

NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC

TRAVELLER

WINTER SPORTS

2020

GET FESTIVE

HOW TO SPEND A SPARKLING
CHRISTMAS IN THE ALPS

TRAVEL ADVICE

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this season

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in backcountry
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ADAPTIVE SKI

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snow sports



AUSTRIA

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SLEEP

DOLOMITES

Incredible food, laid-back resorts, superb snow and reasonable rates — all against the backdrop of mountains so majestic that UNESCO gave the landscape World Heritage status. If one ski region has it all, it's the Dolomites

WORDS: JULIA BUCKLEY



The world's largest linked ski area, Dolomiti Superski's whopping 760 miles of pistes are wide, perfectly groomed and generally gentle: a place to feel good about your prowess. And they look good, too, especially in the golden hour before sunset, when the mountains flush a rosy pink — towers, needles, fangs and witches' hats, the work of friable dolomite rock, which erodes into a living sculpture. Quality and value reign, here: a superb fusion of Italian and Austrian food, cooked at family-run inns and Michelin-starred restaurants, is the norm. The Dolomites' ski scene sprang from old farming settlements that catered to early tourists — you won't find purpose-built resorts with piste-side chalets — so in some places there's a quick shuttle ride to the ski lifts. That said, hotels are constantly recreating themselves, and the standard is high. And with a slew of exciting new openings, there's never been a better time to hit these pretty pistes.



BEST FOR WELLNESS WARRIORS CHÙ LEFAY DOLOMITI, MADONNA DEL CAMPIGLIO

It's not despite it's often not awarded by some — it was deliberately built in Pinocchio just below Madonna del Campiglio (Italy's second biggest ski area) to ensure easy access, even in a blizzard. Nearby gondolas put you straight on piste, there's an in-house ski pass office, and each guest gets a locker (plus a 'ski booter' to handle everything you need to buy or rent from the hotel). Walk to slick rooms with glass-walled bathrooms pitched towards the mountains, or to the restaurant up with its menus, steam-treats, salt caves and saline foot-bath pools. The acupuncture-based massages will nip any muscle aches in the bud — this is the best kind of après ski. **ROOMS:** Doubles from £260. **Book:** dolomiti.lefayhotels.com **SKI PACKAGE:** lefyaholidays.com

