

FOOD *and* TRAVEL

SKIING
Slopes near cities

Gourmet travels
Jordan
New York

Five of the best
**SCENIC
CRUISES**

**AWARD
WINNERS**

RESTAURANTS, CHEFS, HOTELS, DESTINATIONS

CHOCOLATE
*Go cocoa for puddings,
tarts and brownies*

**CITY
GUIDES**
CAMBRIDGE
GIRONA
BANGKOK

NOVEMBER 2012 £3.95



Celeriac Lima Flavours of Japan Gastropubs Horsey holidays Mike Robinson

LOCO CITIES

Getting your skiing fix doesn't mean you have to forego urban pleasures. Gabriella Le Breton picks five cities where top quality skiing is right on the doorstep

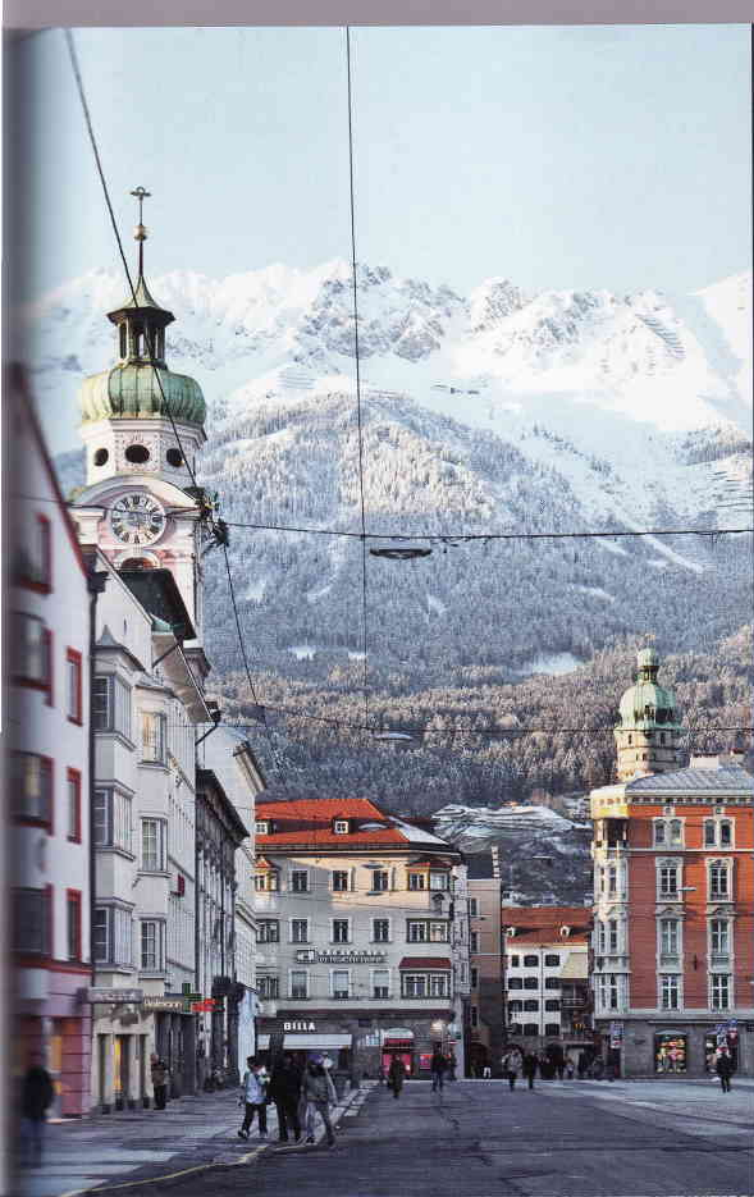
INNSBRUCK AUSTRIA

Hitting the slopes couldn't be easier – just hop on the funicular from the city centre

Innsbruck, the capital of the Tyrol, is perhaps the world's only city to boast both an international airport and a ski resort. The former is just four kilometres from the city; the latter, Nordkette, is reached by a funicular from the centre. Twice host to the Winter Olympics, Innsbruck effortlessly blends old and new at every turn. The Old Town's streets are lined with grand imperial buildings and modern art galleries. Snow-clad mountains provide the backdrop for both the painted, gabled houses lining the River Inn and avant-garde structures, such as architect Zaha Hadid's funicular station.



CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: THE NORDKETTE; THE PAVILLON BAR AND CAFE; THE OLD TOWN; AND THE MOUNTAINS; BIG AIR; ZAHA HADID'S FUNICULAR STATION



After a day's skiing, relax with a hot chocolate in sight of the glittering Golden Roof, a spectacular medieval balcony overlooking the main square. Other après-ski options include admiring works by Gustav Klimt and Oskar Kokoschka in the Ferdinandeum museum, shopping at the Christmas market or attending a concert at the magnificent Landestheater – a far cry from rowdy dancing in ski boots.

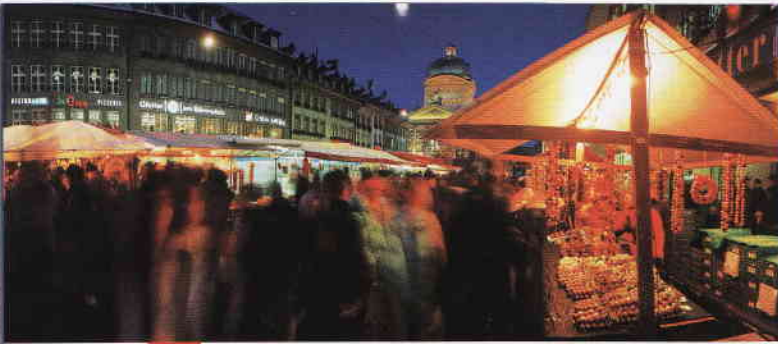
Happily, the Olympia SkiWorld Innsbruck ski area encompasses not only the slopes of Nordkette – which include some challenging terrain but are limited – but also eight other resorts, all within one hour's free ski bus ride. These include the family-friendly Muttereralp and Oberperfuss/Rangger Köpfl; the high-altitude Axamer Lizum; and the delightful Kühtai, which is ideal for beginners.

THE DETAILS

Where to stay: Schwarzer Adler, doubles from £120 (00 43 512 587 109, deradler.com); Pension Paula, doubles from £51 (00 43 512 292 262, pensionpaula.at); Grand Hotel Europa, doubles from £125 (00 43 512 5931, grandhoteleuropa.at)

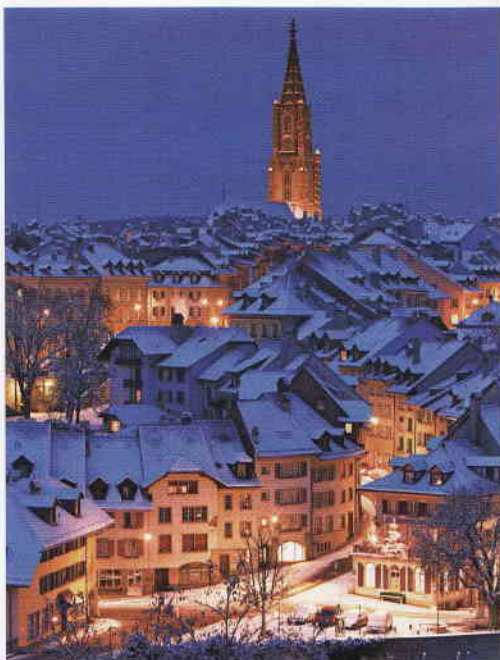
Where to eat: Das Schindler has a lively atmosphere and modern menu (00 43 512 566 969, dasschindler.at); Europa Stüberl at Grand Hotel Europa offers excellent traditional Tyrolean cuisine. —>>





CITIES

Follow the bear to the Swiss capital for six kilometres of shopping arcades, traditional markets, modern art, iconic Alpine panoramas and pistes for skiers of all abilities



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: CHRISTMAS MARKET; THE SLOPES; SKATING: THE CITY FROM THE AARE; INTERLAKEN; BARENPLATZ; VIEW FROM ROSENGARTEN



BERN SWITZERLAND

Bern, Switzerland's capital, is one of Europe's oldest cities, with a medieval Old Town that oozes charm with its crooked buildings, tiled roofs and decorative fountains. Stroll along Bern's six kilometres of covered shopping arcades full of tempting boutiques selling local foods, textiles, clothing and jewellery. Drop by the Zytglogge (Time Bell) on the hour for the world's oldest horological puppet show – intricately carved and painted emperors, bears and jesters have announced the passing of the hour here since 1530.

Old and new jostle for attention. The 15th-century cathedral and town hall, and Münsterplatz's traditional Christmas market, are a walk from the ultra-modern Zentrum Paul Klee, the world's largest collection of the artist's work. The city continues its 600-year-old tradition of keeping brown bears on the banks of the River Aare although today's furry inhabitants are kept in the lush, 6,000 square metre Bear Park rather than the ancient stone bear pits.

Bern's Rosengarten (Rose Garden) offers tremendous views of the Old Town, the river and the snow-capped Bernese Alps which surround the city. These peaks include the forbidding 3,970m Eiger and its neighbours, the 4,107m Mönch and 4,158m Jungfrau, three of the most iconic mountains in the Alps.

Grindelwald, one hour's drive from Bern, is a beautiful Alpine town that visitors flock to for the scenery, climbing, hiking and tearooms. It has superb skiing, with over 200km of pistes, most of which are wide cruisers ideal for beginners and intermediates, in addition to seriously challenging off-piste skiing for experts.

It's also possible to explore Grindelwald's ski area from the city of Interlaken, a short railway ride away (the cost of which is included





in the Jungfrau Top Ski Region lift pass). Base yourself in the city to benefit from its glamorous hotels, restaurants, shops and bars, spectacular setting between Lake Thun and Lake Brienz, and easy access to four diverse ski resorts: the Jungfrau Top Ski Region, the family-friendly Beatenberg-Niederhorn and Brienz-Axalp, and the small but entertaining Habkern. Ski by day and enjoy a sunset paddleboat cruise on the lake for the ultimate Swiss experience.

THE DETAILS

Where to stay: Hotel Allegro Kursaal Bern, doubles from £110 (00 41 313 395 500, kursaal-bern.ch); Pension Marthahaus, doubles from £95 (00 41 313 324 135, marthahaus.ch)

Where to eat: Wein und Sein (00 41 313 119 844, weinundsein.ch) serves innovative international cuisine in an Old Town cellar.

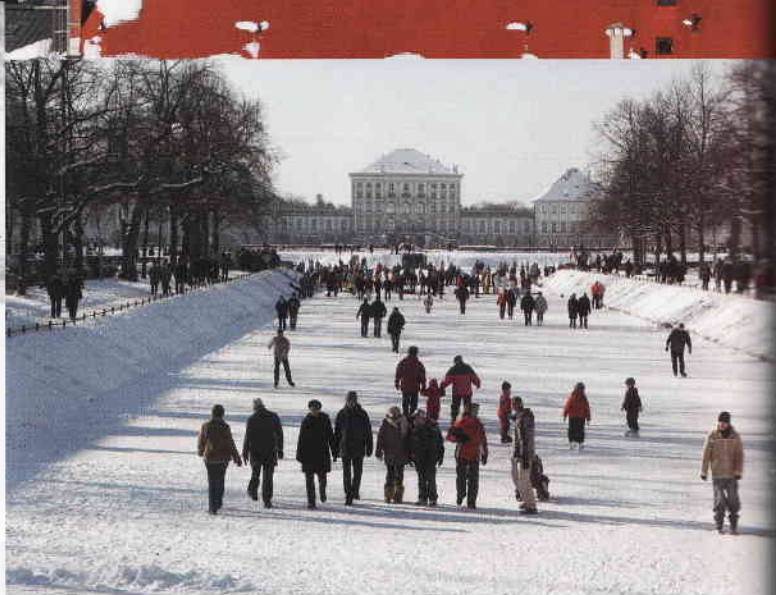




CITIES



MUNICH GERMANY



Munich: a word that sums up German oompah-pah merriment like no other. The vibrant Bavarian capital, Germany's third largest city, conjures up images of steins of *weizenbier*, wheat beer, served in the many beer gardens; too-hot-to-hold *weisswurst*, white veal sausages, dipped in sweet mustard and devoured on the street; and buxom women in figure-hugging dirndls. By no means limited to the Oktoberfest, drinking beer is a way of life in this city. Indeed, the Hofbräuhaus brewery, founded in 1589, remains a major attraction.

However, there is more to Munich than beer: the city is a leading European cultural hub, home to the world-class Pinakothek art galleries, the Bavarian State Opera and Orchestra and countless artists and authors. When not washing down pork knuckles and sauerkraut with a *starkbier*, strong beer, in a candlelit tavern, you can visit the city's imperial palaces, soak up the Bohemian vibe of the Haidhausen district, browse Maximilianstrasse's boutiques or join locals at the Viktualienmarkt food market on a Saturday morning.

Germany's top ski resort, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, is a mere one-and-a-half hours' drive from Munich. The towns of Garmisch and Partenkirchen were joined to host the 1936 Winter Olympics. Today, Garmisch is a large, cosmopolitan town, while Partenkirchen retains much of its medieval charm, with cobblestoned alleyways and frescoed buildings. Together, they offer some 60km of varied pistes across three ski areas: Garmisch-Classic, Zugspitze and Wank (which has no lifts or marked runs but offers long descents for those willing to hike up and 'earn their turns'). At 2,961m, Zugspitze is Germany's highest mountain and offers almost year-round glacier skiing with sweeping views across the Alps, while the Classic area boasts an extensive lift network and runs suitable for all abilities, including the famous Kandahar and Olympia downhill runs.

THE DETAILS

Where to stay: Doubles from £165 at Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten Kempinski München (00 49 892 125 2799, kempinski-vierjahreszeiten.de); alternatively, Hotel Insel-Mühle has doubles from £154 (00 49 898 1010, inselmuehle-muenchen.com)

Where to eat: Boettner's (00 49 8922 1210, boettners.de) serves both rich Bavarian dishes and lighter, international cuisine.

A vibrant cultural scene, rich history, great beer and excellent skiing, Germany's third largest city ticks all the right boxes for a winter break





CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: CORNERING; MUNICH SKYLINE; MARKET IN BRESSANONE, NEAR BOLZANO; FAMILY RUN; BOLZANO; PANORAMA; MUNICH'S VIKTUALIENMARKT; START YOUNG; NYMPHENBURG PALACE

BOLZANO ITALY

The fact that Bolzano goes by the German name of Bozen, as well as the Italian Bolzano (and the Ladin Balsan), indicates the city's multicultural heritage. Set in a broad valley with the towering Dolomites as a backdrop, Bolzano is the capital of the South Tyrol, a region that only officially became part of Italy at the end of World War One. Today, while most residents speak Italian, all signs are in both Italian and German. The cobbled alleys and gabled timber buildings have a distinctly Teutonic feel, yet glamorous locals engage in the classic Italian ritual of the *passeggiata* (evening stroll) along the Via dei Portici, a long street of medieval shopping arcades.

In one of the many taverns, you can enjoy a glass of local lagrein – Bolzano has been producing wine since pre-Roman times and its vineyards fan out into the hills like lace against the snow.

Twelve world-class ski resorts are within an hour's drive of the city. These are all part of the vast Dolomiti SuperSki area, which

encompasses a whopping 1,200km of pistes. The terrain is ideally suited to intermediate skiers looking for fairly gentle, long cruising pistes. The scenery is spectacular, the mountain restaurants among the best in the world and the slopes are generally uncrowded. Fit intermediates should set aside a day to complete the Sella Ronda, a 26km circuit around the Sella massif, during which it's imperative to make frequent stops for fortifying *bombardinos*, brandy and advocaat served hot with whipped cream and an optional shot of coffee.

THE DETAILS

Where to stay: Parkhotel Laurin, doubles from £119 (00 39 047 131 1000, laurin.it); Hotel Greif, doubles from £122 (00 39 047 131 8000, greif.it)

Where to eat: Batzenhäusel (00 39 471 050 950, batzen.it) is a friendly, unpretentious restaurant offering Tyrolean cuisine.

Images by Bavaria Tourism



In its architecture, cuisine and even its approach to life, this picturesque South Tyrolean city in the Dolomites is a fascinating combination of Italian and German influences

CITIES



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE
LEFT: EARLY RUN; OZ
EN OISANS; PIPE; OZ EN
OISANS; LES DEUX ALPES
APRES-SKI; GRENOBLE AT
NIGHT; LES DEUX ALPES



GRENOBLE FRANCE

This historic university city offers a winning formula for visitors with its energetic, youthful vibe, bustling restaurants and bars and top-quality skiing – both on and off piste

Divided by the rivers Drac and Isère and dwarfed by three mountain chains, the Vercors, Chartreuse and Belledonne, Grenoble is the intellectual capital of the Alps. Since the University of Grenoble was founded in 1339, it has been joined by four other universities, with its academic population further swelled by Europe's leading nuclear and microelectronic research facilities.

Far from being a city of boffins, however, Grenoble's boulevards, cafés and labyrinthine medieval Old Town buzz with an energetic, cosmopolitan cultural scene. It's also home to one of France's finest art galleries, the Musée de Grenoble. Get your bearings by riding the cable car 260m up from the Isère's banks to the 19th-century fortress, La Bastille. From there, you can appreciate views of Mont Blanc, and also realise how close the city is to some excellent skiing.

Oz en Oisans, 55km from the city, lies below Alpe d'Huez, a name familiar to fans of the Tour de France. Its two ski areas have more than 250km of pistes for everyone from beginner to expert.

Les Deux Alpes, 71km from Grenoble, offers advanced skiers and riders nearly as many black runs as reds, 1,400 hectares of off-piste terrain with vertical drops of 2,300m, Europe's largest skiable glacier, a dedicated freeski and boardercross park, and one of its best terrain parks. Furthermore, it's linked by lift to the experts-only resort of La Grave, opening up a world of hardcore challenges for the brave. For less intrepid skiers, Les Deux Alpes also boasts 225km of pistes and an impressive beginners' area at the base of the village. The glacier also has lots of gentle runs for beginners and intermediates.

THE DETAILS

Where to stay: Park Hotel Concorde, doubles from £96 (00 33 476 858 123, park-hotel-grenoble.fr); Hotel Angleterre, doubles from £57 (00 33 438 884 040, hotel-angleterre-grenoble.com)

Where to eat: Auberge Napoleon (00 33 476 875 364, auberge-napoleon.fr) serves classic French cuisine in an intimate setting.

