



Skiing TODAY

Travel Today Feature P1



GO's New Ski Brochure

In response to growing demand, GO Holidays has produced its first dedicated Ski Canada/USA brochure in two years—and it has been distributed to travel agents this week. The brochure features more than 20 resorts in the North American region as well as value-add offers and a host of earlybird booking package deals.

Free Whistler Wi-Fi

For clients who want to keep in touch on the mountain, for the coming 2011/12 ski season Whistler Blackcomb is offering free Wi-Fi internet access at Whistler Mountain's Roundhouse Lodge and at the Rendezvous Lodge and Glacier Creek Hut on Blackcomb Mountain.

Bumper Nth American Ski Season For Kiwis



Ski-in/ski-out villages, more snow and wider runs are some of the well-known drawcards of North America's snow scene. These combined with competitive fares and the stronger NZD mean it's shaping up to be a bumper season for Kiwi ski travel to the region, says GO Holidays.

"North American skiing is a lot more popular now and demand is up for both Canada and the US

Epic Season For Whistler

Meteorologists are predicting a La Niña winter for the 2011/2012 Western Canada ski season, and Whistler Blackcomb is expecting another epic season of snow.

The resort says last season's La Niña weather patterns resulted in near record-breaking snowfall at Whistler Blackcomb.

Whistler's 2011/12 ski season opens 24 Nov and the resort has announced a number of new features. Whistler Blackcomb Live is a new mobile app which allows skiers and riders to track their runs and speeds via GPS, access mountain information and more.

Upgrades are also underway at the resort's five terrain parks for the 2011/12 season, along with enhancements to its snow school programmes.

Whistler is a two-hour drive from Vancouver and clients can get there by train, bus, rental car or helicopter.

resorts," says GO ski specialist Amy Blackburn. "The many fully-integrated ski-in, ski-out villages allow Kiwis to spend more time on the mountain, they're convenient for families, there's plenty of après-ski activities—and generally speaking it's a completely different experience from skiing in New Zealand."

The North American resorts offer a wide variety of runs and options for skiers and boarders of all levels—as well as a host of non-ski options from tubing parks and sled rides to spas and shopping.

"It's not all about only advanced skiing. Many mountains are set up so you can take a green run from the top of the mountain to the bottom, which means a group of all abilities can head straight to the top and make their own way down at their own pace," says Blackburn. "The green runs are wider and not as steep, but it means the whole family or group of all levels can head up together."

Canada's Powder Appeal

GO Holidays says well-known Canadian resorts like Whistler continue to attract Kiwi skiers and boarders—along with other popular picks such as Sun Peaks, Big White, Silver Star and Banff/Lake Louise.

"There's more choices for all levels of skiers, not like in New Zealand," says GO ski specialist Amy Blackburn. "Canada's snow is completely different, there's more powder, it's lighter and the weather is drier and the hills are higher," she adds.

With the average length of a Kiwi snow trip around two weeks, Blackburn says it's common for Kiwis to combine resorts in one trip.

"Each resort has its appeal for different clients. Whistler's easy to get to, well-known and such a diverse mountain; while Sun Peaks is just 45 minutes from Kamloops, often has stay pay deals and kids under 12 ski free."

Meanwhile, the Banff/Lake Louise area is ideal for those who want the freedom to choose from the three nearby ski resorts (Norquay, Sunshine and Lake Louise) along with Banff village and picturesque Lake Louise.

Air New Zealand's direct Auckland-Vancouver flights have also made it easier for Kiwis to experience Canada's ski season, adds Blackburn.

Early Booking Deals

For clients looking for value-for-money, a number of Canadian resorts offer early booking discounts, says GO Holidays. Whistler Blackcomb has early booking and value season deals for discounted rates on lift tickets, rental equipment and snow school for its early season, 24 Nov-18 Dec; regular season 02 Jan-12 Feb; and late season 13-22 Apr.



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Travel Today Feature P2

Skiing USA Not Just For High End Market



Skiing the USA's snow resorts was once perceived to be the domain of luxury travellers only, however GO Holidays says the strong NZD and the impressive range of accommodation options and value-add deals now on offer is making a US ski break more affordable for Kiwis.

"There's a resort and accommodation option to fit just about all budgets—plus there are loads of activities for people that don't even want to get on the slopes and a huge range of family-friendly activities," says GO ski specialist Amy Blackburn. Colorado's ski resorts are among the most popular for Kiwis, she says, especially Aspen Snowmass. "Clients have the luxury of four mountains [Aspen, Snowmass, Highlands and Buttermilk] and it's one of the world's most popular ski resorts, but there's also a wide choice," says Blackburn. Clients can immerse themselves in the glitz and glamour of the Aspen resort, which is full of shops and over 100 bars and restaurants, as well as access over 5000 acres of terrain. "Snowmass offers the ski-in, ski-out

concept which is popular with Kiwis, it's slightly cheaper than staying in Aspen itself, plus there's also Buttermilk and Highland which are perhaps not so well known." Blackburn says another key point is that the area's lift passes give clients access to any of the four mountains. "If clients go for two weeks they can pay for eight days skiing and get 14 days—that's six days free." Shuttles operate between Snowmass and Aspen from 0800 daily.

Family Options

While most mountains offer children's facilities, GO says Snowmass is particularly well set up. "They've got this amazing kids ski school called Treehouse, which I can highly recommend. They offer ski and snowboard schools and rentals as well as children's entertainment from climbing gyms to teen activities and they have themed rooms for ages eight weeks up." In addition there's a wide variety of non-ski activities at Aspen Snowmass, from hot air ballooning and fly fishing to snowmobile tours and dog sledding.

Copper Mountain Value

Copper Mountain is a 90-minute drive from Denver and offers one of the cheapest US ski holidays, says GO. "For clients who want to experience the US' soft fluffy snow, with high elevation and reliable weather, Copper is an affordable option," says GO ski expert Amy Blackburn.

The resort has earlybirds for sales to 01 Oct and is billed as having one of the best terrain parks and bowls.

Copper Mountain is also home to a wide range of non-ski activities such as a tubing park, she adds.



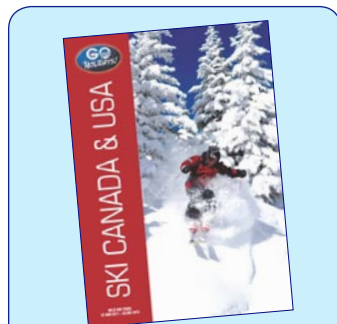
GO's Amy Blackburn

Vail And Breckenridge

Known for its glitz, glamour and celebrities, Vail is a premium ski resort, where the après-ski activities are as much of a drawcard as the snow.

The resort also offers access to multiple mountains on one lift ticket. If clients stay at Vail they can ski Beaver Creek, Breckenridge, Keystone and Arapahoe Basin. GO notes that clients will pay more to rub shoulders with the celebs and ski at Vail, but adds there are early booking deals.

Nearby Breckenridge has both a ski-in, ski-out village, as well as hotels in town—and is slightly cheaper with a good range of properties with some discounts, says GO. Clients can base themselves at Breckenridge, but can ski half of their days at Vail.



Canada/US Ski Deals

GO Holidays new Ski Canada/USA is out this week. It's the wholesaler's first dedicated ski brochure in two years and features over 20 North American resorts and earlybird deals.

Colorado Ski Update

Colorado Ski Country USA has earmarked more than USD50 million to new projects for the upcoming 2011/12 season (late-Nov to Apr), on the back last year's record season. Upgrades will include new lifts and gladed terrain at Buttermilk Mountain; a new high point lift at Copper Mountain; off terrain park improvements at Winter Park; and zip-lining at Crested Butte Mountain Resort. New f&b facilities will appear at Aspen/Snowmass, Crested Butte and Steamboat. Winter Park has also improved its beginners trails, and Steamboat Resort will install heated pavers throughout Gondola Square. See coloradoski.com



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