

# Booking Your Ski Trip

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We are delighted that you are looking to book your forthcoming ski trip with us. The key elements and specific inclusions for your trip will be listed on your personalised **Proposal** so please don't hesitate to ask if you would like any amendments or additions before you book. In the meantime, please read through the following pages very carefully as they contain important generic information regarding the booking and planning of your ski trip. Please call us without delay should you have any questions.

## Accommodation

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We offer a varied selection of accommodations, all of which have been visited by our staff, agents or representatives and checked for their suitability for our groups. Most bedrooms are en-suite although some units may have shared washroom or toilet facilities. As local **accommodation classifications vary** in different countries, please read the descriptions carefully or ask us for further details before deciding whether a particular destination is right for you and your group. Our packages are usually based on a **full board basis**. Subject to confirmation this means that you will receive breakfast and dinner daily at your accommodation, from where you will also take a packed lunch each day. An extra dinner is typically also included on departure day at your accommodation before you set off for your journey home at the end of your trip (coach tours only).

### Damage Deposits

Some accommodation providers require a **damage deposit** to be paid directly on arrival, refundable after the stay subject to an inspection of your rooms.

## Travel

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### Coach

Your travel arrangements are an important part of your tour, and it is our belief that you should **travel in comfort and safety**. An executive coach is typically provided for door to door travel throughout the tour. Your coach will usually be equipped with seatbelts, reclining seats, DVD, stereo, air circulation system, microphone, toilet and drinks machine. Various coach sizes and capacities are available. Tour drivers are also an important part of the tour, so you should find your drivers to be friendly, experienced and reliable. Where coach travel is provided by suppliers in overseas countries, we contract reputable local companies to handle all the necessary journeys as stipulated, but while they comply with local regulations, please bear in mind that these may be different to those here in the UK.

### Ferry

We use **the ferry services** from Dover to Calais for most of our tour groups. With refurbished and improved vessels, you can eat and drink on board in comfort as you sail across to mainland Europe. We also use the fast and popular **Eurotunnel service** from Folkestone to Calais, although a supplement is sometimes required for groups wishing to use this service.

### Flights

For **flight-inclusive packages**, we will always take into consideration your preferred departure airport and travel times, however we cannot always guarantee these as many bookings are accepted in advance of airline schedules and route confirmations being released. Please also bear in mind that there may be very little flexibility in booking seats with a number of these airlines. As such, any requests for passenger name changes after a booking has been received may well be subject to substantial amendment fees as imposed by the airlines and such conditions are outside of our control. Our packages do not typically include the carriage of additional ski equipment which would need to be booked separately at a supplement.

## Ski Information

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### Ski Tuition

Our standard ski trip packages include **4 hours tuition** on each of 6 days unless otherwise stated on your proposal and confirmation. Lessons are provided on the basis of 1 instructor to every 12 pupils. Staff places and/or concessions do not count towards the instructor/pupil ratios. If agreed with the instructors you may, at your own discretion, request to vary the group sizes within your party, to take account of any uneven split of ages and abilities. Extra instructors may be available at a supplementary charge on request. Each 2 hour instruction time allocation may be marginally less as local instructors may require time to transfer to another group, in accordance with local regulations. Our arrangements do not oblige our ski instructors to remain with your group during the lunch break although they may on occasion choose to do so. An extra hour of instruction (i.e. 5 hours instruction per day) can be organised at a supplement in many of our resorts on request, so please ask for a quotation if this is not already itemised on your Proposal.

It is a condition of booking that as party leader, you agree that pupils will ski or snowboard only on marked and patrolled pistes and be supervised at all times while skiing either by your party's teachers, providing they are competent skiers, or by the appointed ski instructors contracted by us on your behalf.

## Ski Equipment

Our standard ski trip packages **include the hire of skis and boots** for 6 days, unless otherwise stated in your proposal and confirmation. As party leader you accept responsibility for ensuring that all your party is present at the appointed time for the safe fitting and collection of equipment and for the return of the same when appropriate and advised to do so. The condition of equipment should be checked prior to acceptance and again on return and any damages settled with the supplier direct if required. Lost or damaged goods may be covered under insurance, subject to the terms and conditions of the policy. Equipment, including details of sizes required must be ordered in advance to guarantee availability in resort. Those individuals requiring sizes larger than boot size 11 may wish to give consideration to bringing their own ski boots as the stock of bigger sizes is always extremely limited.

## Helmets

For a number of years there has been considerable debate on the subject of whether helmets should be worn for all snowsports (alpine skiing, snow-boarding, snow-blading). Until now, the same authorities have required only those that use snowboards or blades, or where the law of the country so dictates, to wear helmets. Currently, young people under the age of 14 must wear helmets in Italy and in many parts of Austria. The Federation Internationale de Ski (FIS) now strongly recommends that all skiers and snowboarders, regardless of ability and age, use helmets. The AfPE (Association for Physical Education) has also advised its members that helmets should be worn. The majority of the members of the Snowsports England Schools and Youth Committee voted to recommend to the governing body that the wearing of helmets should be recommended. **As such, our policy is now to include the hire of helmets in all our packages as standard.** These will be fit for purpose and correctly fitted by specialist suppliers in resort.

## Ski Passes

Many ski lift companies now require a **list of all pupils' names and dates of birth on school headed paper**, to be prepared in advance and brought with you as party leader, if not supplied in advance. Individual photos may also be required. The ski areas covered by lift passes as advised and advertised by us may occasionally be subject to change. Any such change resulting from amendments made by local lift companies or resort authorities is strictly outside our control and we can accept no responsibility for any reduction in ski area caused by any such amendment or decision.

## Snow Conditions

We cannot accept responsibility for **snow or weather conditions** which may affect skiing, boarding, skating or other such activities during your trip. Should bad weather and local conditions dictate that your ski and/or other contracted activities not be possible, then we will attempt to organise for transfers within the region to accommodate you, subject to regional limitations. You may be covered for piste closure by your insurance, subject to the terms and conditions of your policy. The decision of your ski school or instructors on the suitability of snow conditions is final and we accept no responsibility for your party whatsoever for any action taken by you, which is not wholly in accordance with these conditions.

## Skiwise Reps

A Skiwise rep is included as part of your package and someone will be allocated to your group. The role of the rep is to help you in resort with the organisation of your accommodation, ski and après ski arrangements. The ski rep may travel out with you from the UK, or meet with you on arrival at your accommodation. The rep cannot act as a member of your staff or assume responsibility for your students but will hopefully become an invaluable member of the team during your stay. All reps are selected for their suitability in working with school groups and all English reps are **DBS checked** in advance.

## Après Ski

Après ski, including but not limited to, swimming, ice-skating, tobogganing and other events or activities that you may wish to take part in during your trip, can often be organised in advance, or pre-booked to ensure availability. However, even if these are paid for or recommended by us, please bear in mind that they are provided by external independent suppliers and not by us. As such, participation in these is entirely at your own risk. Certain **in-house après-ski activities** such as quiz nights, treasure hunts and discos are often included in your package at no additional charge and can be organised with your rep.

## What to take on your ski trip?

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Sometimes it seems rather daunting packing for a ski-trip when there are so many elements to remember.

Clothing must provide adequate protection against snow, wind and cold. You may wish to use a local ski clothing supplier or we are happy to recommend a company should you prefer. For those who wish to hire ski jackets, trousers and other equipment, this is a sensible and cost-effective way to get kitted out. Suppliers that we recommend will often join us at the pre-ski trip presentation evening to answer any questions and provide further advice. Ski helmets – which are included in our packages unless otherwise stated - should be worn for added head protection (these are now compulsory in many countries). Sun cream should be applied to prevent sunburn and lip balm to prevent chapped lips. Pupils must have any medication if required and pre-warn instructors of any special needs.

## Ski trip packing checklist

Here's a sample checklist below although you may wish to amend or use your own of course.

### Ski Clothing

- Ski jacket (which may be hired in advance)
- Ski trousers or salopettes
- Fleece
- Waterproof ski gloves
- Thermal underwear/leggings
- Thermal tops (best to wear layers)
- Ski goggles (or good quality sunglasses with unbreakable glass)
- Pairs of ski socks

### Other Clothing

- Woolly hat
- Sturdy boots
- Warm coat
- Shirts
- Underwear (including normal socks)
- Trousers
- Hoodie or sweatshirt
- Swimming trunks/costume

### Personal items

- Wash kit
- Towel
- Water bottle (drink water regularly to prevent dehydration)
- Sunglasses
- Paper or notebook and pen/pencil
- Tissues

### Essentials

- Passport
- EHIC
- Travel insurance documentation
- Medication
- Small backpack
- European plug adaptor
- Sunscreen (high factor)
- Lip balm
- Travel sickness medication (if required)

### Extras

- Phone (and gadget or device if you wish – making sure these are suitably insured)
- Camera (consider a disposable camera)
- Reading book
- Language phrase book
- Chargers for gadgets (if required)
- Wet wipes and hand sanitiser
- Waterproof watch

B.B. Consider carefully before deciding whether to bring valuable items, jewellery or gadgets which might get damaged, lost or stolen during the trip. See Travel Insurance section below.

## Travel Insurance

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It is vital that you have adequate travel insurance cover for all the members of your group. **This is why our comprehensive winter sport travel insurance is included within your package.** The full terms, conditions, and cover provided are shown on the policy certificate and documentation, which are available to view on our website. Your policy documents will be sent together with your Booking Confirmation, and further hard copies can be sent to you on request. We are an appointed representative of Fogg Travel Insurance Services Limited for the sale of travel insurance. Fogg Travel Insurance Services Limited is fully authorised by the Financial Conduct Authority. Full details of levels of cover and terms and conditions can be found in the policy documents which can be sent to you via e-mail or are available to download from our websites.

Please note that **gadgets such as iphones and ipads** are not covered under the standard terms of the policy that we offer or that may be included in your tour package should this have been provided. Should you wish to upgrade your policy to include cover for gadgets or indeed to **reduce the normal excess down to zero** (so that no excess is paid on making a valid claim) then you may do so on request by paying the additional premiums as quoted to you. See policy wording for details.

## Health & Safety and Travel Advice

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The safety and wellbeing of our clients is an absolute priority, and procedures are in place to make sure that we take every precaution to ensure best practice for the preparation, organisation and operation of your trip.

### Travel Advice & EHIC

Tour members should seek medical advice if they are in any doubt about their fitness to travel and participate in the activities on the trip. For those travelling to overseas destinations, especially to high altitude resorts, it is the responsibility of participants to contact their doctor in advance should they deem relevant, as some individuals may encounter difficulties at high altitude. Travellers from the UK touring to Europe should ensure they have an EHIC (European Health Insurance Card). Eligible travellers from the UK are entitled to receive free or reduced-cost medical care in many European countries on production of a valid EHIC card. Applications are available online at [www.ehic.org.uk](http://www.ehic.org.uk).

Further details on travelling abroad can be obtained by visiting [www.gov.uk/travelaware](http://www.gov.uk/travelaware) which provides important information on all the destinations we feature, as well as travel tips, checklists and safety videos. You should visit this in advance and sign up for e-mail alerts for your chosen destination. Direct links to some of the useful sections are detailed below:

Travel advice: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

Travel checklist: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/foreign-travel-checklist>

Ski Safe: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/winter-sports-stay-safe-on-the-slopes>

Teacher pack: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-aware-teachers-pack>

E-mail sign up: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/email-signup>

Urgent help: <https://www.gov.uk/government/world/embassies>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/fcotravel>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/FCOtravel>

### Safety Management & Risk Assessments

Our Safety Management System, developed under the guidance of external consultants ensures that all reasonable measures are taken to assure our clients of a **high level of safety and professionalism** throughout a tour. These include; coach company checks including licence, insurance and safety documentation; accommodation inspections to assess fire, safety, hygiene and suitability; training, experience and professionalism of our staff and representatives; accident and emergency procedures and 24 hour assistance. We can supply documents in order to help you with the completion of your own risk assessment as may be required by your own governing body or LEA.

### Inspection trips

We strongly recommend that you undertake an **inspection visit** in advance of your trip in order to satisfy these requirements, complete your own risk assessment documentation and to benefit from local orientation in resort. We are happy to organise an inspection trip for you which will include two free nights' accommodation in the destination where you have booked (or are intending to book) on a half board basis inclusive of two free days ski lift pass and equipment hire for you as Group Leader. The cost of flights, transfers, personal expenditure and the costs for any additional members of staff will be at your own expense. If you have not already booked your ski trip with us but are hoping to do so, then we are happy to facilitate the organisation of an inspection trip as shown above, although you would need to pay for this yourself. However, the costs would be reimbursed to you by way of a discount on your invoice, as and when you book the trip with us.

## Staying Safe & Behaviour

Adults and children alike must **take reasonable care for their own safety** at all times. Being in a foreign environment on a trip can be very exciting, but any tour brings with it certain risks which you should attempt to minimise. Furthermore, in confirming the tour booking you are also agreeing to our terms and conditions with reference to the conduct of your group, including but not limited to damages and behaviour. It must be remembered, and made absolutely clear to parents - that skiing has inherent risks, that falls will happen and that people can get hurt through no fault of their own or anyone else. As well as the importance of the right equipment and clothing, you should read and adhere to the **FIS Ski-way Code**, to ensure that skiers and boarders are in control and that their speed is limited to their ability and the situation.

The International Ski Federation (FIS) operates the following **safety conduct code** applicable to all skiers or snowboarders, which is binding by law:

- 1) Respect for Others: Behave in such a way that does not endanger or prejudice other skiers or snowboarders.
- 2) Control of Speed: Adapt your speed to your ability, the prevailing conditions of terrain, and the density of traffic.
- 3) Choice of Route: Choose your route in such a way that you do not endanger other skiers or snowboarders ahead.
- 4) Overtaking: You may overtake to the left or right, but leave enough space for others to continue their line.
- 5) Entering and Starting: Check up and down the slopes before starting off so not to endanger yourself or others.
- 6) Stopping on the Piste: Avoid stopping on the piste in narrow places or where visibility is restricted.
- 7) Climbing on Foot: When either climbing or descending on foot, keep to the side of the piste.
- 8) Respect for Signs: A skier or snowboarder must respect all signs and markings.
- 9) Assistance: At accidents, every skier or snowboarder is duty bound to assist.
- 10) Identification: Whether involved or a witness, you must identify yourself to others following an accident.

[http://www.fis-ski.com/mm/Document/documentlibrary/Administrative/02/04/30/10FISRulesofConduct-English-A4\\_Neutral.pdf](http://www.fis-ski.com/mm/Document/documentlibrary/Administrative/02/04/30/10FISRulesofConduct-English-A4_Neutral.pdf)

**Please read our Before You Go – A Safety Guide**, which is available to download from our website and is sent to all Group Leaders at booking and prior to setting off on a trip.

## Quality Assured

We are assured members of the **School Travel Forum (STF)** and have been awarded the prestigious **Learning Outside the Classroom (LOTC) Quality Badge**. As such in booking with us, you can be secure in the knowledge that we:

- understand and facilitate the needs of educational travel;
- have effective safety management systems in place, specifically focussed on travelling with young persons;
- offer fair terms and conditions and the best financial security.

### LOTC Quality Badge

Check our LOTC Quality badge holder records at: <http://lotcqualitybadge.org.uk/search>

### School Travel Forum Assured

Check out our School Travel Forum Assured membership status at: <http://www.schooltravelforum.com/search>

## Passports & Documentation

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### Passenger Information

You will be required to send us various details and documentation at the time of booking and/or in advance of the trip and your prompt attention to these is vital to ensuring the smooth running of your trip. **A full passenger list** will be required, inclusive of dates of birth and other information depending on your tour. This is required at the point of booking for flight tours. It is essential that the names you supply on your passenger list match the names that appear on the passports. Discrepancies may result in additional charges, and even refusal to travel.

### Passports & Visas

For overseas trips you will need to ensure that every member of your group has valid documentation to travel. You should ensure that any applications for required documentation are made in good time so that they are received well before you depart. **A full valid passport will be required**, and depending on the destination, it is sometimes necessary to have an extended period of validity beyond the end of the trip. For some European trips a Collective Passport may be used for qualifying groups. However, they are not accepted by several airlines and a number of countries, so you should double-check in advance if you are considering this option. Some countries require an entry visa for the duration of your stay.

It is important to note that **a visa may be required by a non-UK passport holder** that is not required by a UK passport holder. We recommend you check with the relevant embassy or consulate.

**Travelling to the USA - Visa and entry requirements** – if you are travelling to the USA, you may require visas. For British citizens an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorisation) is required and needs completing online at a present cost of \$14 per person. All other nationalities must check with the necessary authorities for appropriate passport and visa entry requirements.

## Financial Protection

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### Why Your Tour Money Is Safe

Tour companies are bound by local and European legislation to ensure that your monies paid to us in respect of your tour are fully protected. While our reputation and experience mean that **your monies are in very safe hands**, you should also carefully read the following sections which confirm that as a company, we have arranged substantial bonds to ensure the financial security of our clients. Please do not travel with a company that is not fully bonded.

### Air Holidays & Flights

All the flights and flight-inclusive holidays organised by us are **financially protected by the ATOL scheme**. When you pay you will be supplied with an ATOL Certificate. Please ask for it and check to ensure that everything you booked (flights, hotels and other services) is listed on it. Please see our booking conditions for further information or for more information about financial protection and the ATOL Certificate go to: [www.atol.org.uk/ATOLCertificate](http://www.atol.org.uk/ATOLCertificate). ATOL protection does not apply to all holiday and travel services we offer. Please ask us to confirm what protection may apply to your booking.

### Coach & Land Package Tours

We are fully bonded for the package holidays organised by us which do not contain a flight element. Our membership of the ABTA means that if you are travelling by sea or land or even if you have booked your own flights, your holiday package booked with us will have full financial protection. Note: the flight element is not covered in the event of the failure of the airline with which you have booked your own flights directly. For further details visit [www.abta.com](http://www.abta.com).

## Booking & Payments

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- Carefully read your **Proposal** to check that it meets with your expectations and requirements.
- You should also carefully read our **Booking Terms and Conditions** before committing to your booking and entering into a contract with us, bearing in mind that the information contained within this document and important information supplied by us and available on our website also forms part of your terms and conditions of booking.
- Complete the **Booking Form** as fully and accurately as possible, and return to us with your initial deposit payment.
- Please note that all **deposit payments are strictly non-refundable**.
- Your deposit may be made by cheque, bank payment or by debit or credit card. If you wish to make payment by **business credit card** we will regrettably have to impose a charge of 2% to cover the additional fees levied by the card companies.
- If you are booking a flight-inclusive package, we shall also require a **full passenger list** at this stage.
- We shall send you a **Booking Confirmation** once your booking is in place.
- Your **payment schedule** will be shown on your Proposal and also on your Booking Confirmation, detailing the final balance payment date and any interim deposit payment dates if applicable.
- **Provisional Tour Details** will normally be sent to you at the time final payment is received.
- Any tickets, references and your final itinerary will normally be sent out to you with your **Final Tour Information**, typically 7-10 days in advance of your departure on tour, or as soon as all arrangements have been finalised on your behalf and all payments have been received from you.

## Getting In Touch

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### Customer Service

We are always here to help. Please don't hesitate to get in touch at any stage to discuss your trip with us.

You can reach us on: **01279 647 566** or by e-mail at [tours@absolutetravel.co.uk](mailto:tours@absolutetravel.co.uk)

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