

Travel & Driving Guide

Top Ski Destinations

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Let's Go to the Snow!...

Skiing & snowboarding in Europe is hugely popular in the northern hemisphere winter months with Switzerland, Austria, France and Italy among the favorites. And if you're talking about skiing, you couldn't possibly forget Canada and the USA. Like Europe, ski season is as popular as summer. A ski holiday in Australia or New Zealand is a great winter break away and an excuse to unwind, work out and have some fun!

A rental car on holidays gives you the freedom to go where you want, when you want. It's no different on a ski holiday, except for some extra rules and safety measures that you should know about. We hope this guide will help you plan your trip to the snow.

Bon voyage and remember to drive safe!

Tips on Driving in Snow

Many Americans are probably unfamiliar with driving in the snow in Europe. Reduced visibility and traction can make driving in the snow challenging but there are some things you can do to ensure a smooth ride.

On the Road

- Slow down! Drive with caution in snow or icy conditions.
- Use low gears to keep traction, especially on hills.
- Switch on your headlights to improve visibility.
- Be aware that braking distances are increased so keep your distance from the vehicle in front.
- Brake gently to avoid skidding. If your wheels start to lock up, ease off the brake.
- Be careful on bridges, overpasses and less travelled roads, as they freeze first.
- Be aware of black ice which can be found in areas shadowed from the sun.

Snow Chains

- Snow chains are mandatory in many places in Europe and should be fitted at the appropriate times.
- Look out for signposting and road marks which indicate when you should use them.
- Using snow chains beyond icy areas can wear the car and damage roads, so ensure you remove them at the correct time.
- Tire pressure should be at 25PSI or higher when using chains.

Car Rental in the Snow

Renting a car for a snow trip is convenient and easy. For example, in Australia, you can hire a 4WD for peace of mind when driving in the snow. Overseas, a rental car can get you from the airport to snow fields quickly and easily.

Rules and Regulations

Rules and regulations specific to snow vary depending on the country in which you are driving (e.g. in Australia snow chains are mandatory in Victoria, whereas in Austria winter tires are compulsory when driving in snow.) All information in this guide is correct at the time of print and subject to change, so you should always double check finer details when making a booking.

Extra Equipment

Generally speaking, you can rent snow chains and ski racks in most skiing countries. Winter tires are also available to rent in some countries. Check out our country guides in the following pages for information on what you can rent in specific countries.

Contact Us

If you have any questions about renting a car for a snow holiday or wish to make a booking, you can call Auto Europe at 1-800-223-5555 or visit our website www.autoeurope.com.

Europe

Just as the snow season ends in Australia and New Zealand, it picks up in Europe. Snow lovers have so many choices in Europe, with destinations like Switzerland, Austria, Italy as well as lesser known places like Bulgaria and Greece.

Auto Europe offers car rental throughout Europe with pick up locations at major airports and rail stations, as well as downtown locations.

Best Time To Go: November - April

Off to the Snow in... France

Where

The Alps in the east and Pyrenees in the south are the two most popular skiing regions in France. Choose from more than 400 ski resorts in the Alps, with heights of up to 10,000 feet above sea level. You can pick up your rental car from a number of city, airport and rail stations throughout France, including Chambéry, Geneva, Grenoble and Lyon.

Did you know.....
Chamonix-Mont-Blanc in south-eastern France is one of the most famous ski resorts in France and was home to the very first Winter Olympic Games back in 1924.

Snow Chains

Snow Chains are available on a request basis. Rates vary from EUR30-50 per rental, depending on the supplier and vehicle type. Snow chains are sometimes not permitted on one way rentals, so check when booking.

Ski Racks

Ski racks are also available to rent on a request basis. Rates range from EUR12.50 per day to a maximum EUR52.50 per rental.

Snow Tires

May be available with all suppliers and are on request at time of booking.

Winter Equipped Vehicle

Some suppliers offer winter equipped vehicles or Skierized Packages (on request) which come with winter tires, snow chains, a ski rack and sometimes an ice scraper. Rates are approximately EUR25 per day and are sometimes capped at about EUR110 per rental.

Italy

Skiers will be hard picked for choosing a slope in Italy with the Alps and the Dolomites in the North, to the Apennines in the South. You can even ski on the highest mountain in Western Europe, Mont Blanc in the Alps. But at almost 16,000 feet above sea level, it is not for the faint hearted. You can pick up a rental car at a number of locations throughout Italy, including airports, downtown locations and rail stations.

Snow Chains

Snow Chains are available to rent from most suppliers. There may be restrictions for select vehicle types, and are on request at time of booking. Cost varies depending on the supplier but range from EUR30-45 maximum per rental.

Ski Racks

Available to rent from the majority of suppliers, and are on a request basis. The cost is approximately maximum EUR30-45 per rental.

Austria

Where

Austria is one of the most popular destinations for skiing in Europe. The provinces of the Tirol, Vorarlberg and Salzburgerland are favorites for avid skiers. You can collect a rental car from Innsbruck, Salzburg, Vienna or at 15 other locations in Austria.

Snow Chains

Snow chains are available to rent on request only. Cost is approximately EUR30 per rental, but may vary.

Ski Racks

You can rent ski racks on request at time of booking in Austria and may only be available for certain vehicle groups so always check when you book. Rates range from approximately EUR25-50/rental.

Winter Tires

Winter tires (on all 4 wheels) are compulsory when driving in Austria between November and early April. Normal tires with snow chains are acceptable, however, if winter tires are not available. Winter tires are normally included in the rental fee but you should always check when you make a booking.

Winterization Fee

This is a mandatory charge for rental cars in Austria. Inclusions vary depending on supplier but almost certainly includes winter tires. Some suppliers also have snow chains and an ice scraper as part of the Winterization Fee. The fee is included in your rental fees at \$4.00 per day.

Switzerland

Where

Home of the Swiss Alps, Switzerland's mountainous terrain makes it perfect for skiing. Zermatt, Davos and St. Moritz are the major destinations for skiers in Switzerland. You can collect a rental car from over 20 locations in Switzerland, including airports, downtown locations and railway stations.

Winterization Fee

This is a mandatory charge for rental cars that is included in your rental rates in Switzerland. Inclusions vary depending on supplier but almost certainly includes winter tires. Some suppliers also have snow chains and an ice scraper as part of the Winterization Fee.

Snow Chains

Where snow chains are not included in the Winterization Fee, they may be available to rent upon request at time of booking. The rental fee is approximately CHF7 per day.

Ski Racks

Ski racks can be rented on request. The rental charge ranges from approximately CHF40-50 per rental.

Did you know.....

The Alps cover 62% of Switzerland's surface area.

Canada

Best Time To Go: November - March

Where

Canada is quite possibly the ultimate ski and snowboarding destination. The provinces of British Colombia and Alberta are home to some of the most famous ski resorts in the world including Whistler, Banff and Jasper. Auto Europe offers rental cars at over 50 locations in Canada including Vancouver, Whistler, Banff, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal.

Snow Chains

Snow chains are not common in Canada as almost all rental cars are equipped with winter tires, suitable for the snow.

Ski Racks

Ski Racks are available to rent upon request at time of booking. Cost ranges from around CAD7-10 per day.

Winter Tires

The majority of vehicles are equipped with winter tires but always check at the time of booking.

Winterization Fee

Some suppliers include a winterization fee throughout winter. It often includes a snow brush/ice scraper and a block heater. This should be requested when you book.

Did you know.....

British Colombia is roughly the size of France, Germany and The Netherlands combined.

USA

Where

The state of Colorado, located in the Rocky Mountain region of the USA, is renowned for skiing. California, Utah and Vermont are also popular for snow holidays. You can collect your rental car from many locations through the USA including airports and downtown locations.

Snow Chains

Like Canada, snow chains are not so common in the USA as most vehicle have winter tires.

Ski Racks

You can rent ski racks in the USA upon request at time of booking. Charges range from approximately USD4-10 per day.

Winter Tires

Most rental vehicles in the USA will have winter or all weather tires.

Did you know.....

Colorado is the only U.S. state that lies entirely above 3,300 feet elevation



Going to the Snow in ...

Australia

Just a few hours drive from Sydney you can enjoy some downtime at NSW's famous ski resorts of Thredbo and Perisher. Pick up a rental car in Sydney or Canberra and make your way to the slopes. In Victoria, you can choose from a number of resorts close to Bright, about 300km from Melbourne.

Best Time To Go: July - September

Can I take a rental car above the snowline in Australia?

In short, it depends on the supplier. Some suppliers do not allow rental cars to be driven above the snow line. Some suppliers permit certain vehicle types above the snow line if additional insurance (Snow Coverage) is purchased.

Snow Coverage is an additional charge and ranges from AUD11-22 per day, depending on the supplier.

Snow Chains are mandatory in Victoria and for most vehicles in NSW and need to be requested at time of booking your car rental.

Ski Racks are generally not available to rent in Australia.



New Zealand

New Zealand is home to some of the best ski slopes on this side of the Equator and a rental car is a great way to get around. You can pick up your rental car from Queenstown or Christchurch, with popular ski resorts not too far away. The famous Coronet Peak and The Remarkables are both a short drive from Queenstown, as is Wanaka. Similarly, Canterbury is a short drive from Christchurch and home to the famous Mount Hutt.

Can I take a rental car above the snowline in New Zealand?

Yes. Conditions do apply, depending on the supplier. Some offer an additional Snow Coverage Charge for approximately NZD8 per day plus tax.

Snow Chains

Bylaws have been introduced in the Queenstown Lakes District and Milford Sound Road to penalize people without snow chains. If you are planning to drive in these areas in snow season, ensure you have snow chains in your car at all times as fines can be up to NZD750.

Snow Chains are available with some suppliers at no additional charge in snow season (some need to be pre-booked). Other suppliers charge an additional daily fee which ranges from NZD10-15, with some suppliers capping the charge between NZD50-100. A deposit may be required, check at time of booking. Snow Chains may not be available in the North Island with some suppliers, always check at time of booking.

Ski Racks

Some suppliers offer ski racks free if they are pre-booked and some are on a request basis. Prices range from NZD10-12 per day, with the charge often capped between NZD50-100. A deposit may also be required. Always check at the time of booking as ski racks may not be available at all locations, especially in the North Island.

Ski Packages

Enquire about ski packages which can be pre-booked and often include ski racks and snow chains and may be better value than renting the items separately.

The touring information has been created to be used as a guide only.

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Après Ski

Snow holidays are about much more than the champagne powder! Socialising after a day on the slopes is a great way to end the day. There are no shortage of things to do in Australia and New Zealand this winter, with a host of great events and parties.

Opening Weekends

June

The snow season often kicks off in style with a party including entertainment, music, activities, food and drink. Dates vary but are often in June.

Queenstown Winter Festival

June 24—July 3

This 10 day festival is still going strong after 30 years! There are concerts, balls, competitions, fireworks, bands, food and wine. With fireworks on opening night and a huge finale, this is one of the best winter events in New Zealand.

Banff Mountain Film Festival

June 25

Held at Mount Buller in Victoria, this prestigious mountain festival is on for one night only! The tour features films about skiing, snowboarding, ice-climbing and all things alpine!

Mountain Fresh Festival

July 23–28

This food and wine festival is held at Mount Hotham, Australia's highest alpine village. You can sample local foods and cool climate wine from the Alpine Valleys. Enjoy wine tastings, master classes, BBQs, music and more.

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