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Rising prices in ski resorts mean bargain-hunting skiers should head east to Bulgaria to cut their costs

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Bulgarian resorts take the top two places in the Ski Resort report – with Borovets beating Bansko to the top spot (<https://www.postoffice.co.uk/travel-money/ski-report>)

Italy's Bardonecchia is the best value Eurozone resort

Barometer prices have risen year-on-year in over 80 per cent of resorts surveyed

Bulgaria again tops the table of best value ski resorts for British skiers in the 13th annual **PostOffice Travel MoneySki Resort Report**¹, produced in partnership with leading tour operator **Crystal Ski Holidays**. However, in a survey of 30 top European resorts – nine new to the report this year², Borovets has emerged as best value, just beating Bansko to the top spot. The report also found that prices have risen in over 80 per cent of resorts.

Using local prices provided by Crystal and converted to sterling by Post Office Travel Money, the UK's leading provider of foreign exchange, the *Ski Resort Report* compares the cost of ski and boot hire, lift passes and ski school plus lunch and drinks for one person to give a realistic view of what it will cost an adult skier on a one week holiday. The two Bulgarian resorts were both significantly cheaper than any eurozone destination but the lower cost of lunchtime meals allowed Borovets (£448) to pip Bansko (£453) for the top spot.

- Third-placed Bardonecchia (£483) is the eurozone's best value resort and boasts the lowest price for skiing (lift pass, equipment hire and tuition). At £332, the Italian resort was around five per cent cheaper than either of its Bulgarian competitors. However, the higher cost of meals and drinks in Bardonecchia - £151 for one week compared with £98 in Borovets and £104 in Bansko – makes it slightly more expensive overall than the two Bulgarian resorts.
- As with the recent *Family Ski Resort Report*, Italy takes five of the top 10 places in the main report table. Sestriere (5th, £556), Sauze (6th, £564, new for 2019), La Thuile (9th, £610) and Cervinia (10th, £615) join Bardonecchia in the best value top 10.

Nick Boden, Head of Post Office Travel Money, which accounts for one-in-four UK currency transactions, said: “*Consumer research shows that resort costs are a big concern for British holidaymakers and this makes it doubly important to do some homework before booking a ski holiday because the price of lift passes, equipment hire and tuition can vary by hundreds of pounds. Despite rising prices*

in many resorts, there are great value options to choose from in Eastern Europe, while Italy is the obvious choice for bargain hunters in the eurozone and will appeal to skiers who prefer to head to the slopes in one of the long-established favourites.”

- Kranjska Gora (£553) has slipped to fourth place in the table after prices rose 22.5 per cent because of a hefty increase in ski school costs this season. In previous reports the Slovenian resort boasted the cheapest prices for tuition and was even rated best value overall in 2017.
- Prices have risen in 18 of 21 resorts that were also surveyed last year but this is not because of the sterling exchange rate. The pound is stronger currently than a year ago against all European currencies, which has helped to mitigate the increase in costs for UK visitors. As a result, only four of the 19 resorts where prices have risen have registered increases of 10 per cent or more. Aside from Kranjska Gora, these are Vemdalen (18.3 per cent), Bansko (11.8 per cent) and La Thuile (10 per cent).
- Only three resorts have seen prices falls. In Norway Crystal researchers surveyed prices in Hemsedal (11th, £620) and found that they were over 25 per cent cheaper than Trysil, the resort that featured in the 2018 report. Prices have also fallen by almost nine per cent in Val d’Isère (24th, £807) and are down by 1.1 per cent in Saas Fee (28th, £883).
- Saas Fee is one of three Swiss resorts surveyed to rate among the most expensive resorts. Zermatt is again the most expensive resort of those surveyed at £1,043, while Wengen (27th) also rates among the priciest places to ski with a barometer total of £881. However, along with Cervinia (1.4 per cent), the barometer increases found by researchers in Zermatt (1.6 per cent) and Wengen (1.2 per cent) were the lowest among the 18 resorts where prices had risen.
- Ellmau in Austria (£570, 7th) and Vemdalen in Sweden (£608, 8th) are the only resorts to break the stranglehold of Eastern Europe and Italy on the 10 best value places in the table. France again failed to gain any top 10 places with Morzine (£635) highest-placed in 12th position. Of the seven French and seven Austrian resorts surveyed, only Ellmau and Morzine were placed in the top half of the table.

- While the overall barometer prices have risen in the majority of resorts, the survey found that lift pass, ski equipment and tuition costs had fallen in seven of them: Hemsedal (-14.7 per cent), Val d'Isère (-13.5 per cent), Saas Fee (-5.5 per cent), Cervinia (-3.3 per cent), Les Deux Alpes (-1.9 per cent), Bardonecchia (-1.1 per cent) and Wengen (-0.4 per cent).
- Crystal Ski Holidays suggests that a good way for bargain-hunting skiers to shave money off the cost of their ski holiday is to take advantage of the discounts available by pre-booking ski essentials.

Chris Logan, Crystal Ski Holidays Managing Director, said: *“The report shows that, despite barometer prices rising year-on-year, there is good value news for British skiers. Bulgaria is known for being a great value destination for ski so it’s no surprise that Borovets and Bansko are in the top spots for this season. Our customers will be pleased to see a decrease in costs in Val’d’Isere, which remains enduringly popular, and Italy continues to be more affordable for price-conscious customers across a variety of resorts. As well as Bardonecchia and Sestriere, La Thuile is a particular favourite for Crystal Ski Holidays customers.*

“We are always looking for ways to provide our customers with excellent value and we feature many offers throughout the season so those heading to the mountains this winter can reduce their costs.”

Skiers can purchase euros over the counter at more than 9,000 Post Office branches. They can also be ordered online at postoffice.co.uk for same day ‘click and collect’ at almost 3,000 branches as well as next day collection at any branch or for home delivery. Swiss francs and Bulgarian lev are available immediately at over 1,600 branches or for pre-order in over 11,500 Post Office branches or online. A range of travel insurance policies suitable for ski trips are also available at Post Office branches or online at postoffice.co.uk

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Notes to Editors:

¹ [The Post Office Travel Money Ski Resort Report was compiled using adult prices for one week \(six active days\) in](#) 30 European resorts that are suitable for a range of skiing levels. These were provided by Crystal Ski Holidays (www.crystalski.co.uk), the UK's leading ski holiday specialist. Costs are based on mid-season pricing and entry level skis and boots. Ski school daily hours vary depending on the resort. Lunch prices are based on two courses (main course and dessert) excluding drinks. **A full breakdown of prices is published in the Post Office Travel Money Ski Resort Report tables.** All prices are based on the Post Office exchange rates on 28 November 2019 and are rounded up or down to the nearest whole number.

² The new resorts surveyed for 2019 were: Borovets, Sauze, Saalbach, Les Menuires, Tignes, Les Arcs, Méribel, Zell am See and Obergurgl.

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