of the Black Forest and in the Bavarian Alps, which border Switzerland and Austria. The German Alps, the Harz Mountains, Black Forest, Bavarian Forest, and the Thuringian Forest are middle altitude mountains, rising as high as 1'500 meters above sea level. Ski areas often sit at altitudes lower than Austrian or Swiss resorts, and skier visit figures show higher sensitivity to snow conditions. Resorts have therefore heavily invested in snowmaking systems in order to mitigate the meteorological risks. 65 new major lifts were also installed over the years 2012 to 2021, mostly in replacement of older ones.

The major catchment areas for German skiers are Munich, Stuttgart and regions further north. The Germans are big consumers of skiing abroad, and represent, for example, the largest foreign customer base for Austrian resorts. However, the behaviour of German skiers is basically similar at domestic level than on inbound markets, with a stagnating appetite for skiing coupled with the influence of seasonal snow conditions. For instance, the level of German winter overnight stays in the major Austrian ski regions has been stable for now 25 years.

Visitors' figures have followed the same trend than in the Alps over the last decade, beside an exceptional season in 2012/13. The long-term trend appeared to be declining on recent years, before stabilising in 2017/18, and then being impacted by covid-19 in 2019/20 and losing 26.7% in visitation. Due to a governmental lockdown of ski resorts in 2020/21, most of them remained closed and business was down by 99%. Winters 2021/22 and 2022/23 were rather warm and not as snowy as the last pre-covid winters.

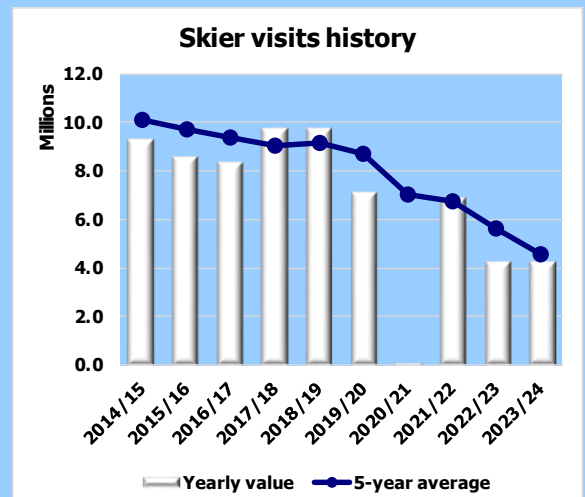
Many of the lower, smaller ski areas did not operate at all or with disrupted operations. Attendance was in the worst ever levels.

2023/24 season's highlights

Last ski season in most of Germany was again below average due to mild temperatures, heavy rainfall, and strong winds, which caused repeated snowmelt. The season began in late November, but snow coverage during key holiday periods was minimal. While cold snaps in January allowed for significant snow production, the number of operational days in most ski areas was still below the 20-year average. Ski resorts with snowmaking managed to stay open longer, but smaller areas had only a limited number of days of skiing. Attendance was as poor as previous season, with only **4.3 million skier visits**.

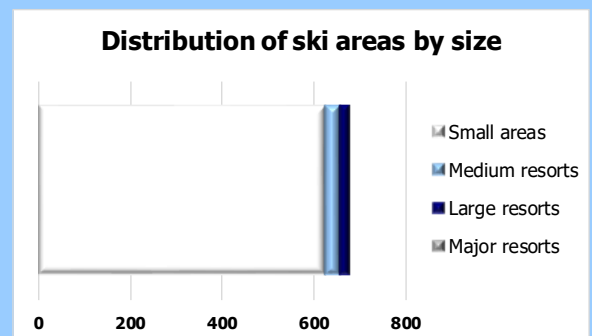
Garmisch-Partenkirchen is the undisputed German winter sports capital. Even if the village started attracting tourist during the summer season first, when a railway line from Munich was inaugurated in 1889, it soon became a winter destination. Already at the beginning of 20th century, winter sports festivals were held there. It hosted in 1936 the first Winter Olympic Games with alpine skiing competitions, which fundamentally changed the place and gained its international recognition. Its slopes extend to the Austrian border and split on 2 distinctive ski areas. Garmisch-Classic, directly connected to the village, offers 18 lifts and 40 kilometres of slopes. The Zugspitze is accessible both with a cable car and a cog-wheel train. It features the highest lift in Germany, topping out at 2'830 meters. It totals 8 lifts and 20 kilometres of pistes. Train accesses the top station at the foot of the Zugspitze glacier through a 5.4 kilometres tunnel on the final part of the journey. There is however no slope downhill reaching to the valley station.

Oberstdorf, coupled with the bordering Austrian region of Kleinwalsertal, is a 4-season destination, also popular with non-skiers in winter. The car-free village of Oberstdorf is directly accessible by train. The ski area is made up of 7 distinctive sectors that make a total of 1 million skier visits in a season: Nebelhorn, Söllereck, Fellhorn in Germany, Kanzelwand cross-border, Ifen, Heuberge and Walmendigerhorn in Austria. They are not interconnected with each other on skis, with the exception of Fellhorn-Kanzelwand

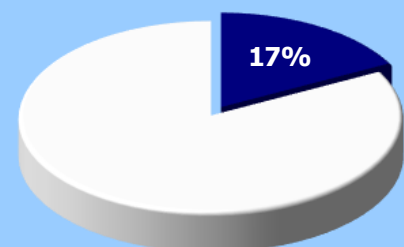


Germany

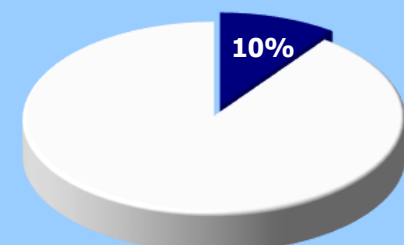
Ski areas	675
Lifts	1'418
National skiers	14'606'508
Skier visits per lift	3'208
Average skier visits	4'549'470
Skier visits per national skier	0.28
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.05
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.01



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





and Heuberge-Walmendigerhorn. However, they offer the possibility of spending a week discovering the different resorts. The sales and marketing organisation brings together 11 different lift companies under the banner of Oberstdorf Kleinwalsertal Bergbahnen. Most ski lifts are modern.

Although not an Alpine destination, located in lower mountains of the central-western Germany, in North Rhine-Westphalia, **Skiliftkarussell Winterberg** is another dynamic ski area of Germany. It is close to some of the most populated metropolitan areas of the country. Innovative entrepreneurs founded the first ski lift association in the Sauerland region 40 years ago, which led to the creation of the *Skiliftkarussell*. Previously, skiers carried multiple tickets to access the different adjacent slopes. In 1971/72, a first joint ticket system was introduced. It moved in 1978/79 to a unified computer-controlled system, starting with a core area including various slopes. Over the years, the ski lift network expanded, and modernization efforts continued, making it a tourism driver in the region. Today, the Skiliftkarussell Winterberg features state-of-the-art lifts, snow-making facilities, and a variety of slopes, contributing significantly to the area's tourism attractiveness. It currently features 27.5 kilometres of ski trails served by 26 lifts. It is one of the German ski area that has been investing the most massively over the last decades.

Skiing in Germany is however not limited to these destinations. In western Länder, there are ski areas such as **Balderschwang** and **Oberammergau** in the Bavarian Alps, or **Reit im Winkl**, **Oberaudorf** and **Berchtesgaden** in the East.

Wintersport-Arena Sauerland – Challenging Ski Season with Weather Fluctuations

The 2023/24 ski season in the Wintersport-Arena Sauerland was marked by inconsistent conditions due to mild temperatures, heavy rainfall, and strong winds. While early December saw promising snow accumulation, warm spells—especially during the Christmas and February school holidays—limited skiing opportunities. The region's ski areas relied heavily on snowmaking to extend the season, with higher-altitude resorts managing 40–70 ski days, while lower-altitude areas only operated for 5–10 days.

Despite February being the warmest on record, two cold and snowy periods allowed for short-lived recoveries. The region leveraged snow production during these cold spells to sustain operations, with a total season length of 123 days, though actual operating days were below the 20-year average.

Significant investments were made to enhance infrastructure. Visitor trends highlighted the importance of smaller ski areas in handling peak crowds during rare snowy weekends. Overall, the season underscored the need for strategic snow management and infrastructure investment to adapt to increasingly unpredictable winter conditions.



In spite of the country's name, it may often be warmer at ski resorts in Iceland than at many ski areas in Europe or North America. The snow conditions are in general cold and firm instead of powdery. Most of the Icelandic mountains are no higher than

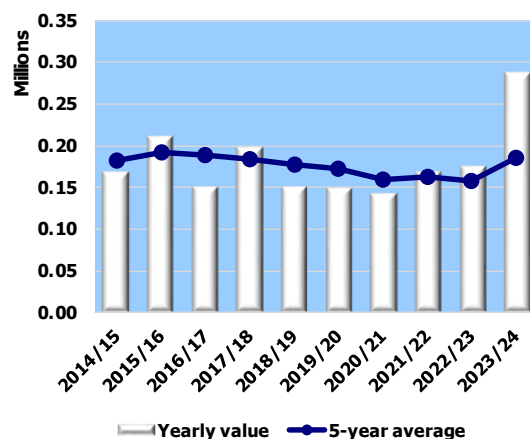
1'500 meters above sea level. The ski areas may therefore lack the vertical drop needed for experienced skiers (the highest is around 450 meters). Several ski areas are located near urban centres, including the capital, Reykjavik. The main areas are equipped for night skiing, which is necessary given the very short winter days. They usually offer a reasonable variety of runs, even if rather short. Many also offer cross-country ski trails, skating rinks and the possibility of renting snowmobiles.

After winter 2016/17 had been missing snow, 2017/18 season's attendance increased more than 30% on former year, as snow conditions were much better. Weather has then been bad in 2018/19, bringing attendance figures to a lower level again. Then the pandemic impacted the 2 following seasons 2019/20 and 2020/21, with a reduction of operating days. Winter 2021/22 returned to higher levels than the 3 former seasons, with however a number of opening days limited due to bad weather and the pandemic limiting operations. Ski season 2022/23 saw a slight improvement over former one, despite ski areas had to close several days because of bad weather conditions.

2023/24 season's highlights

Even if it was not a particularly good season for snow-fall, the winter proved good for Icelandic resorts. Some had even record visitation and it seemed that alpine skiing is getting back on track and getting more popular again, after some drought. Investment in snowmaking and lift improvements is also considered a main driver.

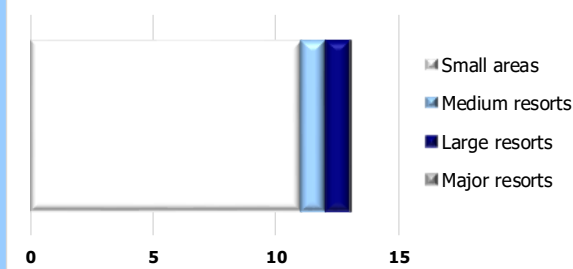
Skier visits history



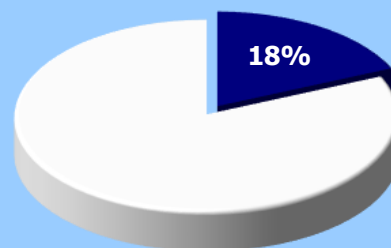
Iceland

Ski areas	13
Lifts	52
National skiers	70'560
Skier visits per lift	3'560
Average skier visits	185'137
Skier visits per national skier	2.49
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.46
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.01

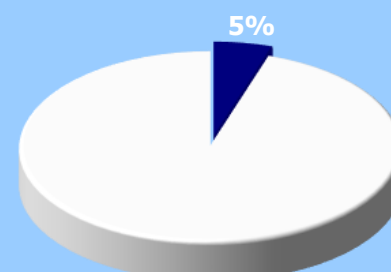
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers



The 2 best-known resorts are **Bláfjöll**, 30 minutes away from the capital, and **Hlíðarfjall - Akureyri**, on Mount Hlíðarfjall. **Bláfjöll** is the largest in the country with 11 lifts (3 chairlifts and 8 surface lifts) plus a couple of trainers' lifts and a total hourly capacity of over 16'000 people. Opened in 1982, it has 16 runs for all levels, but only a small portion is for advanced skiers. The area ranges between 460- and 700-meters altitude, offering limited vertical drop. Glacier skiing is possible during the summer. Accommodations are limited, with only 100 beds available for visitors in homes belonging to 3 ski clubs. However, life in Iceland is pretty expensive for the extras.

Hlíðarfjall - Akureyri is the most popular and most comprehensive ski destination in the country. It is equipped with 7 lifts, including a chairlift and a moving carpet, and features a wide variety of downhill ski runs from the summit. 24 runs cater primarily to beginner and intermediate skiers. With an altitude ranging between 500 and 950 meters above sea level, the area is equipped with a snowmaking system. In addition to skiing and a skating rink, visitors can also enjoy the snowpark, a swimming pool heated by geothermal activity and a fitness centre. Accommodations at the ski area only amount to 100 beds, but other options are available in the town of Akureyri, 7 kilometres from the resort.



Norway



Most of the country is dominated by mountainous regions or high terrain, with 26 peaks higher than 2'300 meters above sea level. The highest summit tops out at 2'469 meters.

Skiing has been an activity in Norway for over 4'000 years and modern skiing was invented here. Initially, skis were solely a means of transportation, but skiing soon became a recreational activity. Morgedal, the birthplace of Sondre Norheim, the skiing pioneer and inventor of the telemark technique, is considered to be the cradle of skiing and was chosen 3 times to light the Olympic torch for the Winter Games. Norway has more than 300 ski resorts and over 750 ski lifts.

In the far North, there are no major resorts, but there is a wide variety of ski areas with cosy holiday cottages that are often rented out by private owners. Many holiday homes and hotels are very close to the ski lifts. Norway also offers several snowboard parks and over 30'000 kilometres of cross-country skiing trails. 2'500 kilometres of tracks are lit, as night falls very early in Norway.

In fact, even if snow sports are very popular in Scandinavian countries, skiing activity is shared between alpine skiing and cross-country skiing. The latter may be even more popular, with more than 1'000 cross-country ski clubs. Norway is also a skiing destination for visitors from Sweden, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and England, who focus mainly on major destination resorts.





After some declining and stagnating years, skier visits have been on the growth for several seasons in a row and reached for the first time over 8 million in 2017/18. Winter 2018/19 was even better, clocking the highest skier visits figure ever reached in Norway. After 2 winter impacted by the pandemic and travel restrictions, the alpine ski industry experienced a return to normal level in 2021/22. Winter 2022/23 scored high in attendance level, with 8.0 million skier visits, an increase of 7% over former season. Large destination resorts experienced a good level of foreign visitors, stimulated by a favourable exchange rate. The poor snow conditions in some other central

European ski areas also encouraged international skiers to reach Norwegian slopes.

2023/24 season's highlights

Skier visits reached 8.3 million, second best-ever score. It can be attributed to excellent snow conditions across the country, delivering a true winter season. Despite initial concerns about energy costs and economic uncertainties at the start of the season, heavy snowfall arrived at the right time, with some resorts experiencing record-breaking amounts not seen in a century. Many ski resorts are vital to their local communities, and the strong season has had positive ripple effects on tourism and the economy. Even smaller, local, and city-adjacent ski areas saw high visitor numbers, highlighting their importance for public health, recreation, and sports development.

Norwegian resorts also saw a surge in international visitors, driven by a favourable exchange rate and a lack of snow in parts of Central Europe. Favourable conditions extended the season, with excellent spring skiing during winter breaks and Easter holidays.

Norway is an ideal holiday destination for families, thanks to excellent child-care facilities. Children under the age of 7 can ski for free, provided they are wearing a helmet. The ski season begins very early and lasts from November until Easter. Norwegian ski resorts benefit from good snow conditions and are not as overrun as elsewhere, so that ski lift lines are rare. The 2 largest ski resorts – **Trysil** and **Hemsedal** – even offer their guests a snow guarantee: if the guaranteed ski trails are not open for an extended period of time, the resort refunds their guests the money for their hotel, ski school, ski rentals and lift pass. Both are operated by the large Scandinavian group Ski-Star.

Geilo is the oldest ski resort of Norway and has since become a modern resort with good infrastructure, excellent ski runs, snowboard parks, mountain restaurants, hotels and spas. Spread on several areas, it has 4 chairlifts and 13 surface lifts with a total capacity of 22'000 people per hour, all located between 800 and 1'178 meters above sea level.

Hafjell is the third largest alpine ski area in Norway, 2 hours' drive north from Oslo, well-known thanks to the 1994 Lillehammer Olympic Winter Games. With 835 meters vertical drop, it has 1 gondola, 3 chairlifts, 11

surface lifts, 44 kilometres of well-maintained ski runs and 300 kilometres of groomed cross-country skiing trails. Hafjell is a very modern and sunny ski resort. Snowmaking facilities cover 87% of the skiable area.

Trysil is located close to the Swedish border, 40-minute drive from Scandinavian Mountains Airport or a 3-hour bus journey from Oslo airport. The resort boasts 78 kilometres of alpine skiing spread across 68 slopes, served by 31 lifts, on 3 mountain sides, catering to both families and experienced skiers. The area provides around 27'000 commercial beds, of which 6'900 are controlled by SkiStar (with about 1'700 owned). SkiStar also operates Radisson Blu Resort and Radisson Blu Mountain Resort & Residences hotels. During the summer, the resort is renowned for its numerous mountain bike trails. It also features climbing park, golf and hiking.

Hemsedal, in the Scandinavian Mountains, is a 3-hour drive from Oslo (230 kilometres). The summit of the resort culminates at 1'450 meters above sea level, offering 830 meters vertical drop. Hemsedal features 49 downhill runs for a total of 46 kilometres of skiing, 6 chairlifts, 12 surface lifts, with total capacity of 28'500 skiers per hour. Accommodations offer 4'800 commercial beds. There are 2 mogul runs and 2 runs are lit for night skiing.

Despite the title of northernmost ski area is heavily disputed between the 3 Scandinavian countries, it falls to the small resort of **Tromsø**, featuring 4 kilometres of slopes, 3 surface lifts and a magic carpet³⁴.

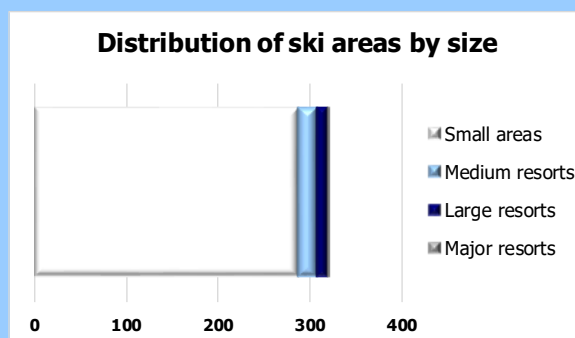
Norway also accounts 3 summer-only ski areas: **Stryn Glacier**, **Folgefonn** and **Galdhøpiggen**. They are all located on glaciers and are usually open from May to October / November.

³⁴ In his book *Around the World in 50 Slopes*, ski journalist Patrick Thorne points out that there are more northern ski slopes equipped with lifts, such as the Nordkapp Alpinklubb, just next to North Cape. There is even a small ski lift in Spitzbergen, in Svalbard Islands.

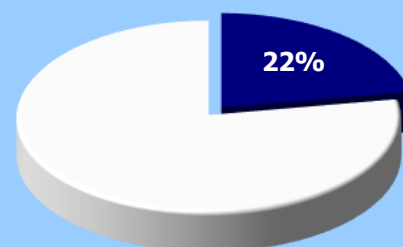


Norway

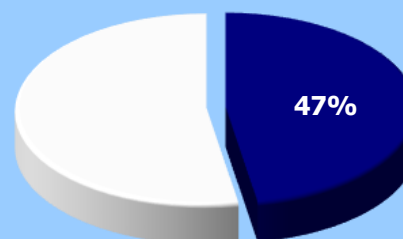
Ski areas	320
Lifts	764
National skiers	1'219'770
Skier visits per lift	10'013
Average skier visits	7'650'200
Skier visits per national skier	3.30
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.74
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.68



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





Portugal



Although Portugal is among the countries most famous for their beaches, the northern half of the country is mountainous and marked with valleys, highlands and cold winters. Ponta de Pico, the highest point of Portugal (2'351 meters above sea level) is located in the Azores Islands.

The continental Portuguese mountains culminate with **Serra da Estrala**, a little less than 2'000 meters high. Cold weather and natural snowfall in winter enables skiing, and the country's only ski area was developed there as early as the 1950s. The ski area offers a vertical drop of 134 meters, between 1'851 and 1'985 meters above sea level. There is 1 chairlift and 2 surface lifts, together with 2 other beginners' lifts. Snowmaking facilities have also been built to secure good skiing conditions.

The resort features 2 hotels and other accommodations, ski rentals, snowmobile tours and other various leisure activities.

The neighbouring village of **Manteigas** also offers the possibility for year-round skiing on its 400-metre-long synthetic slope, equipped with a ski lift and lights for night skiing.



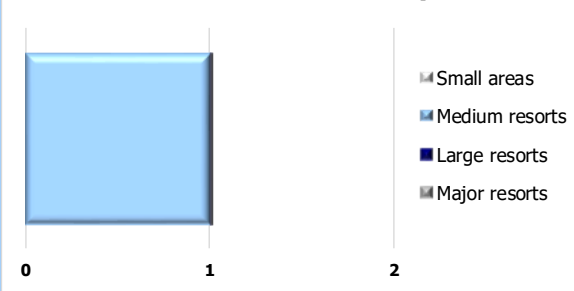
Skiing facilities in Portugal are beginners oriented. More experienced Portuguese skiers travel abroad to the Spanish and Andorran ski resorts, or further to the Alps. The resort of Sierra Nevada, for instance, hosts a large number of Portuguese skiers every winter.



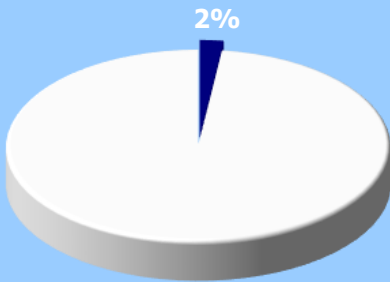
Portugal

Ski areas	1
Lifts	33
National skiers	207'580
Skier visits per lift	1'515
Average skier visits	50'000
Skier visits per national skier	0.24
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.00
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.00

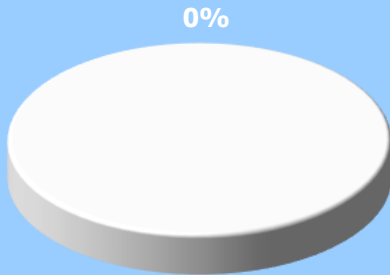
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





Despite the image of beaches commonly associated with Spain, the country ranks well among the mountainous regions of Europe (with a mean altitude of 650 meters above sea level, the country is even the fifth most mountainous in Europe). It has a centuries-old tradition of skiing, with 32 ski resorts located throughout various parts of the country. Spaniards, like many Europeans, love winter sports. Families go skiing or snowboarding on weekends and many people own second homes in the Pyrenees. Even former King Juan Carlos used to spend several days

a year in the spotlight at ski resorts. In most resorts, 90% or more of skier visits consists of domestic skiers. One peculiarity of the ski season in Spain, when compared to other European countries, is that it usually starts at the beginning of December due to certain public holidays. Attendance is therefore fairly well balanced over the 4 full months of the season: December to March. In April, attendance is low, as ski resorts start competing with the beaches.

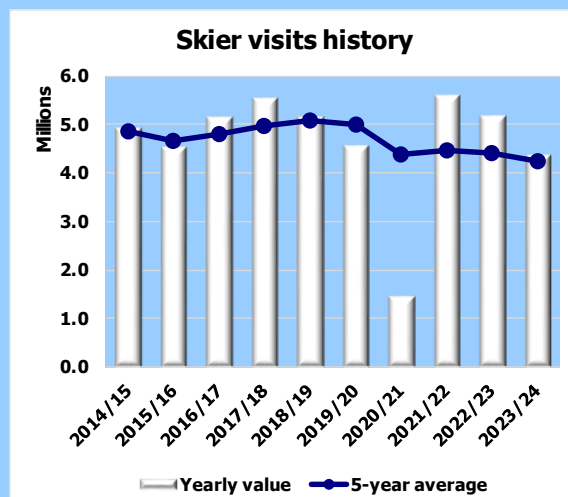


With the exception of those seasons that experienced bad snow and weather conditions, skier visits at Spanish ski resorts grew slightly during the first few seasons of the new millennium, reaching twice more than 7 million skier visits,

before declining and flattening out, following the record 2008/09 winter. Since, the attendance seemed impacted by the country's difficult economic situation and had stabilised for about 10 consecutive years at an average around the 5 million mark. The 2019/2020 season saw the forced closure of the ski resorts due to the covid-19 outbreak, resulting in a significantly shorter season. Adverse conditions created by the pandemic for the 2020/21 season resulted in a dramatic decrease in attendance recorded at Spanish resorts. With 5.5 million skier visits, attendance recovered a very decent level in winter 2021/22, matching with the good season 2017/18 (highest score of last 10 years). The 2022/23 ski season was a bit differentiated depending on the ski areas and the regions. Some resorts hardly opened for 60 days when some other experienced a more than 130-day season. Snowfalls were unequal, with some resorts suffering low snowpack on their slopes when some others measured several meters of snow on their slopes. Total national attendance was 8.3% down on former season.

2023/24 season's highlights

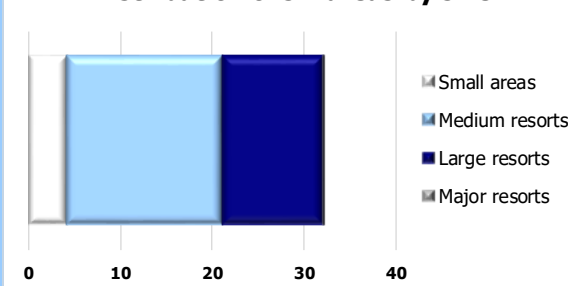
The ski resorts of Spain managed to navigate a challenging winter season marked by difficult weather conditions. **Total skier visits reached 4.4 million**, 15.7% below previous season. The overall results were partially offset by the strong performance of two major Spanish ski areas, Baqueira Beret and Sierra Nevada, with Baqueira Beret even setting a historic record for visitor numbers. However, most other ski areas reported declines.



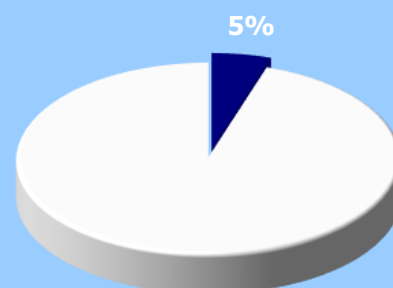
Spain

Ski areas	32
Lifts	384
National skiers	2'380'752
Skier visits per lift	11'061
Average skier visits	4'247'452
Skier visits per national skier	1.61
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.08
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.01

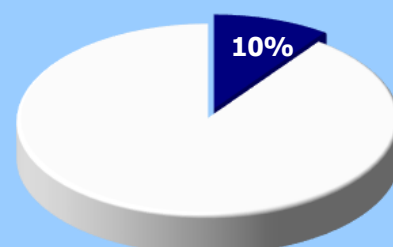
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers



The ski areas in Spain are well equipped and suitable for skiers of all levels. The on-mountain facilities are continuously being improved upon: trails, infrastructure, machinery, access, accommodations and services. Snowmaking systems at many resorts cover more than 50% of the trails. Annual investments, totalling millions of euros at the beginning of the 2000s, have contributed to bringing the resorts up to international standards, with major infrastructure expansion. For instance, the number of lifts grew from 228 in 2003 to over 380 today. This was done in an ongoing effort to respect the environment and natural sites. Some areas have been certified by the Q trademark for Spanish Tourism Quality. This label is granted to establishments that meet the quality standards required.

Snow conditions are usually good; daylight hours are longer in the winter than in the Alps. In addition, resorts offer a wide range of complementary activities to visitors.

In the North, the Pyrenees form a natural barrier between France and Spain and have offered favourable conditions for building multiple ski resorts. Among the famous ones of the region, **Baqueria Beret** is located in the Aran Valley. It was founded in 1964 and is today one of the largest in Spain, featuring 78 slopes totalling 153 kilometres and 25 lifts. It offers a vertical drop exceeding 1'000 meters. **Cerler**, **Formigal/Panticosa**, **La Molina** and **Masella** are some other internationally renowned resort in the Pyrenees. A peculiar, much smaller ski area is **Vall de Nuria**, where the 12.5 kilometres train line is the only way to reach the ski area, despite it does not directly serve a ski slope.

Apart from the Pyrenees, which represent the most extensive ski region of Spain, the centre of the country, the Cordillera Central, has 4 ski resorts located essentially on the outskirts of Madrid, Salamanca and Segovia.



Last but not least is Andalusia. It is home to one of the most attended resort in Spain, **Sierra Nevada**, which sees on average 800'000 skier visits per winter. Located in the second highest mountain chain in Europe, with 14 peaks over 3'000 meters high, Sierra Nevada is the southernmost resort in continental Europe. Skiing at an altitude of 3'400 meters an hour's drive from the Mediterranean Sea offers an exotic experience, as there are very few places where you can swim or surf in the sea in the morning and ski or snowboard in the afternoon. With over 105 kilometres of ski runs, 18 lifts and snow coverage about 5 months per year, Sierra Nevada offers all winter sports, for beginners and experts alike. It is also possible to ski at night on certain weekends or during holiday periods. The resort has many accommodations, bars, restaurants, and discotheques for evening entertainment.





Sweden



The Scandinavian Mountain Range runs along the border with Norway, from the North Sea to the North Cape, over 1'700 kilometres. It reaches 2'104 meters above sea level at its highest point in Sweden, Mount Kebnekaise (the highest summit of the range is located in Norway).

The Swedish winter is long, with a lot of snowfall. In the North, the season lasts until May. Sweden is a sought-after winter sports destination as snow is practically guaranteed. In addition, cross-country skiing is very popular and the beautiful landscapes, lakes and forests offer a breath-taking panorama for skiing and relaxing.

Downhill skiing has already more than 80 years history in Sweden, with the first lift installed in 1940 in Åre. About 20 ski areas were developed in the 1950s, but the big boom of the industry happened in the 1960s. Today, Sweden has over 200 ski areas with a total of more than 800 ski lifts. They are spread throughout all the country, even if the largest resorts are located in the

middle section of the country, in the Scandinavian Mountains, close to the Norwegian border.

Climate change, and its consequences for countries in the European Alps, is considered an advantage for Sweden, as ski tourism may shift to the colder northern Scandinavian countries.

New investments have been made, with extension of hotel and lodging capacities in several resorts and renewal of lifts over the last years. Since 2013/14, attendance has been growing for 4 winters in a row at Swedish resorts, pushing the long-range trend towards the rise after having shown for a long time a very flat evolution. 2017/18 and 2018/19 seasons were then at the highest. The pandemic did not disturb too much the attendance at Swedish ski resorts. Sweden was one of the last countries in Europe to close them further to covid-19 outbreak and following winter, attendance recovered to a level close to the 5-year average. In 2021/22, resorts operated at full swing during the holiday season and attendance was record-breaking, with 10.6 million skier visits, a score never reached before. Season 2022/23 recorded 10.0 million skier visits, ranging it in the best seasons.

2023/24 season's highlights

The season was one of the longest and snowiest in recent years, with an increase of 4.4 % in attendance, totalling **10.5 million skier visits**. For the third time in a row, the 10 million mark has been exceeded.

Most ski resorts across Sweden opened early, with great snow conditions by December. The winter was consistently snowy, ending with an early Easter. There was a notable growth in international visitors, especially from Denmark, Germany, the UK, and the Netherlands.

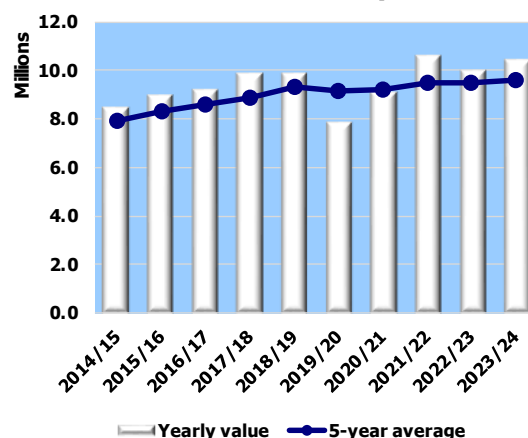
The largest ski destination of the country is **Sälen**, situated in the Northwest of the province of Dalarna, approximately 420 kilometres from Stockholm. It consists in fact in 4 mountains interconnected into 2 large skiing areas – Lindvallen/Högfjället and Tandådalen/Hundfjället. Sälen offers more than 100 trails and 87 lifts, totalling a capacity of 87'600 skiers/hour. Accommodations feature 13'900 commercial beds.



The second largest ski destination in Sweden is **Åre**. It is situated 650 kilometres northwest of Stockholm and consists of 3 ski areas: Åre Björnen, interconnected with Åre By and the single area of Duved. Each one has its own profile and target group. Åre has 42 ski lifts, 89 ski runs and 5'800 commercial beds. Åre is the most internationally visited resort in Sweden.

Vemdalen is the third largest ski destination in Sweden. It lies approximately 480 kilometres northwest of Stockholm, and consists of 3 areas: Björnrike, Vemdalskalet and Klövsjö/Storhogna. They total 35 lifts and 58 slopes.

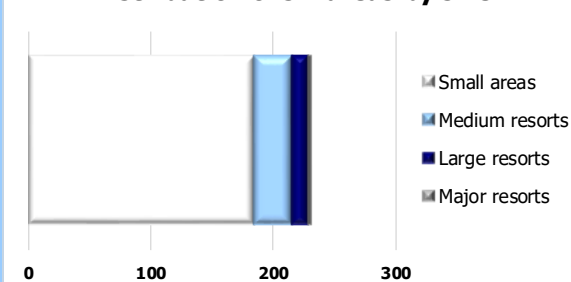
Skier visits history



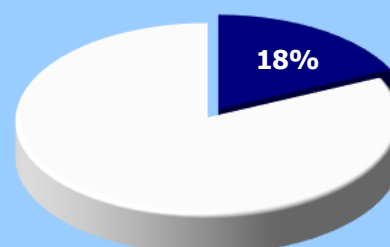
Sweden

Ski areas	230
Lifts	835
National skiers	1'899'827
Skier visits per lift	11'521
Average skier visits	9'619'713
Skier visits per national skier	4.30
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.78
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.14

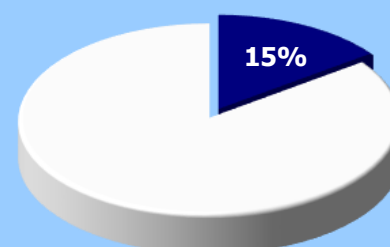
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





All 3 major ski destinations are operated by Ski-Star, the largest Scandinavian ski resort company.

Located in Swedish Lapland, 200 kilometres north of Polar Circle, **Riksgfänsen** is the northernmost ski resort of the country. With its 6 ski lifts and 15 ski runs, it is famous for skiing under the midnight sun. Slopes are elevated between 522 and 909 meters above sea level.

In order to improve accessibility of Swedish ski resorts, Scandinavian Mountains Airport opened by the end of 2019. Funded by an investment grant of SEK 250 million from the Swedish Government, it is located in Dalarna, close to the Norwegian border. From there, it is easy to reach Sälen, Idre, Trysil and Engerdal ski resorts (2 latter are located in Norway). The airport has been constructed on the site of an existing small airfield.

New world record set: 101 different ski lifts in one day

A new world record was set by Oliver Kern during the normal operating hours of the ski lifts in the Sälen ski region in Sweden. In the ski areas of Stöten, Hundfjället, Tandådalen, Högfjället, Lindvallen and Kläppen, he used 101 different ski lifts in just under 11 hours. 3 ski lifts were skied twice and, as a bonus, 6 magic carpets were used.

The passionate skier and founder of the world's largest test portal for ski resorts *Skiresort.info* is always looking for new challenges. So, the early morning skiing started at 7.30 am on Tuesday 11th February 2025 in the Stöten ski resort. In the first hour, the 9 open lifts were mastered without any problems. Then it was off by car to the Hundfjället ski area, a sub-area of SkiStar Sälen, just 20 kilometres away. The lifts opened at 9.00 a.m. and the challenge continued. In Hundfjället, 20 different ski lifts were used.

At 11.00 a.m., the two connecting lifts pulled Oliver Kern into the Tandådalen ski area and another 22 ski lifts were added to the list. At around 1 p.m., Oliver Kern was pulled to the car park by the Östra transport lift, where the car was already waiting and it was off to Högfjället, 5 kilometres away, within 6 minutes. 12 other lifts were used in Högfjället. A three-seater chairlift and a T-bar lift took Oliver Kern to the Lindvallen section of the ski area.

In Lindvallen, another 29 lifts were mastered in record time and unfortunately there was no stop at the world's only McDonald's ski-in, as time was running out. There was no time for a break during the 11-hour ski day and it was only possible to eat and drink in the lifts. At 5.30 p.m. Oliver Kern went to the Kläppen ski area, 19 kilometres away. Here Oliver Kern skied the remaining 9 ski lifts. The 10-passenger Gondol Sälen gondola lift took Oliver via a middle station to the summit, where the official world record certificate was handed over after 101 different ski lift rides.

Oliver Kern from *Skiresort.info* is therefore the new world record holder and has travelled on the most different ski lifts in one day.



United Kingdom



Although many English people are fans of skiing, there are only 5 ski resorts with natural snow in the United Kingdom, located in Scotland, plus a few ski areas managed by ski clubs in Northern England and Wales. However, the country does have roughly 50 to 60 dry slopes, where skiers can slide down slopes covered with synthetic material³⁵. Furthermore, there are 6 indoor snow centres, where skiers can enjoy manmade snow at any time of the year.

Skiing has a long history in Scotland, with resorts such as **Glencoe** and **Glenshee** built in the early 1930s. Although at that time they were already equipped with a small engine-powered tow, the first permanent lifts were installed in the 1950s. Skiing took off in the 1960s with several developments that proved unsustainable, especially due to the unreliable snow conditions. After **Lecht** opened in the 1970s and **Nevis Range** in the 1980s, with the first modern gondola in the United Kingdom, Scotland currently has 5 ski areas in operation.



The Scottish resorts can reach a total yearly average of 200'000 skier visits, but attendance is highly sensitive to weather and snow conditions and can double from one season to another. The Scottish ski season usually starts at Christmas, but ski lifts sometimes open in October. The end of the season

³⁵ There were over 200 dry slopes in the 1970/80's, but most have closed.

may also be extended. One of the record seasons, the 2009/10 winter, lasted through May and even June at some resorts, with 375'000 skier visits. Since winter 2016/17, Scottish ski areas have experienced a succession of very bad seasons with either very low snow, access restrictions caused by the pandemic or misfortunes with a major lift. Low attendance levels decided Glencoe Mountain Resort to purchase an all-weather snowmaking system. It was soon followed by all 4 other fellow ski areas. Only winter 2017/18 was an exception, with much better condition allowing to record the best attendance over 5 years.

2023/24 season's highlights

Last ski season in Scotland was challenging, with scarce snow and a significant drop in skier numbers. Only **55'000 skier visits** were recorded across all 5 resorts, ranging it in the worst seasons on record. Some resorts, like The Lecht, even launched crowdfunding efforts to stay open. While resorts like Glencoe managed to operate most of the winter, they could only open the upper mountain, resulting in lower skier numbers. Despite the difficulties, there is cautious optimism for future seasons.

With its 19 surface lifts and 3 chairlifts, the resort of **Glenshee** offers the country's most extensive skiing and snowboarding facilities. Culminating at 1'108 meters above sea level, with a base elevation of 305 meters, **Glencoe Mountain** resort has the highest vertical drop and offers the longest and steepest runs in Scotland. While **Cairngorm** offers the only Scottish funicular railway, **Nevis Range** features the only gondola lift. Both also operate during the summer months.



The indoor slopes are working hard to attract new people to snow sports, which is a benefit for the industry. One indoor ski centre offers a *Learn to Ski in a Day* program, which is very attractive for first time skiers and snowboarders. The dry ski slopes are also good opportunities to enable novices to learn and become familiar with skiing. The national snow sport's governing

body is working to introduce snow sports to people who have never skied or snowboarded before. Some private clubs even have their own dry slope.

In the 1980s and 1990s, skier visit figures in the United Kingdom were higher than they are today. But with improving roads and air connection to Europe, together with the introduction of low-cost airlines, most of the UK ski business is currently abroad. Every year nearly 2 million skiers travel to the Alps or other destinations for winter sports³⁶. Even if it lost some of its market share, France is still the most popular country among British skiers, accounting for more than one third of travellers. Austria is ranked second, capturing about 25% of the British skiers' market. Next is Italy (about 14%), then Andorra (about 6%), which is on a par with Switzerland (also about 6%), North America (less than 5%) and Bulgaria (about 4%). British skiers used to travel primarily through tour operators (with several major firms specialized in winter ski travel) but now increasingly arrange their own travel and book their own accommodations, or even stay in properties either they or their friends own. For the 2012/13 season, 54% of British skiers claimed that they booked their trip independently and the figure appears to be always growing.

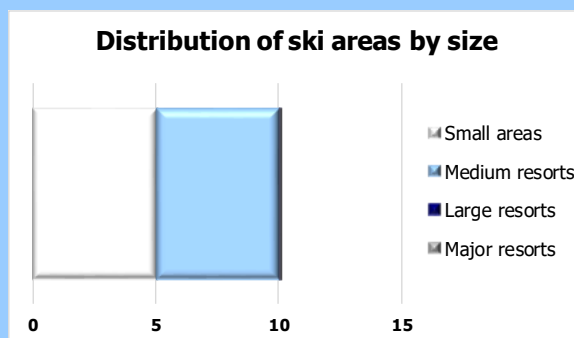


³⁶ A recent survey commissioned by Ski Weekends concludes that 1.5 million UK skiers are going skiing at least once a year.

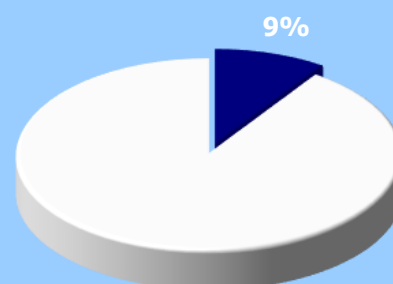


United Kingdom

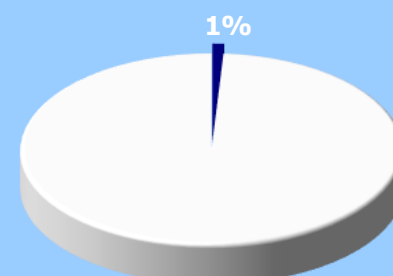
Ski areas	10
Lifts	126
National skiers	6'339'557
Skier visits per lift	505
Average skier visits	63'626
Skier visits per national skier	0.01
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.00
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.00



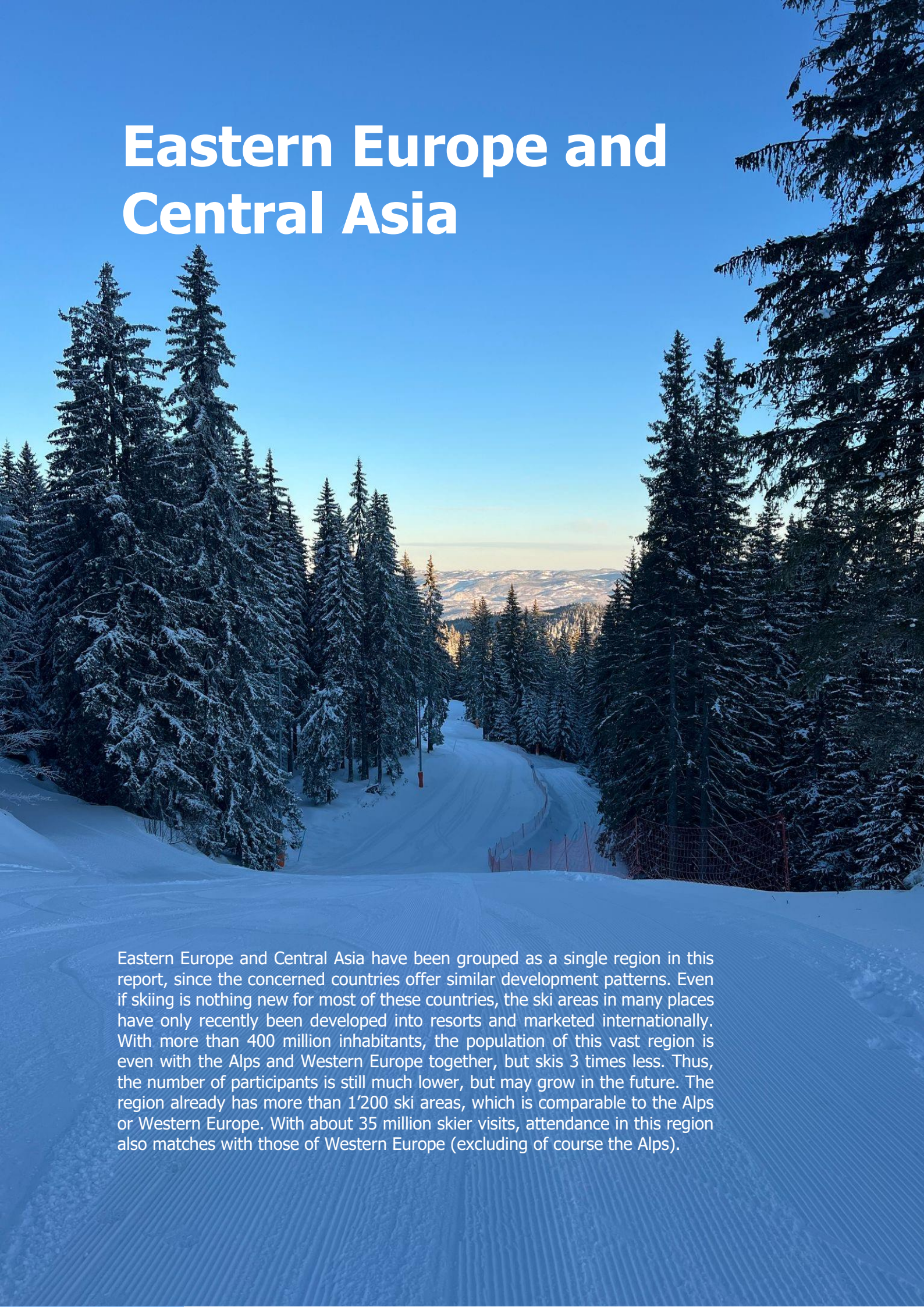
Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers



Eastern Europe and Central Asia



Eastern Europe and Central Asia have been grouped as a single region in this report, since the concerned countries offer similar development patterns. Even if skiing is nothing new for most of these countries, the ski areas in many places have only recently been developed into resorts and marketed internationally. With more than 400 million inhabitants, the population of this vast region is even with the Alps and Western Europe together, but skis 3 times less. Thus, the number of participants is still much lower, but may grow in the future. The region already has more than 1'200 ski areas, which is comparable to the Alps or Western Europe. With about 35 million skier visits, attendance in this region also matches with those of Western Europe (excluding of course the Alps).



Albania



Albania is a mountainous country, with about 70% of its surface area covered by mountains and hilly terrains. The country's high point is Mount Korab, 2'764 meters above sea level. The mountains in the North are a

continuation of the Dinaric Alps and the Montenegrin limestone plateau. The mountain range along the eastern border is the highest zone. The terrain is difficult to access, folded and rugged, with deep valleys and few roads (often unpaved). The non-coastal part of the country has a continental climate with lots of precipitations in the highlands, especially in winter. From North to South, the inland part of the country can offer the right conditions for skiing, including powder snow.

However, and in spite of this attribute, the country is not well known as a ski destination. There are a limited number of unequipped areas to ski and the first surface lift was only installed in 2012. The areas that offer skiing are not resorts, but villages in the mountains where one can go skiing, similar to the Alps one century ago. Albanian ski enthusiasts are few in numbers, and for years, the local situation did not really favour the development of this activity, even if it was not an unknown pastime. If they want to ski, Albanians would prefer to travel to the neighbouring countries, which are better equipped. Backcountry skiing in the mountains is mostly enjoyed by foreigners.

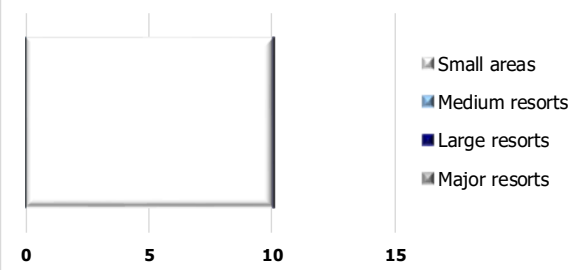
The ski area of **Bigell**, near Dardhe, is at present time the only area equipped with a surface lift.



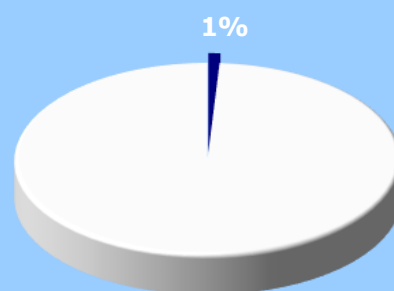
Albania

Ski areas	10
Lifts	1
National skiers	27'756
Skier visits per lift	10'000
Average skier visits	10'000
Skier visits per national skier	0.32
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.00
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.00

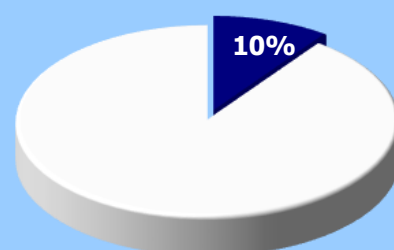
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





Half of Armenia is covered by mountains. The largest part of the country is at an altitude of more than 1'000 meters above sea level. Winters are cold, and offer ideal snow conditions for winter sports.

Yet, the country has only one ski resort equipped with more than 4 lifts, **Tsakhkadzor**, located 55 kilometres from the capital, Yerevan. Once upon a time, it was the training grounds for the Soviet Olympic team. The first lift system was installed in 1972, turning the city into a ski

resort. A ski-teaching centre was founded there in 1986, training athletes, including some who participated in the Olympic Games. The ski area is located between 1'966 and 2'819 meters high, east of Mount Teghenis. In 2005, the Government started a special program to develop Tsakhkadzor into an international tourist destination. Since then, the site has expanded quickly and every year features new hotels and recreational facilities. New lifts, built to international standards, were installed between 2004 and 2008. Among them a 3-stage chairlift, offering new runs and growing the popularity of Tsakhkadzor as a genuine ski resort. The total hourly capacity of the lifts is



4'400 skiers. The ski area extends for over 30 square kilometres and includes 10 runs, for a vertical drop of 853 meters. Most runs will suit beginners, and the ski area offers excellent off-piste conditions. 5 groomers are planned to maintain the slopes. The season runs from late December to late March. In

2002, improvements to the highway leading to the resort were made to meet with international standards and to improve safety. In addition to being a ski area, the city of Tsakhkadzor is also a spa centre.

There are 2 other ski areas in the country, each one with only one ski lift: **Akhtamar Ski Centre**, next to the Sevan Lake, is equipped with a quad chairlift, and **Jermuk** has a double chairlift.

Despite some projects have been contemplated, for instance on the slopes of Mount Aragats, the market potential for such developments has not yet been demonstrated. For more than 10 years after the last new lift was installed in Armenia, nothing new happened.

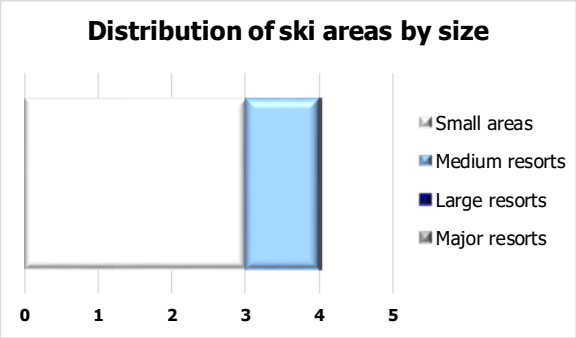
It is now changing, as the commissioning of 3 major lifts has been completed for a new project called **Myler Mountain Resort**, on slopes east of Mount Aragats. A multi-stage plan will see the development of a ski resort of international standard³⁷. In the first phase, one 6-seater chairlift and 2 gondolas started operating by the end of 2023. The resort will feature a year-round offer, with a large choice of hotels and residences, managed condos and holiday apartments distributed among 3 villages. Once completed, the ski area will offer a total of 16 lifts, with total capacity of 41'400 person per hour, 100 marked ski pistes of all ability levels totalling 92 kilometres and a 972 meters vertical drop.

³⁷ Total investment budget over 10 years amounts to EUR 250 to 300 million. The budget dedicated to the first phase of the project amounts to EUR 60 million.

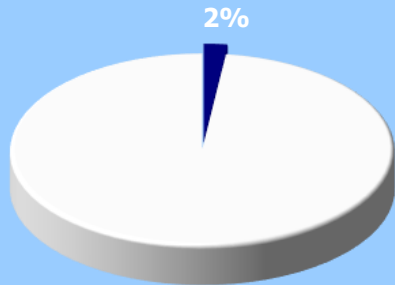


Armenia

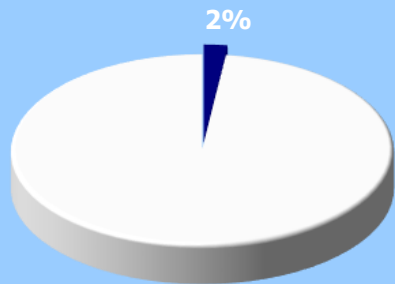
Ski areas	4
Lifts	10
National skiers	55'609
Skier visits per lift	9'000
Average skier visits	90'000
Skier visits per national skier	1.59
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.03
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.00



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





Azerbaijan



About half of the country is flat, with some lowlands situated below sea level (the Caspian Sea is located 28 meters below sea level), and the other half is considered to be mountainous terrain. Except for its eastern Caspian shoreline, Azerbaijan is surrounded by mountains. To the North, part of the Great Caucasus Mountains crosses its territory, offering peaks rising up to 4'485 meters above sea level (Bazarduzu Dagi) along the Russian border. To the West, the Lesser Caucasus Mountains are located on the Armenian border, and top out at 3'500 meters,

together with the Karabakh Mountains and volcanic highlands. South, along the Iranian border, the Talish Mountains rise to 2'477 meters above sea level.

Ski resorts are something new in Azerbaijan. There are presently only a few ones, which were recently built.



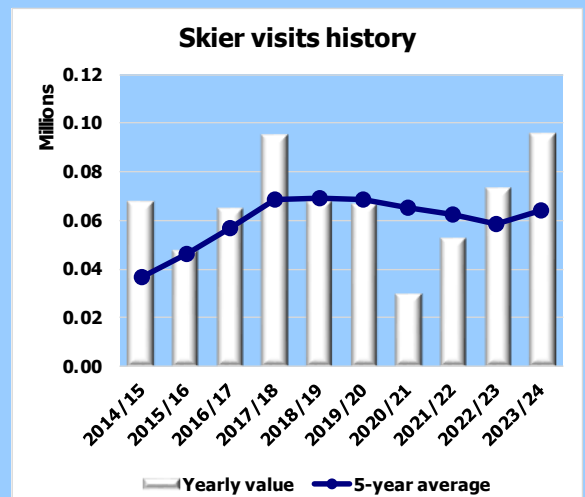
Shahdag Mountain Resort is the first and biggest mountain tourism spot of Azerbaijan. The complex is named after the 4'243-meter Shahdag Peak of Greater Caucasus range and its construction started in 2009. The resort is located close to the Shahdag National Park and offers year-round mountain activities and a complete range of lodging - from luxury hotels (5 hotels with a total of 1'147 beds) to camping (in the summer). In winter, it offers 27 ski slopes with a total length of 30 kilometres and 16 lifts of different types. Skiable area is fully covered with snowmaking systems, which guarantee the

snow for the entire winter season. The base of the ski area is located at an altitude of 1'435 meters above sea level and the top elevation of skiing area is 2'552 meters, which is the highest skiing point in Azerbaijan. Shahdag Mountain Resort has ski schools with experienced international and local instructors. The infrastructure also features a complimentary medical centre (7/24), a helipad and a gas station. The resort is located 210 kilometres from the capital city of Baku, and is 3-hour drive from Baku Heydar Aliyev International Airport. There are up to 30 restaurants within the complex, including Shahdag 2'351 – the highest restaurant of the country. Spa, wellness centres, cinema, nightclub and a game zone add for the utmost comfortable leisure of the guests.

About 40 kilometres away, close to the city of Qabala, **Tufandag Mountain Resort** has also been built recently. A gondola and a mixed lift (8-person gondola – 6-person chairs) were installed in 2012. Two other lifts of this kind were installed the next year. The ski area features 10 trails for a total of 15 kilometres, equipped with snowmaking, offering a 963 meters vertical drop. 3 hotels accommodate guests close to the slopes.

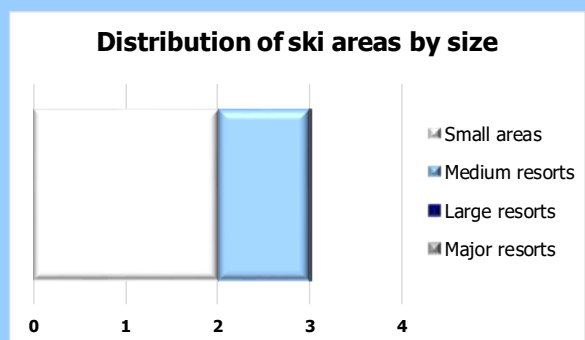
These resorts expect to host mostly foreign customers from neighbouring Russia, Iran and Turkey, plus guests coming from countries further away, such as China, India and Arab countries.

In 2017, first foundations of a new resort were laid in **Agbulag**, in order to develop rural mountain and ski tourism in the Autonomous Republic of Nakhchivan. The ski area features one 4-seater chairlift and one magic carpet, serving a 1'500 metres slope. It opened in 2020 and is equipped with some snow-making devices. There is also one 4-star hotel at the base, with restaurant and lounge. Agbulag is located only 40 kilometres as the crow flies from Armenian ski area of Jermuk, but about 300 kilometres from Shahdag.

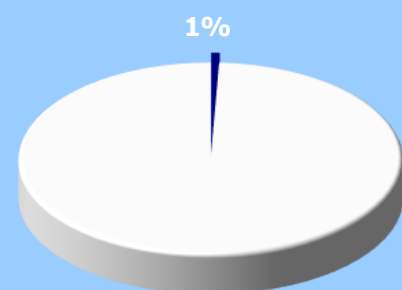


Azerbaijan

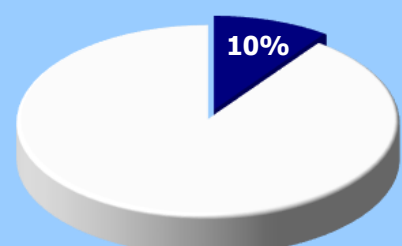
Ski areas	3
Lifts	21
National skiers	71'926
Skier visits per lift	3'043
Average skier visits	63'905
Skier visits per national skier	0.80
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.01
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.00



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





Belarus



With an average altitude of 162 meters above sea level, Belarus is a country covered with plains and forests. Its highest point, Dzyarzhynskaya Hara, is only 346 meters above sea level and is located near the capital city of Minsk. It is part of a range of low-lying mountains called the Byelaruskaya Hrada (Belarus Range). The northern part of the country offers landscapes with several lakes, hills and gentle slopes. Nearly one third of the southern part of the country is covered in swamplands. Winters are mild to cold with an average January temperature ranging between minus 4 and minus 8 degrees Celsius. It snows during the 105-to-145-day winter season, offering the chance to enjoy powder.

Despite the lack of real mountains, alpine skiing started in the 1950s in Belarus, on hills near the city of Minsk. In 1964, the **Raubichi** ski-training centre was built, an initiative of the Belarus Federation of Alpine Skiing and Ski Jumping, and the first championship was held in 1965. Nowadays, downhill skiing has become increasingly popular on the higher hills and steep ravines. In the 2000s, several 4-season recreational areas opened, offering skiing and snowboarding in winter. Alpine skiing facilities are found in Minsk, Minsk Oblast, Gomel Oblast and Vitebsk Oblast. They attract domestic skiers, together with ski aficionados from Lithuania, Latvia and Russia.



The 2 major and most recently built ski areas are **Logoisk** National Ski Centre and the **Silichi** recreational centre. Both are located in the Minsk region.

Logoisk was the first centre of its kind to be built in Belarus. With a vertical drop of 82 meters, it features a fixed-grip quad chairlift and one surface lift, 8 trails totalling 3.6 kilometres, equipment rentals, night skiing, a ski school, a 50-bed hotel and restaurants.

Silichi centre opened in 2005 as a 4-season recreational area. For snow sports, it offers 2 fixed-grip chairlifts (1 double, 1 quad) and a beginner rope tow, 4 trails totalling 2.8 kilometres, snowmaking facilities, night skiing, a half pipe, ski school, snow-tubing, an ice-skating rink (which is used in the summer for indoor sports), snowmobiles, a 104-bed hotel, 12 dachas (wooden cottages), restaurants and cafés. In order to increase the vertical drop and offer a steeper slope, the builders artificially raised the hill an additional 24 meters, for 100 meters of vertical drop. The centre receives more than 100'000 yearly visitors, and skiers can train all year round thanks to a skiing simulator.

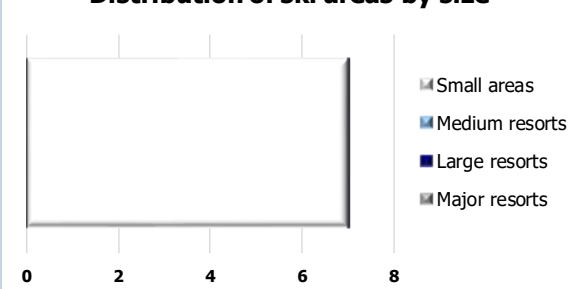
In 2009, the **Solnechnaya Dolina (Sunny Valley)** ski area was built within the city of Minsk, offering 2 ski lifts, equipment rentals and night skiing for its citizens, without having to leave the town.



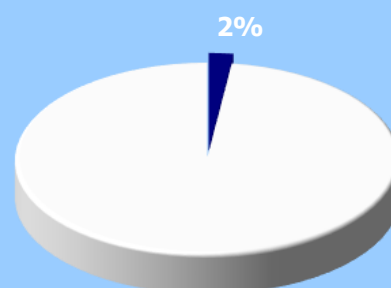
Belarus

Ski areas	7
Lifts	13
National skiers	190'158
Skier visits per lift	15'385
Average skier visits	200'000
Skier visits per national skier	0.79
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.02
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.06

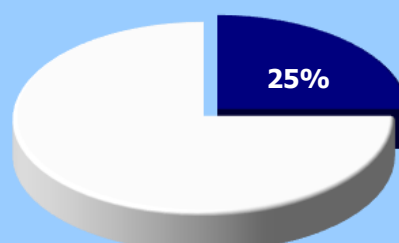
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





Bosnia and Herzegovina



Bosnia and Herzegovina is a mostly forested and mountainous country; the Dinaric Alps run from the Northeast to the South of the country with numerous valleys and peaks. The highest summit rises up to 2'386 meters above sea level, near the border with Montenegro (Peak Maglic).

In 1984, Sarajevo was the host city for the Winter Olympic Games, evidence of the long history of skiing in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, the war in 1992 left scars still visible at ski areas today. It is only recently that

the major ski areas have started to modernise, by either building new ski lifts or renovating old ones, as well as building new accommodations. However, most resorts do not have the means at this stage to install snowmaking systems.

About 5% of the Bosnian population skis. The country has less than 20 ski areas and some are too small to really be considered. Most foreign visitors come from Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia or Montenegro.



Over recent years, the modernisation of existing ski areas has been pushing attendance upwards at Bosnia and Herzegovina ski areas and with it, the hope that the country will find its place among international ski destinations. Skier visits have been pushed upwards with the recent upgrading of major resorts. The ski season 2021/22 has seen still unreached level of attendance at **Olympic Center Jahorina** ski area, which has been pushing upwards

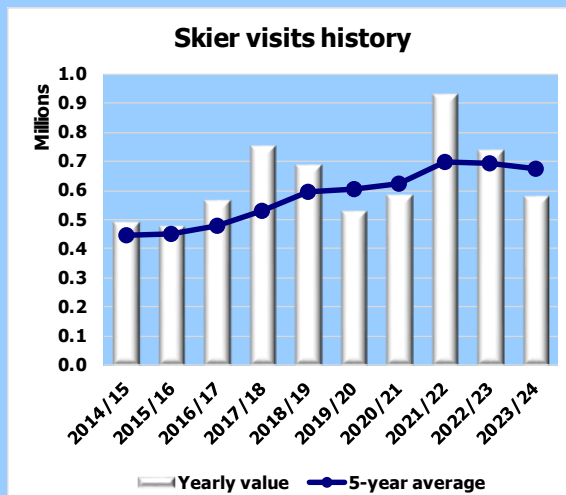
the national numbers. Attendance of 2022/23 winter set at lower level. As with other neighbouring countries in the Alps, Bosnian resorts experienced delayed snowfalls and warm temperatures at the beginning of the season. In many resorts, the ski season only began in the second half of January and they could not compensate for the loss, despite some had snow throughout April.

2023/24 season's highlights

The country experienced mild temperatures throughout the season, with difficulties to get, produce and keep snow never experienced to that date. The resorts closed much earlier than expected. **Total skier visits have been estimated to a low 580'000.**

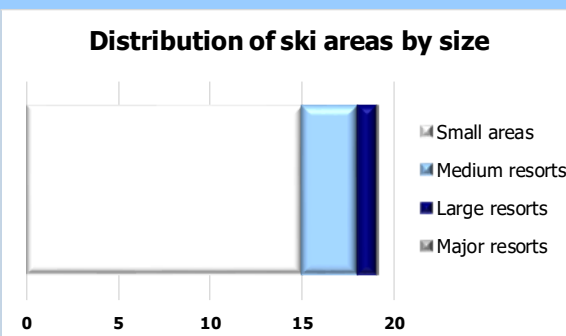
Olympic Center Jahorina and **Bjelasnica-Igman**, the major ski areas in Bosnia & Herzegovina, are located in the Sarajevo region. In addition to these popular places, Mount **Vlasic**, in the centre of the country, also has a ski resort. In the West, Kupres and Blidinje Natural Park are also 2 destinations for connoisseurs. All resorts in the country provide alternative activities to skiing, such as cross-country skiing and snowmobile tours. It is also possible to night ski. A small but important detail for visitors: In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the roads are not routinely salted in the winter, meaning that access to ski areas can sometimes prove a challenge.

Located 30 kilometres from the International Airport in Sarajevo, **Olympic Center Jahorina**, which hosted some of the events during the 1984 Olympics, presents itself as one of the major skiing and tourism centres in the Balkans. Damaged during the war in the 1990s, the area has since been refurbished and new hotels built. A large part of the mountain was turned into a national park to preserve the natural beauty of the region. The ski area is located between 1'300 and 1'880 meters above sea level. Visitors have a wide choice of restaurants and a selection of hostels to 4-star hotels. Since 2017, the resort experienced a new development policy with major investment projects, including snowmaking that guarantees a minimum of 130 days of skiing per season, arrangements of ski slopes, new lifts and trails lighting. It is one of the most modern in south-eastern Europe. A new gondola was inaugurated in

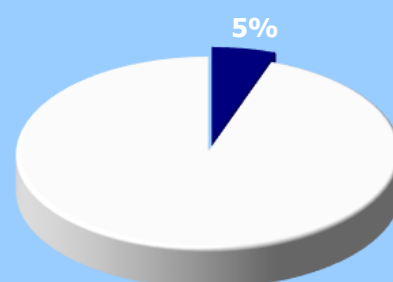


Bosnia and Herzegovina

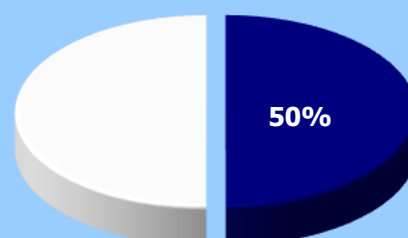
Ski areas	19
Lifts	55
National skiers	175'351
Skier visits per lift	12'245
Average skier visits	673'489
Skier visits per national skier	1.92
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.10
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.50



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





November 2019 with a ski trail named after famous Serbian tennis player Novak Djoković. A second one was installed in 2021. In addition to contributing significantly to the quality of skiing, the gondola will be a kind of tourist attraction adapted for panoramic sightseeing and will adequately complement the offer of the Jahorina Olympic Center throughout the year. Snowmaking pound at the top of the gondola is used at summer time for water activities. The total lift capacity reaches 31'000 skiers per hour (2 gondola, 4 6-seater chairlifts, 1 2-seater, 6 surface lifts). The resort features 47 kilometres of alpine and 10 kilometres of Nordic trails. 11 ski trails are FIS homologated for all 4 disciplines, downhill, slalom, giant slalom and super G, which gives the resort the opportunity to apply for international ski competitions.



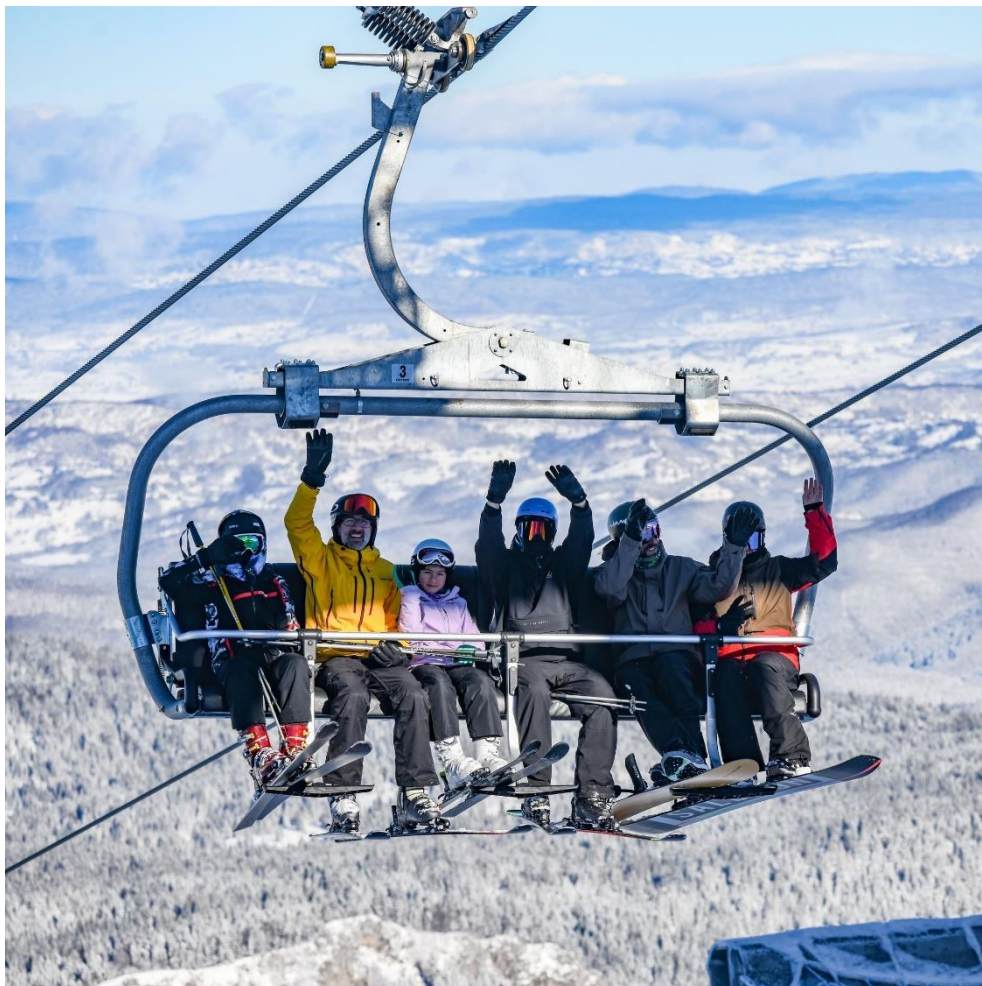
The neighbouring resort, **Bjelasnica-Igman**, was also a former Olympic competition site. In addition to 6 runs of various levels and 11 kilometres of skiing, it has 2 ski jumping facilities. The uphill infrastructure includes 8 lifts (4 surface lifts and 4 chairlifts), for a total capacity of nearly 9'000 skiers per hour. A number of investments have been made at the resort in recent years. It is now equipped with a snowmaking system and 2 brand new chairlifts have been built in 2017 (one fixed grip quad and one detachable 6-pack). Moreover, hotels were recently built in the area. The restaurant selection is still limited, although sufficient for the basic needs of the resort. The price of an all-day lift pass is roughly equivalent to one at Jahorina.

Vlasic offers 14 kilometres of beginner to intermediate runs. It is well suited for novice skiers. It has 6 ski lifts with a total uphill capacity of 4'600 skiers per hour. The runs are poorly groomed. Some facilities that hosted events during the 1984 Olympics were damaged during the war and never rebuilt. However, the resort belongs to a private owner who is investing to improve services for the entire area. Through this modernisation, the ski area hopes to earn the title of second-best ski area in the country with regard to popularity and visits. Visitors will find rooms in one of several new or renovated hotels, or at a few private accommodations (cottages or pensions).

The small city of **Kupres** has a ski area that features 4 runs for 13 kilometres of skiing, 2 chairlifts and 3 surface lifts. The area, which also has 2'000 beds, is especially well suited for beginners. **Risovac**, located in Blidinje National Park, has 1 chairlift and 2 surface lifts with a total hourly capacity of 2'960 skiers. It has 4.5 kilometres of ski runs and a certified FIS slalom run. The resort offers 700 beds.

A study conducted in 2009 by the Foreign Investment Promotion Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina (IFAP) shows that the country only utilizes a fraction of its potential for winter tourism. The document recommends different investments to improve infrastructure in the Bosnian Mountains, which still lack a sufficient number of lifts, lodging and proper ski run maintenance. A new ski area just opened for the season 2023/24 at **Igrista**, near the city of

Vlasenica, primarily for week-end skiing and ski learning. It is equipped with a 1-kilometer long 6-seater chairlift, 2 slopes with snowmaking equipment and some summer attractions.





Bulgaria



Bulgaria is the highest country of the Balkan region, with an average altitude of over 450 meters above sea level. 8 mountain ranges rising higher than 2'000 meters cover one-third of the country. The highest peak culminates at 2'925 meters above sea level (Mount Mousala).

The robust development of skiing in Bulgaria in the early 2000s is mainly due to significant investment in mountain resorts and the country's attempts to host the Winter Olympics (despite several bids, the candidacy has never been retained). In

addition, the quality of the services and activities offered has also improved. A few resorts feature world-class infrastructure. One of the main assets of Bulgarian ski resorts is their excellent price/quality ratio, much less expensive when compared to the Alps; this attracts a number of international visitors. Foreign tourists from Russia, Romania, Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, the United Kingdom, France and Israel visit Bulgaria's ski resorts. The number of Russian tourists recently decreased, while the number of Turkish tourists was on the rise.

Despite the lack of official figures, ski resorts are estimated to attract roughly 1.2 million skier visits per year. The country's most internationally renowned ski resorts are **Bansko**, **Borovets** and **Pamporovo**.

Bansko, often referred to as the Winter Capital of the Balkans and said to be the most modern resort of Eastern Europe, contains a wide variety of hotels up to 5-star. The slopes are equipped with a modern gondola and state-of-the-art detachable chairlifts. Investments of EUR 100 million were made to upgrade the lift system and the ski slopes, enabling Bansko to gain international recognition by organising FIS World Cup Ski races. Bansko has 75 kilometres of ski runs and 14 ski lifts with a capacity of 23'100 people per hour. The resort has many restaurants and a very dynamic après-ski offering, which is very appealing to both national and international tourists.

Borovets ski resort claims to be the leader in the Bulgarian ski market and the largest ski area of Eastern Europe. It is the oldest Bulgarian ski resort, with a history that dates back to 1896, when it was established as a hunting place for the Bulgarian kings. Aristocrats and members of the Bulgarian elite followed the trend and subsequently built their summer cottages and chalets in Borovets. Winter sports developed and the first downhill race was held in 1930. The resort expanded in the 1960s and 1970s based on the French ski resort development model and hosted its first FIS competition in 1974. Borovets has 13 ski lifts with a total capacity of 16'300 people per hour. Large

expansion plans have been developed for the *Super Borovets* project. Once fully completed, it would have provided around 17'500 hotel rooms, extend the number of slopes and double the number of lifts. However, it never turned into reality because of setbacks and environmentalists' oppositions.

Pamporovo, the sunniest of the Bulgarian mountain resorts, is nestled in the heart of the Rhodopes Mountains at 1'650 meters above sea level. It is the perfect resort for beginners and it claims to have one of the best ski schools in Eastern Europe. Pamporovo has 14 ski lifts with a total capacity of 13'000 people per hour.

Vitosha ski resort is only a few kilometres away from the capital city of Sofia and easily accessible by public transportation. It used to be popular for people living in Sofia to go skiing there on the weekends. However, the lack of lift renewal appears to have decreased the area's appeal.

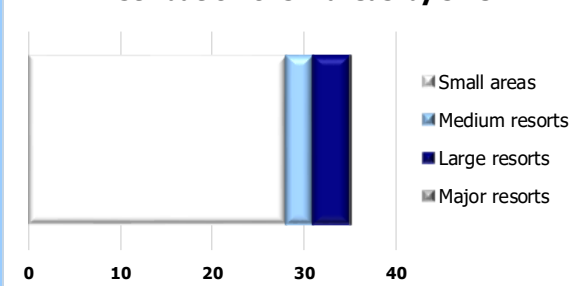
Lifts' renewals and resort development has been a challenging issue for Bulgarian ski resorts over the last 15 years, as environmental activists seem to systematically oppose any new lift project. With an aging infrastructure and less than optimal connections, a few resorts may lose some of their international popularity, likely limiting the industry's growth and development in the country.



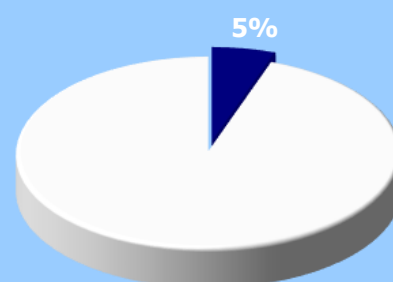
Bulgaria

Ski areas	35
Lifts	128
National skiers	349'082
Skier visits per lift	9'375
Average skier visits	1'200'000
Skier visits per national skier	2.58
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.14
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.04

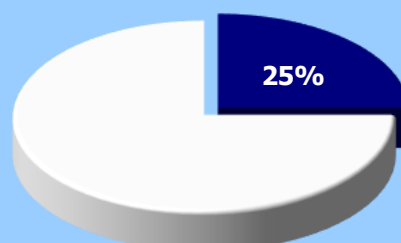
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





Croatia



Croatia extends from eastern end of the Alps through the Dinaric Alps, up to the Adriatic Sea. The highest point in the country is Dinara Peak, which rises 1'831 meters above sea level. The central and southern regions near the Adriatic coastline consist of low-lying mountains and forested highlands. The first snow usually falls in autumn and lasts through spring, providing the right opportunity for winter sports.

Skiing is nothing new in Croatia. In the highland area of Mrkopalj, not far from the Adriatic coast (only a half-hour drive), winter sports developed at the beginning of 20th century. There are records of a ski competition as early as 1913. The first ski jump was built in 1934, where international competitions were held. In the 80s, under the former Yugoslavian regime and around the time of the Sarajevo Winter Olympics, a ski-training centre was built in **Bjelolasica**. At that time, winter sports connected to skiing were actively promoted.

Today, the Zmagajna Croatian Biathlon Centre is located in the same region, together with the ski areas of **Begova Razdolja**, **Bjelolasica** and **Velika**.



The resort of **Sljeme / Medvednica** is located only a 10-kilometre drive away from the capital city of Zagreb, (and 33 kilometres from the airport). It is equipped with snowmaking and lightening for night skiing and is close to a variety of accommodations. It features 3 lifts with a total capacity of 3'000

persons per hour. Although the ski centre is mostly used for recreational skiing, World Cup ski races are held there. In 2021, the ski area was connected with a 3-leg 5-kilometre long gondola directly to the public transport network of the city of Zagreb, allowing easy access, both for winter sports and for 4-season activities.

The largest ski resort in Croatia has only 5 lifts and less than 10 kilometres of trails. **Bjelolasica** offers a vertical drop of 800 meters. A few resorts are equipped with snowmaking systems. However, several resorts only offer a single lift or only a magic carpet.

Even if skiing is not well developed at this stage, there are several projects to expand existing resorts and to build new ones, mostly in the coastal region of Gorski Kotar. About 1'900 hectares of land have been set aside for recreational sports and ski area development. **Maj Cicak** should turn into the best Croatian resort.

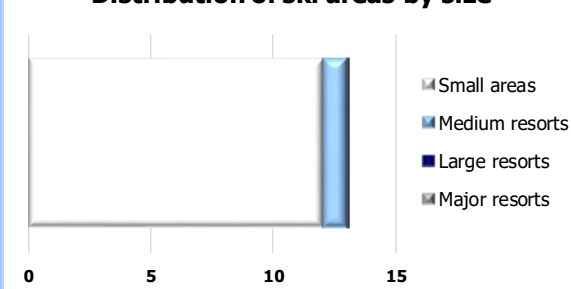
Even if domestic offer is not so wide, it seems that numerous Croatian skiers are heading to Italy, Slovenia and even Austria and France to spend some winter sports holidays.



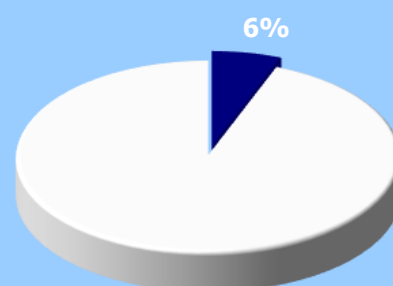
Croatia

Ski areas	13
Lifts	25
National skiers	226'914
Skier visits per lift	8'000
Average skier visits	200'000
Skier visits per national skier	0.79
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.05
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.00

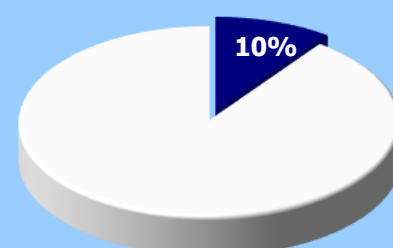
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





The forested Troodos Mountains stretch across most of the western side of Cyprus, offering a cool sanctuary in the summer, and the opportunity for winter sports at the only ski area in the country. Imagine skiing under the blue Mediterranean sky!

The **Troodos – Mount Olympus** ski area is located just a one-hour drive from the seaside town of Limassol or from the capital city Nicosia. It is perched high on the slopes of Mount Olympus, whose summit rises to 1'951 meters above sea level, just 2 kilometres away. The ski area itself ranges from 1'800 to 1'920 meters altitude above sea level. It features 4 lifts (1 chairlift and 3 T-bar lifts), snowmaking facilities and a total of 2 kilometres of skiing spread over 8 runs for all levels. The ski area also offers cross-country skiing.

The Cyprus Ski Federation organises an international FIS ski competition every year at Troodos Mountain, on the officially sanctioned, 380-metre-long Zeus slalom run. The first race was held in 1969, with participants from 9 countries.

The ski season is rather short, running usually from the beginning of January to the end of March.



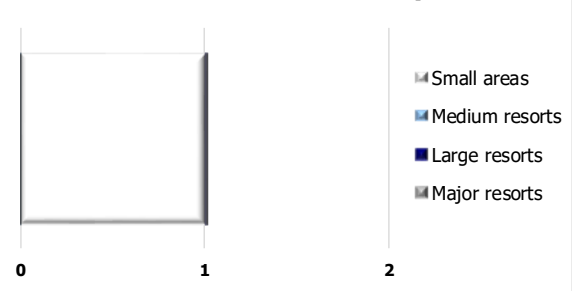
Skiing has a history here, having officially started in Cyprus in 1947, with the creation of the Cyprus Ski Club. At that time, the roads were not cleared and the pioneers used to walk to Troodos in order to practice their sport. The first lift was soon built with local means and ingenious ideas from the pioneers. In the late 1950s, 2 portable lifts were installed in the winter. The first modern ski lift started operating in 1967 and is still in use today.



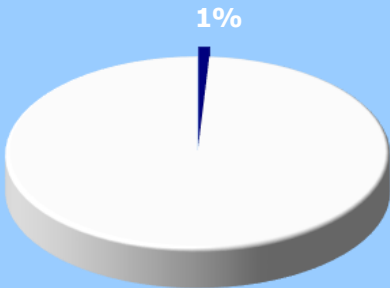
Cyprus

Ski areas	1
Lifts	5
National skiers	12'259
Skier visits per lift	4'000
Average skier visits	20'000
Skier visits per national skier	1.63
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.02
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.00

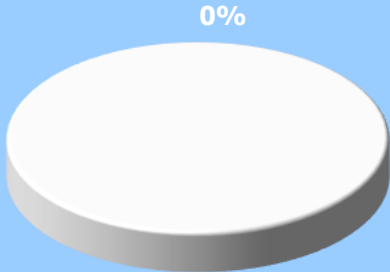
Distribution of ski areas by size

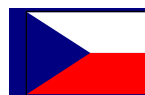


Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





Czech Republic



The 2 main regions of the country, Bohemia and Moravia, are both surrounded by numerous mountains and hills. The highest summit in the Czech Republic is the 1'602-metre high Sněžka Peak in the Sudetes mountain range, Giant Mountains sub-range (Krkonoše). The latter accounts the largest ski resorts of the country.

However, in spite of lower altitudes in some places, there is a large number of ski resorts nearly all over the Czech Republic (about 200 ski areas with a total of almost 800 ski lifts), all of them located

between 900 and 1'300 meters high (only 3 ski areas top over 1'300 meters above sea level). Despite this lower elevation than in the Alps, the northern situation of the country provides for relatively enough snow. Most of the resorts are small; the larger ones are often made of the aggregation of several small operators, and not always fully connected. Many ski areas are easily accessible from Germany or from the country's capital city of Prague. Snowmaking enables skiing throughout the entire season, mitigating climate risks.

Skiing has a long history and tradition in Czech Republic resulting in an important share of skiers in the population; the first ski club was founded in 1887 by Josef Rössler-Orovský. In 1893, the first ski races took place in **Jilemnice** (Krkonoše – Giant Mountains) and in 1903, the Association of Skiers in the Czech Kingdom was founded, which was the first ski association in the world. The first hanging (cabin) cableway was installed in **Ještěd** (Liberec) in 1933 and in 1940 the first chairlift appeared in **Pustevny** (Beskids Mountains). With single chairs and wooden towers, it was the earliest one in Europe³⁸. It was reconstructed with steel towers in 1956, later on replaced in 1987 with a double seater, and modernised again in 2006. This latter version is still in service.

Over the last decade, resort infrastructure has been renewed and expanded. 50 new lifts were delivered by the major manufacturers. Despite this, attendance at Czech ski resort has been showing a stagnant or even declining trend for several years. Obviously, the ski industry in Czech Republic faces the same problems than most of the major mature markets.

Winter 2017/18 saw some improvement in attendance, reaching the best score in at least 10 years. The 2018/19 season was shorter than former one,

³⁸ The first chairlifts in the world were installed at Sun Valley, United States, in 1936 and 1937.

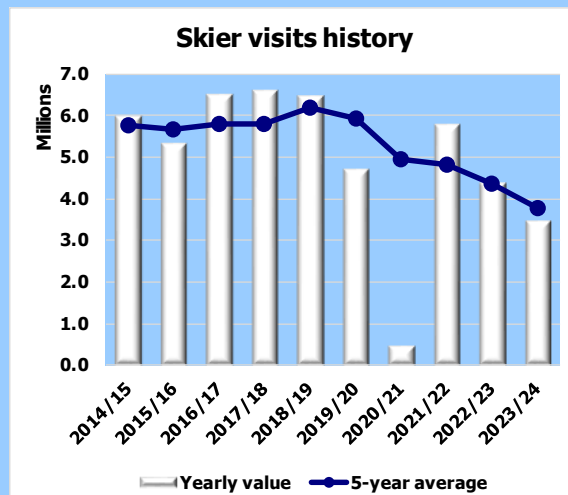
with a slight decrease in attendance. 2019/20 winter was interrupted by covid-19 pandemic and skier visits declined. Resort operation was severely limited in 2020/21 by the pandemic restrictions and lifts remained closed for most of the season. With 106 opening days on average, the 2021/22 season was back in the standards. The lack of foreign visitors, mainly from border areas, did however not allow to return to pre-covid levels. The winter season 2022/23 had a difficult start at Czech ski areas. Attendance was 24% down on former season. However, ski area levelled up their prices, so the impact as far as revenues are concerned was reduced.

2023/24 season's highlights

Season 2023/24 was not a good winter, with many resorts having to close 2nd half of February due to the warm weather and a lot of rains. Only the big resorts got quite good figures. Total attendance has been estimated to a low **3.5 million skier visits**.

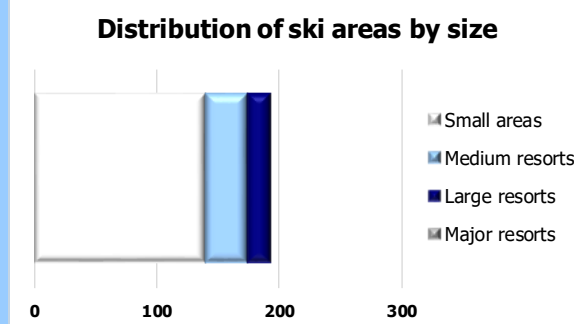
With 41 kilometres of ski pistes and some 40 lifts accessible with the same pass, ski resort **Černá hora - Pec**, located within the Giant Mountains National Park, sells as the largest resort in Czech Republic. It is however not fully interconnected. Despite a snowcat ride allows to connect from Černá hora-Janské Lázně to Pec pod Sněžkou, other smaller areas can only be reached by bus connections. The resort is located at the base of the country's highest mountain, Mount Sněžka, which is accessible via a gondola, built in 2013 to replace its 50-year-old predecessor. The first lift was built there in the 1940s. Ski resort Černá hora - Pec offers approximately 13'000 beds. The ski season lasts from mid-December to mid-April.

Spindleruv Mlyn is one of the largest and most famous resorts in the country. The first lift was built there as early as 1947. The resort developed, split into several sub areas that will be soon all interconnected by lifts and ski trails (Svaty Petr, Hromovka, Medvědin and Horní Mísečky). Hromovka has the second longest night skiing run (1'500 meters) in the country. Svaty Petr hosts World Cup Alpine Ski races, acrobatic ski events and snowboard races. Horní Mísečky hosts also several events. The full resort has more than 20 ski lifts, 25 kilometres of ski runs, of

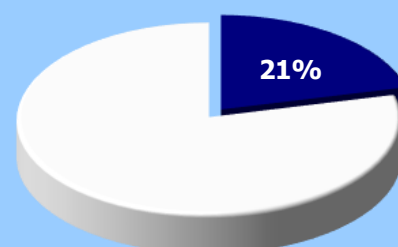


Czech Republic

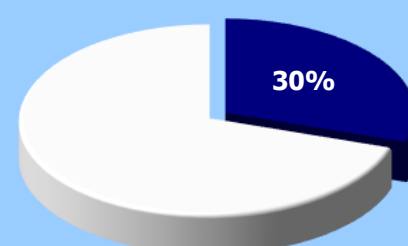
Ski areas	192
Lifts	766
National skiers	2'235'843
Skier visits per lift	4'930
Average skier visits	3'776'463
Skier visits per national skier	1.18
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.25
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.10



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers



which 12% are black (difficult) trails³⁹. To make up for any lack of natural snowfall, snowmaking covers 85% of the ski area. Various base villages offer a wide range of accommodations, totalling 12'000 beds, including chalets, apartments, privately rented homes and hotels, together with a wide choice of restaurants. The resort also features a very lively summer offer.



With also more than 20 lifts, **Rokytnice Nad Jizerou** also accounts among the largest Czech resorts. Its target public is skiers of all levels, even though it has predominantly blue (easy) slopes. The resort is split into 5 sub areas (Horní Domky, Studenov, Modra hvězda, Párek and Udatný) and totals 18 kilometres of ski runs. Rokytnice Nad Jizerou belongs to *skiregion.cz*, a ski area alliance totalling 4 resorts and 35 lifts, 37.5 kilometres of ski runs. It allows skiing with the same ticket in all affiliated ski areas.

Another popular resort is **Malá Morávka - Karlov pod Pradědem**, in Moravia near Mount Praděd, in the Northeast. Although it is split between several operators and not all slopes are interconnected, the ticket system is united. Due to its low altitude (maximum 940 meters above sea level), it is very sensitive to lack of snow. The slopes are nearly fully equipped with snowmaking. The runs are aligned one next to the other and the vertical drop is limited to 150 meters, offering little appeal for experienced skiers. The resort has about 15 ski lifts and 22 kilometres of ski runs, 53% of which are blue (easy).

³⁹ With the projected interconnection, total slopes' length will reach 40 kilometres.

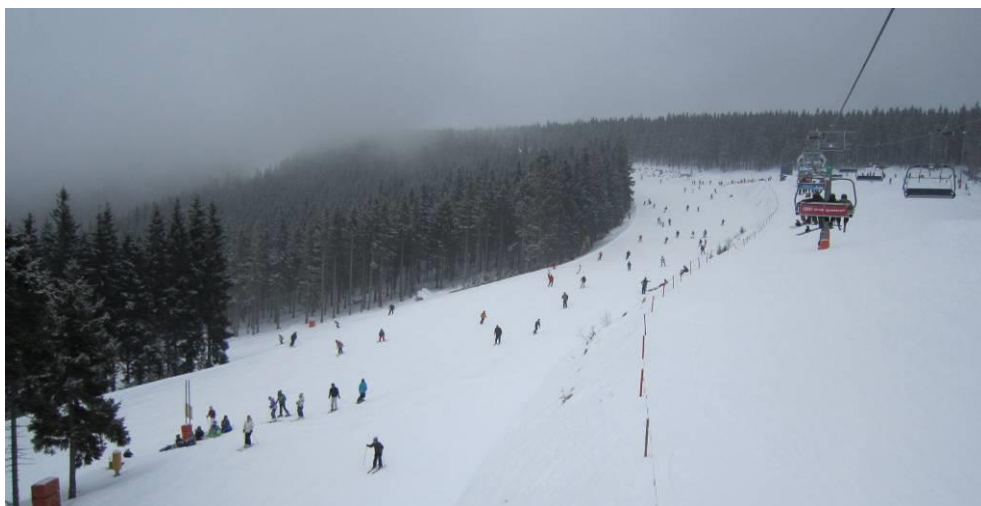
A new ski area open for season 2023/24

The newly opened SKIOZ ski resort in Orlické Záhoří, located in the Orlické Mountains, offers a unique winter experience for skiers and snowboarders. The resort boasts the longest ski slope in the region, measuring 1.7 kilometres, and is equipped with a modern snowmaking system to ensure reliable snow conditions in almost any weather.

The facilities and services include: a new 1'450-meter-long chairlift leading to the summit of Koruna/Kreiselberg, free parking conveniently located next to the lift, ski school & equipment rental for beginners and families, on-site dining near the lift and a 4.5-kilometre illuminated cross-country skiing loop.

The resort's launch had been in planning for over 20 years, with multiple delays before finally opening in February 2024. It provides an ideal setting for families and winter sports enthusiasts, offering both downhill and cross-country skiing options.

The Orlické Mountains, part of the Sudetes mountain range, stretch across the Czech Republic and partially into Poland, featuring peaks over 1'000 meters high.



Estonia



With cold and snowy winters, Estonia offers decent conditions for winter sports. The winter climate is one of the most stable in Europe, with few sudden changes that could harm the ski season. However, due to the lack of any real mountains and low altitude (the high point Suur Munamägi is only 318 meters above sea level), the snow season is short, and cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are much more popular than alpine skiing. Cross-country skiing has a long history in the country, with the first competition being held in Tartu

as early as 1921. It later on became a yearly tradition and the Tartu Ski Marathon is a well-known and highly attended race by national and foreign cross-country enthusiasts. Otepää is called the *Winter Capital* of Estonia and has hosted World Cup cross-country skiing events.

However, downhill skiing and snowboarding have become increasingly popular among the youth. 100-metre long low-angle slopes work well for beginners. However, although not very long, there are steeper slopes for more experienced skiers. Several ski areas have no lifts, including some simply equipped with a magic carpet that may also be used for snow tubing; a few offer terrain parks for snowboarders. Several rental shops next to cross-country trails also offer downhill ski equipment, even if there is only an adjacent unequipped snow hill. Hills that are more sophisticated offer a beginner lift and groomed slopes.



Night skiing is popular, and several ski areas have lighted runs, a necessity since the days are very short in winter at these latitudes.

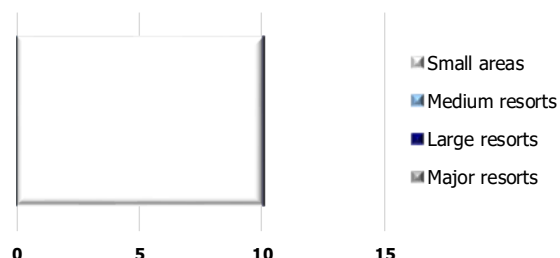
A few more elaborate ski centres are operated in various areas of the country, on either natural or artificial hills (built from mining waste). **Kivoli Adventure Centre**, an adventure park near Kivioli features a few ski runs. **Valgehobusemäe** is a ski centre in the White Mountains next to the city of Tapa. The region of Otepää, south of the city of Tartu, also has a few ski runs spread over several ski areas. This region has the largest ski areas in the country: **Kuutsmäe** has 5 lifts and **Munakas** has 3 lifts.



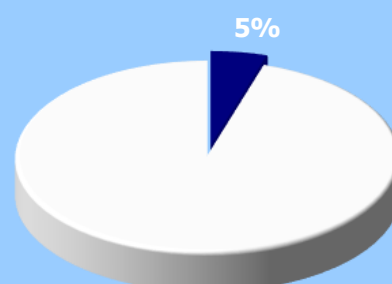
Estonia

Ski areas	10
Lifts	17
National skiers	64'728
Skier visits per lift	9'412
Average skier visits	160'000
Skier visits per national skier	2.35
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.11
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.00

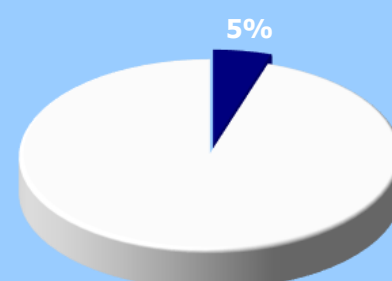
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





Georgia



Georgia is located on the historic and geographic barrier between Europe and Asia, between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. Mountains cover a large part of the country, with the Greater Caucasus Mountains in the North and the Lesser Caucasus

Mountains in the South. Some mountains are majestic and reach impressive altitudes, with the Mount Shkhara, located on the border with Russia, culminating at 5'201 meters above sea level.

Georgia used to be one of the popular winter sports destinations of the former Soviet Union. Winter tourism developed there in the 1970s. With its colossal mountains, there are plenty of options for mountaineering and several spots to go heliskiing. It attracts tourists from neighbouring countries, and especially Russia, as well as from the United States, Germany, Israel and Turkey.

A few ski areas still have limited infrastructure. However, Georgia has been developing state-of-the-art ski resorts over recent years, in view of gaining international recognition. Despite the country unsuccessfully bade for the 2014 Winter Olympics, ski resort development has been going further, with 30 new lifts delivered between 2012 and 2021.



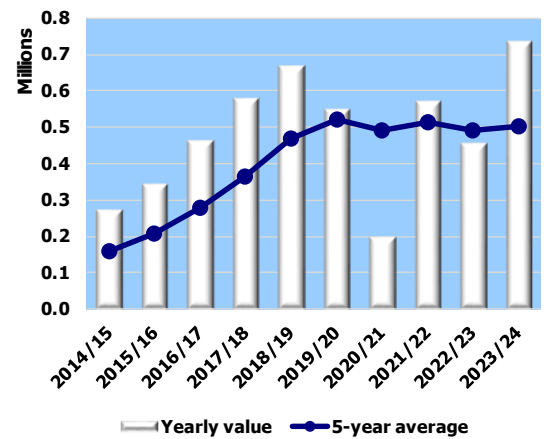
2023/24 season's highlights

Estimated **skier visits reach over 700'000** for the season. It looks that attendance has been stimulated by favourable conditions and the increase in supply.

Georgia has 2 major resorts equipped with lifts that also offer heliskiing: **Gudauri** is located in the Greater Caucasus Mountains, 120 kilometres from Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia. Gudauri has guaranteed snow from November to May. The average snowpack is about 1.5 meters deep. The resort's high point is the 3'007 metre summit of Mount Kudebi. The area enjoys great weather in spite of its high elevation. The resort benefited since 2008 from a complete redesign by a leading international master planner. Accommodations have been upgraded to 2 to 5-star hotels, some with international brands. The ski area has 13 lifts, which were recently replaced, retrofitted or newly built. The development program brought 6 additional high-speed detachable lifts, including a 3-leg gondola connection with neighbouring **Kobi** ski resort. Ski mountaineering is also very popular in Gudauri. The attendance in the resort has been growing dramatically over the last couple of years.

Bakuriani, the second resort also offering heliskiing, is located on the Didveli slopes of the Lesser Caucasus Mountains, in the south-eastern part of Georgia, at an altitude of 1'800 meters. The highest skiable mountain of the resort is Mount Kohta, culminating at around 2'200 meters above sea level. The resort lies 30 kilometres from Borjomi and is located within the Bakuriani Depression. It is connected with Borjomi by an electrified narrow gauge railway line. Bakuriani offers both downhill and cross-country skiing for skiers of all abilities. The resort has accommodations ranging from 3-star hotels to small private hotels and guesthouses. It has 12 ski runs of varying difficulty. New chairlifts and a gondola were recently added. The resort is family oriented, with a year-round offering. The forest-covered mountains, the mineral water springs, the roads leading to the spectacular natural or cultural monuments of the Borjomi Valley are appealing for vacationers. Further to an important private-public partnership, a new resort base named Kokhta-Mitarbi has now been connected to the ski area. It is supported by a USD 150-million

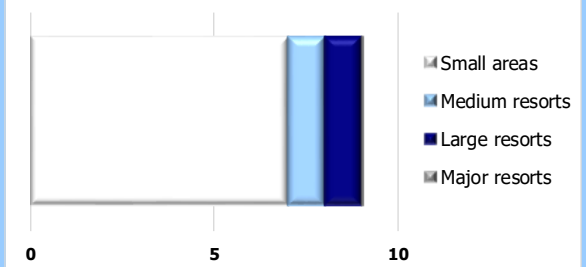
Skier visits history



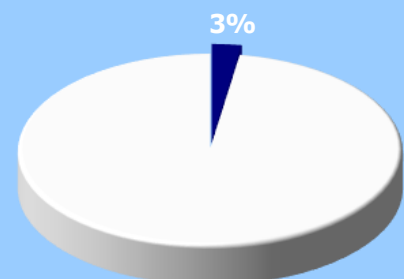
Georgia

Ski areas	9
Lifts	42
National skiers	92'813
Skier visits per lift	12'005
Average skier visits	504'224
Skier visits per national skier	4.35
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.11
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.04

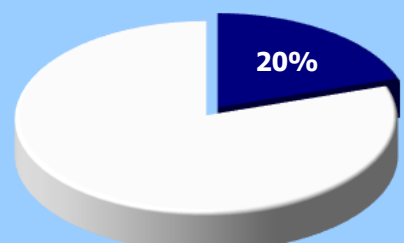
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





investment by the Georgian State in infrastructure improvement. On top of this, the resort has organised FIS 2023 Freestyle Ski & Snowboard World Championships. 3 new 6-seater high-speed chairlifts were delivered to the resort in 2021 in preparation of this event.

New resorts have also been planned. One is at **Goderdzi Pass**. The Georgian Department of Tourism has contracted with a foreign company in order to develop a new ski resort in the high mountains of Adjara. The resort will accommodate about 7'000 tourists and offer 35 kilometres of runs. The resort is located 90 kilometres from Batumi, with an elevation ranging between 1'700 and 2'400 meters

above sea level. A first gondola lift was delivered in 2012 and a detachable chairlift in 2014.

Another project is located in the remote high-mountain town of Mestia, where officials hope to establish a year-round tourist destination at **Mount Tetnuldi**, with an initial budget of USD 145 million. It will feature 6 ski lifts and a run with 988 meters of vertical drop to meet Olympic standards. The first lifts have already been installed through financial support from the Georgian and French governments. Closer to Mestia, the ski area of **Mount Zuruldi / Hatsvali** has also been refurbished and equipped with new lifts. Since 2010, a 4-seater chairlift enabled skiers and pedestrians to reach the top of the mountain restaurant, featuring a beautiful view on the valley and the famous Mount Ushba twin peaks. The slope is equipped for night skiing. Since 2017, an additional detachable 6-pack chairlift is connecting the ski area with the town of Mestia and in 2021, the 4-seater chairlift was replaced by a 10-seater gondola, in order to improve 4-season attractivity of the place.





Greece



Skiing in Greece is a unique experience. Surprising as it may sound, while Greece is mostly well known for its warm sunny weather and beautiful beaches, skiing is also well developed. This is no secret for Greeks and a handful of other Europeans. However, the majority of skiers in Europe, the United States and other countries around the world fail to imagine the numerous skiing possibilities that Greece can offer. Mountains cover 80% of Greece with a majority of peaks topping out at over 1'500 meters above sea level, thus providing

some areas with ideal conditions for winter sports resorts. These resorts are located all over Greece. In Central Greece there are the resorts of **Parnassos**, **Karpenissi (Velouchi)**, **Vassilitsa** and **Agriolefkes**. Located in Northern Greece, in the historical region of Macedonia (not to be confused with the country nearby) are the resorts of **Seli**, **Tria-Pente Pigadia** and **Kaimaktsalan**. In the Peloponnesus, in Southern Greece, are the resorts of **Kalavryta** and **Mainalon**. Greece has a total of 21 ski resorts and those mentioned above are the most well-known, and also equipped with modern infrastructure.

During the winter season, many Greeks enjoy winter sports and although all skiers are not as well trained as those living in Alpine countries, the skier level, especially for children, is improving every year. Skiing is still popular in Greece, and most ski resorts are full with skiers and visitors on the weekend.

The largest ski resort is **Parnassos Ski Resort**, in Central Greece, only 200 kilometres from Athens, and very close to the well-known ancient city of Delphi. Runs are between 1'600 and 2'250 meters high. In Parnassos, one can ski in the morning and bathe in the sea at lunchtime. Parnassos has hosted multiple FIS alpine skiing and snowboarding races at the end of March-April, and foreign racers have always been surprised by the snow quality and quantity.

Greek ski centre to install dry slope as part of EUR 9.9 million spend

Greece's Minister of Tourism, has approved EUR 9.9 million in aid for upgrades to the country's long-established Karpenisi Ski Centre. The plan is to include a new dry ski slope.

This project, which is part of Greece's Development and Resilience Fund, is the fifth application approved under the Ministry's program to upgrade ski resort facilities nationwide. The money will also go on a new chairlift, a mountain coaster and two new trail groomers.

The initiative at the Karpenisi Ski Centre is part of a broader strategy to enhance

the infrastructure and equipment of the country's ski resorts. The goal is to extend their operation year-round and establish them as all-season tourist destinations, thereby boosting the local economy and employment.

Source: Snowhunter

The nearby **Gerontovrachos** ski area offers another 2 lifts and it is possible to ski to and from Parnassos. The **Fterolaka** ski area was built in 1975 and in 1981, the **Kellaria** ski area was fully operational. Today it has 19 runs for a total of 36 kilometres of skiing. Fterolaka and Kellaria have 14 lifts: 1 gondola, 6 chairlifts and 7 surface lifts. The Ermis lift that connects Fterolaka and Kellaria was built in 1988 and offers skiers and visitors unbelievable views. Looking to the North one can admire the Mountain of the Gods, Olympus; looking to the South, the clear blue waters of the beautiful Corinthian Gulf. It is usually operated throughout the year, including the summer season, offering countless hiking options for residents and tourists. The winter season starts in December and usually ends in April.



In Central Greece, in addition to Parnassos, there is the ski resort of **Karpenissi (Velouchi)**, near the city of Karpenissi. The resort is located at an altitude of 1'750 meters above sea level and tops out at 2'000 meters. It has 3 chairlifts, 3 surface lifts and 12 runs. Another ski resort in Central Greece is **Vassilitsa**, close to the city of Karditsa. Snow conditions are very good and it has 2 chairlifts and 4 surface lifts of varying lengths, ranging from 900 to 2'000 meters long. The **Agriolefkes** ski resort (Central Greece) on Mount Pilion, near to the city of Volos, is located between 1'178 meters and 1'471 meters high. It is one of the oldest ski resorts in Greece and has 3 chairlifts, 3 surface lifts and 5 kilometres of runs.

Another well-known ski resort is **Kalavryta** on the Peloponnesus (Southern Greece). It is located 200 kilometres from Athens in the region of Achaia. It is nestled at an altitude of 1'650 meters above sea level, with runs starting

from as high as 2'340 meters. It has 7 lifts and more than 10 runs. The ski resort of **Mainalon** is also located on the Peloponnesus, near the city of Tripolis, at 1'500 meters, with a top elevation of 1'860 meters. It features 4 lifts and 8 runs.

The largest ski resort in Northern Greece, in the region of historical Macedonia, is **Mount Kaimaktsalan**. Its ski area is located between 2'050 and 2'480 meters above sea level. It features 10 runs for a total of 4 kilometres of skiing. It has 7 lifts, including a chairlift and 6 surface lifts. Skiers can take advantage of 430 meters of vertical drop. It also has a half pipe and snowpark for experienced snowboarders and skiers. Snowmaking equipment includes 4 mobile cannons and 6 snow lances.

Another ski resort in Northern Greece in the historical region of Macedonia is the **Tria-Pente Pigadia**, located between 1'430 to 2'005 meters high, near the town of Naousa on Mount Vermion. There is 1 chairlift and 5 surface lifts, as well as cross-country skiing. This resort is used by several national sports teams (football – track and field, etc.) as a training camp, and has top-notch equipment. Most of the Super-G races in Greece take place in Tria-Pente Pigadia, as the slope length meets FIS standards. The ski resort is equipped with snowmaking equipment to ensure excellent snow conditions throughout the entire ski season.

The **Seli** ski resort, where the first ever ski lift in Greece was installed in 1955, near the town of Veroia, is among the most beautiful ski resorts in Greece. Seli is located at an altitude of 1'515 meters above sea level, and tops out at 1'874 meters. It has 1 chairlift and 8 surface lifts that serve 14 runs. Cross-country skiing is also popular in Seli.

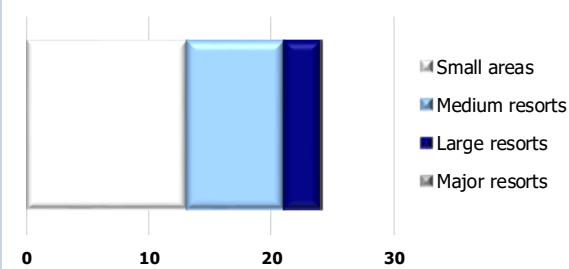
In all the above ski resorts, there are officially sanctioned ski slopes that host FIS alpine and cross-country skiing races every year. All ski resorts have restaurants, cafeterias, ski schools, ski shops, ski rentals and medical facilities.



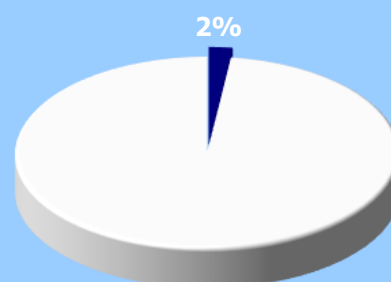
Greece

Ski areas	24
Lifts	117
National skiers	211'331
Skier visits per lift	11'966
Average skier visits	1'400'000
Skier visits per national skier	5.96
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.12
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.01

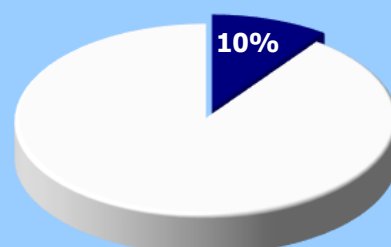
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





Even though only 2% of Hungary is located higher than 400 meters above sea level, a number of small ski areas are disseminated in the country. A mountainous region stretching over 200 kilometres is located in the northern part of the country next to the Slovak border. It consists of Börzsöny,

Cserhat, Matra (including the country's highest peak, the 1'014-metre-high Mount Kékes), Bükk and Zemplén Mountains. However, one of the biggest and most popular ski resorts in Hungary, **Skiarena Epleny**, is located in another region, the Bakony Mountains, on Lake Balaton in the western part of the country.



Skiing has become popular in Hungary: about 600'000 of the 10 million Hungarians ski. However, more than 90% of them travel abroad for winter sports, as the Hungarian mountains are not high enough, the ski lifts are somewhat



antiquated and snow coverage is insufficient. Thus, skier visits in the country are only estimated to be less than 200'000 on average.

2023/24 season's highlights

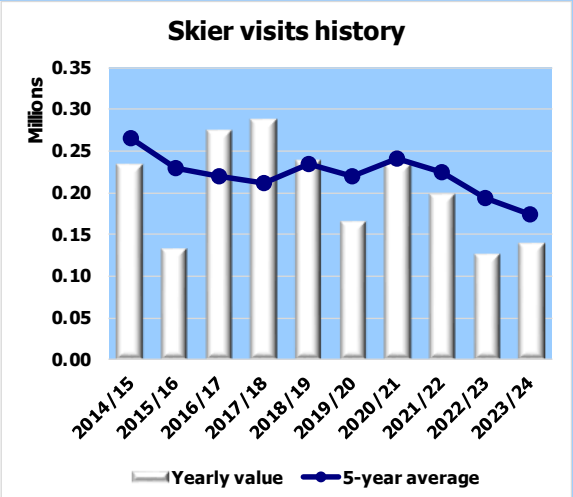
The 2023/24 ski season in Hungary was one of the shortest on record, with only 17 operational days across major ski resorts. This limited duration was due to mild weather conditions and insufficient snowfall, despite the use of snowmaking equipment. The season saw challenges, particularly in maintaining slopes suitable for skiing, and many ski areas had fewer visitors compared to previous years. Resorts are continuing to rely on technology to adapt to increasingly unpredictable winter conditions in Hungary.

There used to be many small ski areas in Hungary, with only 1 or 2 short lifts, but they no longer operate due to poor snow conditions and high costs. 15 years ago, there were 15 ski areas with a total of 55 ski lifts. Nowadays, only 6 ski areas were opened at least once over the last 5 years. All have 4 lifts or more.

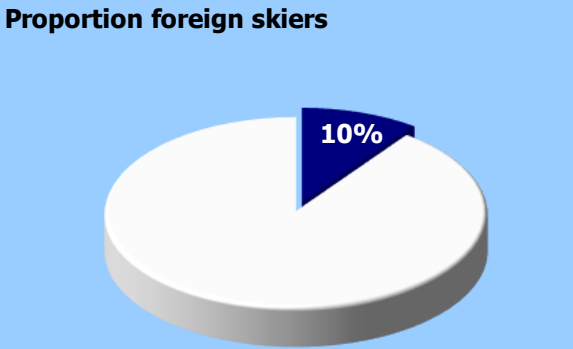
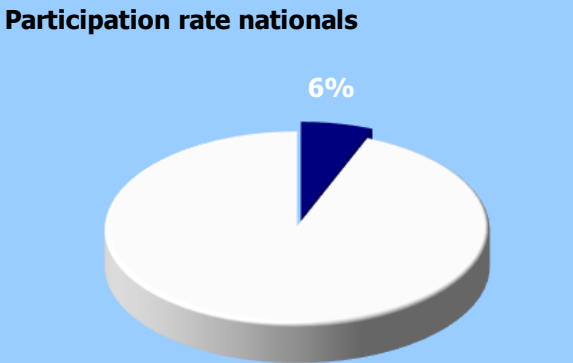
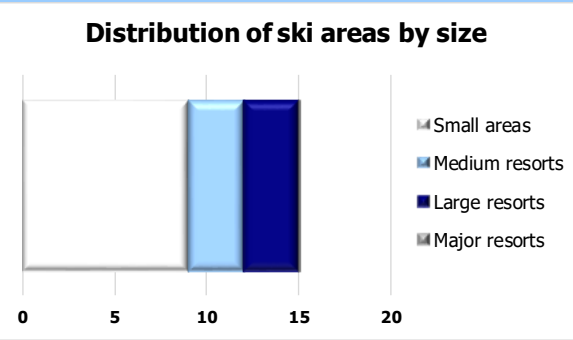
The most important one is the already mentioned **Skiarena Epleny**, which has the most runs, with a total of 7.2 kilometres of trails. The other remaining ski areas are **Matraszentistvan Skipark**, **Kekesteto**, the highest ski resort in Hungary, **Satoraljaujhely** also featuring a synthetic slope, **Visegrad** and **Bankut**. The latter resort operates the most lifts (9).

In Bankut, snowmaking systems are not yet allowed, so the number of operating days per winter is limited. The ski resorts of Epleny, Matraszentistvan, Kekesteto, Visegrad and Satoraljaujhely are relatively modern and have snowmaking equipment, which allows them to operate for up to 100 days per winter if the temperature is low enough.

There is a plan to revitalise the well-known, historical slopes of **Normafa**, in the Buda Hills, which could become popular with people living in the capital city of Budapest.



Hungary	
Ski areas	15
Lifts	55
National skiers	586'868
Skier visits per lift	3'152
Average skier visits	173'371
Skier visits per national skier	0.27
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.02
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.00





Kazakhstan



Kazakhstan is a big country, ranking 9th in the world in area. It offers a variety of terrain, from desert zones, which cover nearly half of the country, to high mountains in the Southeast. The highest peak of the Tien Shan Mountains rises to 7'439 meters above sea level, and this mountainous range that continues well into China, starts from the suburbs of Almaty.

In most areas, there is a wide temperature difference between summer and winter, which can be very cold. The ski season begins in mid-November and lasts until mid-April.



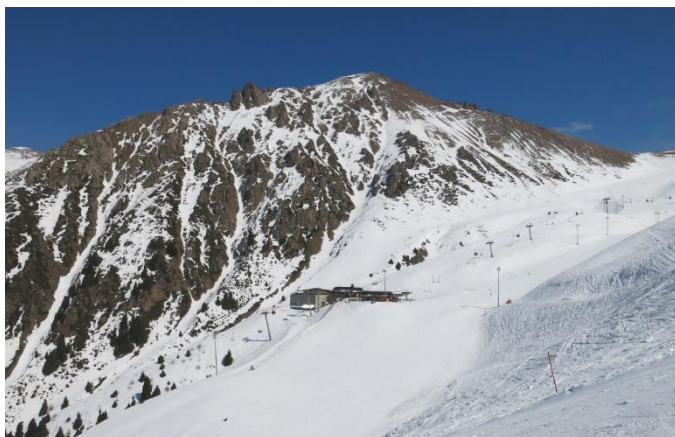
More and more Kazakhs are discovering the pleasures of skiing. The ski resort of **Shymbulak**, near Almaty, has been around for a long time. The resort is located in the Zailii Alatau Mountains. It started to attract skiers at the end of the 1940s, and in 1954, it was established as a ski resort and equipped with its first ski lift. Ski competitions were held there, and until 1962, it had a monopoly on skiing in the former Soviet Union. Since 1983, it has operated as an Olympic centre for downhill ski training and additional lifts were added. The resort was recently refurbished, with 5 new lifts out of a total of 6. It even has one of the longest gondolas in the world, with a 4'572-metre section that provides easy access to the ski area, connecting

Almaty's public bus system with the ski resort. There are a total of 15 kilometres of runs between 2'200 to 3'163 meters high. Some of the runs are FIS certified. The resort hosted the 2011 Asian Winter Games. The famous Medeo ice rink is located at the base of the mountain, where numerous competitions have been held, and 120 world records established.

Another major resort in Kazakhstan is **Ak-Bulak**, recently equipped with 4 new lifts, also not far from Almaty. It offers one high-quality hotel and an important 4-season indoor and outdoor sports centre.

In addition to these well-known resorts, there are several other ski areas, located either in the Almaty Region (**Enbekshikazaksky Resort**) or in the eastern part of Kazakhstan. In the latter, ski areas are located in the suburbs of cities such as Ust-Kamenogorsk, Zhyranovsk. The **Nurtau Resort**, **Altaïs Alps**, **Edelweiss**, **Stardust Camp** and **Eagle** ski areas offer a wide variety of runs for all levels of skiing and snowboarding.

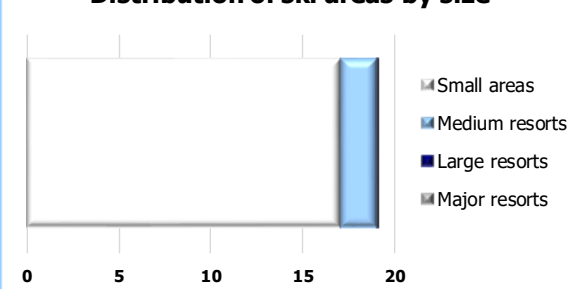
The ski industry in Kazakhstan aspires to continue to develop. 3 major new resort development projects were presented (Kokzhailau, Kaskasu Mountain and Koksai) in 2013 when the City of Almaty applied, unsuccessfully, to host the 2022 Winter Olympics. Now, it seems that the City and the Government have approved new projects to modernise and expand 7 existing ski areas and to build 3 new resorts within the coming years. Work is already underway in **Oi Qara-gai / Lesnaya Skazka**, where a new chairlift has been built and ski slopes have been expanded from 3 to 13 kilometres. Expansion in a further stage will bring a 10-seater gondola and a 6-seater detachable chairlift, to expand skiing over more than 40 kilometres of slopes, including also snowmaking. Shymbulak will further develop as well.



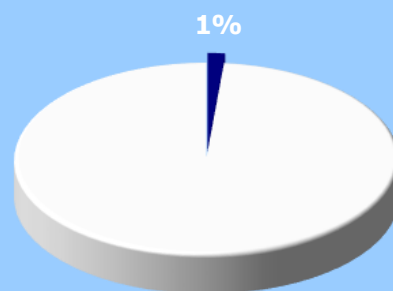
Kazakhstan

Ski areas	19
Lifts	25
National skiers	289'422
Skier visits per lift	16'000
Average skier visits	400'000
Skier visits per national skier	1.35
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.02
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.00

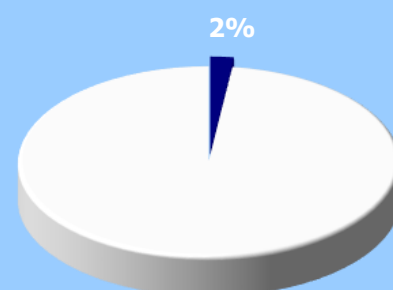
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers



Kosovo



A large part of Kosovo is mountainous, with the highest peaks rising to 2'656 meters above sea level (Mount Gjeravica, located on the western border with Albania).

Despite several mountain ranges, there are only 4 ski areas in Kosovo.

The largest ski area, **Brezovica**, is located in the South, on slopes facing the Sharr National Park. It is conveniently located only 60 kilometres from Pristina Airport and 70 kilometres from Skopje

Airport in North Macedonia. The current ski area was originally established in 1954. In 1979, the first ski lift was installed. Breznovica served as an alternative site for downhill skiing events at the 1984 Sarajevo Winter Olympics and hosted several FIS events in the 1980s and 1990s. However, due to the difficult situation of the country, the resort has not received any meaningful investment for more than 2 decades. The site nevertheless offers favourable conditions for a ski resort, with snowfall from mid-November through May, for an average of 128 skiable days. The ski area currently features 10 lifts, carrying skiers up to an altitude of 2'500 meters, with a total capacity of about 10'000 people per hour. There were recent plans by the Government to develop Breznovica into a genuine 4-season resort. EUR 410 million were likely to be invested to develop more than 100 kilometres of trails and build new lifts. A contract had been announced with a French consortium. However, the whole story was later on denied by some of the said interested parties and the financing anyway failed to materialise.



The other smaller ski areas are **Bogaj** (Bogë), in the Rugova Valley in the West and **Brod**, in the Dragash municipality, in the South. They are equipped with a limited number of lifts but offer nice slopes and spectacular villages.

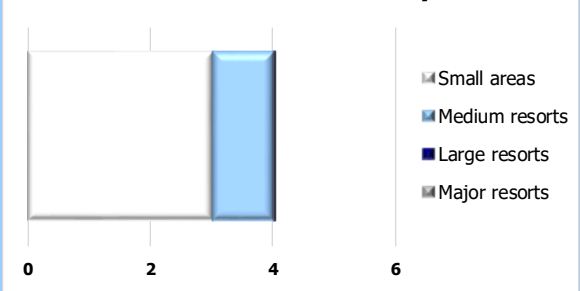
In Brod, there is a hotel and the ski area hosts competitions between local ski clubs and those from neighbouring Albania.



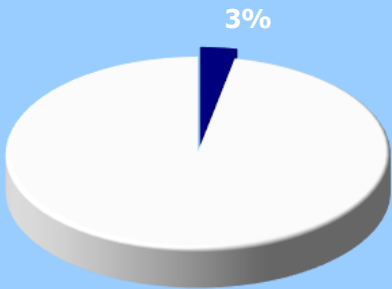
Kosovo

Ski areas	4
Lifts	15
National skiers	54'921
Skier visits per lift	12'500
Average skier visits	187'500
Skier visits per national skier	3.21
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.10
Skier visits per foreign visitor	#N/A

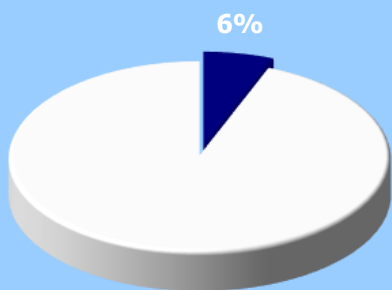
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





Kyrgyzstan is a small country with just over 5 million people and is often compared to Switzerland because of its potential for developing alpine skiing. Indeed, the climate and the significant vertical drop are factors that offer great conditions for skiing. Over 90%

of the country is covered by mountains. Its average elevation is 2'750 meters above sea level and a majority of the peaks rise to over 3'000 meters. The highest summit, Pobedo Peak, is 7'134 meters high.

However, skiing is at this stage not widely developed, even though the country has 19 ski areas, many of them near the capital city of Bishkek. They are small, often at an early stage of development, with no or only one hotel, and a limited range of standard services such as equipment rentals or ski schools. Not a single ski area has a modern detachable lift. The most advanced system is 3 or 4-seater fixed grip chairlifts. Some have only rope tows. Poor master planning is a common issue for many ski areas. For instance, in one place, lifts do not serve all slopes and skiers need to go up by road. Most of the ski areas however feature old second-hand groomers to prepare the slopes.

3 Peaks Cluster Project

In 2023, the Kyrgyz government initiated plans for a major ski resort project, the *3 Peaks*, in partnership with French Société des 3 Vallées (S3V) and its Mountain Resort Consulting division. This ambitious development will span 3 peaks in the Issyk-Kul region: Jyrgalan, Ak-Bulak, and Boz-Uchuk, with a total of 200 kilometres of ski slopes upon completion.

Located between 2'200 and 3'350 meters, the site benefits from ideal geomorphology, excellent snowfall, and abundant water resources. Remarkably, 80% of the slopes will require minimal earthworks or deforestation. The site is well-positioned near key economic hubs (Almaty - 3 hours by road, Bishkek - 5 hours, and future train connections to China) and will also capitalize on the summer tourism of Issyk-Kul Lake, which attracts nearly 2 million visitors annually.

The project will roll out in stages. The first phase, set to open in December 2026, includes 60 kilometres of slopes and 6 ski lifts, with an investment of EUR 165 million.

The full development will span over 350 kilometres of slopes, welcoming up to 850'000 visitors annually, and operating 10 months a year. The resort will create 4'800 jobs. Beyond skiing, the resort will feature a full-service infrastructure, including hotels, restaurants, ethno-towns, conference centres, and recreational areas.

7 kilometres from the town of **Karakol**, a ski resort of the same name is located on the slopes of the Tian-Shan mountain range. Its base area sits at 2'300 meters above sea level. It has a temperate climate and offers views of the second largest mountain lake in the world, Lake Issyk-Kul. Most of the 20 kilometres of runs descending through the forest are of varying difficulty and between 400 and 3'500 meters in length. The highest point of the resort is 3'040 meters above sea level, providing a total vertical drop of 800 meters. Karakol features 4 lifts: 2 double and 2 triple chairlifts. The 2-metre average snowfall per year offers a sufficient base for the entire ski season due to low nightly temperatures. In addition to downhill skiing, there are also plenty of options for back-country skiing, mountaineering or snowmobile tours.

Opened in 1967, **Orlovka** has grown in recent years. A new lift was built, as well as new buildings (cottages, restaurant). Lighting for night skiing was installed and the resort has acquired its first snowmaking equipment, becoming one of the few in the country able to guarantee snow throughout the entire season. The resort has 5 lifts: 4 chairlifts and 1 surface lift, with a total capacity of 4'200 skiers per hour. Skiers have access to 9 runs of varying difficulty and between 150 and 2'900 meters long. Snowmobile rentals are also available.

Norus, about 40 kilometres from the capital, is located at 1'980 meters above sea level. It has 3 lifts and 15 kilometres of trails for all levels. The area is however particularly well suited for children. There are also drop off zones for heliskiing.

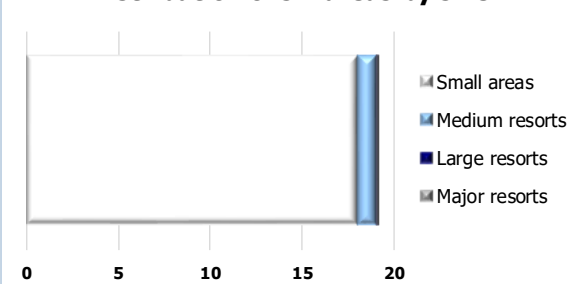
35 kilometres from Bishkek, the **Kashka-Suu** ski area is located at 2'000 meters above sea level. 2 lifts (1 chairlift and 1 surface lift) serve 6 runs of varying levels for a total of 10 kilometres of skiing. A sauna, an ice rink and conference rooms are also available to visitors.



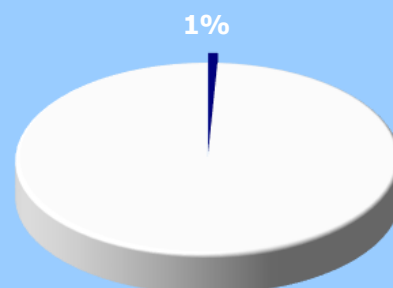
Kyrgyzstan

Ski areas	19
Lifts	29
National skiers	55'480
Skier visits per lift	6'897
Average skier visits	200'000
Skier visits per national skier	2.88
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.02
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.01

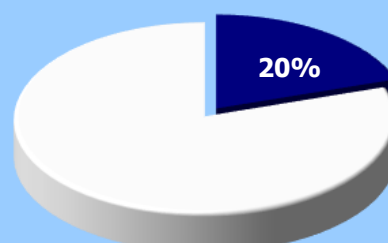
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





Latvia



With the highest hill just 311 meters above sea level, Latvia is not a mountainous country. However, snow is an integral part of the winter season, and over recent years, skiing has gained much interest. The short but steep slopes offer a suitable location for quick runs on skis or snowboard. While it may seem unusual, alpine skiing is one of the favourite wintertime activities in Latvia. Ski runs are located in almost every town, including well-marked and well-lit runs where one can cross-country ski. Since vertical drop is always limited (often less than

100 meters), most ski areas are equipped with only one or a few surface lifts, and sometimes a small chairlift. Ski areas are also often limited to one only run.

The ski season usually starts in the first quarter of December and finishes in the last week of March. Most ski runs are equipped for night skiing.



The ski area of **Riekstukalns** is close to Riga. It features 8 runs, 15 lifts, and some snowmaking equipment. The longest run is 350 meters long.

In the North, the resort of **Baili** has 8 lifts and 100% snowmaking. The longest run is 180 meters long. In the West, there are the ski areas of **Milzkalns**, with 8 lifts, and **Zviedru Cepure** (4 lifts, also equipped with a

summer toboggan run). The recreational park of **Lemberga Hūte** offers a recently refurbished slope on a manmade hill next to Ventspils. Every year since 2005, this hill has been made higher, using construction debris and old asphalt from repaved streets. It is now 58 meters high and equipped with 3 lifts as well as snowmaking. The longest run features 240 meters of slope. As with other ski hills in Latvia, it turns into an adventure park in the summer and is a popular leisure and sporting facility for the inhabitants of Ventspils.

The area around Sigulda has at least 6 ski runs. There is, for example, the recreational centre in **Kaķitis, Korde** slope and the leisure complex in **Reina Trase**, which is located a little bit farther. The only cable car in the country (which by the way is also the only one in the Baltics) is also located in Sigulda and connects both sides of the Gauja River. It is not used for skiing.



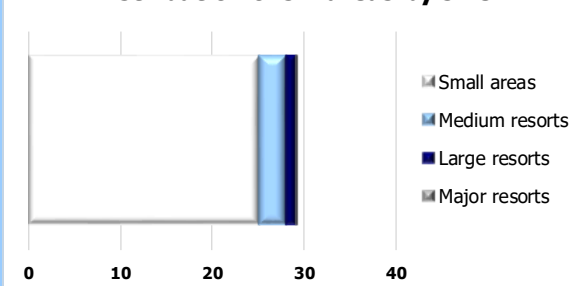
Near the city of Cesis, the ski areas of **Zagarkalns** and **Ozonkalns** are equipped with a chairlift, snowmaking, a snowpark, a beginner and children's zone, ski schools and cafés. The longest run is 500 meters long.



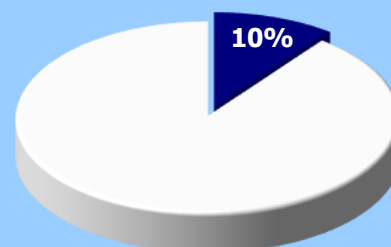
Latvia

Ski areas	29
Lifts	98
National skiers	194'074
Skier visits per lift	12'245
Average skier visits	1'200'000
Skier visits per national skier	5.26
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.54
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.09

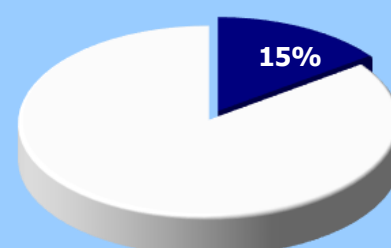
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





Lithuania



Lithuania is a rather flat country with a few gently rolling hills but no real mountains; its highest point is 294 meters above sea level.

Lithuanians started to show interest in skiing only a few years ago and focusing primarily on cross-country skiing, but there are a few downhill ski areas. Most are limited to snowfields on hills, offering a few hundred meters of runs, equipped with one or more lifts, where skiers can pay for a 2-hour pass that includes equipment rental. There is only one ski

area with more than 4 lifts. The majority are located about 80 kilometres from the capital city of Vilnius. They also do not offer hotel accommodations, but there are country homes available for rent near a few ski areas. Some also offer night skiing and have snowmaking systems.



An indoor ski centre opened in 2011 in the area of Druskininkai. Named **SNORAS Snow Area**, it costed EUR 32 million and offers Lithuanians the opportunity to ski year-round. The facility is one of the very few in the world to feature an outdoor slope during the winter season. As the other outdoor ski areas are rather small in size, this 640-metre-long outdoor slope is one of the longest in the country.

The **Liepkalnis Ski Hill** in Vilnius offers at wintertime 10 lifts and 10 tracks, for all levels of skiers. Total length of the tracks is 2.6 kilometres and the ski

area is equipped with efficient snowmaking system. There are current plans to upgrade the Liepkalnis Ski Hill area by adding a complex of iconic buildings to make it an epicentre of entertainment, leisure and culture for the city of Vilnius.

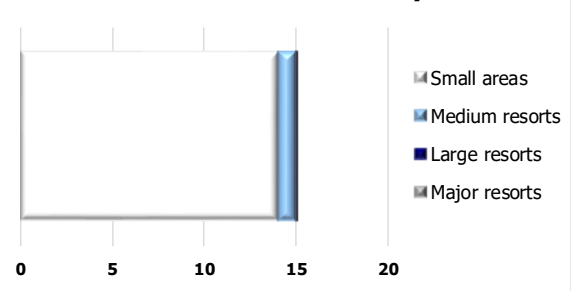
The ski season in Lithuania is a bit peculiar when compared to resorts in the Alps. It begins in September with the first snowfall, and ends in February. However, winters are pretty stable.



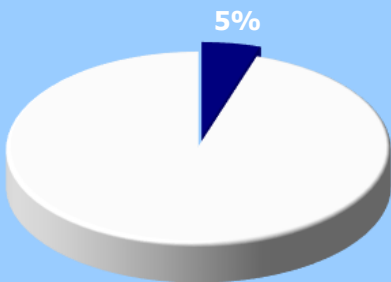
Lithuania

Ski areas	15
Lifts	34
National skiers	141'650
Skier visits per lift	7'353
Average skier visits	250'000
Skier visits per national skier	1.59
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.08
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.01

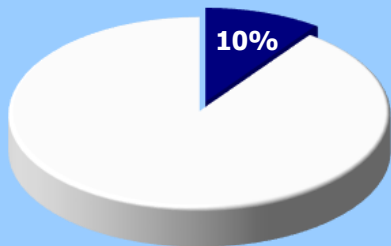
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





Montenegro



Known primarily for its sun-kissed coastline, Montenegro also offers plenty of mountain scenery, lakes and the longest canyon in Europe, through which the Tara River flows. Indeed, 80% of the country is covered in mountains and valleys. The highest peaks in Montenegro rise to over 2'500 meters above sea level (Maja Kolata, Prokletije Mountain, 2'534 meters; Bobotov Kuk, Durmitor Mountain, 2'523 meters). Some winters receive extremely heavy snowfall; during this type of winter, some places become inaccessible by car.

There are several winter resorts for both downhill and cross-country skiing. The most popular ones are **Kolasin 1450** and **Durmitor**, which are at the foot of beautiful and massive mountains.

The resort of **Kolasin 1450** is the most modern resort in the country. Located in Jezerine, near to the city of Kolasin, it was known in the past under the name of *Bjelasica Ski Centre*. After being acquired during bankruptcy proceedings, it was renamed, developed and some lifts were replaced. A high-speed 6-person detachable chairlift was installed in 2010 and a second one in 2021, in addition to 1 other fixed-grip chairlift and 3 surface lifts. The ski area features the only snowmaking system in Montenegro. Kolasin 1450 offers both winter and summer activities. Rustic wooden restaurants and mountain huts make the place a picturesque location, together with 2 4-star mountain resort hotels. **Kolasin 1600** was added starting in 2019 with a 6-seater chairlift and both ski areas were connected. They will be offering a total of 45 kilometres of ski slopes once the global project is completed, with the addition of new lifts.

Located close to Durmitor National Park and in the shadow of one of the country's highest peaks, Zabljak is the highest town in Northern Montenegro and an epicentre for winter sports. It enjoys snow 120 days per year, from December to April. The **Durmitor** resort is made up of several small ski areas for a total of 12 lifts that rise up to 2'313 meters high. Some high-quality mountain ski chalets and new hotel ski-lodge accommodations have opened in recent years.

Both resorts are trying to increase market awareness and attract more local and foreign customers. Durmitor has hosted international downhill ski competitions. Various entertainment and sporting events are organised by the National Tourism Organisation throughout the season, with the slogan, *A hot winter in the mountains*. Ski passes, equipment rental and ski lessons are a bargain here. An all-day lift pass costs about half than in the Alps. A pair of

skis and boots can be rented for cheap, as does a one-hour private ski lesson costs.

A smaller ski centre is **Vucje**, some 20 kilometres away from the city of Niksic. It only features a few surface lifts. It held the first ski festival in Montenegro, at the start of the millennium.

After being inactive for 13 years, **Ski Centre Hajla** reopened in 2017. It is located close to the border with Kosovo. A new 6-seater detachable chairlift was installed there in 2022.

Since Montenegro only gained independence in 2006, the tourism industry is still thinking about the major developments to invest in. Until now, the country's ski areas have primarily been the domain of locals and a few visitors from the Balkans. In the future, a number of tourism projects will enhance the country's tourism appeal. Mountain centres are a key part of this strategy and 6 resorts have been planned for development. Some are starting from scratch, such as **Zarski Ski Centre**, which just got its first chairlift. At the base area of the ski centre, 14 hotels and 11 apartment type accommodations are planned. The resort will be connected to another planned resort, to be built, **Cmiljac**. Together, they will feature a total of 14 lifts and 60 kilometres of ski slopes once completed.

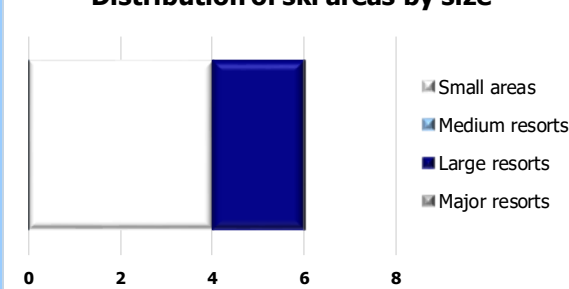
Torine, Jelovica and Komovi are other ski resorts projects that should be built from scratch. There are also some other projects intending to further develop the existing ski area of Kolasin. The global plan predicts 224 kilometres of ski trails served by 52 lifts, together with 52 hotels, 23 apartment-type accommodations, 1 hostel and 1 mountain lodge.



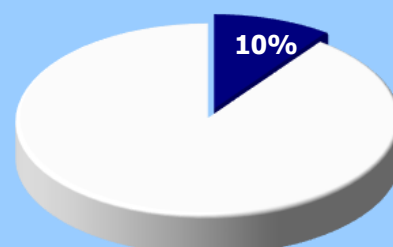
Montenegro

Ski areas	6
Lifts	27
National skiers	62'247
Skier visits per lift	14'815
Average skier visits	400'000
Skier visits per national skier	4.82
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.49
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.06

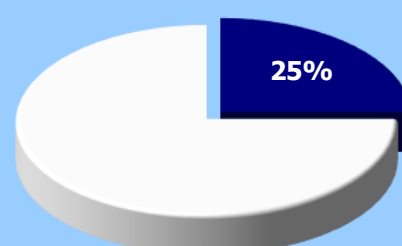
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





North Macedonia



North Macedonia is a small landlocked country, in the southernmost part of what was once Yugoslavia. Reaching altitudes up to 2'764 meters (Mount Korab), the country's mountainous region boasts snow coverage through the end of May, in spite of its southern location.

Civil war and regional conflicts considerably slowed the pace of ski industry development. Even if the country is emerging as a budget winter destination, with weeklong lift passes at the price of a single day pass in a large Alpine resort, ski

areas are still primarily visited by local North Macedonian skiers. Due to past conflict, the country has had a hard time building up a skier population base large enough to support ski resorts and offer state-of-the-art facilities. Lifts, trail marking, grooming and even cleanliness are not yet up to international standards. The ski areas tend to be crowded by locals on the weekends, with long lifts lines, and empty on weekdays, when lifts may even close. The foreign customer-base is currently limited to Albanians, Greeks and Bulgarians.

The **Zare Lazarevski** ski area, in Mavrovo National Park, a one-hour drive from the capital city, is the largest in North Macedonia. It has 14 lifts, and tops out at 1'860 meters above sea level. The resort features several hotel accommodations, including 4-star hotels. It has FIS approved downhill, super-G and giant slalom runs. However, the lift infrastructure is ageing, with no high-speed detachable lifts.

Popova Sapka, another one of the most popular resorts, is located in the north-western part of North Macedonia, just 35 kilometres from the capital of Skopje. With bars, restaurants and hotel accommodations, it is able to successfully attract foreign customers. The ski area is equipped with 9 lifts. It has hosted both European and Balkan ski championships. One of them, the *Shara Mountain Cup*, dates back to 1947. Popova Sapka was linked to the neighbouring city of Tetovo via a 7-kilometre-long cable car that was destroyed in the 2001 hostilities. Slopes are located between 1'708 meters and 2'510 meters above sea level, and the snow pack lasts 135 days per winter on average. A new latest generation 6-seater chairlift has been built there in 2019.

Beforehand, only the **Ski Centar Kožuf** was equipped with new state of the art lifts. It is located next to the border with Greece. Even though it only has 3 lifts, there is a EUR 73 million development plan to extend the resort and add further lifts and accommodations.

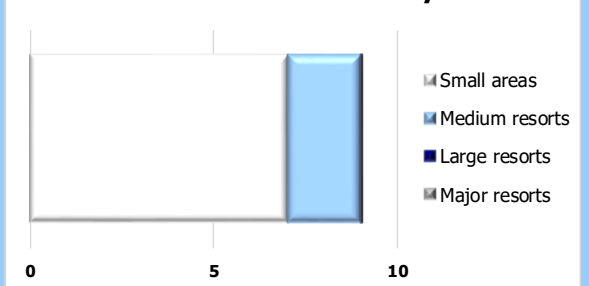
Finally, a special mention for the **Sar Planina – Eskimoo Freeride** ski area, which brings skiers to the top of pristine slopes by using snow cats since the area is not equipped with lifts. 14 free riders can sit in each snow cat.



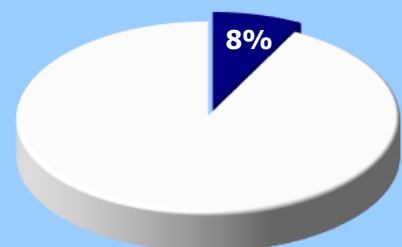
North Macedonia

Ski areas	9
Lifts	36
National skiers	156'237
Skier visits per lift	11'111
Average skier visits	400'000
Skier visits per national skier	2.30
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.17
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.08

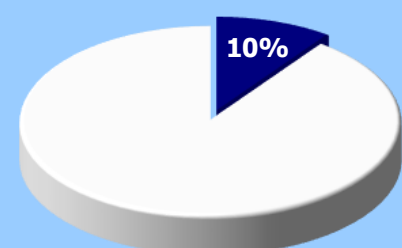
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers

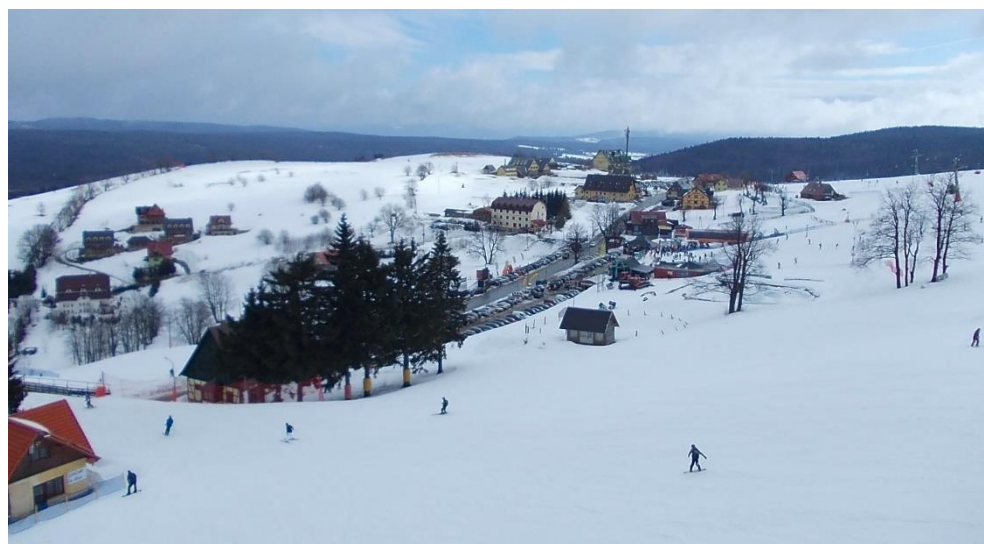




The Carpathian Mountains cross the southern part of Poland and form a natural border with neighbouring Czech Republic and Slovakia. In the High Tatras region, the highest part of the Carpathian Mountains, Poland has 70 peaks over 2'000 meters high. The range culminates with the 2'499-metre-high Mount Rysy. The Beskidy and the Giant Mountains are Carpathian sub-ranges, with slightly lower altitudes. They all feature winter sports areas. Skiing is also possible in the central and northern parts of the country. In these regions, the slopes are

gentler and ideal for beginners or those who want to get in shape before going to the mountains.

Even though skiing has been around for a while, up until recently Poland was not a very popular winter ski destination for international tourists. The opening of Polish air space to low-cost airlines and the development of the highway system have given a big boost to tourism in Poland. The relatively low prices and pristine wilderness are other factors that have helped to make Poland popular with tourists.



The climate in Poland provides good conditions for winter sports. The season begins in December and lasts until April at some resorts. However, the best conditions for skiing are from January to March.

The country has more than 300 ski lifts operators and a total of over 700 lifts. Many ski areas are pretty small, with only a few trails and one or a couple of

lifts. They are sometimes adjacent but operated by different companies. In fact, in a consolidated perspective, there are about 170 destinations featuring ski areas. Most of the time, skiing is consumed on an hourly or pay-as-you-go basis. Snowmaking and night skiing are common.

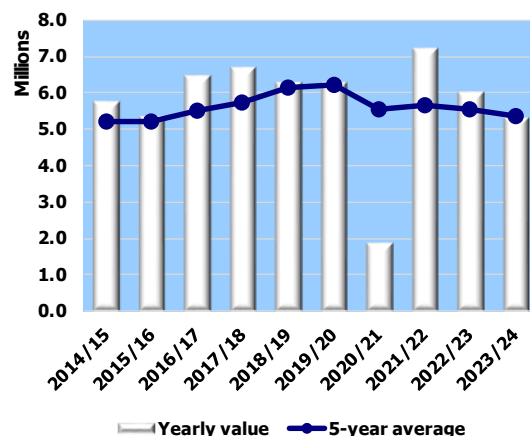
Winter season 2020/21 was marked by a 60% to 80% drop in business because ski resorts had to close during the busiest part of the season. 2021/22 was very good, with a renewed appetite for outdoor sports after covid lockdowns. The 2022/23 ski season in Poland has been marked by massive 20 to 30% price increases, in order to cope with rising operating costs. With 6.0 million skier visits, attendance was 16.6% down on former season.

2023/24 season's highlights

Decline in visitation seems more attributable to impoverished population and high inflation rather than worsening climatic conditions. With an estimated **5.3 million skier visits**, attendance was 12.0 % down on former season.

The most famous ski destination in Poland is the town of **Zakopane**, which attracts 2 million visitors yearly. Nestled in the heart of the Tatras Mountains, it started out as an intellectual centre in Poland. Since the 1930s, the area evolved into one of the most popular holiday destinations in the country, with a flourishing winter sports centre, as well as year-round activities and a busy nightlife. Zakopane hosted the FIS World Ski Championships as early as 1929, 1939 and 1962. However, even if it has a total of almost 50 lifts, it is not a ski resort like those of international renown. The fact is that the town is surrounded by several small ski areas with a few lifts each that are not interconnected and that do not offer a common lift pass. Most of them have short surface lifts, either running parallel or not connected to one another. Some were installed in the 2000s, but there are still some rather archaic relics. The ski areas are privately owned and require separate lift tickets (usually priced for a specific number of rides). From Zakopane, it is also possible to drive to larger resorts.

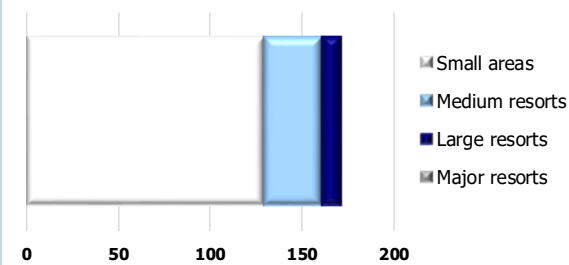
Skier visits history



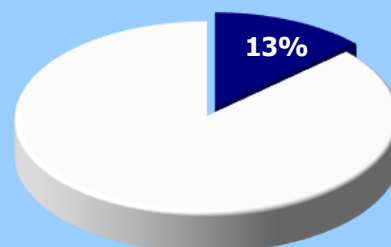
Poland

Ski areas	171
Lifts	729
National skiers	4'936'859
Skier visits per lift	7'332
Average skier visits	5'344'755
Skier visits per national skier	0.92
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.12
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.05

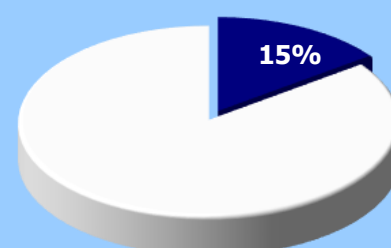
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





Wisla, is another ski destination of the same kind, featuring a large offer of distinctive small ski areas. It is in fact a town stretching over 7 picturesque valleys, located in the Beskid Mountains. It boasts numerous ski areas, including Soszów-Jawornik, Nowa Osada, Cieńków, Stożek, Skolnity, Stok, Klepki, Polana Zielenska, Barania Góra, Czapel, Kuba, Partecznik, Pasieki, Rówienki-Jawornik, Rudgor, and Siglany, totalling more than 20 lifts. The area ranges in altitudes from 392 to 1'220 meters above sea level and each ski area is equipped with restaurants and car parks. The variety of accommodations available in Wisla includes hotels, guesthouses, boarding houses and private options, totalling about 12'000 beds. The town's connectivity by train stations and proximity to airports like Pyrzowice, Balice, and Ostrava, makes it easily accessible. Overall, Wisla offers diverse skiing experience, along with a range of outdoor activities and accommodations for visitors.

The beginner-friendly ski area of **Zieleniec** features more than 20 ski lifts (mostly surface lifts and 2 quad chairlifts) and 7 baby lifts. In terms of lifts, it is the largest single resort in the country. Even if its altitude is rather low (950 meters above sea level), it benefits from a unique alpine microclimate, which guarantees snow nearly 150 days per winter. Together with a snowpark and 10 runs equipped with lighting for night skiing, the resort's broad offering suits skiers of all levels.

The ski areas of Czysta and Solisko combine to form the popular resort of **Szczyrk**. It has about 20 ski lifts as well as several baby-lifts, 30 downhill trails totalling 60 kilometres, with an approved FIS run, snowmaking, night skiing, ski school, restaurants and equipment rentals. The first chairlift was installed in Szczyrk in the 1950s due to the area becoming an Olympic training centre. 4 new detachable chairlifts and a 10-seat gondola have been installed in 2017 and 2018.

With 16 lifts, **Bialka Tatrzańska** is also among the largest ski resorts in Poland. It is 40 minutes away from the city of Zakopane, has recently expanded, and infrastructure was improved with the addition of several new chairlifts. It offers runs for all skiing abilities, and has a number of bars, restaurants and shops.

Czarna Góra features 9 lifts and 15 trails, for a total of 14 kilometres. There is a wide choice of accommodations and restaurants and the resort offers night skiing.

Recently, there has been a revival of ski tourism in Poland. Cross-country skiing and backcountry skiing have become more popular, and there are well-marked itineraries not only in the South of Poland, such as in Karkonosze - Jakuszyce in the famous Race Piast - and at the foot of the Tatras, but also in other parts of Poland, including Masurian Suwałki, the lake region in Kashubian, the Cracow-Częstochowa plateau and the mountainous Roztocze. Furthermore, 60 new lifts have been built at Polish ski resorts over the last decade.

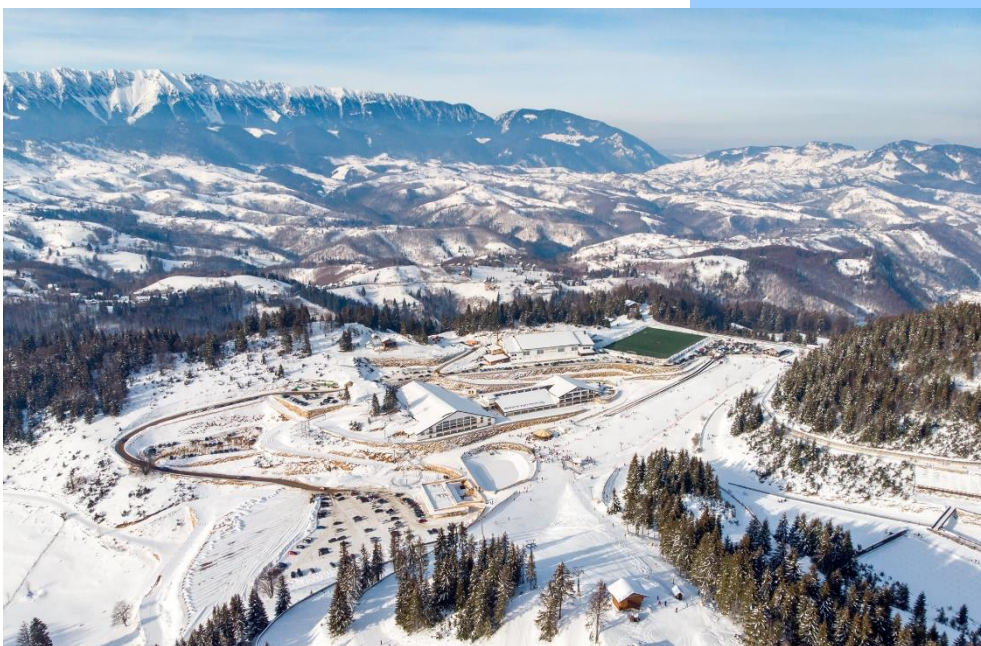


The Carpathian Mountains are the second largest mountain range in Europe. They dominate the centre of Romania, with 14 peaks reaching over 2'000 meters. Culminating 2'544 meters above sea level, Moldoveanu Peak is the high point. There is snow between November and April and snow conditions can be very good through the end of March or even April, with often very cold temperatures. The ski resorts have decent infrastructure, and the hotels are comfortable and offer interesting specials packages. Nevertheless,

the poor access roads are sometimes an issue.

Romania features more than 50 ski resorts. More than 20 % of the lifts have been installed or renewed over the last 15 years. Over this period, the private sector in Romania has started to invest constantly in the ski areas. Every year 3 to 5 new slopes are developed. Unfortunately, the investment rate is low due to the lack of European funding for the ski areas. The good news is that the number of skiers in Romania increases from year to year, and the premises for new investments, both public and private, are good. Moreover, in recent years, public resorts (Sinaia, Poiana Brasov) have resumed investing, thus managing to feature ski areas that can compete with areas in Bulgaria, Poland or Ukraine. A great benefit brought by the constant investments is the duration of the ski season. With nearly 70% of the slopes now equipped with snowmaking, about 10% of the resorts already start the season around December 1st.

Romania is still a rather unknown and undiscovered winter holiday destination. It is however attractive for foreign visitors, as prices are relatively low when compared to most of Europe, and some ski runs are lit for night skiing (35% of the slopes countrywide). However, lift



passes are not considered as cheap due to limited infrastructure and poor grooming.

The winter seasons 2020/21 and 2021/22 have been excellent for Romanian ski areas. Business showed a growth of about 30% over the pre-pandemic level of season 2018/19. 2022/23 was not a good season for Romanian ski areas, with attendance going down 50% on average countrywide. An estimated total of only 1.1 million skier visits was recorded.

2023/24 season's highlights

The season experienced delayed openings due to lighter snowfall and warmer temperatures. Ski resorts gained momentum in mid-January with a cold snap. February was mostly warm. Based on the regional evolution and the eastern European snow and weather conditions that prevailed during the season, it is estimated that Romanian ski resorts recorded about **1.4 million skier visits**.

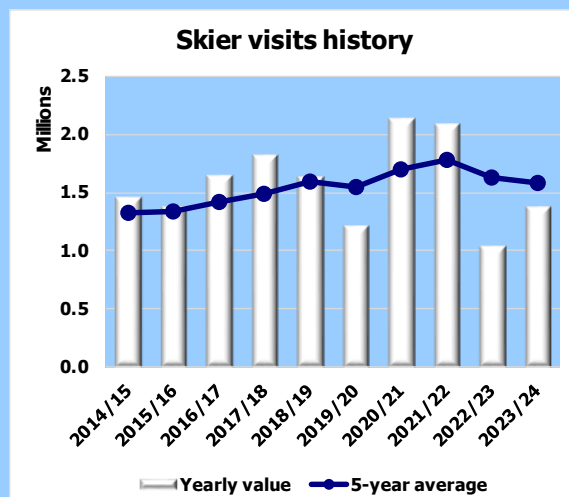
The main ski areas in Romania are **Poiana Brasov, Sinaia, Busteni, Predeal, Azuga** in the South-Eastern Carpathians (also called Transylvanian Alps), **Paltinis** in the Southern Carpathians and **Borsa, Vatra Dornei**, in the Eastern Carpathians.

The popular destination of **Poiana Brasov** is only 13 kilometres from the medieval city of Brasov. More restaurants, villas and hostels have been built there than anywhere else in the country. The region hosts several sporting events every year. It has 11 ski lifts, a snowmaking system, cross-country skiing, ice rinks, swimming pools as well as several bars, restaurants and discos. The resort tops at 1'783 meters above sea level and offers a capacity of 4'500 visitors per day and the lodging infrastructure can accommodate 4'000 guests.



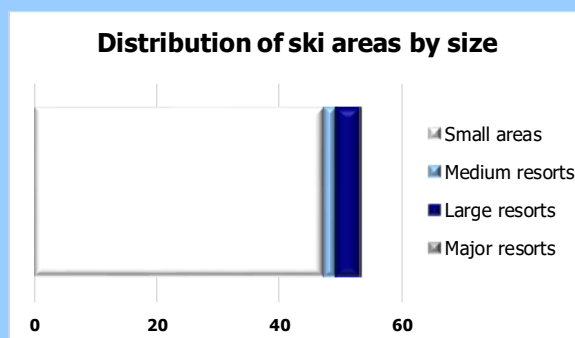
Sinaia, with a maximum altitude of 2'077 meters above sea level, is located 125 kilometres from Bucharest. It is called the *Pearl of the Carpathians* because of its beautiful landscape. The mountain resort has 10 recently upgraded lifts, cross-country skiing and lots of restaurants, bars and discos. The highest city in Romania is **Predeal** at 1'000 meters above sea level, 145 kilometres from Bucharest. It is one of the main ski resorts in the country and has 7 lifts, located between altitudes of 1'030 to 1'450 meters.

Recently, a new ski resort opened. Initially called **Star Trek Voineasa**, the now official name is **Transalpina**. It features a 2-section gondola, 1 quad chairlift and 2 surface lifts. Developers want to add more lifts to make it the largest resort in the Southern Carpathian Mountains. The finalised project features 31 lifts and 80 kilometres of trails. The resort is being built by the Romanian Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism as part of their EUR 80 million *Ski the Carpathians* program, backed with EC funding, which includes the dramatic upgrade of several Cold War era resorts as well as the development of new centres.

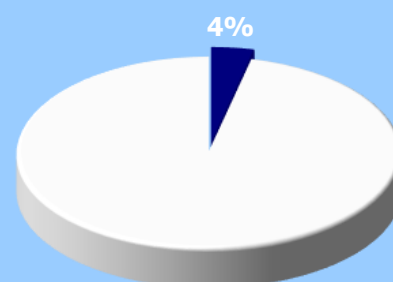


Romania

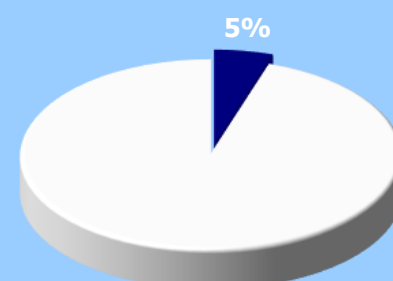
Ski areas	53
Lifts	125
National skiers	685'529
Skier visits per lift	12'635
Average skier visits	1'579'389
Skier visits per national skier	2.19
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.08
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.04



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





Russia



Out of all the countries in the world, Russia boasts the largest number of mountain ranges, from the rolling hills of the Khibiny range, to the majestic peaks of the Caucasus and the volcanoes of Kamchatka.

Skiing has been practiced in Russia since ancient times. An old set of skis dated from 6300 BC was found near Lake Sindor, in the Vychevda basin of Russia (Northern Russia). Rock paintings near the White Sea, dated from 3000 to 2000 BC also confirm an old history of skiing. Other petroglyphs, dated between the 3rd century BC and the 4th century AD were found only 600 kilometres from the Altay Mountains of North-Western China.

Since the 1950s, there has been a Russian alpine ski instructors association. In 1967, it launched a national training programme. However, at the time of former USSR, winter sports were mostly reserved for professional athletes and training centres were built in various republics that are now independent. It is only since the early 2000s that recreational skiing became more popular and that ski areas were developed or re-developed. Between 2000 and 2023, more than 150 new lifts were supplied in Russia by major western manufacturers. The government has plans to develop further the winter sports and supplies from local manufacturers will replace imported equipment that is no longer available because of Western sanctions. It seems that local lift manufacturers are now developing their own detachable ropeways.

Ski resort development for the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics has been driving a growing market with future potential. Of Russia's 140 million inhabitants, only 3% ski. However, the market is expanding through an increasing number of domestic skiers, and an increased attendance at domestic ski resorts. The trend has been clearly noticeable since the Sochi Olympics, triggered by the state-of-the-art resorts. On the other hand, the drop in the rouble's value, due to recent political issues, encouraged Russians to ski in Russia. Between January 2014 and January 2016, Russian rouble lost half of its value. Tours to Russia became much cheaper for foreigners and, accordingly, travelling

abroad became much more expensive for Russians. Therefore, many Russians who used to spend their winter holidays in European resorts skied domestically. According to surveys, the number of Russian tourists travelling abroad decreased by about 30% in 2015/16. With the development of the conflict with Ukraine and the escalation of international sanctions, Russian tourism has become mostly domestic. So also skiing.

It looks that visitation in Russian ski resorts was boosted after Sochi Olympics. However, the growth has not been sustained every year, with some season stagnating at former years' level. Continuous growth in Northern Caucasus and Siberia pushed visitation further upwards before the outbreak of the pandemic brought 2019/20 attendance numbers 6% down. With borders mostly closed, winter 2020/21 benefited from an influx of domestic guests. The government also supported domestic tourism with some cashback incentives. All this offered good conditions and increased visitation of Russian ski resorts. Skier visits for the 2021/22 season have been estimated down 10% on former winter. This was caused by the economic situation and the general climate generated by what was officially called the Ukrainian special operation. The estimate visitation for winter 2022/23 season is 9.8 million skier visits, 9.2% down over former season. Some large resorts in the country have been lacking snow for a long part of the season. Even if February has then been very snowy in some places, warm weather in March forced early closure of several resorts.

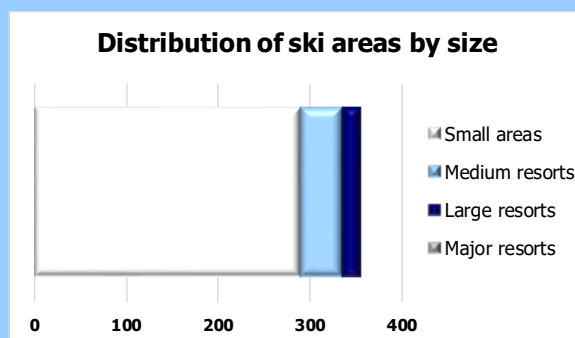
2023/24 season's highlights

Despite some weather challenges, such as rain and severe frosts in certain regions, most resorts adapted successfully to maintain high-quality slopes. The season began slightly later in some areas, but overall, Russian ski destinations demonstrated resilience and readiness to accommodate diverse skiing and snowboarding enthusiasts. The combination of improved facilities and favourable conditions contributed to the season's success. Attendance has been estimated to **9.9 million skier visits**.

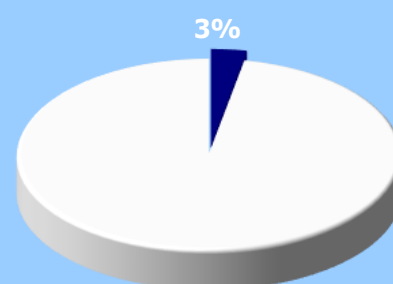


Russia

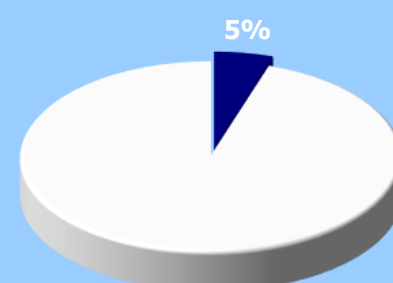
Ski areas	354
Lifts	843
National skiers	4'306'672
Skier visits per lift	12'265
Average skier visits	10'339'437
Skier visits per national skier	2.28
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.07
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.02

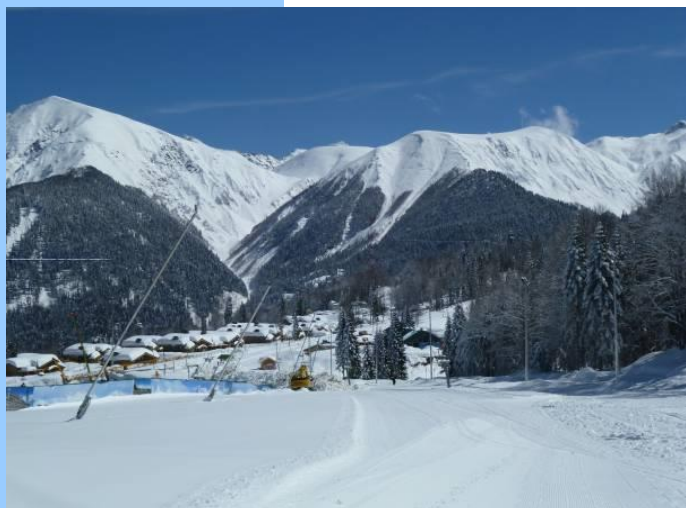


Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





The number of ski areas in Russia increased significantly since 2012. Many of them still feature limited infrastructure and lifts that require some renovation. There are about 40 small ski areas around Moscow and a few around St-Petersburg, even though neither city is located in a mountainous region. The main ski resorts in the country are located in the Ural and the Caucasus Mountains, but many other regions also offer ski areas, from the vicinity of St-Petersburg over Siberia up to Sakhalin Island and Kamchatka peninsula. Currently, 75 of the 83 regions or *subjects* of the Russian Federation offer one or more ski areas, totalling over 350 ski areas.

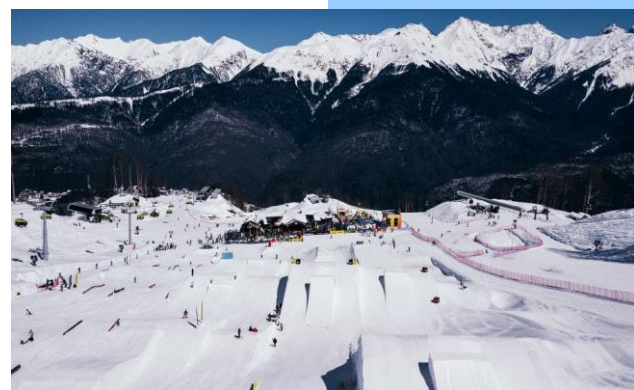
70 kilometres from Sochi, the resort of Krasnya Polyana served as the main site for the 2014 Olympics. It is spread over 3 distinctive ski areas. **Gazprom/Laura**, (some people call it Laura because of the name of the river running through it), first opened for the 2008/09 season. It was developed around the original facilities of Alpika Service, dating from 1993. It now features 14 lifts. Some gondolas are open all year round, since they are designed for more than just skiing. **Gorki Gorod** (which was renamed in 2019 to Krasnaya Polyana, under heavy criticism from other ski resorts in the area, which are even reckoning legal steps, arguing that Krasnaya Polyana is the colloquial name of the whole area) was the place of the media-village during Winter Olympics. The ski resort itself was established in 2001, a few years before Sochi has been selected as the host of 2014 Olympic Games. Actually, it did not host any alpine events and was the only resort open for general public (for skiing) during the Olympics. **Rosa Khutor** is Krasnya Polyana's largest resort, and hosted the alpine skiing events during the 2014 Olympics. The resort features 105 kilometres of runs for all levels, from beginners to Olympic champions, and 26 lifts (8 gondolas, 11 chairlifts and 7 surface lifts) and 6 magic carpets. It is spread over 2'289 hectares, with the highest point culminating at 2'509 meters above sea level. Some gondolas and chairlifts are open almost all year round. Various ski competitions (i.e., Ladies' World Cup) and several festivals are held there. After the Olympics, the resort has proved to be very popular and has been recording about 800'000 skier visits each winter and about the same number of visitors in summer.

The Caucasus is a mountainous region that includes Mount Elbrus (5'600 meters above sea level) and is one of the snowiest areas in the world. With winters longer than the rest of Europe and the opportunity to ski on glaciers and at high altitudes, it has the natural potential to compete with the Alps. However, the Caucasus is subject to cycles of violence (bombings, explosions, terrorist attacks, etc...) on a regular basis. In order to bring the region to more peaceful status, the government's goal is to develop the tourism industry and attract investors. Under the name of *Northern Caucasus Resorts*, a broad regional project was designed to build 5 resorts through a public-private partnership, spread among the various semi-autonomous Russian republics of the region. These resorts were aimed at having a total of 179 lifts and 879 kilometres of ski runs, with the goal of accommodating 150'000 guests daily. After the multi-billion-euro project would be complete, over 10

million tourists would be expected to visit the mountains on an annual basis. However, currently some of the planned areas have been put on hold and the project focuses on 3 only. For the time being, most of the operation is concentrated in the Soviet legacy resorts of **Elbrus** and **Cheget**, situated in Elbrus National Park, near the Georgian border. In Elbrus, a record holding gondola⁴⁰ was added in 2015 to the original 3 gondolas and 2 cable cars⁴¹. They provide the opportunity to ski through August on Mount Elbrus, offering 21 runs for 35 kilometres of skiing. The negative point however is that lift lines are long. In nearby ski area of Cheget, lifts are aging and grooming is substandard. In **Arkhyz** ski area, one of the other projected resorts, several lifts (2 gondolas and 3 chairlifts) have already been delivered and some further are expected in the near future.



Another well-known ski resort of the Caucasus Mountains is **Dombai**, located close to the Georgian border. Although the resort was equipped 10 years ago with 3 modern lifts, part of the infrastructure still looks from a past era.



The most popular resort in the Ural Mountains is **Abzakovo**. It is also one of the largest in the region. With a spa, the area is both a ski resort and a sports and health complex. For years, it was essentially the resort of choice for residents in the city of Magnitogorsk, 60 kilometres away. Nevertheless, with the construction of a new complex and modern skiing facilities, its popularity has spread throughout Russia. Abzakovo features a dozen runs with a total length of 18 kilometres of skiing, including FIS approved slalom and giant slalom runs. The 5 ski lifts and the baby lift can carry 5'000 skiers per hour. In addition, the resort has a snow-making system and offers the possibility of renting snowmobiles. Visitors also have the opportunity to enjoy ice-skating.

Sheregesh ski resort, in Siberia, is one of the largest and most visited of Russia. It was open in 1981 and accounts 18 lifts, including gondola, combined lifts and high-speed quads and 6-packs. Slopes total more than 50 kilometres, with a vertical drop of 680 meters. It is famous for its end of season ski festival, where everybody skis or snowboards in bath suits! It features a lot of cafés and restaurants. A total of 3'000 commercial beds are distributed in various accommodations ranging from hostels and hotels to VIP apartments. They are all located within walking distance of the mountain infrastructure. Some slopes are FIS homologated. Another popular Siberian resort is **Baikalsk-Sobolinaya**, on the banks of Lake Baikal. It offers 7 lifts, including 2 designed for beginners and was established in the beginning of the 1990s.

Though Kamchatka is known mostly for what many consider to be second-to-none heli-skiing and ski touring destination, it has a few ski areas close to

⁴⁰ Highest gondola in Europe, reaching up to 3'847 meters above sea level

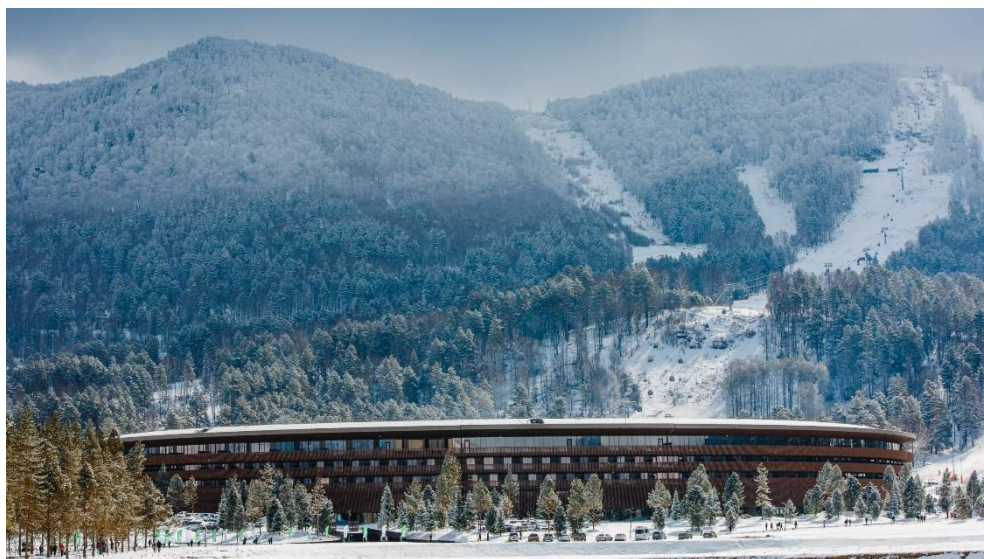
⁴¹ Gondolas are from the 2000s while cable cars date from the 1960s.

the regional capital Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky. The biggest and the most popular one is **Moroznya**, with 523 meters of vertical (branding itself as a training base of Russian alpine skiing team). **Krasnaya Sopka** ski centre is also located close to the city of Petropavlovsk. The top of the hills is 450 meter high.

In Sakhalin, the **Gorny Vozdukh** ski area is located close to the city of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk and offers a vertical drop of 500 meters. It was recently equipped with a new 8-seater gondola and a combined lift, on top of 2 high-speed quads.

A project for a new year-round resort of international standing is also in the planning phase in the Nizhny Novgorod region. The infrastructure will be able to accommodate 1'900 people.

An impressive new 4-season resort is under development in Altai Republic, at **Manzherok**. In 2021/22, it operated with only 13 kilometres of ski slopes. In 2023/24, it already offered 30 kilometres of slopes, 1 gondola and 2 chairlifts and winter attendance more than doubled. Construction is still on progress. It is expected to feature 7 lifts (3 gondolas and 4 chairlifts), 86 kilometres of ski slopes and 900 rooms in accommodations by 2027.



Ski resort development in Russia raises environmental controversy

Between 2021 and 2025, Russian Government estimates that a total of RUB 65 billion will be invested in ski tourism development. However, it seems that regulatory issues prevent some of the development projects to be implemented.

The Russian Ministry of Economic Development has introduced a draft law permitting clear-cutting in protected forests to facilitate the construction of ski slopes and associated infrastructure. This legislative initiative, developed and advocated by numerous mountain resorts across Russia, aims to address existing legal

barriers that hinder the expansion of ski tourism. Currently, prohibitions on clear-cutting in protective forests, particularly those on mountain slopes, prevent the development of new ski runs and facilities. While larger resorts have occasionally managed to bypass these restrictions, smaller ones often find themselves unable to overcome the legislative hurdles. Proponents of the bill argue that revising these regulations is essential for the growth of ski tourism and for providing citizens with greater access to winter sports.

However, environmentalists express significant concerns regarding the potential ecological impact of the proposed law. They warn that allowing extensive deforestation in these sensitive areas could lead to irreversible damage to mountain ecosystems. The protective forests in question play crucial roles in preventing soil erosion, maintaining biodiversity, and regulating local climates. Disrupting these natural systems may result in increased landslides, loss of habitats for endemic species, and other environmental issues.

Industry experts acknowledge the necessity for regulatory updates but emphasize the importance of a balanced approach. While the ski industry requires clear legislative frameworks, it is imperative to ensure that development does not come at the expense of environmental integrity. Preserving natural landscapes is vital, as they are integral to the appeal of ski resorts.

The draft law defines a "ski complex" to include tourism industry facilities, engineering and transport infrastructure, sports facilities, and ski slopes. The government will establish specific requirements and a list of objects encompassed by this definition. This clarification aims to prevent the misuse of the term "ski complex" for projects that could cause unjustified deforestation, such as constructing tubing slopes under the guise of ski resorts.

Ski resort operators assert that they have a vested interest in preserving natural landscapes, as these environments are central to their business. Forests provide essential ecosystem services, including wind and snow protection and slope stabilization, which are crucial for the safe and enjoyable operation of ski facilities. Therefore, the industry is not inclined toward unnecessary deforestation.

In summary, while the proposed legislation seeks to facilitate the development of ski tourism in Russia by easing restrictions on land use, it has ignited a debate between economic interests and environmental preservation. Achieving a sustainable balance that allows for tourism growth without compromising the integrity of mountain ecosystems remains a complex challenge that requires careful consideration and collaboration among stakeholders.



Serbia



If Northern Serbia consists mostly of plains, 75% of the country is covered with hills and mountains. The highest peak culminates at 2'169 meters above sea level (Mount Midzor, shared with Bulgaria). There are several mountain ranges, offering good conditions for winter sports, with up to 5 months of snow on the ground in a season.

The mountains in Serbia therefore offer options for winter sports enthusiasts. Among the more than 30 ski areas, the country's most developed and popular ski resorts are **Kopaonik**, **Tornik Ski**

Centre on Zlatibor and **Stara Planina**, which have FIS certified ski runs and hosts international competitions. These areas were modernised by the government company, *Ski Resorts of Serbia*, which is working to build up skiing infrastructure and transforming Serbian ski resorts into an international ski destination. The goal is to make the resorts more attractive to domestic and foreign tourists with a year-round offer.

Serbian ski resorts were popular with Irish and British skiers when tour operators offered them as destinations. However, the major operators stopped offering these destinations a few years ago. Today, more and more skiers are locals. Russians also used to come before the Ukrainian crisis.



The resort of **Kopaonik** has taken the lead in Serbia's ski industry. It is located at an altitude of 1'600 meters above sea level, with runs that start from as high as 2'000 meters. It benefits from about 160 snow days per year and offers more than 50 kilometres of ski runs serviced by 26 lifts, including

6-, 4- and 2-seater chairlifts, together with some surface lifts. They can accommodate more than 35'000 skiers per hour, which ranks Kopaonik among the largest ski areas in this part of Europe. The resort is equipped with snowmaking that covers 70% of its runs and offers one trail equipped with lighting for night skiing and a snowpark. The village base offers various accommodations, from cottages up to 5-star hotels, bars, restaurants and a vibrant nightlife.

Near the Bulgarian border, located in a high mountain range, the resort of **Stara Planina** offers considerable potential for tourism development. A few years ago, it had only 2 lifts, but now has 5, including the first gondola in Serbia. It is expected to further expand with new chairlifts and runs (to reach a total of 100 kilometres of downhill skiing compared to currently 13 kilometres), accommodations and other infrastructure, and should become one of the country's most important ski resorts. The planned Babin Zub base village will offer 8'000 beds. The timing when the plans will be implemented is however not clear yet.

In the region of Zlatibor, the Serbian capital of mountain tourism, the **Tornik Ski Center** has a modern 6-seater chairlift and a few more surface lifts. It received very recently an additional gondola lift. In addition to skiing, it also offers tubing runs.

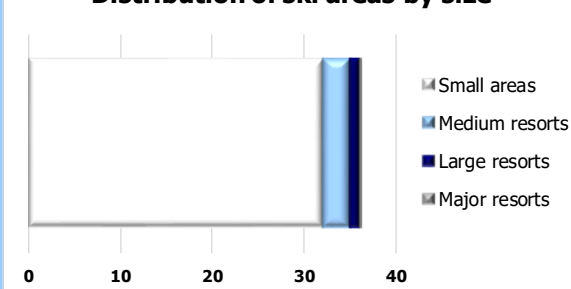
Some other smaller resorts offer limited infrastructure. The **Iver** ski resort, on Mount Tara, has 4 runs, 900 to 1'100 meters long, equipped with snowmaking and one lift. **Divcibare** ski area, on Mount Maljien, is a place specifically designed for beginners, with several short runs, and one intermediate slope, equipped for night skiing. Several other ski areas are only equipped with one lift. A few even have no lifts but are designated places where people ski.



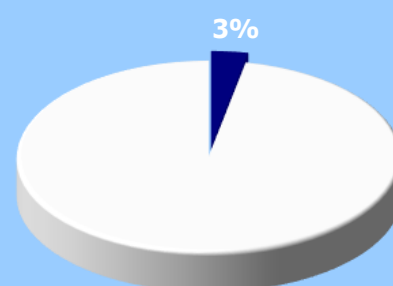
Serbia

Ski areas	36
Lifts	101
National skiers	210'668
Skier visits per lift	9'901
Average skier visits	1'000'000
Skier visits per national skier	3.80
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.12
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.18

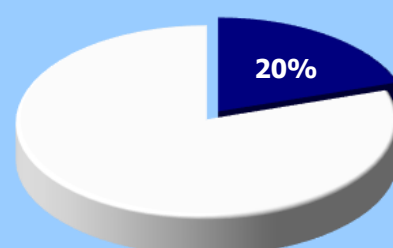
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





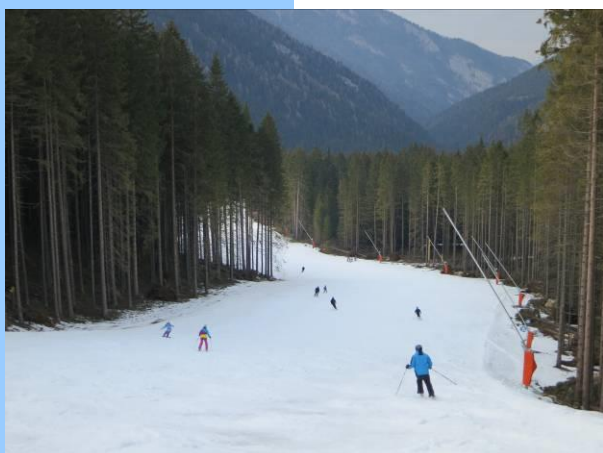
Slovakia



Approximately 80% of the country is located at an altitude of 750 meters above sea level or more. The highest point is Gerlachovský Peak, 2'655 meters above sea level. Slovakia already has a long ski history. Since 1940, lifts have been in the Tatras

Mountains. With about 60 new lifts delivered by the major manufacturers over the last 20 years, there are now more than 100 ski areas in the Slovak Republic, most of them located in the northern part of the country.

The majority of the ski areas are located in nature reserves. With regards to environmental preservation, their development is limited to some extent. Due to the low elevation of many ski areas, snow coverage is not always guaranteed. Nevertheless, Slovakia seems on its way to becoming a popular ski destination in Eastern Europe.



Slovak ski resorts were estimated to have attracted about 4 million skier visits per year at the beginning of the 2000s. This figure is now regularly around 5 million, except the covid-19 outbreak shortened season 2019/20 and 2020/21 pandemic season, when resorts remained most of the time closed because of lockdown measures. 2021/22 winter had high climate variations from one period of the season to the other, so that not all resorts could experience a normal winter again after the pandemic. Only big resorts in upper altitude did. Skier visits remained globally at a low level. Overall, the 2022/23 season was good, with Polish skiers coming

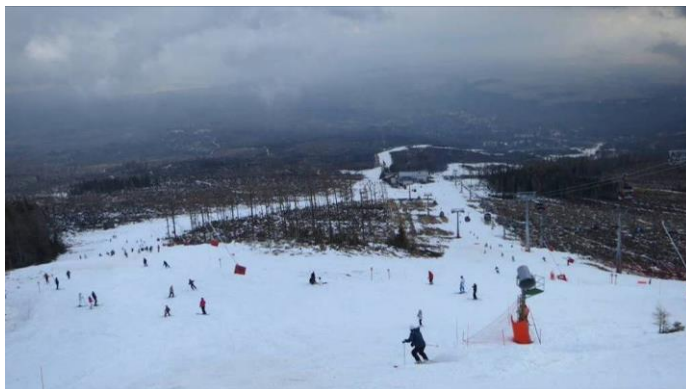
back to Slovakia, together with visitors from Hungary, Romania and Baltic countries. This mostly benefited to the large resorts, while national skiers tended to travel abroad, skiing in the Alps.

2023/24 season's highlights

The beginning of the season experienced good conditions. However, poor weather conditions came by mid-February, with high temperatures and rain that melted the snow away. Higher altitude resorts were less affected. More clients came during the season from Poland and Romania while the resorts saw less Slovaks and Czechs. Total attendance is estimated to **4.4 million skier visits**, down 7.6 % over former season.

Currently, visitors from Poland, Hungary, Romania, the Czech Republic and other Eastern countries come to Slovakia to ski. Thanks to very competitive prices, the Slovak ski resorts are now trying to expand their catchment area

to the Western European market. Some years ago, a group of 4 ski areas (**Snow paradise Velka Raca/Oscadnica**, **Park Snow Strbske Pleso**, **Jasna Nizke Tatri** and **Park Snow Donovaly**) launched an advertising campaign aimed at the French, British and Benelux middle classes. These 4 ski resorts have made different investments and are able to offer infrastructure and services similar to those in Western Europe (64 kilometres of ski runs for all levels, hotels, chalets and guest houses, 6-seater chairlifts, bubble equipped chairlifts ...). The Tatra Mountain Resorts Group, which operates 4 ski resorts and several hotels, invested EUR 190 million over 7 years from 2007 to 2013 to upgrade facilities and expand its resorts.



Donovaly is one of the major ski resorts in Slovakia. It is located in the centre of the country between the Low Tatras and the High Tatras. It is popular with Slovaks as well as with foreign visitors. Donovaly has 15 ski lifts and offers 18 kilometres of ski runs.

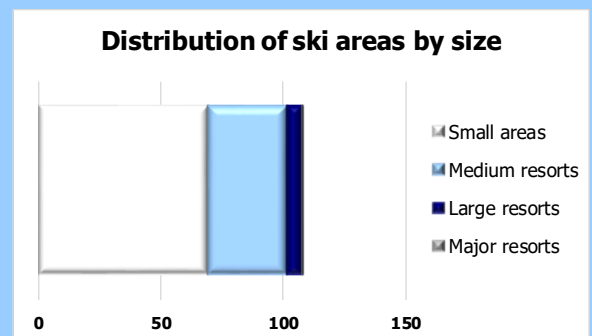
Jasna Nizke Tatri – Chopok North is the largest ski resort in the country. It is located in the Carpathian Mountains, in the Low Tatras. It features a total of 20 lifts, including 7 chairlifts and 5 gondolas, including a funitel, with a total capacity of over 28'000 people per hour. 43 of the 50 kilometres of ski runs are equipped with snowmaking.

The **Bystrianska Dolina** ski resort is located between 1'216 meters and 2'005 meters above sea level in the Low Tatras. It has 14 ski lifts and 7 ski runs, 2 that are considered difficult. The vertical drop is 789 meters.

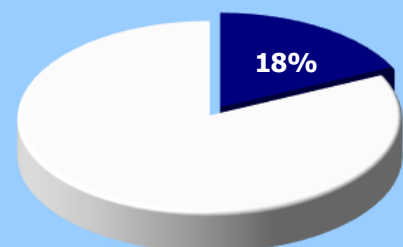


Slovakia

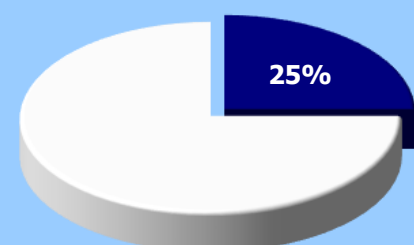
Ski areas	107
Lifts	456
National skiers	979'181
Skier visits per lift	7'725
Average skier visits	3'522'473
Skier visits per national skier	2.70
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.49
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.15



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





Tajikistan



With 93% of the territory covered in mountains, more than 10 mountain ranges and 72 peaks over 6'000 meters high, Tajikistan is one of the most mountainous countries in the world. It shares the high Pamir and Tian Shan mountain ranges with its

neighbours Afghanistan and China. The highest summit, Peak Ismoil Somoni, tops out at 7'495 meters above sea level. The 70 kilometres long Fedchenko Glacier is the longest and thickest glacier in the world, outside the Polar Regions. About 50% of the country is located over 3'000 meters, with an average altitude of 4'000 meters in the highlands in Eastern Pamir.

Despite the vast natural potential, mountain tourism is not very developed, recording very few visitors. It is not part of the local culture.



The only equipped ski area of the country, formerly known as Takob, is now called **Safed Dara**. It was developed during the Soviet era, in the 1980s, about 100 kilometres from the capital city Dushanbe. Access roads are not in very good conditions and driving there can take 3 hours. The ski area is located about 2'250 meters above sea level and was equipped with 2 old surface lifts, of which only one operated. However, in 2016, a brand new 8-seater gondola lift was installed and the old building with accommodations

located at the base of the slopes, which was falling into disrepair, has been renovated entirely. A second gondola has been installed in 2023. Attendance seems mostly concentrated on the weekends.

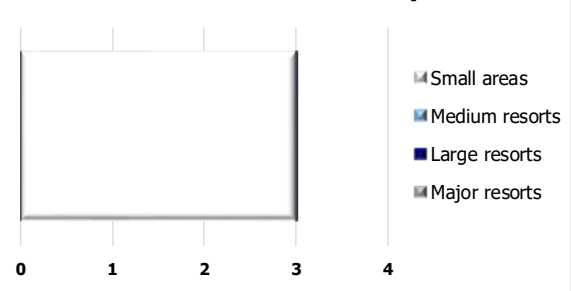
However, since mountains and snow are not scarcities, there is plenty of potential for ski touring and ski mountaineering and there are 2 reputable locations for heliskiing, one in the Pamir and the other in the Fann Mountains. Those who have skied there reported deep untracked snow and stable sunny weather.



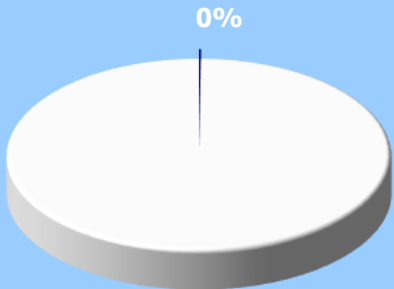
Tajikistan

Ski areas	3
Lifts	3
National skiers	15'820
Skier visits per lift	6'667
Average skier visits	20'000
Skier visits per national skier	1.26
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.00
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.00

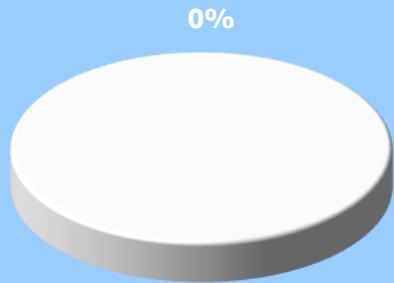
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





Part of the Carpathian Mountains extends through western Ukraine, followed by lower hills to the centre of the country. The highest peak in the Ukraine is Hoverla Peak, which culminates

at 2'061 meters above sea level, near the Romanian border. Ukraine is hardly known internationally for its ski resorts, but there are many places to ski in the country. Most ski resorts are located in the Carpathian Mountains, but there are also a few ski areas in the other regions and several urban ski areas (hills next to cities equipped for downhill skiing).

The ski industry has been developing and Ukraine's ski resorts have considerably improved in the beginning of the 2000s as 18 brand new lifts were delivered by major manufacturers between 2004 and 2009. In the first decade of the century, several small hotels, holiday houses and apartments were built and some resorts have upgraded a portion of their ski lifts to current standards, even if ground transportation remained problematic for access to some resorts. Secondary ski areas usually have only basic equipment, and runs may not be groomed. Lifts queues can last more than one hour on the weekends.

The price for lift passes, ski rentals and ski lessons are relatively cheap compared to Western European standards.

The newest and most modern ski resort in the Ukraine is **Bukovel**. It was built in the 2000s and is for the time being the only one with world-class facilities: with high-speed chairlifts and meticulously groomed runs, snow-making facilities, organised lift lines and safety personnel. Even if Bukovel is the second highest resort in Ukraine, its base elevation is only 900 meters above sea level and the highest ski lift reaches 1'370 meters. This makes the resort very weather and temperature dependent. In 2011/12 winter season, the ski area only fully opened at the end of January. Additional snowmaking systems will help reduce dependence on weather conditions and allow an earlier start to the season. The mountains around the resort protect it from the cold wind. It has 16 lifts, 60 kilometres of runs and quality ski and snowboard instruction.

The resort of **Slavsko** was the most popular in Ukraine for many years (until Bukovel was built after 2000). It is also one of the easiest to access. Located in a picturesque village at 600 meters above sea level, it is surrounded by mountains that protect the resort from strong winds. With 4 different mountains, the resort offers a wide variety of runs. The most famous one is the

Mount Trostian, which offers nearly 500 meters of vertical drop and 8 lifts (1 chairlift and 7 surface lifts).

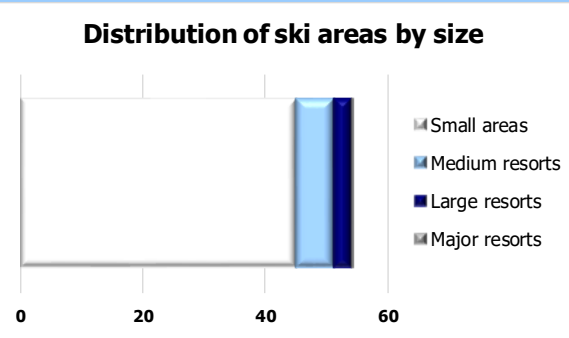
The highest ski resort in the Ukraine is **Drahobrat**, located at 1'360 meters above sea level, in an area with heavy snowfall and a stable snowpack. It is the first ski area to open for the season and the last one to close. The resort features 8 lifts, 8 ski runs and claims to meet the requirements for Olympic competition. It is very popular with skiers and snowboarders because of the guaranteed snow. The natural landscape in and around Drahobrat, and the view from most hotels are appealing. However, access to the resort is a challenge. The only way to drive there is to use old Soviet all-terrain vehicles on an unpaved road.

2023/24 season's highlights

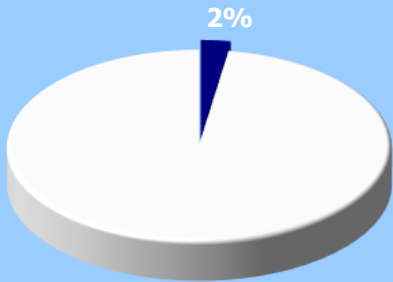
It looks that despite the war, some ski areas remained opened, offering a sense of normality. It even seems that the construction of a new ski resort started in the Carpathian Mountains.



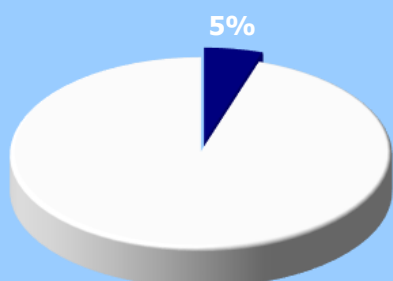
Ukraine	
Ski areas	54
Lifts	141
National skiers	944'534
Skier visits per lift	9'929
Average skier visits	1'400'000
Skier visits per national skier	1.41
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.03
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.01



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





Uzbekistan



A large part of the country is covered with a mostly flat and rolling sandy desert with dunes, and broad, flat, intensely irrigated valleys along the Amu Darya, Syr Darya and Zarafshon rivers. However, the eastern part of the country

along the Tajik and Kyrgyz borders is surrounded by mountainous terrain. The country's high point rises to 4'301 meters above sea level (Adelunga Toghi).

Although skiing has a relatively low national participation rate, the country has 3 ski resorts located in the Western Tian Shan Mountains, about 80 kilometres away from the capital city of Tashkent. Every year, more than half a million tourists from Tashkent and other neighbouring areas visit the 3 health-recreation complexes that have been built in the mountains. 2 of them offer skiing during the winter: **Chimgan** and **Beldersay**.

With a base elevation of 1'600 meters, **Chimgan** lies below the massive 3'309 metre high Big Chimgan peak. As early as the 19th century, the climate made the area an appealing destination. The elite began to build summer-houses and cottages, and then a sanatorium and resorts. Much later, 6 ski lifts were built for winter sports. The ski season is not very long; it starts in December and lasts until mid-March. A recent EUR 100-million project financed by the French Government aims at developing the area into a state of the art 4-season resort. Several new lifts will be installed, including a gondola, one aerial tramway, 2 chairlifts and a snowmaking system. New 4-season leisure equipment will also be supplied.

With a slightly longer season, **Beldersay** ski area is located close to Chimgan, on the slopes of Kumbel Mountain. The ski area advertises more than 300 sunny days a year and abundant snowfall. Runs are more geared towards skilled skiers and snowboarders and one is FIS certified. The ski area's infrastructure is limited to 2 lifts and minimal accommodations.

Various locations in the Western Tian Shan Mountains also offer heliskiing opportunities. Skiers are flown to altitudes ranging between 2'500 to 4'200 meters above sea level. Descents are often 10 kilometres long and offer up to 2'000 meters of vertical drop.

A further new 4-season resort named **Amirsoy Mountain Resort** has now open near Tashkent, in the western part of the Tian Shan Mountains, on the northern slopes of the Maygashkan Mountain of Beldersay. It is equipped to international standards. Its construction began in 2018. It currently offers 12 ski runs totalling 15 kilometres of different difficulty level and served by 3

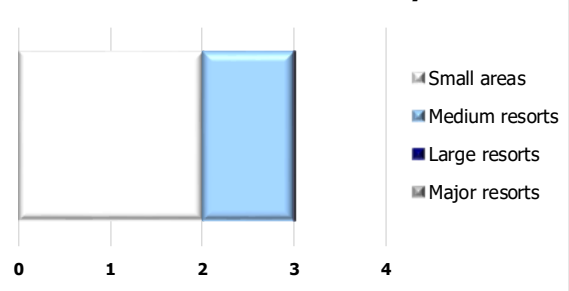
lifts. The resort features equipment rental services, ski school, and currently covers 900 hectares. Development plans target upon completion, a total of 28 ski runs totalling 21.3 kilometres served by 7 lifts including gondola, chairlifts and conveyor lifts. Some floodlit will be provided for night skiing, together with modern snowmaking system and snow grooming machines to offer high quality slopes.



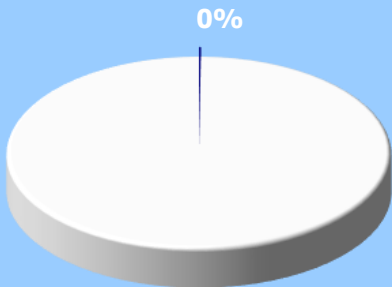
Uzbekistan

Ski areas	3
Lifts	11
National skiers	57'323
Skier visits per lift	13'636
Average skier visits	150'000
Skier visits per national skier	2.22
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.00
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.02

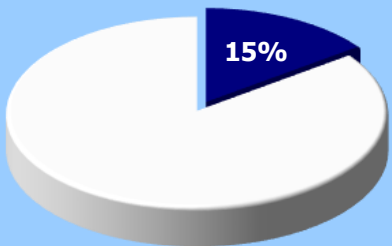
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals

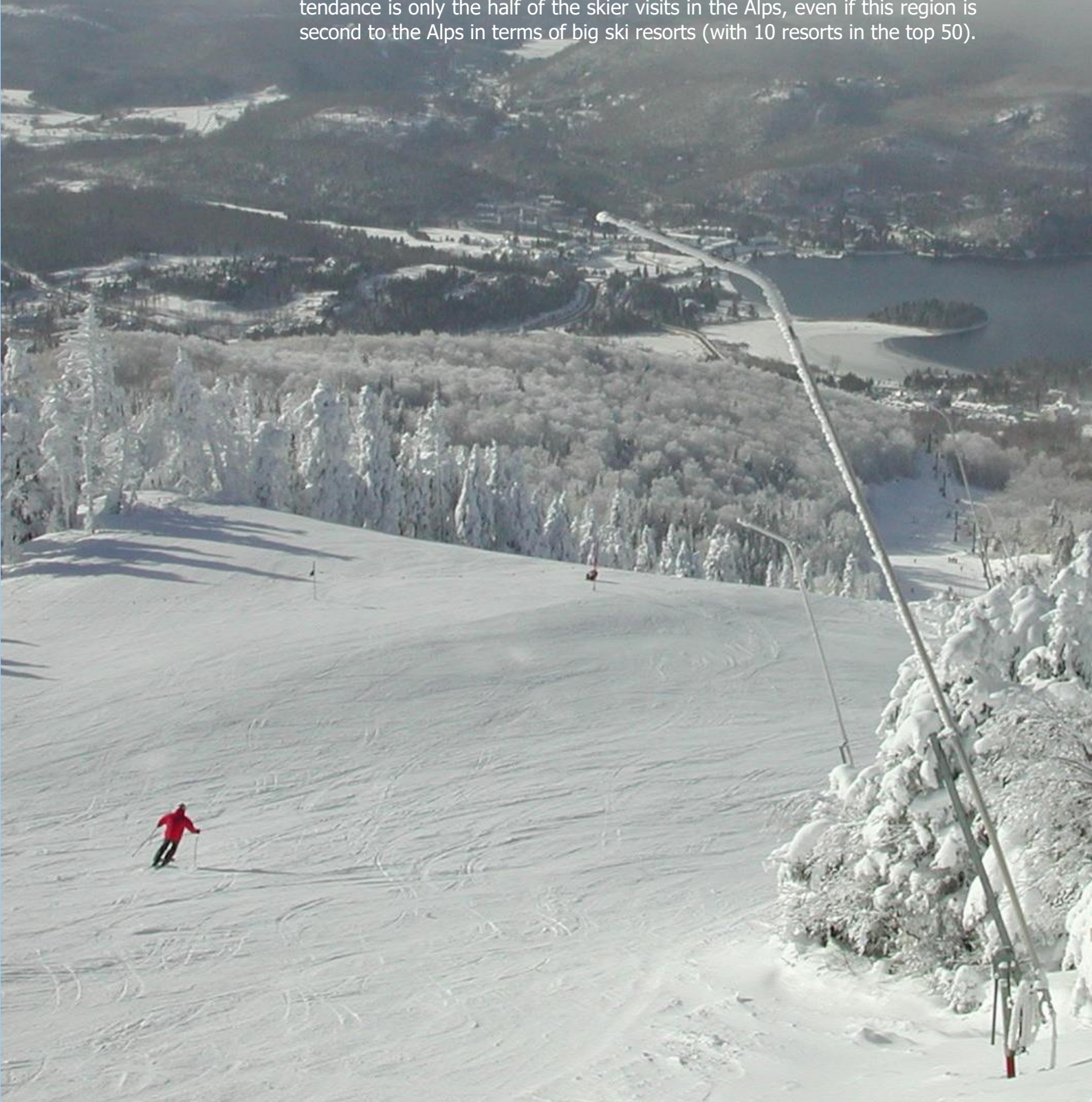


Proportion foreign skiers



The Americas

Both North and South America have ski resorts. Although the region has a market twice the size of Europe, including the Alps, with approximately 900 million inhabitants, penetration rate for the ski industry is low. Proportion of skiers among the population is only one third of what it is in Europe. In spite of 2 continents spread across 2 hemispheres, both with high mountains, more than 90% of the ski resorts are located in North America. Overall attendance is only the half of the skier visits in the Alps, even if this region is second to the Alps in terms of big ski resorts (with 10 resorts in the top 50).





Argentina



23% of Argentina is covered in hilly and mountainous terrain. The longest mountain range in the world, the Andes, runs down the entire western side of the country for more than 3'000 kilometres, and includes the chain's highest summit, Aconcagua, topping out at 6'960 meters above sea level. However, in spite of the high summits of the Andes, the ski resorts are located at lower altitudes, primarily between 1'000 and 2'000 meters high. At the southern end of the country, ski areas are located even lower. As is typical for winter sports resorts in the Southern Hemisphere, the ski season in Argentina starts in June and lasts through mid-October.

Before skiing became a leisure activity, and due to the mountains and the presence of snow, skis were already used in the 19th century as a means of transportation by foreigners who brought the activity over from Europe. It developed as a recreational activity in the 1930s, mostly concentrated in the area surrounding San Carlos de Bariloche under the

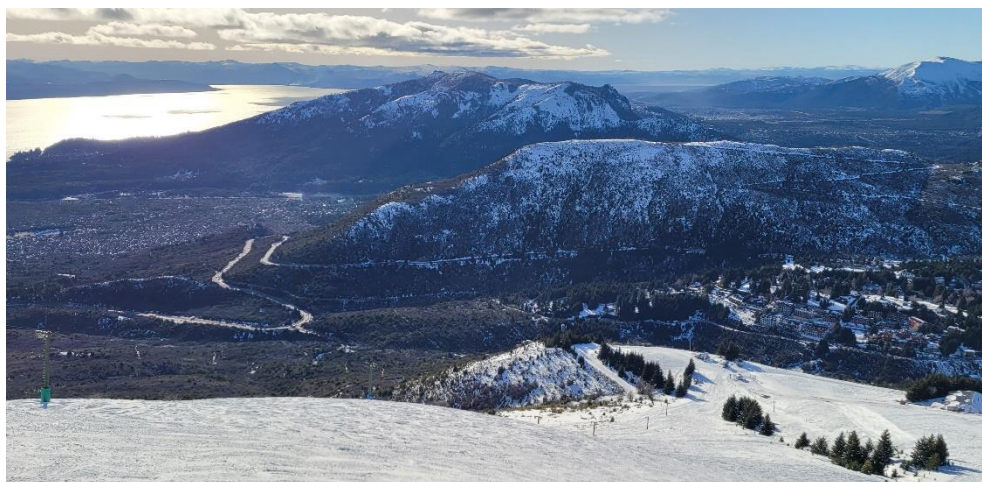
management of ski clubs and promoted by some European pioneers. Ski areas developed even before being equipped with lifts. The first lift was installed in **Cerro Catedral**, Bariloche's ski area, in 1939 and ski racing started in Argentina in the 1940s.



South American ski resorts have experienced new growth and development over the last decade. With nearly unlimited off-piste possibilities and good powder snow on pristine slopes, they offer an appealing option during off-season for resorts in the European Alps and North America. Skiing has until now remained fairly exclusive, as Argentineans do not have the mountain culture of the Alps and costs are relatively high. General interest is increasing,

with an annual dedicated trade show, *Expo Nieve*. Visits to ski resorts are not limited to nationals. Skiers from Brazil, Chile and even Mexico come to Argentina, and some resorts are crowded with this international clientele in July and August, the middle of the austral ski season.

Argentinean ski areas are estimated to generate around 1.5 million skier visits per year, mostly concentrated in the top 7 resorts.



The biggest resort in Argentina is **Cerro Catedral**, which stands for *Mount Cathedral* in Spanish, due to its summits resembling the towers of a medieval cathedral. It is located in a national park near San Carlos de Bariloche, whose name may be more familiar to foreigners. The majesty of the place is well known by skiers from all around the world. The resort was a pioneer in South America. It operates as a 4-season resort and is today the most international and fully equipped ski area in the country. It continues to update facilities in order to provide visitors with the most advanced infrastructure. It is considered to be the *Chamonix* of South America. With 53 runs, 39 lifts, a snow-making system covering 10 hectares, it offers 600 hectares of skiable terrain, with a top elevation of 2'180 meters above sea level. For years, Cerro Catedral has hosted the most important international competitions and snow festivals in Argentina.



Las Leñas is among the most popular ski resorts in Argentina due to snow quality, runs for all levels, the outstanding off-piste descents and cross-country skiing. The resort is located a few kilometres from the City of Mendoza. It is the highest in the country. With a vertical drop of 1'200 meters, the area

is located between 2'240 meters and 3'430 meters above sea level. Due to its dry climate, the snow quality for the 230 hectares of skiable terrain and 40 runs is famous. The terrain is served by 13 lifts and, if necessary, supported by a snowmaking system.

Another spot close to Mendoza is **Penitentes**. With views of Mount Aconcagua, it is also very close to Chile. Inaugurated in 1979, the resort used to occupy more than 300 hectares of skiable terrain and offer 25 runs. Several runs were FIS approved and had been used for competition. The hotel infrastructure, with a capacity of nearly 2'000 beds, included all kinds of accommodations, from hostels to 4-star hotels. After eight years of closure, the Los Penitentes ski resort reopened on June 2024. Under a temporary license, the resort will operate without traditional ski lifts due to environmental and economic challenges. Instead, it aims to become a versatile mountain destination, offering year-round outdoor activities, educational programs, and eco-friendly tourism. This re-opening is expected to boost the local economy while promoting sustainable practices in the Andes.

2024 season’s highlights

Argentina had a strong start with massive early snow-falls, supporting good coverage throughout the season. Although early snow didn't trigger widespread early openings, the deep snow base allowed areas to maintain extensive open terrain throughout the season, contributing to one of the most robust performances in the Southern Hemisphere.

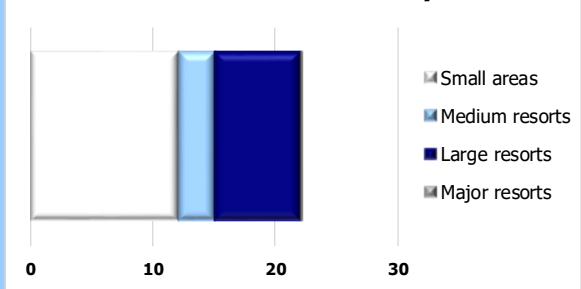
Among the other major ski areas of the country, **Chapelco**, in Patagonia, offers fantastic scenery from its 1'980-metre-high perch. It is advertised as combining adrenaline pumping activities and beautiful landscapes. **Caviahue**, with a base elevation of 1'647 meters above sea level, is located at the foot of the Copahue Volcano on the shores of a lake with the same name. With over 1'000 hectares of skiable terrain, and 20 runs, it offers the longest season in the Southern Hemisphere. The 8-kilometre-long off-piste descent from the volcano’s crater to the base of the resort is legendary. Popular with families, **La Hoya**, located in a forest, lake and waterfall covered landscape, was opened in the 1950s. The first lifts were installed in the 1960s and the resort was subsequently modernised in the 2000s. It now features



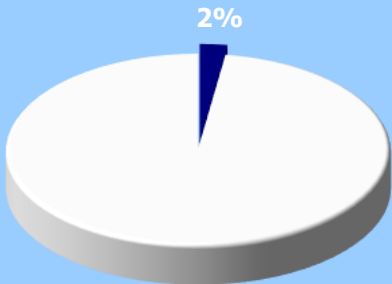
Argentina

Ski areas	22
Lifts	145
National skiers	1'065'275
Skier visits per lift	10'345
Average skier visits	1'500'000
Skier visits per national skier	1.06
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.02
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.07

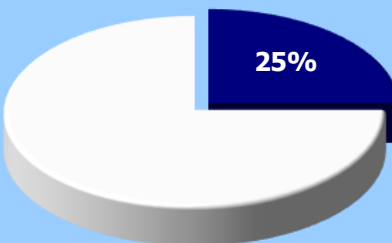
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers



10 lifts, 24 runs and snowmaking equipment. For those who like skiing at the far reaches of the planet, **Cerro Castor**, the newest resort in Argentina and the southernmost on Earth, is close to the capital of Tierra del Fuego, where the sea and the mountains meet. The ski area base is only 195 meters above sea level and the summit rises to 1'057 meters. Cerro Castor enjoys very good weather and quality powder snow. Due to stable temperatures, it has one of the longest seasons in South America. Opened in 1978, **Mount Bayo** ski resort is located within a beautiful natural landscape. Surrounded by forests and with a majestic view of a lake, it offers 200 hectares of terrain for alpine skiing, with a 700-metre vertical drop. It has 22 marked trails and 12 lifts.





The Andes are running through the western side of the country in 2 distinctive ranges separated by the Altiplano, a highland plateau situated between Occidental and Oriental ranges of the Cordillera. The Andes feature very high altitudes in Bolivia and are topping at 6'542 meters above sea level (Nevado Sajama). The country capital city, La Paz, is itself situated at an altitude of 3'640 meters. The town is overlooked by mountains reaching over 6'000 meters, with snow-capped peaks in the northernmost part of the Cordillera Oriental, the Cordillera Real. The upper slopes of these

mountains have some glaciers and are covered yearlong with snow, at altitudes over 4'600 meters above sea level. Over 5'500 meters high, climate can be polar. However, global warming has been showing its impact. Permanent snow-covered slopes are scarcer and some glaciers already disappeared.

This caused the highest ski area in the world to get out of business. For a long time, **Chacaltaya**, situated at nearly 5'400 meters above sea level hold this record and was an attraction for the middle class of La Paz, about 30 kilometres and one-hour drive away. The at that time existing Chacaltaya glacier was served by a single home-made lift, offering a slope that was skiable 7 or 8 months a year, together with some après-ski. It was once home of the Club Andino Boliviano, which established there already in 1939.



The place has however been a witness of climate change over decades. Bolivian scientist started measuring the Chacaltaya glacier in the 1990s. In 2005, it was predicted that it would survive until 2015. However, it completely melted down already in 2009. Now the defunct ski area looks like a ghost place, with the ruins of the base area building. The ski lift has been dismantled.



Ski areas in Canada are located in the Rocky Mountains of the West and in the Quebec, Ontario and Atlantic⁴² provinces of the East. While the Rockies have ski resorts that can compete with the European Alps in terms of vertical drop, skiing in the East takes place on lower altitude mountains and hills.



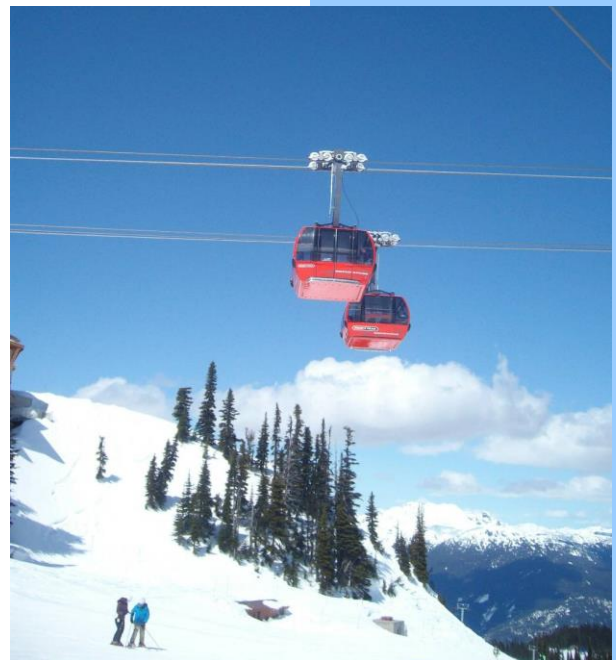
It is considered that alpine skiing, created in Europe, got its first roots in North America in the Laurentians. Even before lifts were installed, railways from Montreal to the Laurentians were already bringing skiers in special trains as early as 1920s. North America's first rope tow was installed in 1931/32 at Shawbridge, in Quebec, in fact a rope moved along pulleys by the tireless wheel of an old car. Mont **Tremblant** was the first destination in Canada to be equipped with a chairlift, around 1938, and the second in North America. A lodge was also opened there by a young and wealthy Philadelphia

⁴² Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, Labrador, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick

American named Joseph Bondurant Ryan, and he initiated the development of the site into a world-class resort, quickly popular among the aristocratic clientele of New York. The death of Ryan in the 1940s stopped the development of the site. The resort was sold a first time in 1965 and saw its attendance reduced to local customers. It took 2 decades before it was turned again into a successful world-class destination⁴³. Many other ski areas developed in Quebec and Ontario. Nowadays, these provinces account respectively more than 70 and more than 60. In the 1980s, the practice of skiing moved west to the Rocky Mountains. For instance, despite the first lifts opened already in 1965 in Whistler, the development of the **Whistler Blackcomb** resort was planned at the end of the 1970s and the resort grew into one of the biggest of North America only in the 1980s-1990s. It reached over 1 million skier visits in 1988 and over 2 million in 1999. Several other resorts developed in Alberta and British Columbia, with the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics used as a booster for the sport⁴⁴.

Canada is one of the only western mature markets that has still seen development of new ski resorts in the current century. **Kicking Horse** Mountain Resort was developed beginning of 2000s and expansion is still increasing. **Revelstoke** Mountain is the newest ski resort in Canada. It opened in 2007 with a gondola and a few chairlifts and aims at offering the greatest lift-served vertical drop in America (total forecasted investment is USD 1 billion over 15 years)⁴⁵. There were further new ski area development projects in the Canadian Rockies, with **Jumbo Glacier Resort** and **Valemount**. Jumbo Glacier Resort project was eventually abandoned by the end of 2019, after nearly 30 years of administrative and legal proceedings⁴⁶. Valemount is still in the building phase. It was due to open by the end of 2020 but it seems the project has been delayed.

Canadian skiers' market is now mature, with serious concerns about an ageing clientele and the ability to renew the customer base. It is facing challenging demographic and ethnic issues. Skier visits have been flat for the last decade, mostly influenced by weather conditions. These can be much different from East to West, mitigating the overall impact on national attendance figures. However, market studies show that the number of skiers continues to decline. The purchasing behaviour of most skiers has been influenced by the economy and they have more actively sought out deals or to ski close to home. Some still say however that weather and poor snow conditions are the prevailing drivers.



⁴³ After 2 operators succeeded each other without investing, the resort fell into bankruptcy at the end of the 1980s and was purchased in 1991 by Intrawest. At that time the world leader in ski resort development, it decided to revitalise the area with billion dollars development plans in several phases that transformed the place into a 4-season destination of international renown. It is today the social and economic engine of the entire region of the Upper Laurentians and part of Alterra Mountain Group.

⁴⁴ Despite Calgary Olympics alpine skiing venue, Nakiska, remained a rather confidential resort.

⁴⁵ Further development phases have not been completed yet.

⁴⁶ On January 18, 2020, the provincial and federal government jointly announced that the permit had been sold to the Nature Conservancy of Canada and returned to the government to allow the Ktunaxa First Nation to manage the area as a conservancy. Essentially, the government bought back the merits in order to stop the construction.

After a decade of flattening trend, winter 2015/16 was the worst season over at least 20 years for some regions, resulting in a depressed national total. Attendance started to improve again from 2016/17 to 2018/19, which recorded the highest visitation total in more than 10 years. After 2 season impacted by the pandemic, 2021/22 winter was typified by strong demand brought on by the lessening of covid-19 restrictions on operations. With international visits still negatively affected by border restrictions, the domestic skier market surged as Canadians sought recreation options in an outdoor environment. With 21.1 million skier visits, 2022/23 marks the highest attendance recorded to Canadian ski areas in the current century. Both East and West coasts experienced record-breaking visitation. Consolidation of domestic recovery, record sales of season passes and strong visitation from the United States all contributed to push numbers upwards.

2023/24 season's highlights

Season was not a great year due to weather, with **17.9 million skier visits**, 14.8 % down to former winter. It was very interesting to see consumer demand high in the pre-winter period and still high in the spring period despite the poor winter across Canada. The biggest decline seems to have been in domestic skier visits. The international market appears to have grown slightly. Still not back to pre-covid but getting closer every year. In addition to a lack of natural snow, Quebec ski areas faced the additional problems of a weakened Canadian economy and a provincial teachers strike.

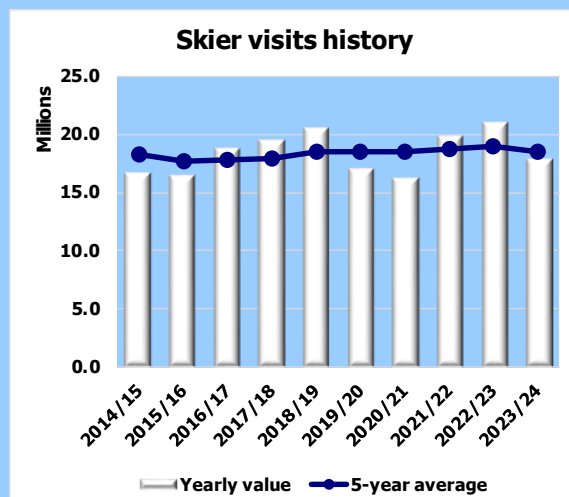


Although Canadian ski resorts mostly depend on a domestic and US customer base, it is interesting to stress that some of the well-known resorts, such as

Whistler Blackcomb, Banff and to a lesser extent **Tremblant**, also attract some overseas skiers, even if the proportion of foreign visitors is relatively low. Furthermore, some very small resorts also appear to attract British tour operators.

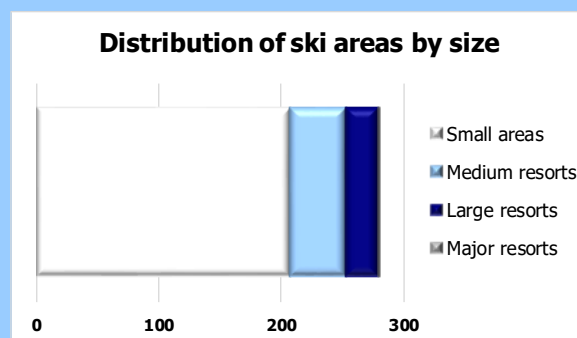
Mont Saint-Sauveur International and Resorts of the Canadian Rockies are the largest multi-resort operators in Canada, with 6 resorts each. Further to the demise of Intrawest, some of its former resorts are now being operated by the 2 large US multi-resorts groups. Otherwise, operators are mostly local.

Due to the ongoing stagnation of attendance, the Canadian ski industry has conducted detailed studies about the demographics, implementing the *Model for Growth*. Several operators have also diversified their activities and some of the major resorts now offer numerous summer activities that enable them to balance out visits for both seasons. The idea of a year-round resort has been highly developed and promoted. Some resorts near metropolitan areas have developed water rides and other such summer activities, which even allow them to use some of the lifts during the summer, as well as to sell year-round passes. Tremblant is among the resorts that manage to balance summer operation with winter.

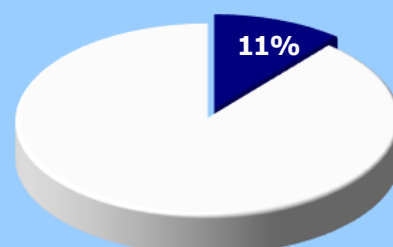


Canada

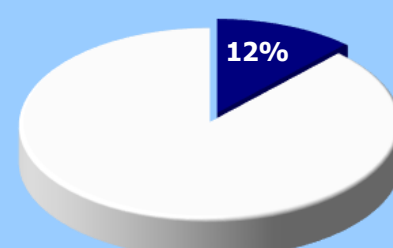
Ski areas	280
Lifts	922
National skiers	4'307'199
Skier visits per lift	20'023
Average skier visits	18'461'300
Skier visits per national skier	3.77
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.42
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.12



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





Chile



The Andes run 4'000 kilometres up and down the entire length of the Chile. 80% of the country is covered in mountains, rising to very high altitudes in the North, with year-round snow coverage on summits over 4'800 meters high. In the South, after having reached its highest point, the Andes are a bit lower, with most peaks topping out in the 3'000-metre range. Most ski resorts are typically located at these altitudes. Further south, Patagonia offers huge glaciers that plunge into the sea, where several fjords shape the coastline.

The first Andean skiers were already identified in 1887, when investigation work started for the construction of a railway from Valparaíso to Santiago, crossing the mountains into Argentina, from Mendoza to Buenos Aires. With snowfall of up to 8 meters in the high passes, the most efficient way for the European engineers to travel was on skis. Skiing was, for instance, the only realistic way for workers to reach Uspallata Pass, which is near the present-day Chilean resort of **Portillo**. During construction of the Trans Andean Railroad, skis

were then used by engineers to travel around in winter. There are also historical records of skiers hired to transport mail across the mountains in the winter of 1889. Finally, after the inauguration of the railway, in 1910, recreational skiers began to use the railway as a ski lift.

In the 1930s, a rudimentary lift was built in the **Portillo** area (so called because it was a small pass between the mountains) and adventurers from Europe and North America became the first ski tourists. Ski instructors were brought from Europe and a rustic mountain lodge served as the first hotel. In 1946, Portillo installed a chairlift, the first one on the continent. In 1949, the Gran Hotel Portillo was inaugurated. In 1960 the Chilean government, who had owned and operated the ski area up to that point, decided to sell Portillo, making it one of the first state-owned companies sold to the private sector in Chilean history. In 1966, the World Alpine Ski Championships were held in Portillo, which focused international attention on Chile's emerging ski industry, and also increased national interest in the sport. Over the years, 3 speed records were set on Portillo's slopes, including the 1978 record for US skier Steve McKinney, who surpassed 200 kilometres per hour for the first time in skiing history. During the 1960s, top international ski racers began to

train during the Northern Hemisphere's summer on Portillo's slopes, and then later on in **El Colorado**, **La Parva** and **Valle Nevado**.



During the 1950s and 1960s, the sport expanded rapidly with new ski areas being built in the central Andes near Santiago and in Southern Chile, largely on the slopes of volcanoes. During the 1980s, improvements to infrastructure included new ski lifts, increased and better hotel capacity, and improved roads. With fewer tourists than in Europe and the United States, the ski industry in Chile remained relatively quiet until the 1990s. Improvements such as new ski lifts, added capacity to hotels, saunas and swimming pools served to provide Chile's ski resorts with a world-class reputation.

There are 3 principal geographic ski regions in Chile. The Central Chilean Andes, where ski resorts are located between 2'800 and 3'000 meters, on wide-open mountains, above tree line. The snow is generally dry and the terrain varied, providing slopes for skiers and boarders of all abilities. The main resorts are **El Colorado**, **La Parva**, **Valle Nevado**, **Portillo**, **Lagunillas**, and **Chapa Verde**. The already mentioned ski resort of **Portillo** is the oldest in South America. It is surrounded by snowy peaks that rise to 5'000 meters above sea level. The resort has a few odd 5-person T-bar lifts, unique in the world. The resort offers 23 runs, features 14 lifts and claims to limit access to only 450 guests, offering a unique experience. **Tres Valles**, with an interconnect between **El Colorado**, **La Parva** and **Valle Nevado**, is the largest ski area of South America, with a total of 48 lifts and about 120 kilometres of groomed runs. The area, located 40 kilometres from Santiago, tops out at 3'630 meters. In addition, the Valle Nevado base area, nestled at 3'025 meters above sea level, is recognised as the highest in the world.

In the Southern Andes, where the mountains are lower on average, precipitation is much higher, and as a result, there is both more and heavier snow. The resorts are largely located on the lower slopes of volcanoes, many of which are active, and provide terrain with dense native forests. The views of lakes, forests, and distant volcanoes are exceptional. The major resorts are **Termas de Chillán**, **Villarrica**, **Antillanca**, **Lonquimay**, **Las Araucarias**, and **Corralco**.



Patagonia offers skiing at **Cerro El Fraile** and at **Cerro Mirador** in Punta Arenas, where one can ski and enjoy spectacular ocean views. Due to the latitude, these resorts have the longest ski season of anywhere in Chile. Cerro Mirador is the southernmost ski area in Chile. It was equipped in 1947 with its first lift, in spite of the fact that it was already considered a ski resort as early as 1938. Still today, the area features one unique lift, but 14 runs, which allow skiing from mid-June to mid-September with spectacular scenery of the Straits of Magellan.

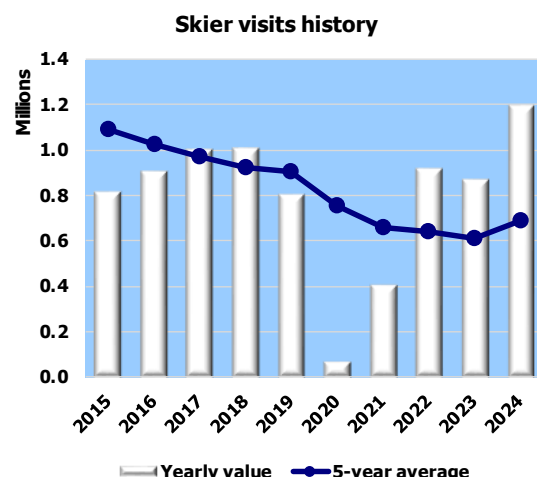


After 2 goods seasons in 2017 and 2018, 2019 saw a decrease in attendance at the Chilean resorts. With an average length of only 84 days, the season was 17% shorter than former year. Climate conditions were harsh in Central Chile and snowfalls down 29% over former winter. The very strong impact of the pandemic over the whole country led to a very limited opening of the ski resorts in 2020 and depressed visitation figures, about 90% down from

former season. With a delayed opening of the resorts, one remaining closed and no foreign visitors, season 2021 was also much lower as normal years. The 2022 winter was more successful, with visitor numbers approaching levels of 2018 and recovery of 88% of the jobs lost in the former 3 years. The 2023 ski season experienced a 7.9% decrease in skier visits, primarily due to late snow arrival and schools ending winter vacations earlier. This decline highlights the significance of winter holidays, historically representing 30-40% of the total season visits.

2024 season's highlights

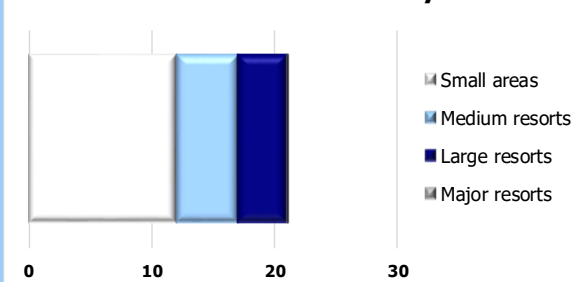
The country experienced an exceptionally early and heavy snowfall, with resorts opening weeks to a month earlier than usual. Valle Nevado reported high international visitor numbers, mainly from Brazil and the USA. With **1.2 million skier visits**, Chile experienced its best season in recent years. Massive storms in May and June brought early and abundant snowfall, allowing many ski areas to open weeks ahead of schedule. Snowfall totals were exceptionally high, with opening day conditions exceeding what would typically be seen in a full season. Total average snowfall was 7 metres, nearly the double of last 8-year average. While the heavy early snowfalls eased off as the season progressed, consistently low temperatures and moderate snowfalls kept conditions favourable throughout the season. Average opening days reached 121 days, versus 95 in last 8-year average.



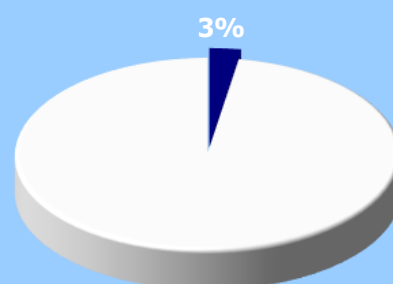
Chile

Ski areas	21
Lifts	127
National skiers	516'508
Skier visits per lift	5'443
Average skier visits	691'305
Skier visits per national skier	0.74
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.02
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.07

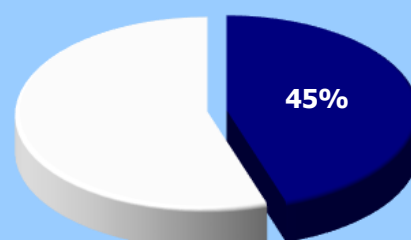
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





Colombia



Colombia offers a wide variety of terrain: it combines flat coastal lowlands, central highlands, high Andes Mountains and eastern lowland plains. Altitudes range from sea level up to Pico Cristobal Colon and Pico Simon Bolivar, both topping at 5'775 meters.

Colombia no longer accounts in the current world ski areas' inventory, but it deserves however to be mentioned as it used to host a small lift equipped ski area, despite it has already belonged to the past for a long time. The idea to ski on the very

high slopes of **Nevada del Ruiz**, a 5'305 meters high active volcano of Cordillera Central, already emerged in 1949. This mountain is located in a compact cluster of volcanic mountains near the centre of Colombia and is included in Los Nevados National Park. It is partly covered by a glacier. The ski area was located over 4'800 meters and a T-bar lift was installed in 1956, allowing to host the same year the South American Ski Championships. A second T-bar lift was installed later on and whilst the ski season corresponded to the Northern Hemisphere winter, there was enough snow there for the lifts to operate on any day of the year, subject to demand.

Skiing in Columbia was driven by a couple of enthusiasts but as no Colombians succeeded in international (or national) competition, interest waned rapidly and the lifts fell into disrepair by the late 1970s. Later on, it is reported that the lift cables were partly buried in glacial ice. The volcano had a major eruption in 1985 and more than 23'000 people were killed⁴⁷. Following that eruption, the volcano remained continually active for several years, melting down part of the glacier. Eruptions culminated in 1991 and 1992. The last eruption dates from 1996.

Even if accessibility is sometimes restricted due to seismic activity, Nevada del Ruiz remains a popular climbing area in Colombia, as well as a popular unorganised ski spot in winter. Some parts of the glacier and snow still remain on the mountain year-round, even if they are expected to melt down over the next 30 years.

⁴⁷ The 1985 eruption was the world's second most deadly eruption in the 20th century, the first being the 1902 eruption of Mont Pelée, which killed 29'000 people.



Mexico contains several mountain ranges. The Sierra Madre Occidental and the Sierra Madre Oriental run from North to South along the western and eastern sides of the country. The Mexican highlands (Altiplano) range between 1'000 to 2'000 meters high.

From the Pacific Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico runs the 900-kilometre-long Trans-Mexican Volcanic belt, the Cordillera Neovolcanica, which marks the geological divide between North and Central America. The Cordillera Neovolcanica features the country's 3 highest volcanic peaks, all over 5'000 meters. At 5'675 meters above sea level, Pico de Orizaba (Citlaltépetl) is the third highest mountain in North America.

Snow can be found in winter on the high peaks of the Sierra Madre, as in other places in the Northern Altiplano. There are even some remaining glaciers on the 3 highest peaks⁴⁸, where mountain aficionados sometimes enjoy skiing after their mountaineering endeavours.

Skiing is nevertheless not very popular among Mexicans. There is only one small ski area in the North, named **Monterreal**, close to the city of Monterrey. It is a 4-season leisure centre, equipped with 2 dry slopes (230 and 45 meters long), one platter-lift and one magic carpet. However, between December and January, it is possible to ski there on the natural snow that covers the area.

Despite the significant population of the country, there seems to be very few people who actually ski, as there is no ski culture. The closest destination for Mexican skiers is of course the United States. However, there is in fact no report of important figures of Mexican skiers, among the half million of people that come every year to ski in the United States (most of them are Canadians).

⁴⁸ Due to volcanic activity and the associated rising temperatures, Popocatépetl is now off limits to climbing and its snowfields are slowly disappearing.



United States



With a territory as large as Europe, the United States represent one of the world's largest ski markets. Beside the Rocky Mountains Range, reaching altitudes higher than 4'300 meters in Colorado, there are numerous other mountains throughout the country. Located in the State of Alaska, the highest summit, Denali, also known as *Mount McKinley*, its former name, reaches 6'144 meters above sea level. Only a dozen of the 50 States do not offer ski areas. The East part is subject to polar winds in winter and ski areas can be located in low altitudes. On the West part, resorts are located at higher altitudes, with some base areas over 3'000 meters⁴⁹ and reaching up to 3'914 meters above sea level with the highest lift in **Breckenridge** ski resort. This enables some ski resorts like **Arapahoe Basin** to offer one of the longest ski seasons in the world, for non-glacier resorts, with opening in October and closing in July.

Ski has a long history in the United States. The sport was obviously brought in by Norwegian immigrants, who founded the first ski club in 1882 in New Hampshire. The National Ski Association was founded in 1905 and a ski factory already existed in 1911. **Howelsen Hill Ski Area** already opened in 1915 in Colorado and the first rope tow was installed in 1934 in **Woodstock**, Vermont. United States accounted already more than 50 ski areas before World War II. The first Winter Olympic Games in America were held in 1932 in **Lake Placid**. However, at that time, downhill skiing was still not introduced as an Olympic discipline. In 1936, **Sun Valley** opened and installed the first chairlifts in ski history. The first aerial tramway in United States was installed 2 years later at New Hampshire's **Cannon Mountain**. The first destination resorts already appeared before World War II: **Stowe** and **Sun Valley** were the forerunners.

There has later on been a big boom in the development of ski areas in the 1950s to 1970s. From 78 ski areas in North America in 1955, the figure increased of 580 in the next 10 years. However, contrary to the Alps, new ski

⁴⁹ Arapahoe Basin, Loveland, Silverton Mountain, Santa Fé, Monarch, Wolf Creek, Cooper ...

areas went on appearing even after the 2000s, although in numbers that are more limited. Nevertheless, due to closures and other misfortunes, the number of ski areas has been steadily decreasing over the years. At the beginning of the 1980s, there were over 700 ski areas in the country, whereas there are less than 500 ski areas still in operation today. The rising infrastructure costs, coupled with the always-increasing expectations of the clients drove several small community ski hills out of business. The adverse consequence is that several convenient and inexpensive places for ski learning disappeared, diminishing easy access opportunities for beginners.



In the 1950s and 1960s, participation in skiing grew at 15% annually, meaning that the sport was doubling in size every 5 or 6 years. This development was driven by demographics and its massive adoption by baby-boomers. In the 1960s, average age of downhill skiers was reported to be 24⁵⁰. The first snowmaking equipment was tested in winter 1950/51 at **Mohawk Mountain** and by 1964, 140 ski areas in North America were able to produce snow. Nowadays, 17% of the slope surface is covered with snow-making. The real estate driven development of ski resorts started with **Snowmass** (next to **Aspen**) in 1967. By the time, few ski area operators were willing to invest lots of money to build inns and hotels. The solution to extend the offer for accommodation came with the condominium units, which were sold to individual owners and rented out when not occupied.

Deer Valley expansion plan

In mid-November 2024, Deer Valley Resort commenced *Phase 1A* of its ambitious expansion project. This initial phase aims to introduce 3 new lifts, 21 additional runs, and approximately 300 acres of new terrain by late December 2024, nearly a year ahead of the original schedule. The broader *Phase 1* of the expansion is set to more than double the resort's skiable acreage by the 2025/26 season.

Upon full completion, the Deer Valley East expansion will feature 16 new lifts, including a gondola, and 135 new ski runs, adding 3'700 acres of skiable terrain. This development will bring the resort's total to 5'726 skiable acres. Notably, if considered independently, the expanded area would represent the largest new public US ski resort established in approximately 50 years.

The expansion utilizes previously undeveloped land located east of the existing resort, between the current boundaries and Route 40, as well as south of Bald Mountain. This strategic development effectively transforms what were once peripheral lifts into central, mid-mountain access points.

Deer Valley Resort is overseeing the construction and management of the ski infrastructure, operating under a 2023 agreement that permits the resort to lease the land and incorporate it under the Deer Valley brand. Concurrently, New York-based developer Extell is responsible for developing the new East Village base area, which will include retail spaces, a 68'000-square-foot recreation centre, and 3 luxury hotels. The collaboration between Deer Valley Resort and Extell aims to

⁵⁰ It now reaches age of 35, according to Kottke & Demographic Report 2022/23.

provide guests with a seamless and integrated experience.

This expansion fulfils a vision that dates back over 50 years, originating from the original master plan for Deer Valley in 1970. The plan envisioned extending lifts down to what is now the East Village, creating a new portal to the resort from the Mayflower side. After decades of anticipation, this vision is now being realized, marking a significant milestone in the resort's history.



The industry is currently dominated by 2 big players, operating several mostly integrated resorts. These giants have been growing in size by new acquisitions over the years, with some billion dollars deals. Vail Resorts (which acquired Peak Resorts) operates 42 resorts⁵¹ (7 of which outside the US) and Alterra Mountain Company⁵² operates 19 resorts (2 of which outside the US)⁵³. Together with Boyne Resorts and Powdr Corporation, they cumulate nearly 50% of US skier visits. Some of the larger players are listed companies, while some are not, which does not help for data disclosure and benchmarking. In addition to smaller groups, there are numerous independent ski areas of varying sizes.

The largest ski areas in the United States, based on visitation numbers, are **Beaver Creek, Breckenridge, Copper Mountain, Keystone, Mammoth, Park City, Steamboat, Vail** and **Winter Park**. Most of them are located in Colorado (one left in Utah and one in California).

Aside from the 2008 crisis, weather conditions have shaped, more than anything else, the change in skier visits over the years. Their pattern throughout the decades reinforces the trend of a mature market since the end of the 1970s. After the 2010/11 winter posted an at that time all-time record of 60.5 million skier visits, attendance entered into a declining trend, until winter 2018/19 showed a reversal. After 2 season with lower scores due to

⁵¹ Further to the acquisition by end 2021 of Seven Springs, Hidden Valley and Laurel Mountain, a majority share in the Swiss resorts of Andermatt-Sedrun in 2022 and of Crans-Montana in 2024.

⁵² A joint venture between Henry Crown & Company (owner of Aspen) and KSL Capital Partners.

⁵³ Including the latest addition of Schweizer resort in the course of 2023 and Arapahoe Basin in 2024.

pandemic restrictions, visitation returned to the growing trend, with winter 2020/21 to 2022/23 scoring each time anew as the best seasons on record, culminating with 65.4 million skier visits in 2022/23. One driver seems to be the increase in the number of active participants during the season, which also reached an all-time high, with an estimated 11.6 million people actually skiing / snowboarding during 2022/23 winter.

2023/24 season's highlights

60.5 million skier visits were recorded in the US ski areas over the winter. Skier visits declined across all US regions, but the impact varied. The Rocky Mountain and Pacific West regions had their second-best seasons on record, while the Midwest experienced its worst. Long-term trends show increasing skier visits in the Rocky Mountain region, gradual growth in the Northeast and Pacific Northwest, flat trends in the Southeast and Pacific Southwest, and declines in the Midwest. The 2023/24 season was shorter due to unfavourable early weather, resulting in delayed openings, early closures, and unscheduled midseason closures across many ski areas. Average operating days were down across all regions and size groups.

Estimated number of participants for the season was 10.6 million.

The ski industry in the United States has been the most closely analysed ski industry over the years. There is a substantial history of statistical data available, already since early 1980s. It was the first in the industry to raise issues in the discrepancies between population growth and skier visits development, especially since it primarily depends on domestic skiers. In spite of its huge population, the actual yearly participation rate is low. The number of active snow sports participants⁵⁴ is estimated on a yearly basis with the End of Season & Demographic Report and is of course much lower than the total population of nominal skiers⁵⁵. The industry is working hard to keep its skiers active. 45% of the ski areas feature programs in order to recover lapsed skiers and it is estimated that over last 2 seasons, about 35% of

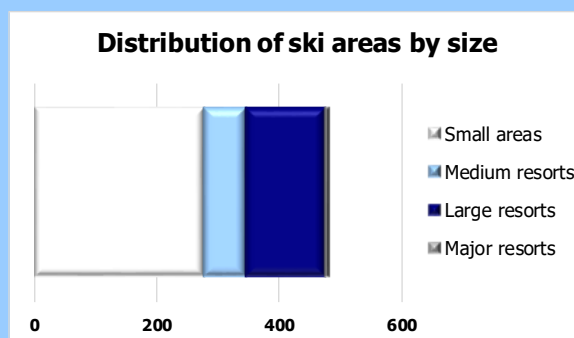
⁵⁴ Participants who participated in a snow sport at least once during the given season.

⁵⁵ See Glossary - it is estimated that at least 25 million people in the United States know how to ski (nominal participants).

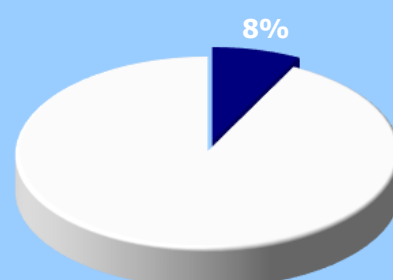


United States

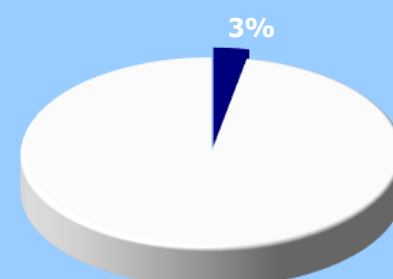
Ski areas	480
Lifts	2'193
National skiers	25'016'817
Skier visits per lift	27'054
Average skier visits	59'329'554
Skier visits per national skier	2.30
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.17
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.02



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers



skier visits can be attributed to revival participants (participants returning to the slopes after a stop of one or more seasons). Active snow sports participants still represent a small fraction of US population and are ethnically very much concentrated.



Some consider that the decline in the number of young people entering the sport already began in the 1970s. To address demographics, the US ski resort industry closely monitors the yearly results of its *Model for Growth*. This aims at addressing the aging population, the increasing proportion of minorities and skier retention rates (increasing beginner interest, converting them into lifelong skiers and preventing regular skiers from abandoning the sport). For several years now, measures have been taken in order to implement this *Model for Growth*, even if some drawbacks have arisen and the US ski industry continues to have difficulty in growing its customer base. The results show that continuous efforts are required and their benefits are limited, so they need to be multiplied. With a market as big as Europe but only one third of the number of skier visits, the US industry still appears to have some potential.

Another issue that the US ski industry is facing is the increasing prices. The window price of daily lift ticket rose from an average of USD 59 in 2005/06 to USD 192 during the 2023/24 season⁵⁶. In some Colorado resorts, it is now usual that the daily window price reaches over USD 200 on peak days and it is reported that during 2022/23 season, the USD 300 cap has been passed. Average daily rates in accommodations in the western resorts also rose from an average 30% over 10 years. This tends to make skiing less affordable, and especially to beginners, who usually purchase daily passes, the less discounted tickets. The share of skiers with a household income under USD

⁵⁶ Even if yield per lift ticket did not increase that much, rising from USD 32 to USD 74.

100'000 declined from 44% in 2013/14 to 31% in 2022/23 (when they represent 64% of total US population).

The spreading of the *mega-passes*, discounted multi-resorts season passes that are sold in advance of the season, only offers part of the answer to this important issue. Although they have gained much popularity and Vail Resorts announced more than 2.4 million Epic passes sold for 2023/24 season, with some offers focused at less frequent skiers, one can doubt that real beginners will invest in a more affordable multi-day advance purchased ski pass when they have no clue if they will enjoy their first trial⁵⁷. Therefore, it looks that with the *mega-passes*, US ski industry managed to make existing skiers skiing more often, but still failed at bringing in new skiers, which remains a challenge.



Despite US skiers going to Europe for skiing is nothing new⁵⁸, over the recent post-covid years, several Alpine countries and Japan have observed record-numbers of US skiers in their ski resorts. No noticeable market driver seems to explain this, out of the attraction provided by mega-pass affiliated Alpine and Japanese resorts. However, as the increase is also observed, at a lower level, in non-affiliated resorts, one can also wonder if this swap cannot be at least partly attributed to the growing dissatisfaction testified by part of the clients at some major US resorts. Flying from the East Coast to Denver and then suffering traffic jam to join the resorts, topped with the high cost of a ski holiday in the US, makes the trip to Europe or Japan not much more cumbersome.

⁵⁷ In addition, the US ski industry, which is one of the best informed in the world, through regular surveys of customers' behaviour, already identified that the conversion rate of beginners is lower than 20%.

⁵⁸ The first charter flight specifically organized for skiers traveling from the United States to Europe occurred in 1958. This flight brought skiers from New York to Zurich, Switzerland, marking the beginning of what would become a growing trend of international ski tourism. The trip was organized by ski enthusiasts and travel agencies seeking to make skiing in the Alps more accessible and affordable for American skiers.



Asia-Pacific

With more than 3 billion inhabitants, this region is by far the largest potential market. It combines countries with a long ski history and others that are still completely novice to the industry. Despite the fact that some countries will remain mostly unreached by the industry over the next decades, some others have demonstrated over the last 15 to 30 years a considerable potential for development. This has compensated for the decline or stagnation in attendance of the more traditional markets in the region.





Australia



The geography of Australia is extremely diverse, ranging from snow-capped mountains in the Southeast to large deserts, tropical and temperate forests. The country culminates at 2'228-metre Mount Kosciuszko, in the Southeast, in a region called the Australian Alps, situated between Melbourne and Canberra, in the states of New South Wales and Victoria. Downhill skiing and snowboarding thus primarily take place at 10 resorts located there. Even if there are other mountain ranges of lower altitudes throughout the country, the local climate does not allow for snow sports.

There are also 2 small ski resorts on Tasmania Island, located in national parks, where snowfall is not always sufficient to enable skiing every year.



Skiing already has a long history in Australia. Miners are said to have started skiing in the 19th century. Records indicate that they founded the first ski club in 1861. The 1920s saw an explosion of winter sports. The industry organised and Australia's first ski lift started operating in 1937. On-slope lodging facilities remained limited through the 1950s. Then skiing became more popular and resort development increased, with strong influence from the United States, Canada and Europe. However, some ski areas are located in natural parks and their expansion has been under tight control. The boom of the ski industry lasted through the 1970s and then entered a consolidation phase, with skier visit figures flattening.

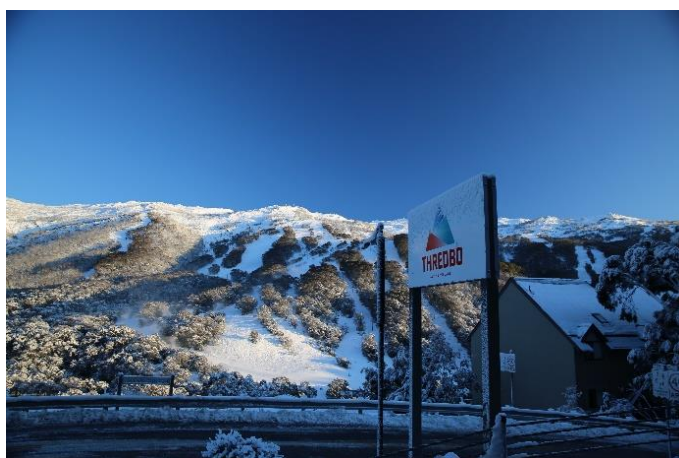
Attendance at ski resorts has been rather stable during the first decade of the century, before entering a growing trend. Despite good years alternating with average and poor years, the 5-year average visitation figure has been

steadily growing since season 2012. It was already reaching high scores just before the covid-19 outbreak, thanks to good winter conditions and improved snowmaking facilities⁵⁹. After winter 2020 and 2021 severely affected by covid-19 issues, the Australian ski industry recorded 2.6 million skier visits in 2022, a record by considerable margin. Resorts had up to one meter of fresh snow days before opening date. These early snowfalls stimulated demand even further to unprecedented levels, with Australians embracing their first real post-covid-19 opportunity to enjoy Australia's alpine resorts. During this bumper season, it happened that ski resorts were brought beyond their capacity limits and had to close their access, with packed car parks and police forcing vehicles to turn around as they approached the ski areas. 2023 season was mostly mild and lacking substantive snowfalls. Some ski areas even had to close during the season. All closed before the scheduled closing date.

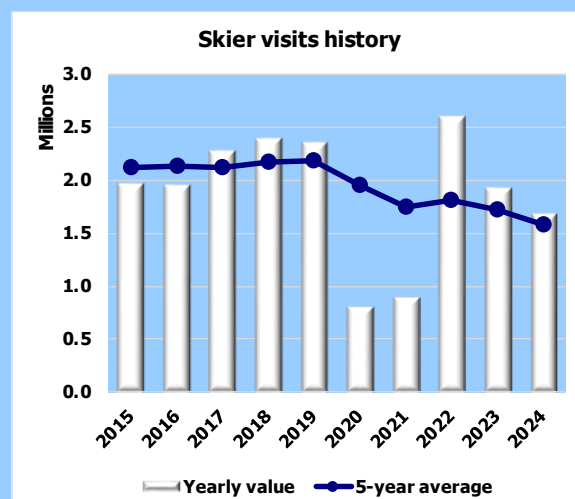
2024 season's highlights

After a dry beginning, heavy snowfall in July transformed conditions, allowing most resorts to open fully. Late-season warmth, however, has begun to reduce snow coverage and led to some early closures. **Skier visits totalled 1.7 million**, 12.5 % down to former season.

It shall be noted that Selwyn ski area operated again for the first time since 2019.

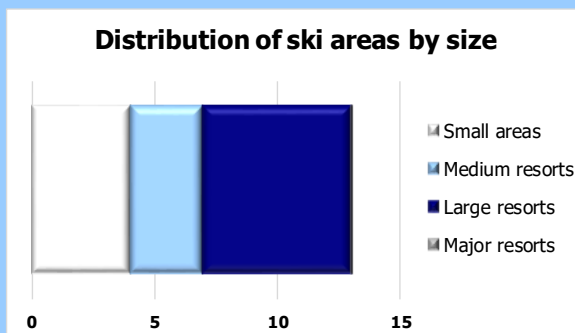


⁵⁹ The Australian ski industry is now far less reliant on natural snowfalls than ever before, with all resorts investing in the very latest snowmaking technology and resources.

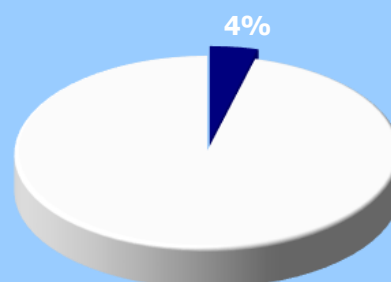


Australia

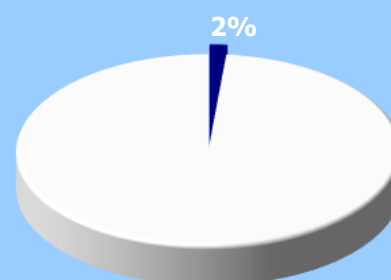
Ski areas	13
Lifts	167
National skiers	1'058'014
Skier visits per lift	9'474
Average skier visits	1'582'169
Skier visits per national skier	1.47
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.06
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.00



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers



There is a very high level of interest in Australia's Alpine resorts at present, with strong visitation coming from a wide range of customers. Australia has a strong immigration program, which in effect creates a whole new emerging market within its own borders. Many *new Australians* come from countries with no snow and no winter culture. These people are very keen to experience snow and have a go. This market is embracing snow tourism and flocking to the Alpine resorts, particularly on weekends. A number of Australia's resorts are experiencing capacity issues in some areas of operations as they strive to convert snow tourists into ski/snowboard enthusiasts. These are problems the industry is mostly pleased to be dealing with. Australian resorts are now adjusting to this large influx of new customers and hope to work with governments and other stakeholders to provide tailored facilities for every customer group.

Despite global warming, the observation of snow depth in the Snowy Mountains of Australian Alps, New South Wales, shows that the long term trend over more than 40 years seems to be rather stable. The recent 5-year average even shows slight increase in the snowpack. Good news for the industry as some of the largest resorts of Australia are located there.

Thredbo, built on the European ski resort model with its shops, nightlife and accommodations, is an example of the kind of resorts that exist in Australia, with 50 runs served by 14 lifts. The resort offers the longest run in Australia, 3.2 kilometres long with a vertical drop of 670 meters. Thredbo is located in a natural park, on the slopes of the Mount Kosciuszko, in the Southern Snowy Mountains. It is operated 4-season with an integrated business model by a large Australian leisure & entertainment company.



Another example is **Perisher**, located in the Snowy Mountains, run as a winter only operation. This is the largest ski resort in Australia (and of Southern Hemisphere), with 4 villages (Perisher, Smiggin Holes, Blue Cow and Guthega) and 7 summits (including 5 of the highest in the country) served by 47 lifts. There are 99 kilometres of runs for all levels, with a total vertical drop of 429

meters. 60% of the slopes are of intermediate level. The resort features cog-wheel train access through an underground tunnel⁶⁰, with one stop under one base village and final station at the top of one of the summits. Perisher's first lodges were constructed in 1952. In 1958 a pioneer of the mountains built the first rope tow, soon followed by a T-bar. The first chairlift was opened in 1961. The resort is now owned and operated by Vail Resorts since 2015.

Also located in the Snowy Mountains, **Selwyn** ski area reopened in 2024 for the first time since 2019, as the resort's buildings and lifts were destroyed by bushfires in early 2020. They were rebuilt through the pandemic but the resort did not operate. It features 6 lifts and is ideal for beginners.

Further south, a section called Victorian Alps (Victoria State) also features 3 resorts of a significant size. **Mt Buller** is located 3 hours from Melbourne's Tullamarine Airport and offers the largest lift network in Victoria State, consisting of 21 lifts. Topping at 1'805 meters above sea level, the resort features ski and snowboard school, 3 terrain parks, 2 toboggan parks, and an alpine village at the mountain's base. It provides for apres-ski, fine dining and spa treatments. The Olympic Winter Institute of Australia is based here. In summer, Mt Buller offers mountain biking, walking trails, and events. Its summit altitude of 1'805 meters results in cooler temperatures than Melbourne.

Mt Hotham offers both challenging terrain and beginner-friendly slopes for skiing and snowboarding. The resort's skiable terrain includes groomed slopes, tree-lined backcountry bowls, and terrain parks. It has 13 lifts. Mt Hotham is on the Great Alpine Road, a 4-hour drive from Melbourne. It also features its own airport, the highest in Australia, opened in 2000 (it cannot accommodate large jets however). During summer, the area offers mountain biking and hiking trails.

With its 14 lifts, **Falls Creek** offers a wide choice of winter activities, including skiing, snowboarding, cross-country skiing, tobogganing, snowshoeing, and snow play. In summer, it transforms into a mountain bike park with over 50 kilometres of trails. It also provides road cycling, hiking, trail running, and water-based activities on Rocky Valley Lake. Accommodations cater to various budgets, and the village offers services like child care, gym, day spa, and a supermarket. The culinary scene includes restaurants and bars, contributing to a vibrant nightlife. The resort hosts events like the Dragon Boat regatta, mountain bike events, the Long Lunch, and the Easter Festival, along with competitive events in road cycling, mountain biking, and trail running.

The 2 latter ski areas have been purchased by Vail Resorts in 2019, as a consolidation of the Group's penetration of the Australian market.

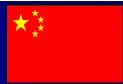
Apart from these larger resorts, most of the ski areas are rather small with limited vertical drop. In-resort accommodations are often rather limited and concentrate on lounge-style type. Most areas have snowmaking capabilities.

With foreign visitors representing less than 2% of skier visits, Australian resorts are clearly not very appealing to international customers, since New

⁶⁰ The tunnel is Australia's longest transport tunnel at 6.3km long, and at its deepest point it is 550m below the surface. Since its start of operations in 1987, *Skitube* has carried over 4 million passengers in comfort and safety.

Zealand offers a close alternative with much greater vertical drop, lower prices and at least as much fun. It even competes for domestic customers, who in part also prefer to go skiing in New Zealand. Besides New Zealand, Australia is also an important outbound skier market for Japan and South Korea. However, these markets do not directly compete during Australian winter as the season there is inverted (Northern Hemisphere).





China



Two thirds of China are covered by mountains. As the country has boundaries with Nepal and Pakistan, China shares with these countries 11 of the 17 highest peaks in the world, including Mount Everest and K2. In addition, it has also one summit over 8'000 meters above sea level exclusively on its territory (Mount Shishapangma, 8'027 meters). 40% of China lies above 2'000 meters, mostly in the western part of the country. Mountains in the eastern part are much lower, with top altitudes limited to 2'600 meters above sea level.

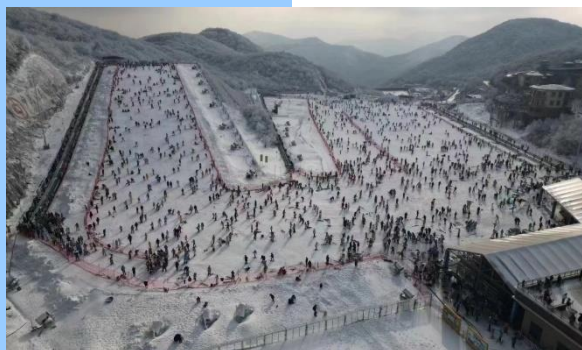
Skiing is not new at all in China, even if it looks that modern skiing only became popular since the early 2000s. In fact, skiing is very likely to have been invented in China. Skis were used already thousands of years ago by hunters in the Altay Mountains. Petroglyph paintings showing skiers have been found there and some experts dated them more than 10'000 years ago. It would be from the Altay cradle that skiing was then exported to Northern Europe, Russia and other places⁶¹. Long and wide traditional wooden skis are still currently used in the Altay Mountains. They have their base covered with animal skin, which allows for both climbing and sliding downhill in the very cold and powder snow that uses to cover the ground during the winter.



Modern skiing and snowboarding practice started in the north-eastern part of the country, in the Harbin region (Heilongjiang Province), which still contains most of China's ski areas, but where temperatures can be extremely tough. The first ski areas emerged in the 1980s, mostly designed for training

⁶¹ Rock paintings picturing skiing hunters were found in Altay in 2005. The International Ancient Skiing Cultural Forum held in January 2015 in Altay gathered international experts that agreed together that Altay was the oldest skiing region in the world.

ski racers, with usually only one slope and poor accommodations. Since **Yabuli** was awarded the 1996 Asian Winter Games, interest in skiing has developed quickly. Besides building the necessary infrastructure to host the Games, ski areas suddenly began to develop around major cities. In Hebei Province, the defunct ski area of **Saibei** pioneered Chongli region in 1996. It was developed by a few enthusiasts of winter sports, with rudimentary means. It brought appetite for skiing and later on the **Wanlong** ski resort opened in 2003. The pace of growth also increased in the 2000/01 winter, when the first snow stadium near Beijing was built. The number of ski areas in China grew from 50 in 2000 to 568 in 2020.



With the boost of winter sports triggered off by 2022 Winter Olympics, ski areas have been blossoming in nearly all Chinese provinces, up to the South-West. There are currently more than 700 ski areas in operation⁶². Most offer limited infrastructure and are rather ski fields for beginners, only equipped with one or a few magic carpets. The latter however needs not to be underestimated. There are examples of some ski areas only equipped with magic carpets that manage to get 10'000 visitors with 2 beginners' slopes in one day (e.g., **Yunshang Greenland**).

More than 500 ski areas have a vertical drop lower than 100 metres. Less than 200 ski areas are equipped with aerial lifts and only about 40 among them have detachable ropeways. However, only about 30 ski areas can be considered as destination resorts. In recent years, this restricted circle has been growing by at least one unit yearly and traditionally included **Beidahu**, **Cuiyunshan-Galaxy**, **Fulong**, **Genting Resort Secret Garden**, **Vanke Songhua Lake**, **Thaiwoo**, **Wanda Changbaishan**, **Wanlong** and **Yabuli** ski areas. They have been recently joined by some new areas in Xinjiang and Jilin provinces. Soon, a few other new 4-season destinations will enlarge the group.

There are currently 60 ski-domes throughout China, with 6 of the 10 largest in the world. Over the last years, the market for ski simulators has also been growing and 140 venues offer such equipment, mostly in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong. Dry slopes are also offering another option for beginners to practice and the number grew from 2 in 2012 to 45 in 2019. It is estimated that these facilities generate now more than 1 million visits (not included in attendance figures chart).

Supported by the development of supply, growth in attendance has been dramatic since 2000. It was boosted since 2015 by the awarding of the 2022 Winter Olympics, which has generated further enthusiasm for skiing. Total

⁶² The total figure takes into account newly opened ski areas, closures that happened over the last years and some reopenings. Indoor ski areas are included in the total ski areas figure. The total number of ski facilities is highly influenced by numerous very small areas that may have had problems in pandemic times and which future may be sometimes unclear. However, the large facilities such as indoor snow centres have continued to grow year after year and even during the pandemic. Even if the large resorts development experienced some kind of plateauing during a couple of years just before the Olympics, except the building of Yanqing Olympic Center, new state of the art resorts have appeared again over the last seasons. For instance, let's name Hemu Jikepulin and Koktokay in Xinjiang, Tonghua Wanfeng in Jilin, Guangwu Mountain Resort in Shanxi. So, there is currently no signal that the ski area development process is slowing down. Part of the process is also that small ski areas with unsatisfactory offer and service get out of market because clients are becoming more exacting.

attendance at ski resorts grew from 300'000 skier visits in 2000 to 12.5 million in 2015. The last few winter seasons pre-pandemic experienced considerable growth, with the 20 million skier visits mark reached during winter 2018/19 and visitation rising further. During the 2019/20 season, Chinese ski areas were the first to have to close down, but they were also among the first to reopen. Nevertheless, visitation lost about 50% over former winter. Visitation during winter 2020/21 was back around the pre-pandemic level and 2021/22 showed a slight increase, despite several restrictions of use of ski resorts related to the Winter Olympics and the pandemic prevention. It therefore seems that China will very soon rank among the top players of the industry, even if this has been slowed down by the pandemic. China was the only country in the world where the pandemic still had an impact on 2022/23 visitation at ski areas, as all activity in December 2022 and January 2023 was severely reduced by the last development of the pandemic in China, after the Government released all the covid-19 control policy measures. Despite ski resorts were open without restrictions, the majority of the guests either were infected by the virus or afraid of it and keeping home. Attendance came only back to normal in the second part of the season, that ended up with a decrease of 7.9% on former winter.

2023/24 season's highlights

The season saw **23.1 million skier visits**, marking a 16.3% increase from the previous season. A significant contributor to this growth was the expansion of indoor ski facilities, with the total growing to 60. These indoor facilities attracted 4.88 million visits, accounting for 21.1% of the total skier visits.

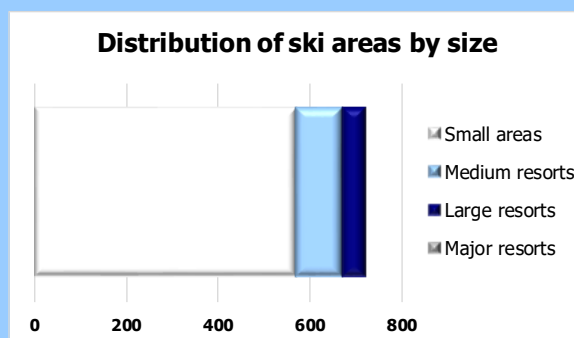
Outdoor ski resorts also benefited from enhanced infrastructure, with 30 new aerial ropeways added, increasing the total to 355 across 176 resorts. This development contributed to a 51% surge in visits to the 33 resorts with vertical drops exceeding 300 meters, totalling 6.4 million visits. In terms of regional performance, provinces such as Jilin, Xinjiang, and Heilongjiang experienced notable increases in skier visits.

It is estimated that during the winter season, 12.8 million of active snow sports participants hit the Chinese slopes.

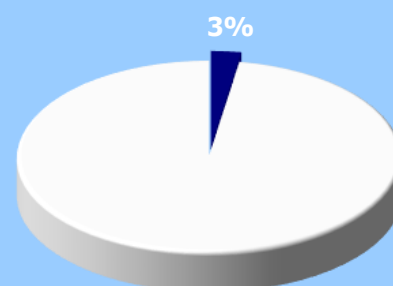


China

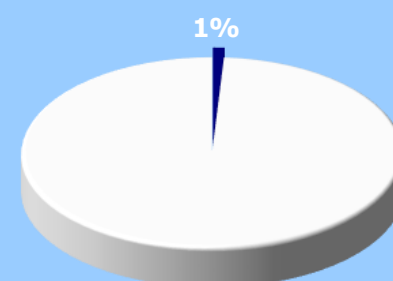
Ski areas	719
Lifts	747
National skiers	36'046'270
Skier visits per lift	25'612
Average skier visits	19'132'000
Skier visits per national skier	0.53
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.01
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.00

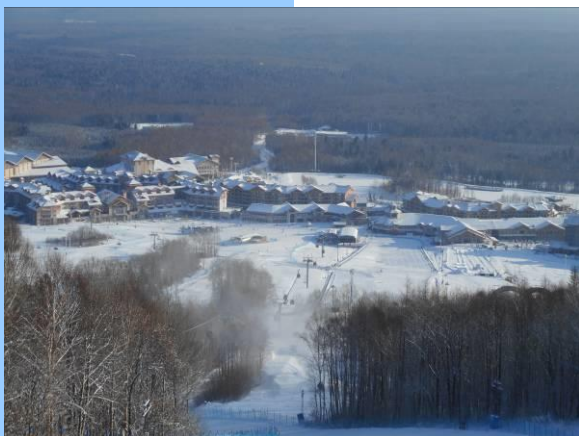


Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





With ski areas and ski centres nearly all around the country, and close to large metropolitan areas (for instance there are 24 snow stadiums around Beijing with 100% snowmaking and a maximum vertical drop of a few hundred meters), the number of skiers in China is also growing quickly. Even if the number of Chinese that actually skied in the last winter season is much lower, it is currently estimated that between 35 and 40 million Chinese practiced or at least tried skiing over the last couple of years. Unfortunately, most of the market consists of one-time skiers, with a huge potential both to encourage repeated visits of lapsed skiers and to address the untapped part of the market. Total market was estimated at 120 million in the plans of the Chinese government to encourage winter sports (share of skiers in the global plan aiming to have 300 million Chinese participating in winter sports). Support from the government seems very strong. However, when this figure will be reached is still anyone's guess, even if it was expected that after 2022 Olympics, it was likely there may soon be more than 1'000 ski areas in China and 40 million skier visits.

However, ski culture is not widely spread. Most Chinese skiers do not ski more than once per season and 80% are beginners. Some ski areas even have paid employees to help skiers get up after they fall and to retrieve their equipment! Most ski areas offer packages for 2 hours of skiing, including ski gear. Skiing is often consumed as a kind of entertainment product rather than a sport that requires repeated practice. For the time being, ski areas are considered more as ski playgrounds than as mountain resorts, and one-time skiers account for a considerable portion of skier visits, even if it seems that the situation improved over recent years, with an increasing proportion of returning guests. Skiing is becoming more and more popular among Chinese between the ages of 25 to 35. About 80% of the skiers are under 40.

A big challenge facing the ski business in a market such as China is the learning process. As various foreign surveys already pointed out, the first ski experience is often very disappointing for first-time beginners, with extremely low return rates. Unfortunately, ski areas crowded by uncontrolled beginners do not offer ideal conditions for a good learning experience. On top of this, the traditional alpine ski teaching methods are mostly designed for skiers staying for one week at a ski resort and may not be the best adapted for the current Chinese consumption pattern. The industry needs to quickly develop a suitable ski-teaching curriculum in order to be able to capture this huge market potential and not drive it away from skiing forever.

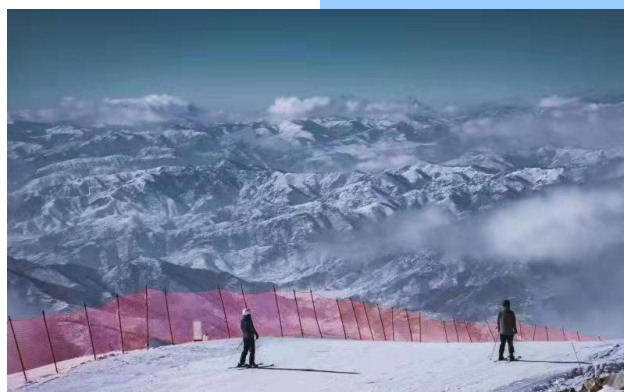
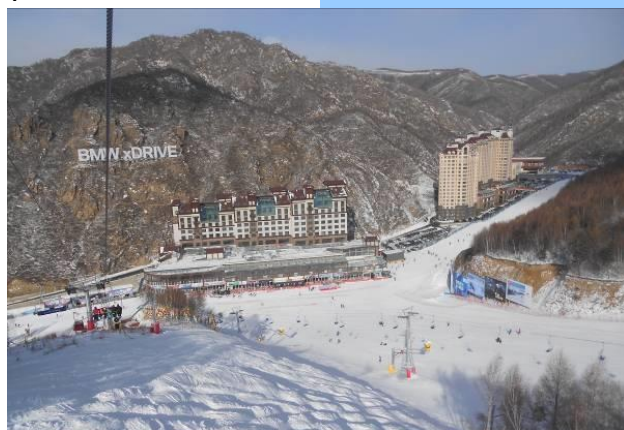
Among the destination resorts, one of the oldest and most well known in China is **Yabuli**, in the Heilongjiang province, near Harbin. It has been brought close to European and Japanese standards in terms of infrastructure quality, with the interconnection of the 3 mountains, offering 46 runs. Some of the accommodations are now managed by well-known international

hospitality & leisure operator. Located in the far Northern China, temperatures can be frigid. Heilongjiang accounts numerous other resorts. However, despite the province was at the origin of development of modern skiing history in China, Hebei, Jilin, Beijing, Xinjiang, Zhejiang and Sichuan provinces are now experiencing a quicker development, when measured to attendance figures.

In Jilin province, **Wanda Changbaishan** is one of the most modern and state of the art resort in China. It is comparable to modern resorts in North America. It offers a combination of hot springs and snow. The resort has views of 16 peaks in the Changbai Mountains. It is located at an altitude of 800 to 1'206 meters above sea level and was built in only 23 months. It features state of the art lifts and slopes, with an emphasis on a lively base village and comfortable accommodations: it offers 5'700 hotel beds under management contracts by local and international brands and another 1'200 rented apartments. Recently 2 other big ski resorts opened in the region, one is **Changbaishan Luneng** and the other is **Changbaishan Tianchixue**. The distance between these 3 ski resorts is less than 90 kilometres.

Beidahu is also located in the Jilin province. It is surrounded by mountains with summits over 1'200 meters that are covered in snow for half of the year. It offers one of the highest vertical drops in China and received recently the addition of a large accommodation facility operated by an international group. It is close to Vanke Group's **Songhua Lake** resort, featuring a 5-star hotel and state of the art detachable lifts, with heated seats. Vanke also manages 2 other ski areas, **Shijinglong**, near Yanqing and **Beijing Xishan**, a family friendly urban ski area in Beijing, only 2 kilometres away from the 16 metro line⁶³. Jilin province also host the newcomer **Wanfeng Tonghua**, which already features 4 detachable lifts.

Close to Beijing, about a 2-hour drive northwest, in Hebei province, the city of Chongli⁶⁴ seems to develop into the ski capital of China. The already well-established resort of **Wanlong** (improving every year its infrastructure, featuring detachable chairlifts and combined chair / gondola lifts called there *chondolas*, all Chinese-made and a huge top of mountain lodge), was quickly followed by the development of **Genting Secret Garden**, where the freestyle competition of the 2022 Winter Olympics was held. The resort of **Thaiwoo** opened not far away for winter 2015/16, featuring a North American like village base. A further state of the art resort was opened in December 2016 by the **Fulong** Group, just next to the city. It was followed in December 2017 by **Cuiyunshan-Galaxy** ski



⁶³ Vanke Group Ice & Snow Business division has also 2 other ski resorts projects moving forward. Xiaohaituo, which will see the Yanqing Alpine Centre of 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics turned into a commercial operation, and a new ski resort project in Chongli named Hanhailiang.

⁶⁴ Part of the Zhangjiakou area

resort, featuring also hotels and real estate development, and there are still other ski areas projected in the neighbourhood. With the opening of the new 1-hour high-speed train link between Beijing and Chongli in December 2019 and the development of Taizicheng Village at the heart of the Chongli Olympic venues, the place is continuously consolidating its role of a major winter sports cluster in China.

In the South-West, the mountains are much higher. Dagu Glacier Ropeway, installed in 2008 in the Sichuan province, is the highest gondola in the world (despite it is not considered as a ski area). The summit station is located at 4'860 meters! **Xiling Snow Mountain**, in the same province, currently features a gondola lift and several 2- and 4-seater chairlifts. Surrounded by mountains more than 5'300 meters high, the resort represents the largest ski area in Southern China. Ski areas are also being developed even more southern, in Yunnan, Guangxi and Guizhou provinces. In the latter, for instance, the city of Liupanshui opened **Plum Blossom Mountain International Ski Resort**, a ski area located at latitude of 26.6 degrees. There is also a project of ski area for Lhasa, capital of the Tibet autonomous region, which has an average altitude of 4'500 meters above sea level.



Because of the natural conditions, Xinjiang province in the North-West offers quite good snow quality. **Silk Road Ski Resort** is 38 kilometres away from Ürümqi city and **Jiangjun Shan** just next to Altay city. **Altay Powder Park** is located in Kelan Grand Canyon and has the first heliskiing program in China. Opened in 2019, the ski resort of **Koktokay** is also expected to grow quickly in popularity and size, to offer 58 kilometres of ski runs. It currently features 5 detachable lifts and some additional magic carpets. Its 900-meter vertical drop is one of the highest in China. There are currently also other plans to develop skiing in the Altay Mountains, with the first lifts of **Hemu-Jikepulin** already open by end of 2021. Currently the resort offers 5 detachable lifts. 2 other resorts have been inaugurated in Xinjiang during winter 2022/23: **Sayram Lake**, that currently features 2 detachable lifts and will reach up to 3'539 meters above sea level, with a vertical drop of 1'314 metres, and **Qinggeli Langshan (Wolf Mountain)**, which opened with one gondola, but aims at offering 39 kilometres of slopes and further lifts. Both offers a

stunning landscape. Attendance at Xinjiang's ski areas has seen a substantial growth over the last years and the province ranked 3rd in skiers' visitation in winter 2023/24. It is expected that the number of ski areas in Xinjiang will reach more than 100 (currently 66).

The booming ski-domes' market in China

A total of 22 provinces and municipalities have ski-domes, accounting for 65% of the total number of provinces and municipalities in China. These ski-domes are spread across 47 cities.

35 ski domes have opened or are planned to open between 2020 and 2025, accounting for 57% of the total number of ski domes.

In terms of units under management, the largest number of ski domes are managed by Bonski under Sunac China, with a total of 12 ski domes (9 in operation and 3 under preparation). The total ground floor area is 620'000 square meters, with a cold area of 350'000 square meters. Tuspark Ice and Snow Technology Group manages 4 ski domes with a total building area of 200'000 square meters and a cold area of 65'000 square meters. Ji Hua Group manages 3 ski domes with a total building area of 90'000 square meters and a cold area of 60'000 square meters.

Bonski is also preparing projects in Beijing, Qingdao, Quanzhou, and Haiyan. Tuspark Ice and Snow is preparing projects in Kashgar and Lin'an.

The indoor ski resort with the highest annual visitor time traffic nationwide is Bonski in Guangzhou. The main sources of visitors are local residents, with weekend trips, surrounding area tours, and micro-vacations being the primary forms of travel.



Source: research by Zhang Xinli



Northern India is a mountainous region with several peaks over 7'000 meters high. Skiing was introduced there by Europeans in the early 1970s and has become popular with some foreign skiers. Even if some Indians love skiing, most are not yet familiar with the discipline. Some operators were planning the development of more modern ski areas, but they failed to turn concrete until now. Currently, ski areas in India remain in limited supply.

Skiing takes place in the Manali Valley, located in the State of Himachal Pradesh, in North-Western India. This region, in the foothills of the Himalayas, concentrates most of the country's few and limited ski areas, which are also among the least expensive in the world. The lift infrastructure remains modest, but some rise to impressive altitudes, as the region is located between 4'500 and 7'000 meters above sea level. There is also skiing in Kashmir, a neighbouring region of the Himachal Pradesh. This region of the Indian subcontinent is still disputed territory between India and Pakistan, giving rise to armed conflict from time to time, which may cause access restrictions in some places.

There are 3 acknowledged ski resorts in the country. The largest one is **Gulmarg**, in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. It is one of the most famous in this region of Asia. Runs range from 2'600 to 3'200 meters long. The ski area is equipped with a 2-section gondola, famous for carrying skiers to an altitude of nearly 4'000 meters above sea level at its top station. A quad chairlift also



serves the slope from the level of the gondola’s middle station. The area offers more than 1'000 meters of vertical drop, with pristine slopes. The village of Gulmarg lies at 2'500 meters above sea level. The base area sits below the 4'124 metre Mount Apharwat. This gives the place a magical feel for skiers. The resort is one of the few places on Earth where there may be 2 continuous weeks of snowfall. Furthermore, it offers a variety of runs: skiers will enjoy the high slopes of Aparwath, which offer magnificent views of K2 during good weather, or the runs in Kongdori. The best time to come to Gulmarg is from mid-January to mid-February, especially for skiers looking for a balance between a stable snowpack, combined with the powder snow down to Gulmarg, in the valley.

Auli is the most select resort in India, offering the best possible infrastructure. It hosts the Indian national ski Championships and an Indian ski festival. It is nestled in a collection of snow-covered Himalayan peaks (the Garhwal Mountains). Auli offers 2'000 meters of slopes, equipped with lifts.



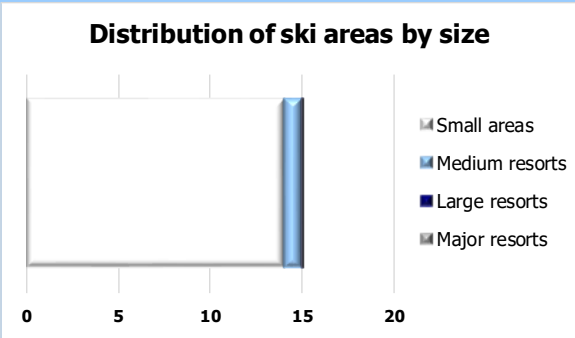
The ski area of **Manali** is located at the northern end of the Kullu Valley. It is best known for heliskiing but also operates a few lifts. It has a multi-season sports offering.

The country’s other ski areas usually have only one lift. The small **Kufri** ski area is nestled in the hills of Himachal Pradesh. It is one of the best destinations for skiing in this state and a destination easily accessible for anyone in Northern India. This quiet town becomes a winter paradise as soon as the snow

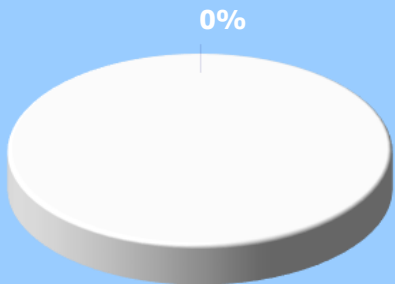


India

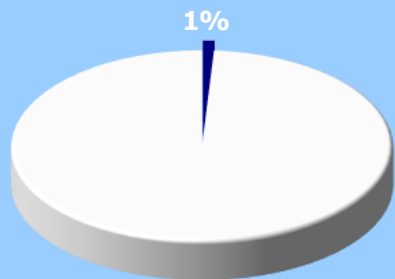
Ski areas	15
Lifts	22
National skiers	133'918
Skier visits per lift	9'091
Average skier visits	200'000
Skier visits per national skier	1.48
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.00
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.00



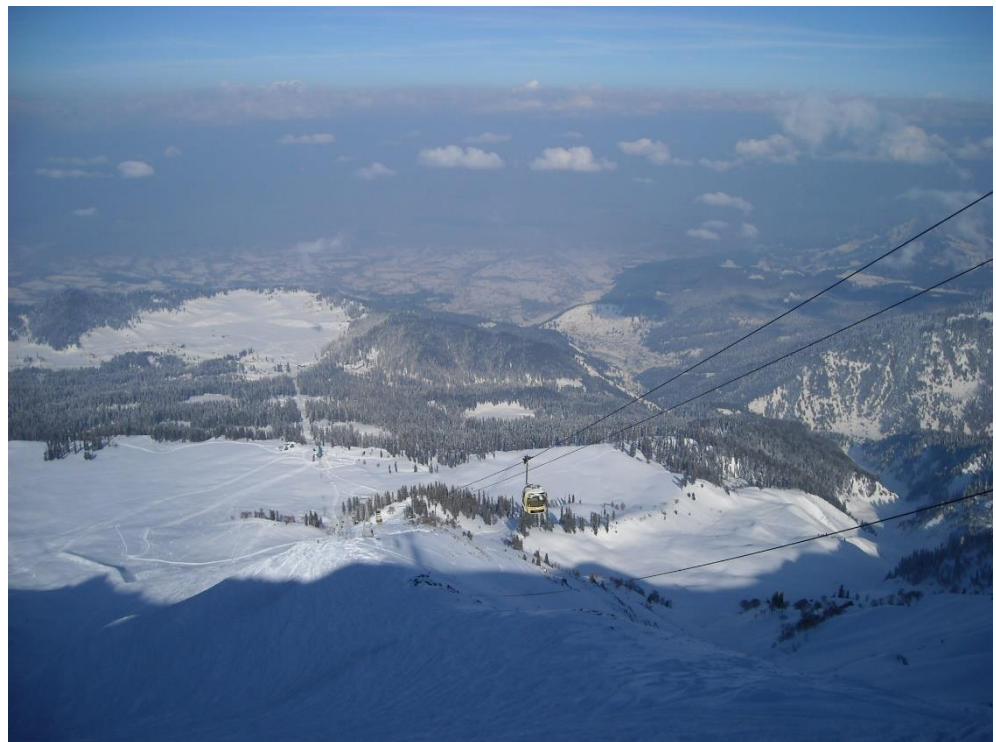
Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers



begins to fall. Kufri is home to an annual festival of winter sports in February. **Narkanda** ski area is located 65 kilometres from Shimla. At 3'143 meters above sea level, it is one of the oldest in India. The ski season is concentrated between late December and early March. Narkanda offers beautiful landscapes and splendid views of the Himalayas. **Dayara Bugyal** is another ski area, located at an elevation of 3'050 meters.





Japan



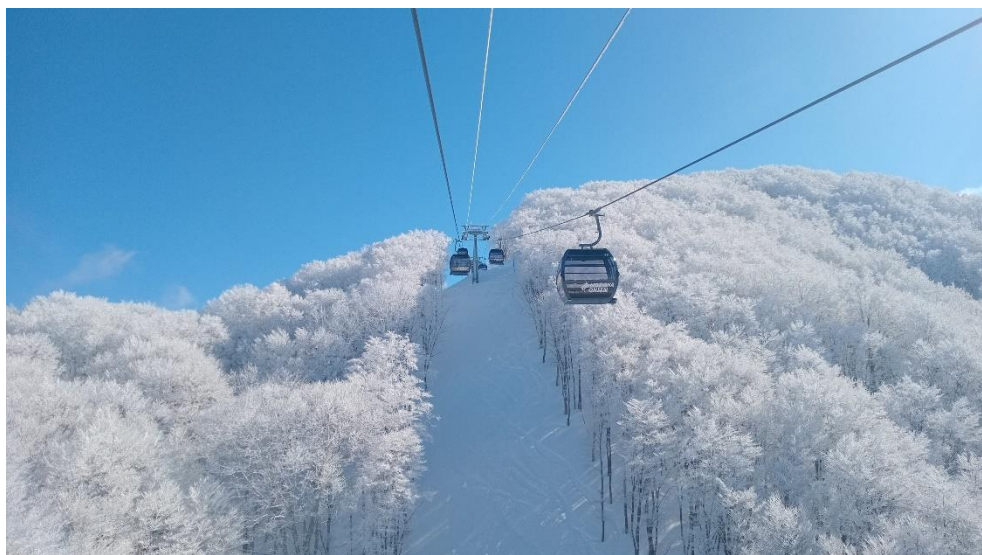
Mountains can be found all around Japan, as the country features a mostly rugged and mountainous terrain, which dominates 73% of its land area. It is shaped by volcanic activity and tectonic movements. A mountain range is running through each of the main islands. The country's highest peak is Mount Fuji (3'776 meter above sea level). In the centre of the main island of Honshu, a series of mountain ranges are called the Japanese Alps. They also include some peaks reaching over 3'000 meters

above sea level. Japanese mountains are heavily forested, as forest covers 68 % of the country. The terrain features rugged landscapes, steep valleys, and active volcanoes. These mountains play a critical role in Japan's climate, creating diverse ecosystems ranging from alpine zones to dense forests. They're also central to Japanese culture and leisure, hosting ski resorts, hiking trails, and sacred sites.

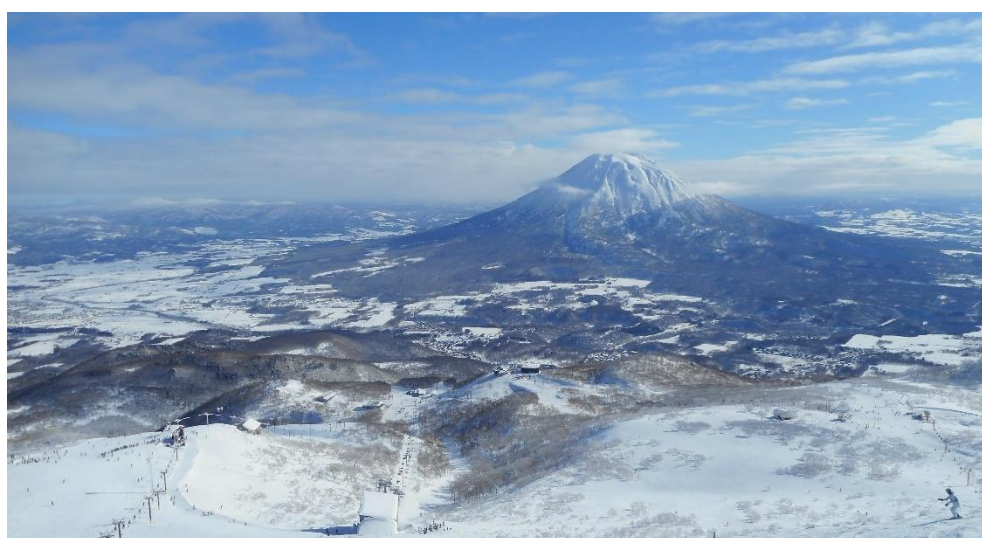
It is therefore not surprising that Japan is one of the countries with the highest number of ski areas. Resorts are located all throughout the Japanese islands, from the northern island of Hokkaido to the main southern island of Kyushu. Almost the entire population is only a couple hours away from a ski area. With its high number of inhabitants, this represents a huge potential.

The earliest ski areas to have been identified in Japan are **Goshiki** (Yonezawa City, Yamagata Prefecture) and **Kanayasan** (Joetsu City, Niigata Prefecture) which date back to 1911. **Kusatsu** (Kusatsu Town, Gunma Prefecture) was added in 1914 and **Numajiri** (Inawashiro Town, Fukushima Prefecture) in 1915. The earliest lifts were built in Japan in 1946 in **Moiwayama** (Sapporo City, Hokkaido) and **Maruike** (Shiga Kogen, Yamanouchi Town, Nagano), followed in 1948 by **Kusatsu** (Kusatsu Town, Gunma Prefecture) and in 1950 by **Nozawa Onsen** (Nozawa Onsen Village, Nagano Prefecture) and **Akakura Onsen** and **Ikenotaira Onsen** (Myoko City, Niigata Prefecture).

Nozawa Onsen Mountain Resort is an example of the ski tradition in Japan. It celebrated in 2024 its 100 years of existence. Ski was already practiced there in 1924, with a ski training camp organised by a Tokyo university. In 1928, a dedicated ski slope was prepared and the first lift appeared in 1950. Pictures from 1966 already testify of crowded slopes.



The Japanese ski industry experienced a tremendous boom in the years from 1970 to 1990, in the move of the 1972 Sapporo Winter Olympics. Skier visits showed record figures and the number of active skiers reached over 18 million in a season. They are estimated around only 8 million nowadays⁶⁵. In the 1980s, resort development was extraordinary, with several new, expanded or fully rebuilt ski areas. The country offered the finest and most modern facilities in the world. Skiing became very fashionable, and the most popular sport among young people. The resorts were busy and crowded to such an extent that it was sometimes difficult to actually ski! There were long lift lines and crowded slopes. This surely contributed to skiing becoming less appealing. Furthermore, Japan experienced a significant economic downturn at the beginning of the 1990s and real estate was affected. Many resorts had difficulty financing their huge investments. Skier visits began to decrease significantly. Currently, for foreign guests, Japanese lifts look vintage or second hand. However, the reality is that most of the lift infrastructure in Japan is reaching the end of its life and would require heavy renewal investments.



⁶⁵ Skiers having actually skied last season.

In the past, Japan was also the country with the most indoor snow centres and the world's first such centre (the first one opened in 1959). However, several of these facilities are now closed. This seems to be a further sign of the loss of interest in skiing.

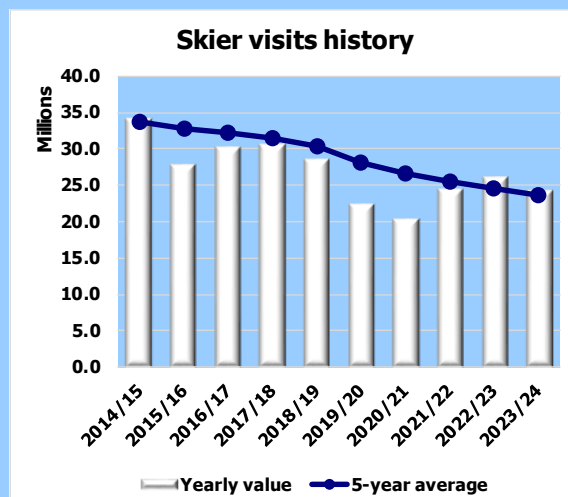
Skier visits currently hardly reach 25 million per year in a normal season, less than a third of what they were in the 1980s⁶⁶. After a succession of seasons with decreasing attendance, the situation seemed to have stabilised at the beginning of the 2010s, before in the season 2015/16, riders count decreased 18% due to warm weather conditions (Japanese resorts feature a lower equipment level in snowmaking than the Alpine region, with 65.8% of ski areas having no snowmaking). After this season that was one of the worst for 50 years, the further seasons did however not show a full recovery. Some of the recent winters were for many Japanese ski areas the worst in their histories for snowfall, with predominantly warm weather for much of the autumn and winter meaning some receiving little or no snow all season. Despite the covid-19 pandemic did not bring much restriction on the ski resorts operation in Japan, limitation on travel deprived Japanese ski resort from all their foreign customers in winter 2020/21 and 2021/22, ending up with low visitation figures. International visitors did not either fully resume in 2022/23.

2023/24 season's highlights

Warm weather conditions in many regions led to reduced visitation numbers, except in Hokkaido and Nagano, which attract also most of the foreign visitors. The national average temperature during the winter season was higher than average. It was the 2nd warmest winter since the statistic started in 1898, with very little snowfall. Total attendance of the season is estimated to have reached **24.4 million skier visits**.

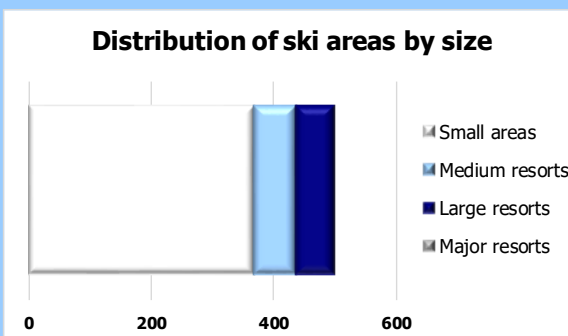
Pre-covid years, Hokkaido prefecture showed a distinctive trend. With very favourable snow conditions, it was not affected by the overall decrease in visitation and attendance even showed a move upwards. Nevertheless, it may still take time before Hokkaido

⁶⁶ It is estimated that when Japanese ski industry was at its best, it had up to 90 million yearly skier visits.

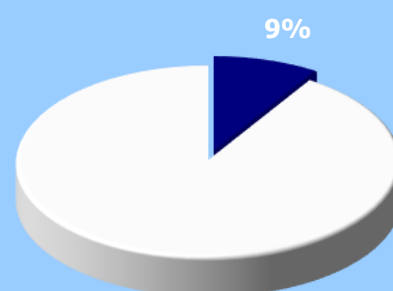


Japan

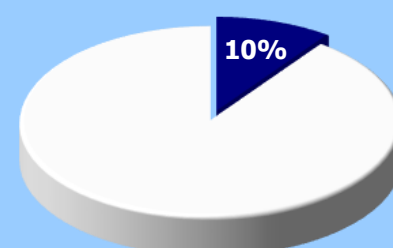
Ski areas	497
Lifts	1'847
National skiers	11'261'249
Skier visits per lift	12'796
Average skier visits	23'633'609
Skier visits per national skier	1.89
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.17
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.12



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers



recovers the 7 million skier visits it had at the beginning of the century⁶⁷.

The largest ski areas in Japan are mostly in Hokkaido Prefecture, Nagano Prefecture and Niigata Prefecture. Hokkaido Prefecture hosts **Niseko United** (Niseko Annapuri/Niseko Grand Hirafu/Niseko Hanazono/Niseko Village) and **Rusutsu**, Nagano Prefecture is the home of **Shigakogen Mountain Resort**, **Nozawa Onsen** and **Hakuba Valley** (10 resorts including Hakuba Happo-One, Hakuba 47/Goryu) and Niigata Prefecture features **Gala Yuzawa/Ishiuchi Maruyama** together with **Mitsumata/Kagura/Tashiro** (Mt. Naeba). Other large resorts include **Zao Onsen** (Yamagata Prefecture) and **Appi Kogen** (Iwate Prefecture).



Ski resorts have started attempts to revitalise the industry, but they have to fight against demographic reality of the aging Japanese population. The latter may unfavourably affect the overall participation rate. Nowadays, the Japanese slopes are no longer overcrowded and the industry is trying to attract new clients. Some ski areas have turned into big resorts where skiing is only one of many activities to choose from. Investments are directed to make these places attractive to both skiers and non-skiers. True mountain base villages have been developed, offering housing and multiple facilities. Some are even afraid of an almost Disneylandification of the mountain.

With these changes, Japanese ski areas have subsequently attracted an increasing number of foreign visitors. Before the 2000s, nearly no foreign visitors came to Japan to ski. After the 9/11/2001, Australian skiers began to come to Japan instead of flying to North America. They were followed by visitors from neighbouring Asian countries, even some without any ski culture. Efforts have been made to produce trail maps, sign and menus in English, Korean and Chinese. Today, the country attracts more and more skiers from abroad. It is now common to see skiers from Australia and East Asia. Recently, China became one of the most promising markets for skiing in Japan and Chinese skiers going to Japan represented pre-pandemic the largest international skiers flow in Asia-Pacific region. Focus has also turned to attracting European and American skiers. Some resorts now offer access to the holders

⁶⁷ Attendance in Hokkaido was around 5 million skier visits in the years pre-covid.

of the American mega-passes. After nearly 3 years of travel ban to Japan due to the covid-19 pandemic, there has been a surge in visitation from America and Europe since 2023. It looks more and more foreign skiers have added Japanese ski resorts into their bucket list. Although this is limited to a dozen of high profile resorts, it is not uncommon to have more than 50% of foreign guests on the slopes. There, also the resort staff includes Aussies, Kiwis and Canadians.

Multi-resorts pass has also got introduced to the Japanese ski industry very recently. The *Earth Hopper* ski pass claims to be a game-changer for the Japanese skiers. With 45 participating resorts, it is the first pass to extensively cover ski areas across Japan.





Mongolia



Mongolia is a large country combining highlands and mountains. The lowest altitude in the country is 518 meters above sea level, and the average altitude is 1'580 meters. The western and northern parts of the

country are crossed by the Khangai and Altay mountain ranges, featuring the country's highest summit, the 4'374-metre high Kujten Uul (formerly Nayramadlin Orgil). There are also several volcanoes in the area. One third of Mongolia is covered by the famous Gobi Desert.

With an extreme continental climate, the country has long, dry, cold winters and short summers. The average temperature is below freezing from November to March. Minus 20 degrees Celsius is common in January and February and night temperatures can reach minus 40. Lakes and rivers freeze in winter. Snowfall is limited. The level of precipitation is low and mostly concentrated during the summer months.

Even though Mongols are accustomed to winter, the first and only ski area of the country opened in 2009. **Sky Resort** is located next to the capital city of Ulan Bator. Its base elevation is 1'379 meters and the top of the lifts reaches 1'570 meters, offering about 200 meters of vertical drop. It is equipped with 2 quad chairlifts and 2 surface lifts, plus 3 moving carpets, comprehensive snowmaking facilities and lighting for night skiing. All of the equipment was manufactured in China. The ski season lasts from November to March / April, but the resort is operated as a year-round recreation destination. It features various outdoor activities, including a golf course.



Nepal is an 800 kilometres long on 200 kilometres wide territory land-locked between India and China. Although Nepal is well known for its Himalayan Mountains, the altitude in the country ranges from as low as 60 meters in the sub-

tropical lowlands of Terai, on the northern rim of the Ganges River, to the top of the world, with the 8'848-meter-high Mount Everest (shared with China). The country accounts some 90 peaks over 7'000 meters and 8 of them are over 8'000. This wide range of terrains involves also a wide range of climates, and annual precipitations vary on average from 160 millimetres to 5'500 millimetres depending the region.

Nepal is highly affected by global warming, with its glaciers melting down. From 1997 to 2010, the country lost 25% of them, putting some areas at risk with the sudden creation of lakes that can be a threat for the populations located in the valleys below.

The zone with mountains over 3'000 meters covers about 15% of the country and populated villages reach up as high as 4'500 meters above sea level. However, the snowline is at an altitude of 5'000 to 5'500 meter above sea level, making it difficult to find comfortable skiing conditions.



Occasionally, it may snow at lower altitudes and in 2019, a first ski lift was installed on a temporary basis at the **Kuri** area in Kalinchok of Dolaka, at an altitude of 3'842 above sea level. With the help of a rope and some home-made machinery, a 60-meter-long rope tow was inaugurated for snow lovers.

Ski and Snowboarding Foundation Nepal organised a 2-month festival with an aim to make Kuri of Kalinchok a popular ski park, expecting 10'000 visits over the period. Kalinchok is a famous Hindu pilgrimage site with beautiful sceneries and it features a sightseeing cable car and hotels for visitors.





New Zealand



The southern island of New Zealand is the more mountainous of the 2 main islands, crossed through the middle by mountains referred to as the Southern Alps. They include 18 peaks over 3'000 meters, culminating with the 3'754-metre Mount Cook. Although the northern island has fewer mountains, it features some volcanoes. The highest peak, Mount Ruapehu (2'797 meters above sea level), is still an active volcano.

New Zealand is a major destination in the Southern Hemisphere for skiing and snowboarding. The resorts are well equipped and evenly spread out over the 2 main islands that make up the archipelago. Snow conditions are good, even if the powder is not as light as in the European Alps, Japan or the Andes, due to the maritime climate. Only a few resorts offer more than 500 meters vertical drop. The others have shorter slopes. The season starts in late May and ends in early November.

In addition to 13 commercial ski areas, New Zealand has 10 private ski clubs. Heliskiing is also highly developed, with numerous possibilities and departures from 10 different bases.





In the new century, skiing has grown. Before the 2000s, only exceptional seasons saw more than one million skier visits. Since the early 2000s, this has been the rule. The growth emphasised after winter 2015 which saw record snowfalls and an extended season. Winter 2016 and 2017 renewed with very good attendance figures and were again bet by 2018 season, which clocked a record 1.9 million skier visits, 16% over former season. It was said a phenomenal snow year, which ensured that the season was longer than usual. In some resorts, the introduction of cheaper season passes is considered having encouraged New Zealanders to return to the slopes or visiting them for the first time. Season 2019 could not match the former one, although very good indeed and records as the second best. During covid-19 pandemic, ski areas had to rely on the domestic

market for 2 seasons in a row, in 2020 and 2021. Borders were closed and resorts were even locked down for 3 weeks in 2021. Season 2022 was better, with covid-19 restrictions lifted and travel between the North and South islands and from Australia normal again. However, low snowfall in the northern island did not allow for perfect skiing conditions. Despite southern island ski areas enjoyed excellent snow conditions throughout the season and visitors' numbers reached pre-covid-19 levels, the national total was not fully back to the pre-pandemic highs. Despite big pre-season snowfall in early May, temperature remained above average for nearly 2 months, with rain and little snowfall. The 2023 season was slow to get underway however July and August were excellent with good snow conditions throughout. Destination resorts benefited from the return of international demand.

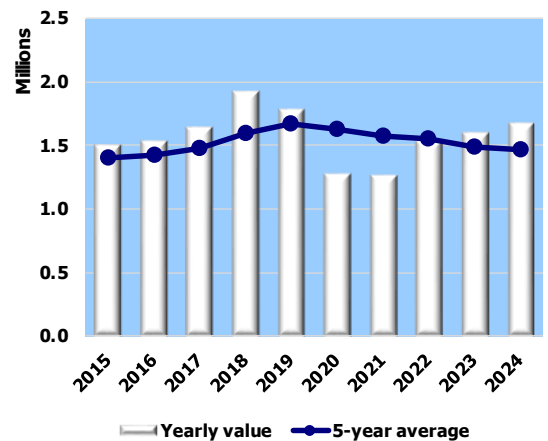


2024 season's highlights

The season started strongly with the help of snowmaking for the Southern resorts, and most were open by the end of June ready for the domestic school holidays. In July and August, there were sufficient snowfalls to keep up the momentum. In September resorts received a number of unexpected snowfalls which helped them, especially the high-altitude resorts, remain open well into October. Total **skier visits reached 1.7 million**, 4.5 % up over former season.

The southern part of the country offers the best ski resorts in New Zealand. Near Queenstown, **the Remarkables** mountain range boasts a vast ski area of about 220 hectares that rises to 1'935 meters above sea level. There are 4 ski resorts on the northern Island. **Whakapapa** and **Turoa** are the most popular ski areas, topping out at 2'300 meters above sea level on the northeast side of Mount Ruapehu. They recently merged and draw many skiers and snowboarders every year. Despite being the largest resort in the country, it is small when compared to other international destinations. It has only 43 trails and 16 lifts spread out over 400 hectares.

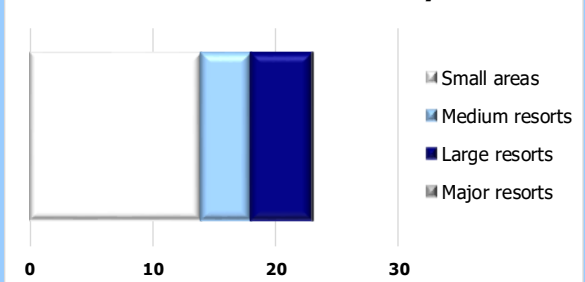
Skier visits history



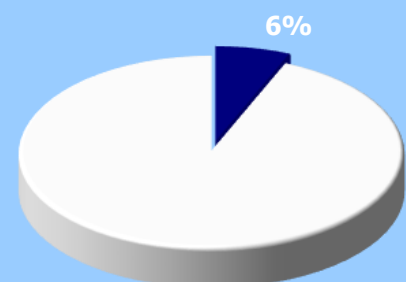
New Zealand

Ski areas	23
Lifts	109
National skiers	326'604
Skier visits per lift	13'485
Average skier visits	1'469'835
Skier visits per national skier	2.88
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.18
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.17

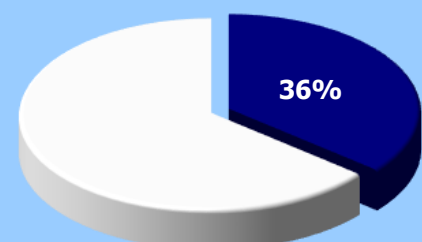
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





North Korea



With its high point Paektu-san rising to 2'744 meters above sea level, North Korea is a country covered by forested hills and mountains, separated by deep, narrow valleys. It counts 50 peaks over 2'000 meters. There are some coastal plains wide in the West, discontinuous in the East.

Although the climate is tough, with long cold winters and a decent amount of snow, the socio-economic situation for most of the population does not generate an important demand for leisure activities. The

number of skiers is very limited.

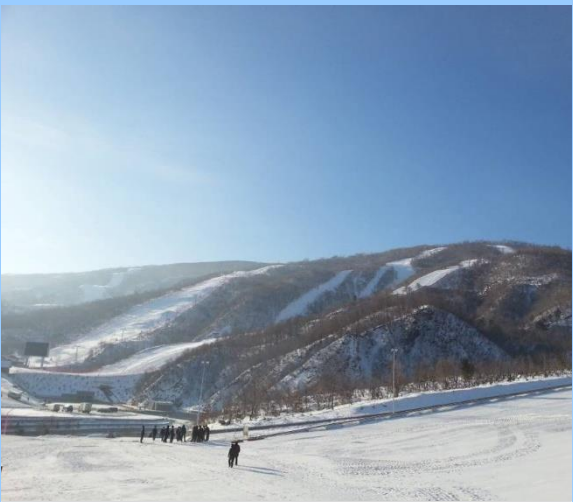
A couple of limited ski areas offer a few second-hand ski lifts but they are reported to be only used by the military and other selected members of the North Korean population. The small ski resort of **Begaebong** features a second-hand chairlift retired from the Alps.



Due to the UN embargo, Austrian, French and Swiss manufacturers had to refuse to sell the country a new detachable chairlift to equip the ski resort of **Mount Masik**, the first with the goal of meeting international standards. Despite this drawback, the resort was officially inaugurated at the end of December 2013 with unusual media visibility for North Korea. Due to the embargo, the originally planned brand new western manufacturers' installations were replaced with second-hand equipment (surface lift and fixed grip 2-seater chairlift). Later on, a gondola lift having served before in Austria was installed, and some further Chinese-manufactured lifts. The ski area features an impressive hotel, ski rental shop and restaurants (even one top of the mountain panoramic restaurant). The final plans would call for 110 kilometres of ski trails and a heliport. It is considered to be the first ski area in the country to open to the general public.

Another ski area, **Kanggye Ski Resort**, opened in North Korea in early 2018 complete with a drag lift and conveyor lift. It will be followed by a further one. The Hot Spring Tourist Area of **Yangdok County** has seen an expansion of the initial plan, in order to add a ski area, on top the thermal facilities. From project renderings, ski slopes seem rather limited, focused on beginners.

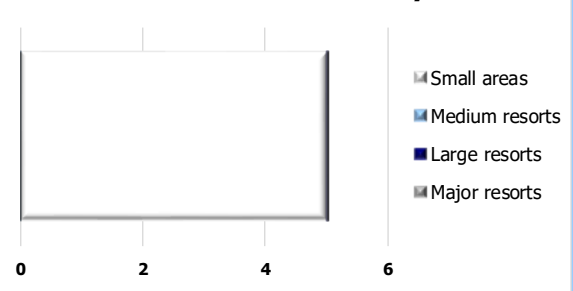
Another formerly single downhill slope equipped with a ski lift and mostly used by the military has been recently developed towards reaching a wider audience in **Samjiyon**, close to Mount Paektu. This move is part of the country's broader effort to boost tourism, despite international sanctions and restrictions. The Samjiyŏn ski resort, located in a mountainous region, once served as a military base due to its harsh winter conditions, which were ideal for specialized training. However, in an attempt to diversify its economy and attract foreign visitors, North Korea has invested heavily in modernizing the site, transforming it from a secret military facility into a leisure destination. Samjiyŏn sits at an altitude of 1'300 meters above sea level in Ryanggang Province, near the Chinese border. As a key North Korean tourist destination, the resort is being promoted as part of the country's limited reopening to international visitors, particularly targeting the Chinese and Russian markets due to its proximity. Significant investments have been made to enhance the area's tourism infrastructure, including the construction of multiple hotels with around 4'000 rooms and ski slopes catering to various skill levels. Renovations have focused on upgrading the slopes, adding modern equipment, and improving visitor services, with an emphasis on comfort and safety.



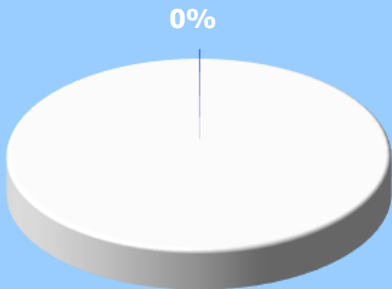
North Korea

Ski areas	5
Lifts	11
National skiers	15'642
Skier visits per lift	2'727
Average skier visits	30'000
Skier visits per national skier	1.92
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.00
Skier visits per foreign visitor	#N/A

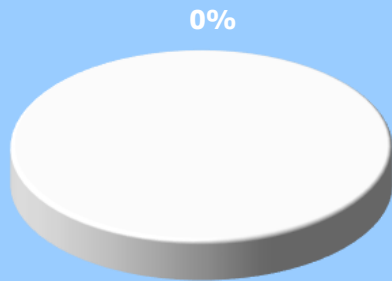
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers



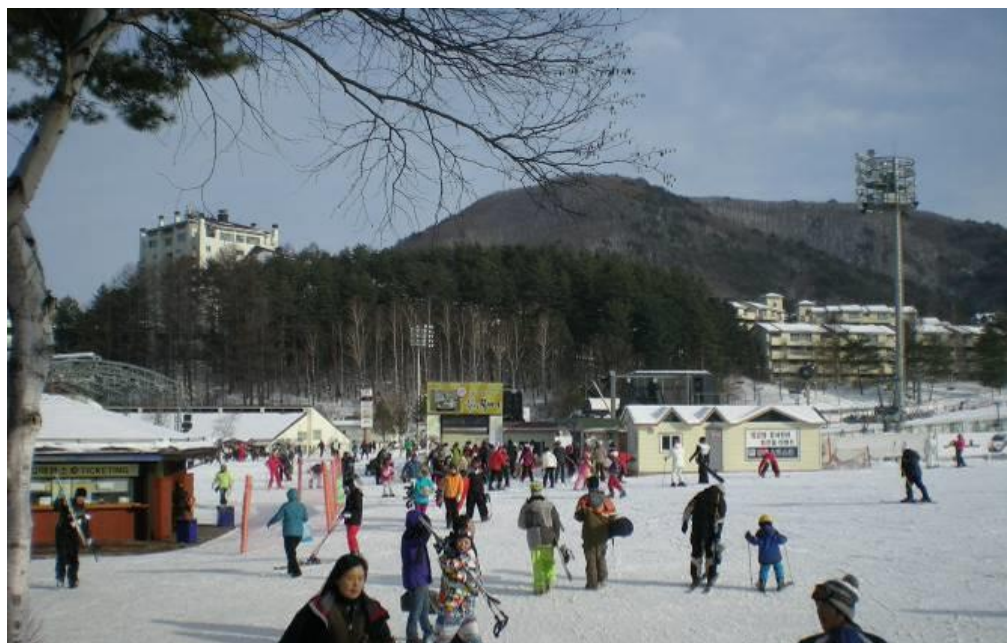


South Korea



South Korea is a mountainous country with relatively cold winters. Ice skating or gliding over the snow was already familiar to part of the population before the advent of skiing. When the first ski resort was developed in 1975, it rapidly became popular. A few years later, it was followed by several new openings, mostly resorts equipped to international standards. Even if the financial crisis that hit South Korea in 1998 slowed down new developments for years, they resumed after 2002 but stopped again by 2010. A total of 19 ski areas were built over the years in the country. However,

starting from 2006/07, some began to close temporarily or for good. One turned into a ghost resort and some more have now remained closed for several years in a row. A total of 7 ski areas remained closed during the 2023/24 season.



Korean resorts are based on the North American model, very capital intensive. They are generally built on land that must be fully or partially acquired by the operator, who then controls the entire business. As all ski resorts have been created from scratch, they required significant investment in roads and utilities, not to mention the need to build the entire base area infrastructure. Accommodations are almost exclusively condominiums. The peculiarities of

the terrain also create the need for a lot of civil engineering work. This generally limits ski resort operation to powerful financial groups. Several ski areas are owned by large, typically Korean, conglomerates, like Hyundai and LG. The smaller developers have often suffered financial difficulties or gone bankrupt only to be acquired by a big investor.

With the significant increase in supply up to 2010, some resorts have been losing market share as the market has become much more competitive. In light of the huge investments, some had to fight to survive and some even already closed.



All resorts offer year-round activities. Most have at least one golf course, an indoor swimming pool and shops. Indoor malls are filled with recreational activities like bowling, ping-pong, video games, movies, karaoke, and of course restaurants, bars, clubs and night-clubs, as many of the resorts are active both day and night. 3 resorts even offer a water park and a theme park.

Starting at the beginning of the 2000s, attendance records grew steadily through 2008. Then they plateaued well over the 6 million mark for 5 more seasons, before starting to decline continually. Since then, yearly skier visits dropped below the 5 million mark, and then the 4 million mark with the pandemic years. This happened in spite of several high-quality resorts that have opened in the late 2000s. It was expected that they would stimulate demand. The PyeongChang 2018 Winter Olympic Games completely failed to contribute increasing the popularity of skiing. Skier visits number continued to decline the Olympic year. Despite they stabilised the next season, the pandemic brought again a decrease in visitation. 2020/21 was simply catastrophic. Very few resorts recovered pre-pandemic visitation level and a record number remained simply closed for the 2021/22 season. With 4.2 million skier visits, winter season 2022/23 eventually saw the attendance back over

the 4 million mark, despite a substantial number of resorts remaining closed. Among the resorts that were open, some performed rather well, returning to visitors' levels at their highest.

2023/24 season's highlights

Despite several resort bankrupted, welfare of the population and time available for leisure have been on the rise. Resorts made marketing efforts to develop their offer and propose incentives that have been rewarded with some increased attendance, reaching **4.4 million skier visits**, 5.4% upwards.

South Korea also expected an increase in foreign customers, boosted by promotional efforts made by the government. However, the reason for the stagnation probably has to do on one hand with current economic conditions and a depressed market, both nationally and in Asia⁶⁸. On the other hand, ski has been so much packaged like a leisure product in South Korea that this makes it much more sensitive to trendy fashion as if it had been presented as a sport and healthy practice to dedicate to. It seems that there is currently a switch towards other leisure activities at domestic level.



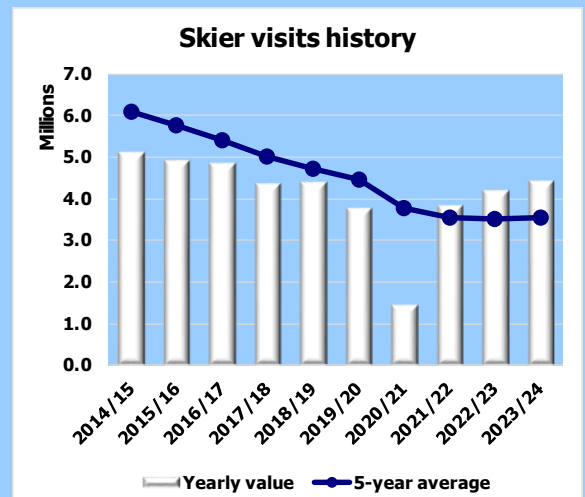
With 2.5 million skiers for a population of more than 48 million inhabitants, a participation rate of about 5%, the potential for the Korean market is still partially untapped and demand could however be developed. In addition, the high-quality equipment at Korean ski destinations, meeting the highest of international standards, offers an attractive alternative to European resorts

⁶⁸ South Korea is perhaps the country where attendance is the least dependent on the climate. With a lot of snowmaking and relatively cold temperatures, snow is nearly guaranteed. Furthermore, much skiing consumption is done at night, with little concern for sunny skies.

for skiers throughout the entire Asian continent. Prices are also more attractive than in Japan, and Korean ski areas offer a great deal of fun, with several ski resorts operating their lifts nearly around the clock. With this kind of controversial situation, the Korean ski industry seems at a turning point. Either it finds ways to stimulate a revival of skiing demand; either it will have to transform the business model of the ski resorts. Nevertheless, adding more leisure activities may only make the business more subject to temporary trends and fashion.

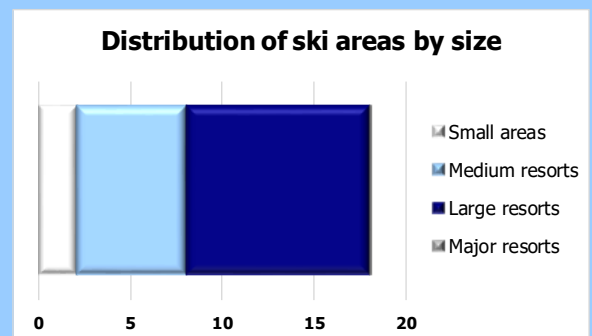
The ski season is peculiar in Korea. It is relatively short, but very dense. The school year matches the calendar year, so students have their annual holidays in December and January, which is followed by mid-February and spring holidays. The ski season begins in late November / early December and ends in March, but has virtually no lag time.

The resorts that score the highest number of skier visits are **Daemyung Vivaldi Park, Gangwonland (ex High1), Yongpyong, Jisan, Bokwang (Pheonix), WelliHilli (Shinan, ex Hyundai Sungwoo) and Konjiam (LG)**. Most feature between 5 and 10 lifts, sometimes only or mostly high-speed lifts. Only Yongpyong has more lifts. Few have more than 20 kilometres of slopes.

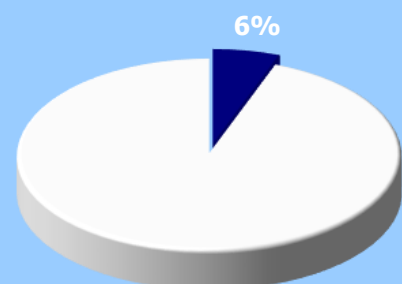


South Korea

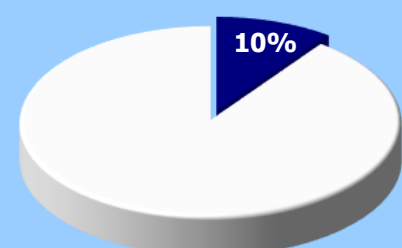
Ski areas	18
Lifts	168
National skiers	2'937'312
Skier visits per lift	21'066
Average skier visits	3'539'040
Skier visits per national skier	1.08
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.06
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.03



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers



The Middle East & Africa

Every continent offers options for skiing. Even if much scarcer than in other regions of the world, there are ski resorts spread across the Middle East and Africa, and in both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres for the latter.



Afghanistan



The country is mostly covered by rugged mountains, with the Hindu Kush range and 100 peaks rising to over 6'000 meters above sea level. The highest point tops out at 7'485 meters above sea level (Now-shak Peak). With an arid climate, the cumulative snowfall in the mountains during the cold winter serves as the primary water supply. The Koh-e-Baba (Grandfather Mountains) is the western extremity of the Hindu Kush mountain range of Afghanistan and Pakistan. It contains glaciers and permanent snow.

Modern skiing was introduced to the country by European visitors in the 1960s. At that time, the Afghan tourism organisation established Afghanistan's first ski area at **Chowk-e-Arghande**, near a low pass just outside Kabul known for its heavy snowfalls. With the help of a German ski enthusiast, Afghanistan's first rope tow was installed in 1967. A few years later a second rope tow was installed to take skiers to a higher, steeper slope. Together the two lifts offered a roughly 700-metre descent. Most skiers were expatriates living in Kabul. Some locals, including women, also got acquainted with skiing and a few races were organised in the 1970s (the last ski races were held at Chowk-e-Arghande during the 1978 winter). Through the subsequent 4 decades of conflict, snow sports became all but impossible to pursue in the country.

Today, the widespread poverty among most of the population does not allow for expensive leisure activities (living standards are among the lowest in the world). However, sledging has remained a popular activity in the snowy mountainous regions. Boys and girls sliding down on homemade sleds is a common sight. In 2010, during a local festival in Bamyan, a ski race was once again organised to familiarise people with snow sports. Second-hand skis from France, together with others made by local artisans, were used.

In spite of the few favourite spots of a couple pioneering skiers and snowboarders, there is currently no organised and equipped ski area. The rope tows have been destroyed along with most infrastructures. For the time being, the only available ski lifts are donkeys. A homemade ski lift had been put in operation in 2019 at the **Bamyan** ski area, located 100 miles west of the country's capital Kabul. The rudimentary ski lift, like many of the early ski lifts in North America and Europe, utilised a motorbike engine to pull a simple cable lift. The bottom pulley wheel was fixed in an upturned wheelbarrow. The lift was reported to have been created by an American family who lived locally.

This lift was the latest development since the creation of the annual Afghan Ski Challenge, originally established by a Swiss journalist in 2011 and later

on organised by the Bamyan ski Club, which was a ski touring race over 2.5 kilometres. Indeed, the Bamyan region offers tremendous backcountry skiing potential. More than 200 ascent/descent options have been described in backcountry guide to Bamyan and Band-e-Amir region⁶⁹.

Although country's tourism appeal is debatable, some places were very popular with tourists through the 1970s. 4 decades of war have destroyed the country, including its once profitable tourism industry. The Bamyan province, formerly the centre of Afghanistan's tourism industry, was aspiring to become again an appealing destination for tourists, with its culture, natural beauty and snow-covered mountains. In fact, in several countries across the world, tourism has already demonstrated an ability to rebound quickly following a war. However, recent history seems to make this aspiration more a dream than ever.



⁶⁹ Ski Afghanistan - A Backcountry Guide to Bamyan & Band-e-Amir, Laurie Ashley & Chad Dear, Aga Khan Foundation, 2011



Algeria



Although the highest point of Algeria is located in the Saharan part of the country (Mount Tahat, in the Hoggar, 3'003 meters above sea level), the Atlas mountain range in the coastal region also rises to over 2'000 meters high. In Kabylia and in the Aurès, several mountains are covered with snow during the winter. In several areas, there is sufficient snowfall to ski for 2 to 3 months during the winter.

Even though the country uses gondolas for urban transportation in several major cities and recreational areas, there are no longer any operating ski lifts in the country. For the time being, ski resorts in Algeria are a thing of the past. Although at least 4 ski areas used to be equipped with ski lifts, they have all been either destroyed or no longer function. In recent years, there were plans to rehabilitate 2 of these areas, but this has not yet been implemented.

For instance, in the Blida area, 70 kilometres away from the capital city of Algiers, the **Chr  a** National Park used to have a ski area. Located 1'500 meters above sea level, it was the first one in Africa when it opened in the 1940s and was equipped with a surface lift. Later, in the 1980s, an additional chairlift was installed as well as a 7-kilometre long 2-section gondola, in order to enable direct access from the city of Blida. All lifts were later damaged by the civil war and only the gondola was renovated in 2007. Today, on the weekends, the small slopes are sometimes crowded with locals sledging, even if there is no longer any organised form of skiing.

Another place that became famous for skiing in 1948 is **Tikjda**. Rising to over 2'000 meters above sea level and offering a vertical drop of about 500 meters, it used to be equipped with 2 ski lifts and a chalet-hotel. Even if the lifts are no longer in use, Tikjda remains the second place in Algeria where people still do some snow sports.



Iran



Modern skiing was introduced in Iran around 1930. Germans, who were in the country to build the national railway, and Iranian students, who studied in Switzerland and France and learned to ski there, helped to introduce the sport. In 1947, the Olympic Federation of Iran and the Iranian Ski Federation were founded. The first lift was installed in 1951. Iran was represented for the first time in history by a skier in the women's competition at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games.

Most ski resorts were built during the reign of the Shah. When he was overthrown in the 1979 revolution, the Iranian clergy closed all ski areas, as they were considered emblematic of the decadent western lifestyle. In the mid-1980s, growing demand put pressure on the government to reconsider its position and reopen the ski resorts. Today, there are a dozen in operation, and the most important are located in the Alborz Mountains above Tehran, in the northern part of the country. The highest peak in Iran is located here, Mount Damavand, a giant dormant volcano rising to over 5'600 meters above sea level. Even if several new gondolas were delivered in the 2000s, infrastructure is still rather old and facilities often limited. However, the resorts are located at high altitude and have excellent snow conditions. Several resorts also offer spring and summertime activities, such as tennis, volleyball, climbing, mountain biking or grass skiing. Although runs are no longer segregated between men and women, the lifts still are. There are two separate lines and it is illegal for a man and a woman to share a gondola.



The biggest resort in Iran and even in the Middle East is **Dizin**, 70 kilometres north of the capital. Founded in 1969, the ski area lies between 2'650 and 3'600 meters above sea level. It thus accounts among the highest ski resorts

in the world. It covers 470 hectares and receives about 7 meters of snow per year. With 23 runs for all levels, 4 gondolas, 3 chairlifts and 9 surface lifts, it is the first ski area in Iran to have been officially recognised by the FIS as suitable to host officially sanctioned international competitions. The mountain also offers many freeride options. Dizin has 2 hotels, 19 cottages, villas and private apartments. An all-day lift pass costs USD 30.

Shemshak is the second largest ski area in the country. Located 60 kilometres northeast of the capital, it opened its doors in 1958 and lies between 2'550 and 3'030 meters above sea level. It was originally designed to offer a trendy spot to the Teheran jet set. With 2 chairlifts, 5 surface lifts and 8 runs, it is well suited for experienced skiers and snowboarders. The resort offers the opportunity to ski at night as well as cross-country skiing. There is only one official hotel, Shemshak Hotel, built in the style of an old Austrian chalet; the resort has adopted a somewhat western style.

The **Tochal** recreation complex, which is connected to Tehran by a 7.5 kilometres 3-section gondola lift⁷⁰, features a ski area at the top. In addition to the gondola, there are 2 chairlifts and 1 surface lift that serve the 4 runs.

Ab-Ali is the oldest resort in Iran, where the first lift was built in 1951. It helped to instigate the development of skiing in the country. Recently renovated, it has a few new lifts: 1 gondola and 8 surface lifts for a total hourly capacity of 4'500 people. The 5.5 kilometres of runs at this ski area, located between 2'400 and 2'650 meters high, are well suited for beginners and intermediate level skiers.

The newest ski area in the country is **Darband-Sar**, opened in 1982. Originally, a very small ski area with only one chairlift, it has been purchased by a private investor that is now developing it further. Designed for beginners and intermediate skiers, it has 6 lifts: 1 gondola, 3 chairlifts and 2 surface lifts. Ski area of Darband-Sar is close to Dizin (with currently and interconnection project under study).

Situated in an exceptional setting, **Pooladkaf** is the southernmost resort in Iran, located only 400 kilometres away from Kuwait. Founded in the 1960s, it

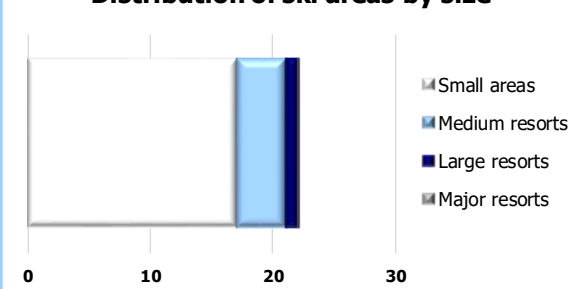
⁷⁰ One of the longest gondolas in the world, climbing 1'840 meters vertical. 500'000 people use it annually. There has been recently a project to extend it to a total of 8.1 kilometres.



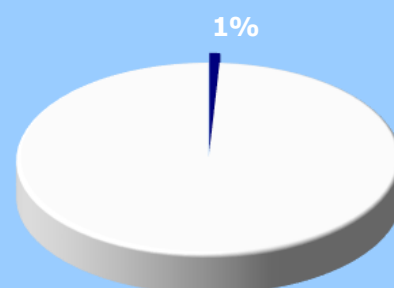
Iran

Ski areas	22
Lifts	72
National skiers	811'628
Skier visits per lift	10'417
Average skier visits	750'000
Skier visits per national skier	0.91
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.01
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.00

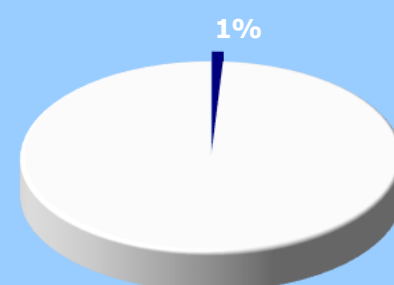
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers



offers a full range of activities: skiing, snowmobiling, restaurant, equestrian centre, après-ski, hotel, yurts, mountain biking, and hiking. It is the 5th largest in Iran. A 4-seater gondola⁷¹ and a ski lift allow to access to the only red slope.

Iranian ski resorts require new investment, since most of them still operate with equipment from the late 1970s. However, this would require promoting skiing at a national level to attract more skiers and to increase resort revenues in order to provide the financial means to make any new investments. With regard to foreign visitors, apart from the occasional diplomat, tourists are a rare sight at ski areas around Tehran.



⁷¹ Second-hand use of old main lift from Chalmazel resort in France. On all the cabins of the lift there is still an inscription: *Département de la Loire*.



Even if large parts of the country are flat deserts and of low altitude, Iraqi Kurdistan, in the Northeast, is a mountainous region, with peaks reaching up 3'611 meters above sea level (Cheekha Dar high point, near the border with Iran).

Snow is not unusual in the mountain in this autonomous region of Kurdistan, even if not all places are accessible due to some hostilities and unsettled disputes. Already several decades ago, the mountain near Haj Omran, next to the Iranian border, was an acknowledged place for skiing, even if the place was not equipped.

Recently, an ice and snow festival was held there at Kudu Mountain.

It is reported that a first ever ski school was opened in the mountain village of Penjwin in early 2010s. It does not operate any ski lift. The only infrastructure is a simple municipal building that houses the equipment.

The only equipped ski area in Iraq, **Korek Mountain Resort**, opened in 2013. Located about 100 kilometres east of the city of Arbil, it features a 3.7-kilometre gondola lift, bringing the people from base station in Bekhal up to the mountain, 1'690 meters above sea level, where there are some facilities for skiing. Equipment rental and a magic carpet allow everybody that can afford to have a taste of snow sports. The place has become a popular attraction for Iraqis and Kurdish people seeking to have some respite in the snowy landscape. Some are coming from regions that do not experience snow and have there their first contact with it. Some visitors are even coming from the neighbouring countries Turkey and Iran. In one packed day, the place can welcome up to 2'500 visitors. Of course, only a fraction is skiing, despite ski can also be practiced without snow, thanks to a dry slope. The mountain also offers some amusement park style attractions, zip-line, tubing, chalets and food outlets.





Israel



In spite of its small size, Israel is home to a variety of geographic features, including mountain ranges in Galilee, Carmel and the Golan Heights in the North. Even if the city of Jerusalem receives snow at least once per year, only the Golan Heights are high enough in altitude to offer the requisite conditions for winter sports.

The sole ski resort of Israel is located there, just next to the UNDOF buffer zone with Syria. Although **Mount Hermon** is located in this buffer zone, the Israeli ski area is called Hermon Ski Resort. It is located on the south-eastern slopes of the Mount Hermon, between 1'600 and 2'040 meters high. During the winter, when the mountains are covered in snow, the resort attracts a lot of visitors that come to enjoy the snow. It offers family activities, like sledding and of course skiing. On peak days, it hosts up to 12'000 visitors.

The first lift was built in 1971. Now, the resort offers several chairlifts and surface lifts. It even features a FIS-approved competition run. Winter operations usually run from January to March. However, during some seasons, skiing may be limited to only 2 to 4 weeks due to the lack of snow. In 1999, the resort had no sufficient snow at all for skiing. The resort also offers summer activities.



2023/24 season's highlights

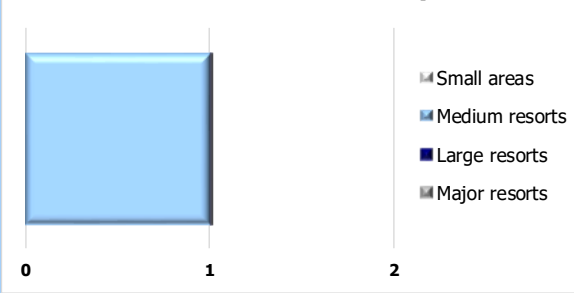
The only ski area of the country was shut down by military order on October 7, 2023, after the Hamas terrorists attack and did not reopen to the public during the winter. Thus, no skier visits were recorded during the 2023/24 season in Israel.



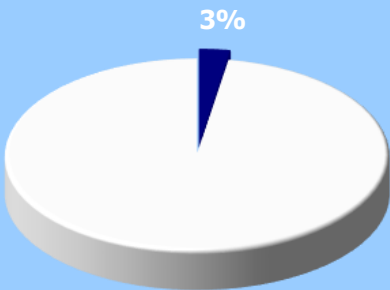
Israel

Ski areas	1
Lifts	12
National skiers	253'456
Skier visits per lift	8'333
Average skier visits	100'000
Skier visits per national skier	0.39
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.01
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.00

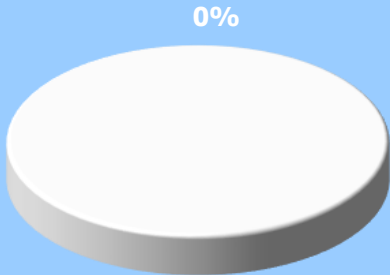
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





Lebanon



Only 23% of Lebanon lies in coastal plains and lowlands; it is a mountainous country, with 2 mountain ranges parallel to the Mediterranean coastline. Both ranges run up and down the entire length of the country. The first row of mountains is called the Lebanon Mountains. It varies in between 10 to 56 kilometres wide. Narrow and deep gorges cut through the range. The Lebanon Mountains top out at 3'088 meters above sea level, with Al Qurnat as Sawda as the high point. They gradually descend to the South before rising again to a height

of 2'695 meters at Mount Sannine. The second range, the Anti-Lebanon (An-tilibanos) Range, is separated from the first range by the Biqa Valley. It runs parallel to the first, bordering with Syria and Israel. Mount Hermon, its highest peak (2'814 meters above sea level), is situated in the South, on the geographical border with Syria. Parts of both of these mountain ranges are covered in snow in winter.

Lebanon is one of those countries where it is possible to ski in the morning and to swim in the sea in the afternoon. It has 6 ski resorts with lifts and groomed slopes⁷². The ski season last about 4 months, from mid-December to the beginning of April.



⁷² One of these ski areas now only features tow lifts, operated by the local hotel. Resort's buildings were damaged by the war and major lifts were dismantled.

Local industry considers that the total of domestic skiers is on the decline. In the past, Lebanese ski resorts also used to welcome visitors from the Emirates, Syria or Saudi Arabia, but these times are over.

Skiing developed and became popular in the 1930s, when the first ski club was founded, soon followed by the first ski school. The first lift was installed in 1953 in **Cedars**. This resort is reputed for its charming natural surroundings. It is located at an altitude of 2'000 meters and benefits from an extended season (sometimes beginning in early November and lasting until late April). Resort capacity was enhanced in 2005 with the addition of a few chairlifts. Further projects include the construction of a gondola and new accommodations.

Mzaar offers world-class infrastructure and facilities for tourists. It is the best-equipped and most popular resort, capturing about 75% of the national skier visits. It features 18 lifts and 42 runs totalling 80 kilometres. With a base elevation of 1'850 meters, the resort tops out at 2'465 meters above sea level.

Faqra is a private ski club, meaning the club owns the land, the 4 lifts and all other facilities.

2023/24 season's highlights

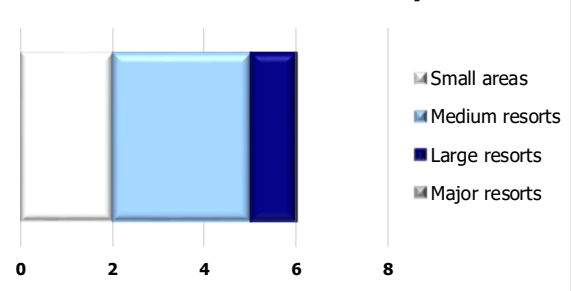
The season in Lebanon was marked by an increase in visitors to ski resorts, despite the ongoing conflict in the south of the country. Many Lebanese sought refuge in the mountains to momentarily escape the violence. At Kfardebian, crowned the region's winter tourism capital, normalcy prevailed with busy slopes and long queues. Skiing provided a way for people to disconnect from the war. More people came to ski compared to the previous season.



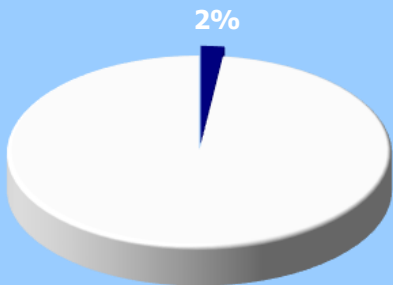
Lebanon

Ski areas	6
Lifts	46
National skiers	109'795
Skier visits per lift	6'522
Average skier visits	300'000
Skier visits per national skier	2.60
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.05
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.01

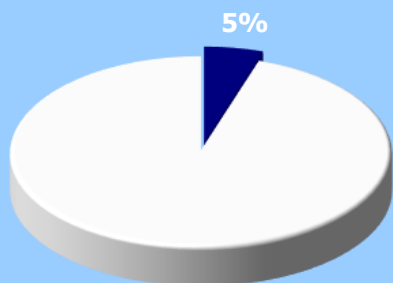
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





Surrounded entirely by South Africa, 66% of Lesotho’s land area is mountainous. Its lowest elevation is 1’000 meters above sea level, and the highest peak tops at 3’600 meters. With some natural snowfall, the country almost brings together all the necessary criteria to operate a successful ski resort. This was enough to motivate a few entrepreneurs to start **Afriski Mountain Resort**.

It is located in the arid Mahlasela Valley, 3’222 meters above sea level, in the Drakensburg-Maluti Mountains. The ski area features a 1-kilometre-long T-bar as well as 2 beginner lifts and a magic carpet for kids and beginners. The resort is not always covered with natural snow during the winter months. In general, snow falls 3 to 4 times per winter season, but is quite unpredictable: it can snow 10 out of 12 months a year at the resort’s altitude. The ski area is equipped with a snowmaking system, which guarantees skiing from June to the beginning of September.



The ski area is far from any urban area. The nearest city is located 110 kilometres away, and it takes four-and-a-half hours to drive there from Johannesburg, South Africa. The ski area offers winter and summer activities. Various chalets and group accommodations provide for 250 beds at the resort. Since Afriski is an alliance of individual companies and private

homeowners that work in cooperation with each other, similar to a European ski resort, a central booking office services the rooms available at the resort. Winter and summer activities, including equipment rental and meals, can also be booked through this agency.

The ski area hosts around 12'000 skiers per season, with a good portion of them being foreign visitors. 90% are South Africans, who come up primarily from Johannesburg. There are also skiers who travel from farther away, such as Germans, Dutch and North Americans.

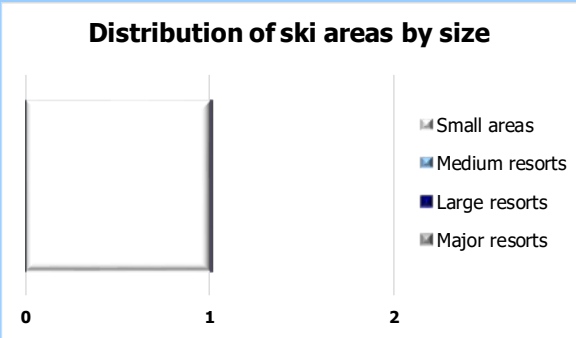
It is reported that the slope at Afriski did not operate at full swing during the 2023 season. Only a beginner's slope is said to have open.

2024 season's highlights

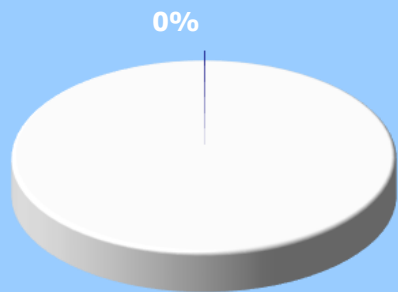
Afriski managed to open during the season despite challenges, using snowmaking to keep the main slope and terrain park operational. High electricity costs remain a challenge for the resort.



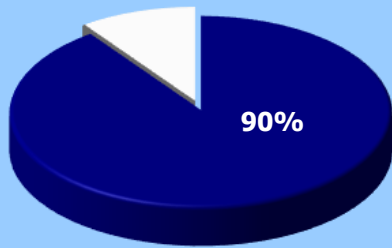
Lesotho	
Ski areas	1
Lifts	1
National skiers	1'999
Skier visits per lift	12'000
Average skier visits	12'000
Skier visits per national skier	0.60
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.00
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.03



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





Morocco



Morocco has several mountain ranges: in the North, the Rif, the Middle and High Atlas in the centre and the Anti-Atlas close to the Saharan plains. The highest summit, Jbel Toubkal, south of Marrakech, rises to 4'165 meters above sea level.

In the 1930s, mountaineers and skiers already enjoyed the snow-covered mountains of Morocco, even if access was rather difficult at that time due to poor or inexistent roads. Situation improved in the 1960s, and skiing became fashionable.

The largest and most well-known ski resort in the country is **Oukaïmeden**. Chalets and hostels were built there in the 1940s and 1950s. In the 1960s, the first ski lifts were installed and the resort continued to develop by adding restaurants and nightclubs. By early 2000s, it featured 5 surface lifts and 1 chairlift, topping out at 3'200 meters above sea level (the base area is at 2'600 meters high), which makes it the highest ski resort in North Africa. It was possible to ski from November to April. The resort was also popular in the summer. Close to Marrakech, it provided a cool refuge during the warm



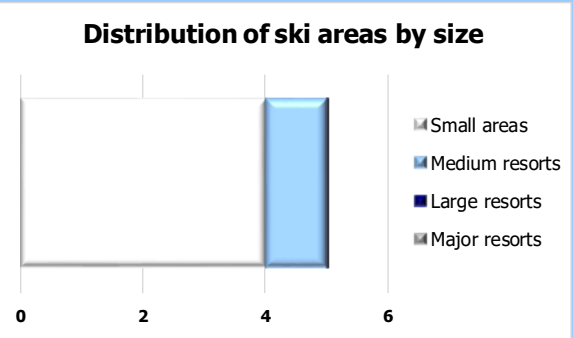
summer months. Mountain biking, climbing and mountaineering are all popular here. However, the resort has faced challenges regarding its ski lift infrastructure. Reports indicate that these installations are aging and in need of modernization. A rehabilitation project, estimated around EUR 15 million, has been contemplated to upgrade the infrastructure and improve accessibility. Some sources suggest that ski lifts have not been operational for several years, making access to the slopes reliant on other means.

The only still operating ski area in Morocco is **Mischliffen**, in the Ifrane region. This city is located in a region with a cold climate, one that posts the lowest temperatures in Africa. The mountains are lower, with cedar forests and smaller vertical drops. The area rises to only 1'650 meters above sea level and is equipped with 2 ski lifts and some accommodations. The ski season is shorter, with slopes skiable from December to end of February.

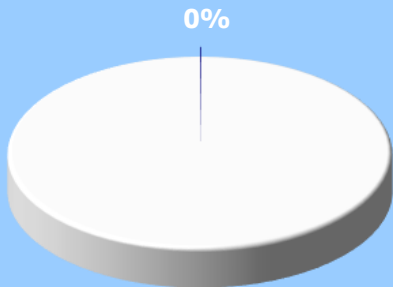
The area of Azrou was also once known for skiing, with 2 surface lifts installed in the 1950s at Borg Doumergue and Djebel Hebri. They are now out of service. In the past, they used to host ski races. The first one was held there in 1936, even before any lifts were built.



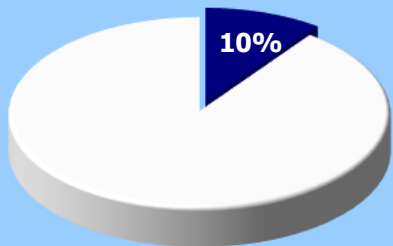
Morocco	
Ski areas	5
Lifts	10
National skiers	32'649
Skier visits per lift	10'000
Average skier visits	100'000
Skier visits per national skier	2.76
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.00
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.00



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





With peaks rising to over 8'000 meters above sea level, Pakistan is blessed with majestic mountains. 7 of Asia's 16 highest peaks are located in Pakistan. Shared with China, K2's 8'611 summit makes it the second highest peak on the planet. The western and northern parts of the country are covered in mountains. The highest peaks are in the North, while in the West, the mountain ranges rise up to 3'000 meters above sea level.

The first ski area in Pakistan to be equipped with a chairlift was **Malam**

Jabba. It was owned by the Pakistani Tourism Development Corporation and featured a 50-room hotel together with an 800-metre-long slope located 2'804 meters above sea level. The resort was equipped with modern facilities through cooperation with the Austrian government and was completed in 1988. It was however left on standby for the next 10 years due to disputes over operations.

Malam Jabba then quickly became a popular retreat, especially for families and students from Islamabad and Peshawar. Many of them drove the 4 to 5 hours to the resort not for skiing but just for the snow. Malam Jabba gets a lot of it; the snowpack can reach up to 3 meters deep. Even in summer, the place was packed with people who just came for the fresh mountain air, took a ride on the chairlift to the summit ridge (2'670 meters) and enjoyed the stunning views of Nanga Parbat. It all ended when the Swat valley fell under the influence of the Taliban in 2006. Since they consider skiing un-Islamic, they blew up the hotel, the chairlift and the grooming equipment.



In 2009, the Pakistani army regained control over the Swat valley but it took another 5 years before contracts to rebuild the resort were signed. Under a lease from the Pakistani government, a large tobacco company from Islamabad won the tender to develop Malam Jabba, to build a 4-star hotel and other 3-star accommodations, a new chairlift and run the place as a 4-season resort. In exchange, the government promised to rebuild the road and take care of the power supply. The chairlift was rebuilt in summer 2015, supplied by a Chinese manufacturer who also supplied the magic carpets for a beginner area and a toboggan run. Nevertheless, skiing there never actually stopped. A simple lift has served about half of the vertical drop and locals have continued to offer ski rentals and lessons. The new hotel, managed by a local brand, opened in March 2020. Some competitions were held during the 2020/21 season, with the Pakistan International Snowboarding Championship and Festival. The resort has been shut down again by end of 2021 because of local unrest.

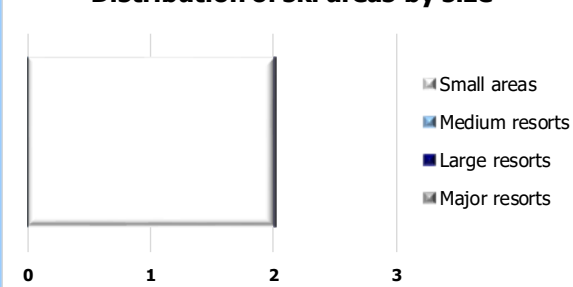
In 2014, **Naltar** ski area became the second ski resort in Pakistan to get a chairlift, with the help of the Ski Federation of Pakistan. This second-hand lift previously in use in the Swiss ski resort of Villars-Gryon replaced an old surface lift. Access to the ski area is difficult and requires either a 4-wheel drive vehicle or helicopter. Actually, the ski area is located in an army base and is primarily used by army officials. The staff is employed by the Pakistani Air Force. The resort features the country's longest ski run at 2.5 kilometres in length.



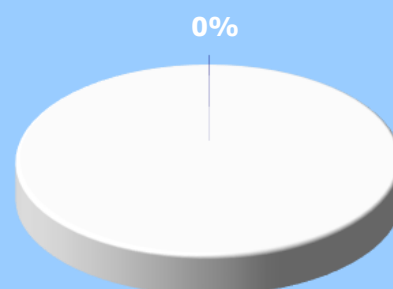
Pakistan

Ski areas	2
Lifts	8
National skiers	96'619
Skier visits per lift	1'250
Average skier visits	10'000
Skier visits per national skier	0.10
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.00
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.00

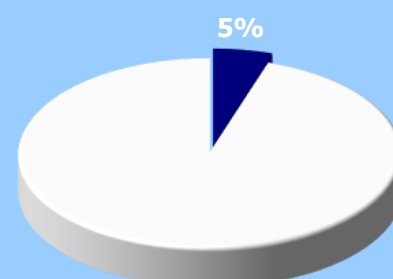
Distribution of ski areas by size



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





South Africa



South African interior highlands are separated from the coastline and its lowlands by the Great Escarpment, a 3'500-kilometre-long geological formation along the edge of the Central Plateau with mountains that range from 2'000 to 3'300 meters high. In the East, the highest stretch of the Great Escarpment is known as the Drakensberg Mountain range. It features the country's high point, Peak Mafadi, culminating at 3'450 meters above sea level, on the border with Lesotho. Other mountain ranges are located between

the coastal plains and the Great Escarpment (Swartberg and Langeberg).

South Africa has only one single commercial ski resort, even if it is possible to ski in different areas in the mountains. Located near the border with Lesotho, on the highest mountain in the region, Ben McDhui Peak, the **Tiffindell** ski area tops out at 2'900 meters high.

Since opening in 1993, an area for beginners, and 2 main runs with 2 T-bars were built. A recent investment was made to renovate the 2 T-bars, increase the length of the ski runs, add a terrain park and upgrade services in order to improve its offering. Although its location on the southern face of Ben McDhui Peak receives enough natural snow, the ski area is equipped with a modern snowmaking system that covers 3 hectares.

There are daily entertainment programs offered to children and adults. Tiffindell also has an attractive after-ski scene, with mountain-themed bars to relax after a day on the slopes. The accommodation consists of rustic log cabins for 4-8 people, Luxury Mountain Chalets for up to 12 people and Mountain Suite rooms for 2 people – for a total of over 150 beds. Popular ski week packages include meals, lift passes, ski equipment and instruction.

The ski season extends from late May to early September (Southern Hemisphere). Skiing in South Africa is of course a completely different experience than skiing in Europe. The number of runs and infrastructure is limited, as is the snow quality. In spite of such a limited offer, the country has a ski association. Founded in 1990, Snow Sports South Africa (SSSA) is affiliated with the FIS and recognised as an official organization for everything relating to skiing in South Africa. It serves to coordinate and promote the development of skiing in the country.

In conjunction with Tiffindell, the association organises the South African National Skiing Championships every year. Incredibly, in 2014, SSSA and Tiffindell also hosted the first Men's FIS slalom ever to be staged on the

African Continent and again in 2015 the men were joined by the women for the first Ladies' FIS race in Africa. Competing racers were from Austria, Sweden, Belgium, Iceland, the United States, Slovenia, Italy and Slovakia. A local ski club called the Ikhephu Ski Pups train around 120 children from the surrounding schools annually. There is a Winter Sports Academy based at the resort, which provides 24 children with both schooling and race training for the ski months of June, July and August.

From a snow perspective, there are some years with little to no natural snowfall in South Africa (and Lesotho), but low temperatures allow Tiffindell as well as Afriski in Lesotho to make snow in order to open the ski areas. In Tiffindell's case, 2014, despite poor in natural snowfalls, was the longest season on record thanks to a newly extended snowmaking system. In 2020, the ski area remained closed due to the pandemic situation. It looks that the ski area never reopened since covid-19 outbreak. Despite some indications they would operate again in 2023, it seems the resort remained closed.

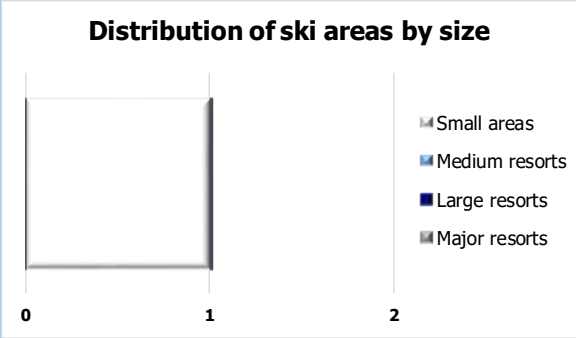
2024 season's highlights

Tiffindell has not operated since the winter of 2019 and is currently up for sale.

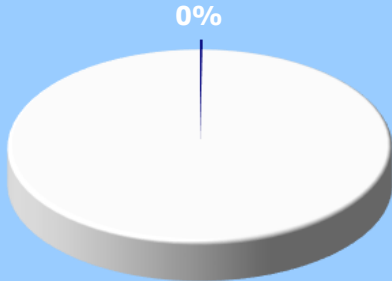


South Africa

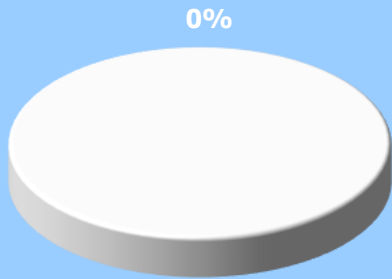
Ski areas	1
Lifts	5
National skiers	119'788
Skier visits per lift	5'000
Average skier visits	25'000
Skier visits per national skier	0.21
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.00
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.00



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





Turkey



Turkey, in addition to its beaches, is also a mountainous country with almost 60% of the territory covered in mountains. They are spread all over the Anatolian region, with the Köroğlu and Pontic ranges in the North and the Taurus Mountains in the South; they meet join in the eastern part of the country. The average altitude in Turkey is 1'131 meters above sea level, but in Eastern

Anatolia, this average increases to 1'600 meters. Located in the far eastern part of the country, Turkey's highest mountain, with an elevation of 5'137 meters above sea level, is the legendary Mount Ararat, the supposed final resting place for Noah's Ark.

The Turkish Ski Federation was founded in 1936, the year when the Turkish Olympic team first participated in the Winter Olympic Games. This was the impetus to develop skiing in Turkey and build ski resorts, especially **Uludag** (the highest mountain in Western Turkey, topping out at 2'543 meters above sea level, about 45 kilometres from Bursa), **Erciyes** (Mount Erciyes is the highest point of Central Anatolia with 3'916 meters) and **Elmadag** (in the province of Ankara).

Internationally sanctioned competitions were first organised in Turkey as early as 1944. To increase participation in skiing, ski training clinics and holiday camps are organised every year, but for the time being, this only reaches a small section of the population.

New ski areas have been built on a regular basis in Turkey and the pace increased between 2005 and 2012. In 2000, there were 20 ski areas. Today, there are more than 40, spread all over the country, plus another 50 additional sites identified as having the potential to become new ski areas. For the time being however, less than 10 ski areas offer more than 4 lifts. Hotels provide approximately 15'000 rooms all ski resorts combined.



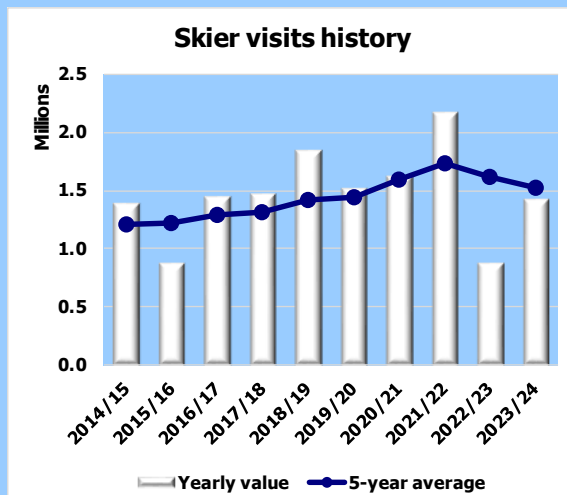
In fact, the growth in supply currently has not demonstrated a symmetric growth in demand. Skier visits remain at a rather low level despite all the available infrastructure and some state of the art ski resorts.

Winter 2022/23 featured a low snow coverage in several regions of the country and some resorts could only open mid of January. Then came a big earthquake in south-eastern Turkey. It affected all business countrywide, and especially tourism. Therefore, attendance at ski resorts was much lower than the level of former years, with only 900'000 skier visits on estimate.

2023/24 season's highlights

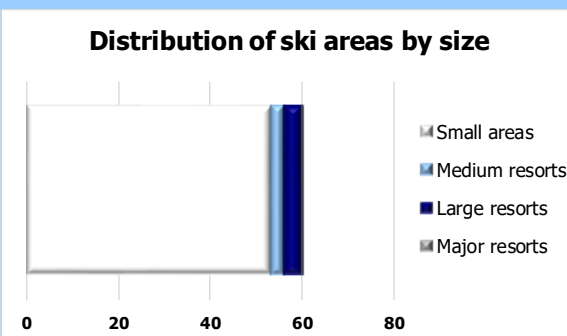
Season 2023/24 was marked by a lack of snow coverage, as even some resorts were not opened at all. There were an estimated **1.4 million skier visits**.

One of the most famous resorts in Turkey is **Palandoken**, which hosts FIS competitions. It lies in the eastern part of Turkey, near the city of Erzurum and has one of the coldest climates in the country resulting in very good snow conditions. The Winter Universiade in February 2011 was the driving force to bring the Turkish ski industry to new heights. In preparation for the event, Palandoken invested nearly USD 100 million. In 2014, the brand *GrandErzurum* was born from the merger of Palandoken with the neighbouring resort **Konakli**. The brand has later on been changed into *Ejder 3200 World Ski Center*. Although both ski areas are not physically connected, *Ejder 3200 World Ski Center* totals 65 kilometres of ski trails and 14 lifts. 212 snowmakers guarantee snow

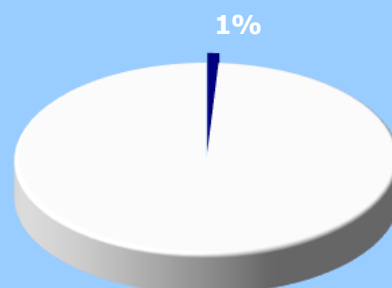


Turkey

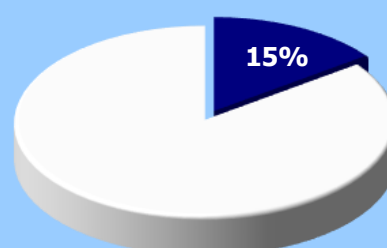
Ski areas	60
Lifts	159
National skiers	852'878
Skier visits per lift	9'617
Average skier visits	1'529'076
Skier visits per national skier	1.52
Skier visits per inhabitant	0.02
Skier visits per foreign visitor	0.01



Participation rate nationals



Proportion foreign skiers





coverage for 75% of the resort's skiable area, located between 2'200 and 3'180 meters above sea level.

Although it was already possible to ski at the base of Mount **Erciyes** for a long time, the area developed into a modern, state of the art ski resort – the largest in Turkey. Initiated in 2005 by Kayseri Metropolitan Municipality and later on managed by its wholly owned development company Kayseri Erciyes A.S., it was inaugurated in 2011. After a global investment of EUR 350 million, the resort now offers 13 aerial lifts, including gondolas and 4 and 6-seater chairlifts, some with heated seats and bubbles, totalling capacity of 26'750 skiers per hour. 58% of the 102 kilometres of slopes are equipped with snowmaking. They range between 2'200 and 3'400 meters above sea level. The resort offers 1'450 beds (with some further hotels planned, together with additional lifts on the other side of the village) and the 25 kilometres away neighbouring city of Kayseri offers an additional 6'000 hotel beds, including international brands. Lift passes are priced very attractively. The resort has FIS homologated slopes and already hosted several World Cup events. It also offers night skiing and promotes *cultural skiing*, with tours of Cappadocia in addition to days spent on the resort slopes.

Kartalkaya, located west of the Balkan Sea, in the Koroglu Mountains, built the first professional snowpark in Turkey. The ski area lies between 1'850 and 2'250 meters above sea level and has 18 lifts serving 12 runs of all levels. Kartalkaya has 3 major 4-star hotels with a total capacity of 2'250 beds. The resort hopes to become better known worldwide by hosting international competitions in the future. Since it snows a lot, the ski season lasts an average of 120 days.

With 2 gondolas, 6 chairlifts and 8 surface lifts, **Uludag** is one of the largest resorts in Turkey. It is located near Bursa, offers an uphill capacity of 19'630 people per hour, and 28 kilometres of runs. Snowfall generally averages 3 meters per winter. In addition to alpine skiing, the area enjoys favourable conditions for cross-country and heliskiing. Located in a national park, the ski area also has swimming pools, fitness centres and a well-developed night-life. With its 27 accommodations for all levels of expectations (some are State properties), Uludag offers 3'000 beds.

From 2000 to 2020, 50 new lifts were installed in the Turkish mountains. To diversify the tourism offering (primarily beaches), there are major projects in the works to further develop Turkey's winter tourism and bring the number of ski resorts to 100. This plan, which includes EUR 50 billion in investments, 1'000 new lifts and 275'000 beds for 14 million of skiers, has been questioned a lot in the media. At present, although resort capacity is on the rise, they are not yet at a stage to compete with foreign resorts in attracting an international clientele. The potential for the Turkish mountains is not yet fully exploited. The Minister of Sports has declared the willingness of the government to promote winter sports among children, in a country where only an estimated 1% of the population participates in skiing.

Foreign skiers were primarily coming from Russia, the Ukraine or Iran, which currently does not seem to be the best market focus. Thanks to the 2011

Winter Universiade, which brought together 58 nations, the country had hopes of attracting more Europeans. In addition, many Turks still travel abroad for their winter holidays. Improvement in local infrastructure will increase the retention rate within the country.



Closing section



Conclusion

Despite climate change and increasingly chaotic weather conditions, despite the constant denigration of skiing by mainstream media and prevailing thought, and despite the evolving global economic and geopolitical situation, **skiing has remained a resilient activity over the past 20 years. Ski resort attendance has recovered well since the covid-19 pandemic.**

The ski business, therefore, is doing fairly well. **However, it is ultimately lucky because it still neglects many efforts that could be made to attract more skiers. Indeed, the customer journey still needs to be considered globally and improved.** Moreover, digitalization solutions that have been introduced often add chaos rather than helping to improve it.

To address the major ecological challenge of tourism, ski resorts must rethink how to transport skiers to the slopes. Although there are a few examples worldwide of new valley lifts, reaching most ski resorts using public transportation is usually difficult, but doing so with low-emission transport modes such as electric trains or cable cars is often a near impossibility. These are clearly major infrastructure issues that often exceed the competencies of the resort itself or its lift operators. They require strong commitments from public authorities and governments. Unfortunately, these entities are quick to attend global forums to discuss climate issues but seem incredibly reluctant to tackle the root of a massive societal problem they continue to deny: individual motorized mobility is not sustainable, even if efforts are made to introduce cleaner energy sources.

However, before this major issue even has a chance to be addressed, ski resorts face a very practical challenge that they have struggled with for decades without truly solving: **it is simply too complicated to go skiing, period!**

Since the early 2000s, we have been bombarded with talks about the digitalization of tourism. It is often the keynote topic at tourism conferences. We are shown images of all kinds of technological wonders that should be possible and that would make the skier's journey so easy. But the reality is quite different.

A quick survey of the world's 50 major ski resorts, as presented in this report, shows that for most of them, it is impossible to book anything beyond accommodation and ski passes directly on their websites. And even worse, the situation does not seem to have improved over the past 20 years.

Ideally, a *one-stop shopping* experience should allow visitors to book accommodation, ski passes, equipment rental, ski lessons, airport transfers, and, as a bonus, additional leisure activities such as wellness (spas, massages), local gastronomy (culinary experiences, wine tastings), or adventure excursions (snowshoe hikes, dog sledding, winter paragliding).

In 2005, it was possible to book all of this on at least one ski destination's website—I had personally experienced it. Today, after trying again, I realize

that even for that destination, the *one-stop shopping* offering is now more limited than it was 20 years ago.

Tour operators sometimes offer packages that include all basic services, but they are almost always in a rigid format, with fixed dates and very little flexibility. The infamous Saturday-to-Saturday stay remains the norm, even though there is a trend towards more flexibility. Private transfers have also seen strong growth, but otherwise, there is little true innovation.

There are a few rare travel APIs that allow for fully customizable trips—the holy grail—but finding them is a challenge. Moreover, they do not cover all destinations.

All of this highlights the fact that the digitalization of tourism remains an empty promise, I would even say a joke. For the average skier looking to visit a ski resort, it is still a frustrating obstacle course. Here, I am not even talking about the on-site customer journey, which is another area of concern, but rather the **pre-trip booking process, which is supposed to be digitalized yet remains highly inefficient.**

How does the ski industry not realize that if it wants skiers on its slopes, it must first bring them there? While waiting for governments to implement more widespread carbon-neutral mobility solutions to ski resorts, these resorts should already be taking every possible technical step to facilitate booking access for their guests.

One possible solution would be an integrated system where ski resorts adopt a connected *marketplace* model, allowing visitors to seamlessly customize their experience. If ski resorts want to ensure their future and attract new skiers, they must finally embrace true digitalization of the customer booking experience, offering solutions tailored to different skier profiles. The outdated rigid package model belongs to the past—it is time to offer real personalization and flexibility and not only to speak about this in keynote speeches and business presentations.

This starts with truly functional e-commerce platforms. A ski resort's website should not merely display an unsolicited promotional video that consumes all available bandwidth and bombards visitors with useless ads. What sells ski trips is the ease of navigation, a user-friendly marketplace, the ability to compare options quickly, customize a trip based on preferences, and complete the booking process smoothly without having to visit multiple websites.

A skier arriving by public transport should be able to purchase an all-inclusive package featuring transfer from the nearest train station, luggage storage, heated lockers room upon arrival, and fast-track access to the ski lifts with a *ready-to-ski* option. Families should have access to turnkey solutions that include childcare services or kids' clubs, child-friendly menus in mountain restaurants, and special discounts based on the number of family members booked. Young groups should benefit from packages including premium dormitory-style accommodations with vibrant common areas, ski passes, equipment rental, and added perks like organized après-ski events, discounts on group lessons, and friendly competitions. For beginners, the ideal solution would offer immediate assistance upon arrival, including a *Zero Stress*

package that bundles ski pass, rental, and an introductory lesson, along with a dedicated welcome coach to help them navigate the resort and even a simulator session to learn the basics stress-free. Finally, let us not forget the hedonists—those for whom a day of skiing is incomplete without a touch of luxury and pleasure. Why not offer them a *Ski & Gourmet* option featuring a mountaintop breakfast before the first descent? A *Gourmet Pass* could grant them access to regional specialties at select restaurants along the slopes, while exclusive experiences like a dinner in an igloo or an overnight stay in a remote mountain lodge, complete with wine tasting under the stars, would make their trip unforgettable.

If ski resorts truly want to secure their future and attract new generations of skiers, they must embrace genuine digitalization of the customer booking experience, providing adaptable solutions tailored to different preferences. The old model of rigid packages is obsolete—now is the time to deliver true personalization and flexibility.

What are ski resorts waiting for? A long time ago, when I presented the 1st issue of this international report in a panel discussion, I remember one of the panellists provokingly suggested that ski resorts might run out of customers before they would run out of snow ...



Sources and acknowledgments

As comprehensive information is not available worldwide for the industry, and even scarce for some countries, the present report compiled data from numerous sources.

A lot of effort has therefore been focused on presenting the data as accurately as possible. The data has been crosschecked numerous times. If, however, a reliable source has been omitted or the data insufficiently updated, the author would very much appreciate being informed for future reference. Any comments to **vanat@vanat.ch** will be welcome.

Besides the personal historical database assembled by the author, and in addition to conducting extensive web research, the following sources of data were used:

- Reports, webpages and news from national or regional ski areas associations: ACESKI - Asociacion de Centros de Ski de Chile A.G., ALF (Norwegian Ski Areas Association), ANEF (Associazione Nazionale Esercenti Funivari), ASAA (Australian Ski Areas Association), ASSQ (Association des Stations de Ski du Québec), ATUDEM (Asociacion Turistica De Estaciones de Esqui y Montana), Canadian Ski Council, CWSAA (Canada West Ski Areas Association), DSF (Domaines Skiabiles de France), Esqui Espana, NSAA (National Ski Areas Association), NZSC (New Zealand Snowsports Council), PSNiT (Polish Ski And Tourist Resorts Association), RMS (Remontées Mécaniques Suisses), SHKY (Finnish Ski Area Association), SLAO (Swedish Ski Area Association), Ski Andorra, VDS (Verband Deutscher Seilbahnen und Schlepplifte), WKO (Fachverband der Seilbahnen Österreichs) and others
- Annual reports from large ski resorts operators, such as Compagnie des Alpes, Skistar, Tatry Mountain Resorts ...
- ADAC Ski Guide, various issues
- Altay-China International Ancient Skiing Cultural Forum Report, Shan Zhaojian et al. 2015
- ATOUT France, Chiffres clés du tourisme de montagne, 7e édition, and others
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- Webpages (among others) wikipedia.org, skiinghistory.org, skileb.com, skiofpersia.com, www.skiresort.info
- World Bank online database

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Maps: CIA Factbook, used without any endorsement of the geopolitical issues they may contain.

French / German / Chinese glossary

English	Français	Deutsch	中國
Aerial lifts	Téléportés (terme générique)	Luftseilbahn	架空索道
Alpine country	Pays alpin	Alpenland	高山国家
Alpine skiing	Ski alpin	Ski alpin	高山滑雪
Backcountry skiing	Ski hors piste	Skifahren ausserhalb der Pisten	后山滑雪
Button lift	Téléski à perches / assiettes	Tellerlift	圆盘式拖牵
Cable-car	Téléphérique	Pendelbahn	箱式缆车
Cat skiing	Ski avec montée en chenillette	Skifahren mit Aufstieg per Pistenwalze	雪猫滑雪
Chairlift	Télesiège	Sesselbahn	吊椅式缆车
Combined lift	Télémix	Kombibahn	吊箱吊椅混合式缆车
Cross-country skiing	Ski nordique, ski de fond	Langlauf	北欧滑雪, 越野滑雪
Detachable	Débrayable	Kuppelbar	脱挂式
Downhill sliding	Sport de glisse (gravitaire)	Schneesportarten (Abwärts)	速降
Drag-lift	Téléski	Skillift	拖牵
Fixed grip	Pince fixe	Feste Klemme	固定抱索器
Freeride skiing	Ski freeride (pratique libre, hors cadre formel)	Freeride Skifahren	自由滑雪 (多指滑野雪)
Freestyle	Freestyle (figures lors de sauts)	Freestyle (Figuren im Sprung)	自由式滑雪 (多指花样或技巧类)
Gondola lift	Télécabine	Gondelbahn	箱式缆车
Groomer (vehicule)	Dameuse, chenillette	Pistenraupe / Pistenfahrzeug	压雪车
Grooming	Damage	Pistenpräparierung	压雪
Hourly lift output	Capacité horaire	Stundenleistung	每小时运力
Lifts	Remontées mécaniques	Seilbahnen	索道
Magic carpet	Tapis roulant	Förderband	魔毯

English	Français	Deutsch	中國
Nordic skiing	Ski nordique, ski de fond	Langlauf	北欧滑雪, 越野滑雪
Off-piste skiing	Ski hors piste	Skifahren ausserhalb der Pisten	道外滑雪
Participation rate	Taux de pratique	Ausübungsrate	参与率
Quad	Télésiège 4 places	4er-Sesselbahn	4人缆车
Rope-tow	Télécorde	Kleinskilift	小拖牵
Ropeways (cableways)	Installations de transport à câble	Seilbahnen	索道
Six-pack	Télésiège 6 places	6er-Sesselbahn	6人缆车
Ski area	Zone de pratique du ski	Ski Übungsgelände	滑雪区
Ski lift	Téléski (terme générique)	Skilift, Schlepplift	拖牵
Ski resort	Station de ski	Skigebiet	滑雪场
Ski touring, ski mountaineering	Ski de randonnée	Skitouren	滑雪旅游
Skier	Skieur	Skifahrer	滑雪者
Skier transported	Passagers transportés	Beförderte Personen / Frequenzen	运送的乘客
Skier visits	Journées-skieurs	Skifahrertage / Skier-Days	滑雪人次
Snowboarder	Néviplanchiste / snowboarder	Snowboarder	单板滑雪者
Snowcat	Chenillette	Pistenwalze	雪地履带车 / 雪猫
Surface lift	Téléski, télécorde (terme générique)	Skilift, Schlepplift	拖牵
Snow field	Stade de neige	Schneefeld	滑雪场
T-bar lift	Téléski à arbalètes / archets / pioches	Bügelift	T型拖牵
Terrain park	Zone freestyle, snowpark	Freestyle-Bereich, Snowpark	地形公园
Trails	Pistes	Pisten	雪道
Tram (aerial)	Téléphérique	Pendelbahn	缆车
Vertical drop	Dénivelé	Höhendifferenz	垂直落差



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