



Cervinia, Italy
PICTURE: Marco Gabbin

Ski on a shoestring

Rising costs for winter sports holidays causing clients concern?
Alice Barnes-Brown explores a selection of money-saving spots

nothing beats the feeling of crisp, powdery snow gliding beneath your skis – but clients on a budget may find that saving on their ski break feels almost as good as sailing down a slope.

With many popular resorts across the Alps seeing prices rise, dedicated skiers may wish to seek somewhere off-the-beaten-piste that suits their vibe and offers great value for money, whether they're a couple looking for an active getaway or a family keen to boost their ski skills without breaking the bank. We asked four operators for their favourite budget-friendly snow destinations.

BEST FOR...FAMILY SKI

Bulgaria is buzzing with great-value deals, thanks to a lower cost of living and operating costs.

Chris Logan, managing director of Crystal Ski Holidays, says: "We've seen strong demand for budget-friendly destinations, including the resorts of Borovets and Bansko." To complement Crystal's ski packages, Tui has also added flights from Newcastle to the Bulgarian capital Sofia this winter.

If clients need to brush up on their skills, the cost of tuition must be factored in – and Bulgaria excels in low-cost lessons. The Post Office Travel Money Ski Report estimates that a six-day lift pass, ski/boot hire, ski school, plus daily lunch and drinks on the slopes costs £563 per person in Borovets and £573 in Bansko,

against £1,346 in Zermatt and £1,142 in Val d'Isère.

Book it: Crystal sells seven nights' B&B at the Grand Royale Hotel & Spa in Bansko from £836 per person, based on two adults and two children sharing. The price includes luggage, transfers and flights from Manchester to Sofia, departing December 27.

crystalski.co.uk

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BEST FOR...FRESH POWDER

If clients are keen on snow-sure slopes with breathtaking views of the Matterhorn to boot, suggest Cervinia in Italy's picturesque Aosta Valley. The town is more than 2,000m above sea level, with some of the slopes at elevations of nearly 4,000m, so clients can expect lots of snow and a chance to ski in the off-season months. It's even possible to ski year-round on 15 miles of glacier at Plateau Rosa. Cervinia's USP is that clients can be based in a more affordable Italian resort but still have access to 200 miles of ski routes stretching into Switzerland.

Melvin Westlake, Inghams' head of ski product, ➤

DESTINATIONS

SKI & SNOW | BUDGET



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Les Arcs, France; Bansko, Bulgaria; Banff, Canada

PICTURES: Shutterstock/Greens and Blues, Nataliya Nazarova; Les Arcs Tourist Board/Tristan Shu; Jeff Bartlett Media



says: "Italy is doing well at the moment, including Cervinia – which is in the same ski area as Zermatt, but far cheaper."

Book it: Inghams offers seven nights' half-board at Hotel Serenella in Cervinia from £899 per person, based on two adults sharing. The price includes transfers and flights from Gatwick on January 4, 2026.

ingham.co.uk

BEST FOR...CROSSING THE POND

If budget-seeking skiers believe that North America is out of their reach, tell them to think again. Victoria Mclean, marketing manager at Ski Independence, says: "Banff is a great option if you have a price-conscious client who wants to go transatlantic. Banff and Lake Louise offer one of the longest ski seasons in the northern hemisphere, with skiing until May pretty much guaranteed."

"For our North American destinations, the overriding recommendation is to book early. Rather than going at February half-term, suggest families travel at Easter instead. Prices are lower, the days are longer for more time on the slopes and it's a bit warmer – making extended outdoor lunches and sunny après-ski more likely."

Book it: Ski Independence sells a seven-night stay at the Elk + Avenue in Banff from £1,203

per person, based on two sharing a standard room on a room-only basis. The price includes transfers and flights from London to Calgary on March 5, 2026.

ski-i.com

BEST FOR...OLD FAVOURITES

France is the number-one destination for British skiers – and with increased Eurostar services to the French Alps (running for an additional five weeks this season, now from December 20 to April 5, 2026) and a new Jet2.com route from Newcastle to Chambéry, many French resorts will be even more accessible this winter.

Miles Porter, Skiworld's sales and operations director, recommends Les Arcs as a lesser-known resort that can help clients save money. "Les Arcs offers extensive snow-sure ski areas and more-affordable lift passes and dining," he says. "When speaking with clients, ask if they would prefer a catered chalet – which often includes meals, drinks and luggage – or a self-catered apartment for more flexibility and lower costs."

Book it: Skiworld sells a seven-night catered stay at Ski Chalet Arnaud from £999 per person, based on two sharing, including flights from London to Grenoble, luggage and transfers, departing December 13.

skiworld.co.uk **TW**

SPOTLIGHT ON BANSKO

With its relatively low price tag, I expected Bansko to prove that you get what you pay for, writes *Robin Murray*.

But it didn't take long to discover my preconceptions of a ski holiday in Bulgaria were wide of the mark.

Bansko has an expansive lift network, offering easy access to 46 miles of slopes. Skiers of all abilities will find a run they enjoy, though its network of predominantly blue and red runs is better suited to beginner and intermediate skiers, with a sole black run for the more advanced.

The longest run from the highest point of the resort, at 2,600m, to the base is about 10 miles and features a range of slopes, from challenging red runs at the top to a gentle tree-lined green run as you approach the base.

One of the most popular spots for food and drink is Bar 180, set at the crossroads of four runs. It has inside and outside seating areas with loud music pumping out, and serves Italian-style dishes costing about £20 for mains, with a pint about £6.

For a cheaper meal, there are plenty of options in Bansko's Old Town – a Unesco World Heritage Site with narrow, cobbled streets. I visited Obetsanova Mehana, a traditional Bulgarian restaurant decked out with interesting artefacts and music. The *kapama* – a chicken dish made with cinnamon and tomato sauce – and filo pastry stuffed with cheese were particularly good. This hearty grub provided sightseeing sustenance for highlights including the mid-19th-century Holy Trinity Church and its imposing bell tower, which dates from when Bulgaria was under Ottoman rule.

