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## **SLOVENIA: THE PERFECT CHOICE FOR FIRST-TIME SKIERS**

Looking for a first-time skiing holiday that offers more than just the slopes? Then Slovenia could be the perfect choice.

Just a two-hour flight from London, Slovenia is one of the cheapest skiing destinations in Europe. Its ski resorts are world class but include plenty of gentler slopes suitable for beginners.

What's more, as one of Europe's most compact countries, it's easy to escape the pistes and combine a ski trip with a distinctive city experience in the picturesque capital, Ljubljana.

About 40 per cent of Slovenia is mountainous so skiing is a national sport. The country hosts the men's and women's World Cup slaloms every year (at Kranjska Gora and Maribor-Pohorje respectively) and offers dozens of other ski areas. From the award-winning Krvavec (identified by one UK national newspaper as 'the best ski short break resort in Europe') to the charming little resort of Cerkno, Slovenia is becoming renowned for its beautiful alpine settings and its skilled ski instructors.

Visitors can take full advantage of their surroundings by trying some of the other popular winter activities on offer: snowboarding, cross-country skiing, snow-shoeing, dog sledding, ice-skating and ice-climbing. In the main tourist resorts, horse drawn sleigh rides are also available.

In addition, Slovenia consistently ranks among Europe's most affordable skiing destinations – significantly cheaper than ski resorts in France, Switzerland and Austria. The World Ski Lift Ticket Price Report (2009) reported that last season, Brits paid an average of £168.98 for a six-day lift pass across all destinations, with prices in Europe reaching an average of €245 in Andorra. By comparison, the price of a six-day pass at Slovenia's top resorts Kranjska Gora and Maribor was €147 (approximately £128). Slovenia's ski resorts also stand out for their high quality, offering Western standard accommodation and service at Eastern European prices.

Although flights from London to Ljubljana, Slovenia's capital, take only around two hours, the country still remains untainted by tourist influence or over-development and offers a traditional ski experience – off-the-beaten-track adventure with interesting cultural experiences.

The country's compact size (Slovenia is slightly smaller than Wales) means that you can be on the top of a mountain within 45 minutes of leaving the airport in Ljubljana. You can also easily combine your ski break with a city experience – either by staying in the mountains and heading to the city at the end of the day, or by using Ljubljana as a base for your skiing and other outdoor activities.

The ski season in Slovenia begins as early as November and in resorts such as Mount Kanin – the highest in the country – the snow remains well into the spring.

For further information about Slovenia and its winter sports scene visit [www.slovenia.info](http://www.slovenia.info).

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