

The Five Best Countries for Winter Sports



Chasing the fresh powder each season is an immensely popular pastime for all the winter sports enthusiasts out there, and no doubt the debate will rage long and hard as to which country is the best in the world in catering for such pursuits. Of course, it's down to a matter of opinion and personal preference, but we think these picks below have got a pretty decent shout for the crown. Conditions, facilities, and costs have been taken into account as we make an educated guess for the top five countries in the world for winter sports. So, without further ado and in no particular order, let us begin.

Canada

As winter sports destinations go, you just can't leave Canada off the list. They have some of the finest snow conditions on earth, and some top-notch ski resorts to boot. Whistler-Blackcomb is North America's largest ski resort and one of the most famous in the worldwide community, but there are many more great facilities across the country to enjoy. Canada is easier on the pocket than its southern neighbor too – another reason for its popularity and its inclusion here.



Austria

There's an abundance of world-class resorts at your ski-tips in Austria (the most in Europe per capita), the difficulty lies in choosing which one to visit. In a country that guarantees the very best powder every season, it's little wonder skiers and snowboarders of all ages and abilities flock here every winter – and well into the springtime. Every resort has top-of-the-range snowmaking facilities, so the pistes are always in the very best condition. St Anton is undoubtedly the number one choice – its apres-ski hospitality is legendary and worth the visit alone.

France

You only have to mention the Three Valleys skiing region to any winter sports enthusiast to know just how revered France is when it comes to the conditions here. The combined resort powerhouses of Méribel, Courchevel and Val Thorens pull in the crowds each season to experience the very best that the country has to offer all within an easily accessible location. They also lay claim to one of the scariest runs in Europe if you're looking for a real challenge. Oh – and it's rather beautiful in those Alps too.



Japan

For the country that boasts the most ski resorts in the world, it would be amiss not to include it here. It is estimated there are over 600 locations to enjoy winter sports in Japan, which is incredibly impressive considering the size of the country while offering plenty of options for getting away from the masses. Japan has popularised the miniature ski resort, with facilities at every turn in a largely mountainous country with perfect snowfall every year. It's also not as expensive as you might think, and with delicious cuisine and great hospitality, it more than holds its own in the top five.



Switzerland

With the most mountains over 4000 meters in Europe and some stunningly beautiful alpine scenery as the backdrop, Switzerland is the quintessential ski-lovers paradise. As you might expect, such quality doesn't come cheap, but you get what you pay for these days. The infrastructure is naturally top-drawer, and with thrilling and iconic mountains like the Matterhorn, Eiger and Monte Rosa to enjoy, you won't forget a winter sports vacation here in a hurry.



Queue the outrage in the comments section, and while we've certainly missed some big hitters when it comes to the best countries for winter sports, we stand by our decisions. The likes of Italy, Norway, and the USA very nearly made the cut, while outsiders such as Bulgaria and Kyrgyzstan are definitely up and coming locations that are well worth a look. But so long as the powder is fresh and the weather is crisp – we don't really care anyway.