

FAMILY SKI CHALETs



There's nothing quite like gliding wistfully down a velvet-soft piste, pine forests peeping out through the sparkling snow, slopes stretching off in every direction like something from a Christmas card.

And there's no better time to start hitting those slopes than when you're a young, fearless kid – which is probably why family ski holidays have long been a bestseller.

But ski holidays aren't just about the skiing itself, of course. Just as important is the lodging. For that, there's an abundance of choices, from fully-catered, ultra-luxe chalets complete with pools and private cinemas to simple, self-catered lodges where log fires blaze and wooden beams peep out overhead. We've picked out some of our favourite options and sorted them by budget.

Save



Chalet Les Cimes Blanches in La Plagne, France

Iglika Villas, Borovets, Bulgaria: Skiing might not be the first thing you think of when it comes to budget holidays, but there are excellent bargains to be found. Balkan Holidays recommends Iglia Villas in Borovets, Bulgaria. The villas are ideally located, close to the resort centre where lively restaurants meet wide, tree-lined slopes. Each of the seven Alpine-style lodges has two bedrooms and a kitchenette, with a week's self-catering costing from £265 per person, based on a family of four sharing with flights. balkanholidays.co.uk

Chalet Les Cimes Blanches, La Plagne, France: Over in France, prices can be a little steeper, so look at shared hotels for the best deals. For families with

The villas are ideally located, close to the resort centre where lively restaurants meet wide, tree-lined slopes that are perfect for beginners

younger children, Crystal Ski recommends the four-star Chalet Les Cimes Blanches in La Plagne. Spread across nine Swiss-style chalets, it features 145 apartments with a shared hot tub, pool, spa and sauna, with the slopes, main lift and ski school all nearby. There's also a Crystal Childcare service available for kids up to eight years old, and it's all surprisingly wallet-friendly, with a

week starting at £524 per person, including flights from Gatwick to Chambéry and transfers, on a catered basis. crystalski.co.uk

Chalet Dahu, Les Arcs, France: For those wanting their own private spot, look to this four-bedroom chalet in Les Arcs, France. Built in traditional Alpine style, it boasts a glass-fronted log fire, a balcony and a sauna, and there's a play area where kids can sledge under the watchful eye of their parents. It's fully hosted, with daily breakfast, afternoon tea and three-course evening meals, and guests can ski back to the chalet via a blue run at the end of the day. Ski Beat offers a week catered from £669 per person, including UK flights and transfers. skibeat.co.uk ➤



"When it comes to family ski holidays, we're seeing lots of interest in France. Avoriaz is a great option because of its convenient ski-in ski-out accommodation, and Andorra offers excellent value for money. February half-term was traditionally the time families went skiing, but nowadays, they are also booking Christmas, New Year and Easter. We are also seeing more younger families with pre-school children than in previous years and offer deals to cater to them. For example, there's free kindergarten for children under six years old for clients who pre-book ski school. My top tip would be to arrange everything in advance to save time in resort – our rep will deliver lift passes on arrival for clients who have already booked them."

Melvin Westlake, senior product manager, Inghams





Spend

BEST OF THE REST

Chalet Isba, Meribel, France: A location in the heart of Meribel and first-class facilities, including a home cinema, billiards room, sauna and hot tub, make this Ski Total's top recommendation for families wanting a lively, action-packed stay. A week starts at £1,039 per person, including flights.

Chalet Skye, Val d'Isère, France: This cosy wooden lodge, complete with atmospheric beams and roaring fireplace, sleeps eight comfortably and is a stone's throw from Val d'Isère's main lifts. Powder White offers seven nights from £604 per person, including flights.

Chalet Pere Josef, Alpe d'Huez, France: Located 50m from the slopes and three minutes from the centre, this simple spot offers everything families might need, with a roster of activities on hand in the area – from climbing-walls and ziplines to ice caves and ski shows. A week with Crystal Ski costs from £974 per person.

Neilson Chalet L'Olan, Les Deux Alpes, France: You'll find plenty of private, family-friendly chalets in the mid-range, but for one that goes above and beyond, try Neilson's antique-filled Chalet L'Olan in Les Deux Alpes. With five bedrooms and space for 13, it's a good shout for bigger families, and there are kids' clubs at the nearby Neilson Hotel Aalborg. A week starts at £716 per person, based on eight adults and five children sharing, with flights, transfers, daily breakfast, afternoon tea and meals included, and there's free guiding for blue and red-run skiers. neilson.co.uk

Chalet Hotel Pepi Gabl, St Anton, Austria: For a livelier base, there's Austria's iconic St Anton, where Esprit Ski recommends this recently renovated chalet hotel. "It occupies an excellent position just next to the Nasserein gondola and only 50m or so from the end of the Nasserein home run," says Robyn Adam, reservations consultant for the operator. It's traditional Austrian in design and there are kids' clubs for every time of day – as well as a wellness area and family-friendly lounge and restaurant. It's also handily close to several dedicated children's areas, where

“It's close to several dedicated children's areas, where youngsters can learn on gentle, beginner-friendly pistes

youngsters can learn on gentle, beginner-friendly pistes. A week costs from £741 per person, based on two adults and two children sharing, with flights from Gatwick to Innsbruck and group transfers. espritski.com

Chalet Everest, Courchevel, France: If it's five-star luxury and ultimate privacy clients are after, look to celeb hangout Courchevel, where you'll find Chalet Everest – a plush, four-bedroom lodge with an outdoor terrace, cosy lounge and traditional brick fireplace. "It offers high standards without the price tag and is just two minutes from the piste," says Cahal Kane, business development manager for Powder White. A week costs from £699 per person, including flights and transfers and based on four sharing, with breakfast, afternoon tea and dinner with wine on six days. powderwhite.com ➤

Splurge



The Lodge, Verbier;
top right: Kern Peak;
right: Chalet Charlie



PICTURES: Georgi Dakalov, Mark Bader, Yves Garneau, Andy Parant

Chalet Charlie, Tignes, France: Those with more cash to splash are not short of options. But for one of the most unusual luxury spots, suggest Chalet Charlie in Tignes. It's quirky throughout – the entertainment space is built with parts of a 1950s military aircraft, with a games console inside the nose and a TV area surrounded by plane paraphernalia. There's also a private hot tub, steam room, sauna and fitness room. The chalet sleeps 16 across six double rooms and a four-bunk room, making it ideal for larger families or multigenerational groups. UltraVilla offers a week from €16,200, including breakfast and three-course dinner on five days plus drinks, transfers and use of facilities in the neighbouring Black Diamond residence. ultravilla.com

Kern Peak, Zermatt, Switzerland: Over in Switzerland you'll find a slightly more understated kind of luxury at Kern Peak, a three-bedroom, recently refurbished apartment decked out in ultra-modern style – all neutral tones and clean, sleek lines. Located just off the resort's main street, it sleeps six, with good self-catering facilities making it ideal for families wanting a quiet, private getaway within easy reach of the slopes. Zermatt itself offers something for every level, boasting some of Europe's highest slopes as well as plenty of off-piste, so it's a good suggestion for more-advanced families. It's also car-free, which is a plus point for younger kids. Lagom offers seven nights from £3,047, excluding flights. levlagom.com

The Lodge, Verbier, Switzerland: For the absolute ultimate in high-end, there's only one thing for it – The Lodge, Richard Branson's famous nine-bedroom mountain retreat in Verbier. Facilities are excellent, with Michelin-level food, an open bar, an entertainment lounge – with pool table, games console, TV and disco ball – a private indoor pool, a spa and an outdoor whirlpool bath. It's also just a stone's throw from Switzerland's most exclusive ski resort. Nightly rates start at £1,360, based on two adults sharing a room for at least three nights, including daily breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner and drinks. Guests can also book out the entire property. virginlimitededition.com TW

NEED TO KNOW

- Book ski school well in advance to make sure families get a spot, and boost your commission with a higher-value booking.
- Encourage other add-ons, such as pre-booking equipment to save clients hassle on arrival.
- Look for chalets with access to kids' clubs for parents wanting some quiet time on the slopes.
- If the children haven't skied before, suggest trying an indoor ski slope to get them used to it.
- Remind clients to pack thermals, goggles, sunglasses, ski socks and sun cream.



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