

Ski-lux

There's more to winter holidays than skiing and boarding, with luxury and relaxation awaiting off the slopes too

There's a rare kind of magic to a ski holiday – the crispness in the air, the hush of fresh snow blanketing the slopes, and the thrill of tracing your line through pristine powder. Yet, luxury ski travel has evolved: it's no longer just about skiing, but about the entire experience, from the moment you arrive at the airport to the bottle of wine beside the warm fireplace.

WHISTLER

In British Columbia, long regarded as the birthplace of iconic ski holidays, the Four Seasons Resort Whistler stands as the gold standard in alpine hospitality. Perched just steps away from the Blackcomb Gondola, the resort blends rugged mountain luxe with refined service. From deluxe rooms and suites through to townhouses and resort

residences, the Four Seasons caters to all booking types, with each space thoughtfully designed to include natural wood and an organic colour palette reflecting timeless luxury and local character. Every guest benefits from the hotel's elevated Ski Concierge, who ensures your gear is waxed, warmed, and ready to go each morning. After exploring the mountain on skis, you can soak in heated outdoor pools or indulge in spa treatments tailored to soothe tired muscles. Evening dining at Sidecut, the in-house steakhouse, brings locally sourced ingredients including BC steaks and Pacific seafood to the table. It's difficult to define what sets Canada apart, but there's something undeniably enchanting

about snow-dusted pines, the romance of stone and timber, and the welcoming buzz of a village that feels like home. fourseasons.com/whistler

VERBIER

High in the Swiss Alps overlooking the village below, W Verbier exudes cosy alpine chalet on a grand scale. Around two hours by car from Geneva International Airport, Verbier is renowned for its freeride terrain that attracts elite skiers from around the world. The hotel spans five floors and provides accommodation ranging from comfortable standard rooms for casual travellers to specialty suites designed for a luxurious escape. Each room includes a private balcony and a fireplace,

creating a cosy and inviting atmosphere before enjoying ski-in-ski-out access to over 400 kilometres of pistes via the nearby Médran gondola. W Verbier is the first European ski resort under the W brand, part of the Marriott Hotels group. Renowned après ski activities begin early at the W Off Piste bar, where resident DJs create a lively atmosphere. Visitors can relax in stylish lounges before joining friends for traditional ski shots to end the evening. For a more peaceful retreat, the spa offers indoor and outdoor pools, steam rooms, and quiet outdoor spaces where guests can unwind and take in the stunning views. w-hotels.marriott.com

JAPAN

In Japan, where snowfall and powder rivals legend, Setsu Niseko has already established itself as the standard for contemporary ski luxury. Located in one of Grand Hirafu's most accessible areas, it was named the World's Best New Ski Hotel at the 2023 World Ski Awards and caters to every ski holiday

need, from equipment hire and a dedicated concierge to exclusive access to local tours. Its 190 residences showcase minimalist sophistication, with timber features, natural materials, and expansive windows that capture striking views of Mount Yotei, often compared to Mount Fuji. Guests can apres like the locals in the on-site onsen, both private and communal, recharge at the Rikka Spa or yoga studio, and enjoy Japanese French fusion or fresh sushi crafted with precision across five in-house restaurants. Immerse yourself in cultural experiences including Japanese art, tea ceremonies, and

celebrations around Christmas and New Years – perfect for families or festive getaways, with all the traditions and none of the stress. A peaceful escape that reflects the art of Japanese hospitality, Setsu Niseko stands at the peak of winter holiday luxury. setsuniseko.com

MONTANA

Half a world away, Montage Big Sky in Montana anchors its appeal in Western grandeur. Tucked into the Spanish Peaks region, the resort offers direct ski access to Big Sky's 5,800-acre wilderness and is only an hour drive from Bozeman Yellowstone International



Airport. It combines the era's finest lodge aesthetic including stone fireplaces and exposed timbers, with contemporary luxury across 139 rooms and 39 private residences. Guests rave about the curated extras: a ten-thousand-square-foot spa, indoor bowling alley, family swim areas and Top Golf that deliver genuine lodge-like charm. Not unlike Canadian resorts, Big Sky has family friendly activities to keep the kids busy on and off the slopes including lessons, season long programs for aspiring athletes, dog sledding, and snowmobile tours for the whole family. Evenings around roaring firepits with Montana cocktails evoke the spirit of the American West while refined culinary services keep the cold at bay. montage.com/bigsky ➤

Far left: Whistler Village in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada is considered one of the best resorts in the world
Above: View of the Spanish Peaks from The Montage Big Sky in Montana



a deep sense of place. In Whistler, guests experience West Coast professionalism with a relaxed feel. Verbier brings modern design and high-altitude energy. Niseko embodies refined Japanese calm. Big Sky evokes pioneer-era authenticity with contemporary polish, and Matakauri offers lakeside luxe with soul. Whether you're chasing fresh powder, panoramic vistas, or soul-soothing luxury, these destinations don't just meet expectations, they reimagine what a ski holiday can mean. ■

QUEENSTOWN

Down in New Zealand's South Island, Rosewood Matakauri offers a contrasting brand of alpine elegance. Settled on the shore of Lake Wakatipu and minutes from the vibrant hustle of Queenstown, it marries lakeside serenity with ski access to Coronet Peak and The Remarkables. In contrast to the hotel-style accommodations previously mentioned, Rosewood offers just 12 suites and a select few villas, each featuring lavish beach house-style interiors ideal for travellers looking to combine

their ski holiday with other leisure activities. The architectural property feels intimate and homely, each room featuring private terraces, fireplaces, spacious tubs, and panoramic mountain views. What truly sets Rosewood apart is its onsite kitchen garden and two beehives, which support a locally sourced, handpicked seasonal menu served in its bespoke dining room.

After a morning on the slopes – or even a popular heli-ski outing – guests return to restorative spa rituals, a fresh breeze of lake air, and a sense of quiet reverie that's hard to find elsewhere. [rosewoodhotels.com](https://www.rosewoodhotels.com)

From these global luxury ski retreats emerges a common thread: an unwavering attention to service, substance, and



Top: Skiing in New Zealand is among the most breathtaking in the world **Above right:** A sauna at The Four Seasons Resort in Whistler is a blissful way to relax after a day on the slopes **Right:** Doorstep skiing at The Marriott W Hotel in Verbier, Switzerland, means there is no time wasted in transportation prior to commencing the apres ski routine

