

Livigno Italy Is The Place To Ski Duty Free

France, Austria and Switzerland are some of the most famous ski resorts for British skiers and snowboarders. But these traditional favourites are now also some of the most expensive places to get your snow fix. It's not uncommon to pay 7 Euros or more for an après ski beer in ski bars in Val D'isere or Kitzbuhel - and cheap accommodation can also be hard to find.

Many skiers are looking to Eastern Europe for a cheaper ski trip, but while there are certainly bargains to be found in the Balkans, the resorts tend to be less developed than in Western Europe and offer less extensive terrain. So what does the cash strapped skier do?

The answer lies in the not-so-well-known ski resort of Livigno, Italy. Set in the Italian Alps at 1816 m above sea level, Livigno offers extensive skiing without breaking the bank. With 33 lifts and 110km of skiing, the area attracts all levels of snow sports fans. The wide open runs are perfect for beginners to learn and intermediates to progress, and the terrain park and easy back country access will even keep more advanced skiers and snowboarders happy for a week or more.

The town has avoided the rapid building boom of imposing concrete high rise hotels that has blighted some of the more famous ski resorts in Western Europe. Instead, Livigno remains a town with plenty of rustic charm; the traditional wooden chalets and small rural buildings are easy on the eye and add to the natural charm of the surrounds.

But the best thing about Livigno is the price, due to its duty free status which was introduced by the Austro-Hungarian Empire about 160 years ago. It's thought that Livigno's remote nature, which was completely cut off from the rest of the country during the harsh winters, was largely the reason it was made into a tax free haven. And even nowadays, only three roads connect the town with other areas - though improvements in building technology and snow clearance mean that access is no longer a problem.

Perhaps the only downside to Livigno is its slight inaccessibility from major airports. It's around a three hour drive from Bergamo or Innsbruck, but with regular buses to the resort or [cheap car hire in Italy](#) readily available, getting to Livigno isn't difficult.

So, with plenty of terrain, easily accessible off piste, a warm Italian reception and prices far cheaper than other resorts in Western Europe, Livigno is one excellent Italian job.

About the Author

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