



PICTURE: Paolo Codeluppi

Snow in a snap

The slopes of South Tyrol in northeast Italy are prime territory for a short ski break, finds **Robin Murray**

Speed is of the essence on a ski trip – and I don't just mean on the slopes. After whizzing through Bolzano Airport's tiny terminal in no time, as if it were a railway station in rural England, I'm delighted to discover I'm only half an hour from the ski resort of Obereggen.

That's far quicker than the average European transfer of two to three hours, making the Italian resort an attractive proposition for a weekend ski break. Clients can take advantage of SkyAlps' direct Gatwick to Bolzano service, which was expanded to three times a week in December 2024.

SKI IN

Obereggen forms part of South Tyrol's Ski Center Latemar, which connects Obereggen, Pampeago and Predazzo. It's best suited to intermediate skiers with its wide, well-maintained slopes, but caters to all abilities.

"Not only does Obereggen have something for everyone, but we average more than 300 days of sunshine because we're on the southern side of the Alps," says instructor Matthias Furlani over lunch at Oberholz, 2,096 metres above sea level with views over the jagged peaks of the Dolomites. "As you can see, it's a very picturesque resort."

Oberholz, whose striking architecture is matched by the quality of its food, epitomises the combination of cultures that makes South Tyrol an intriguing destination. Staff converse in both Italian and German, and the menu features Italian risotto alongside Austrian dumplings (with mains around €20).

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SWITCH IT UP

Skiers could happily spend a few days at Obereggen without getting tired of repeat runs – there are 30 miles of slopes to play with – but for those wanting to stay longer or experience a different resort, the Dolomiti Superski pass, from €77 per day for adults, grants access to 12 skiing regions covering 750 miles of slopes. Included in the pass is Kronplatz, one of South Tyrol's largest resorts, where we head for our second day of skiing.

Still just over an hour from Bolzano Airport, Kronplatz has a wider variety of runs than Obereggen ➤

DESTINATIONS

SKI & SNOW | ITALY



Hotel Petrus

This 50-room property in Riscone, just a five-minute drive from the chairlifts of Kronplatz, is run by the Aichner family. My room had its own infrared sauna, while others have massage chairs, balcony hot tubs and other standout features. Food is first rate, with ingredients from the hotel's garden. A large pool offers indoor and outdoor swimming, plus there's a spa and saunas. Prices start at €150 B&B or €180 half board per person, based on two sharing. hotelpetrus.com/en



Falkensteiner Hotel Bozen WaltherPark

This central Bolzano pad opened last July in the WaltherPark district, which includes a shopping centre. The hotel has a rooftop terrace with views of the Dolomites. Its restaurant serves Japanese fusion at dinner and a breakfast buffet offers South Tyrolean fare. Rooms from €170 per night. falkensteiner.com/hotel-bozen



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Skiers pass Oberholz restaurant; Alpinn by Norbert Niederkofler; pizzeria Il Corso
PICTURES: Thomas Oндertoller; Marco Zanta; Andrea Bianchi Photography; Hannes Niederkofler



but is better suited to advanced skiers. It's home to the Black Five – a quintet of challenging black runs – one of which, Piculin, is among the steepest in Italy with gradients of up to 72%. I give that a wide berth, but conquer another of the five, Erta, which will host the women's giant slalom at the Ski World Cup in February. I live to tell the tale, though I won't win any prizes for getting down it gracefully.

I reward myself with lunch at Alpinn, a restaurant at the top of the Kronplatz lifts headed by celebrated chef Norbert Niederkofler. He has earned acclaim for his 'cook the mountain' philosophy, featuring local, seasonal ingredients and reducing food waste by using everything from fish skins to vegetable cooking water. The dedication to sustainable cooking extends to the quality – my venison ragu tagliatelle and tiramisu were both exquisite.

SKI-FREE DAYS

Alpinn is in the same building as the Lumen Museum of Mountain Photography, which opened in 2018. One of the most technologically advanced museums in the Alps, it has numerous interactive features including a 360-degree sensory mirror room, which immerses you inside changing mountain landscapes. It's one of two museums at the summit of Kronplatz, alongside MMM Corones where I learn about the history of climbing and the daring feats of mountaineers.

INSIDER INSIGHT

Artur Costabiei,
head of
international
PR, South
Tyrol Tourism
Board



"We're planning to make the UK the fifth or sixth-largest market for South Tyrol; right now, it's eighth or ninth. We have always had to rely on airports such as Verona, Venice and Innsbruck, resulting in a longer transfer, but the direct route from Gatwick is good news for anyone wanting to visit. German is the main language, spoken by 70% of people. There are 20% native Italian speakers and 10% native Ladin speakers, an ancient language that came from the Romans. Each culture has its own traditions, special dishes and languages, which make South Tyrol a diverse and interesting region."

Those still keen to learn more can tack on a half-day visit to Bolzano and its 14 museums. Most notable is the South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology, where Ötzi the Iceman – a 5,300-year-old mummy discovered in the Alps in 1991 – is on display. Among the array of shops, cafes and restaurants dotted along Bolzano's picturesque streets, I enjoy one of the best Neapolitan pizzas I've ever had at Il Corso, a colourful and contemporary pizzeria. After all, South Tyrol prides itself on its cuisine, whether it's in the heart of the city or amid its snowy mountain peaks. **TW**

BOOK IT

SkyAlps' direct service from Gatwick to Bolzano operates on Saturday, Sunday and Wednesday in winter, with a typical return trip ranging from £300-£380. skyalps.com

Crystal Ski Holidays offers seven nights at Hotel Petrus Riscone from £1,644 per person, half board, based on two sharing a Double Room with balcony. Includes 20kg luggage, flights from Bristol to Innsbruck plus transfers, departing February 28. crystalski.co.uk

Inspiring Travel sells a seven-night stay at Falkensteiner Hotel Kronplatz from £2,665 per person, half board, based on two sharing a Double Deluxe Room. Includes transfers and flights from Gatwick to Bolzano, departing February 21. inspiringtravel.co.uk