

**DOING IT... THE FRENCH WAY**

niques, and even ski flying, monoskiing, skiing with wings, and, common old cross-country.

The resort height means there is rarely a snow shortage. During my January stay it flooded down every day.

After 15 ft of snow piled up, the mountain was shut for two days. So the bars shops opened longer and the cinemas brought out all those Emmanuelle films they keep for just such an emergency.

The energetic go skating or play squash or go disco dancing at night (the Fairway at the Golf is the best).

There is plenty of good and inexpensive eating. At Arc 1800 L. Epicure gave a good three-course dinner for just over £6. Punch was a reasonable £3 for a lunchtime steak salad, glass of wine and coffee. The cheapest bar was Le Gabottis. La Gaipette is an intimate and trendy bar on the terrace at 1800, but watch out for some queer customers. The Scandinavians, who seem to be everywhere these days, have a curious new craze SNUFF TAKING.

It took my breath away when the lovely girl sitting opposite on the terrace whipped out a medical syringe, packed it with snuff and injected it right into her mouth.

Back to skiing. The storm died down by a two-day rest and skiing myself sily on the 100 or so miles the resort

Very good skiers can take a guide and ski off-piste to Tignes - Val d'Isere, for some of the most extensive skiing in the Alps.

In the opposite direction lies the resort complexes of La Plagne—whose skiing is linked to Les Arcs.

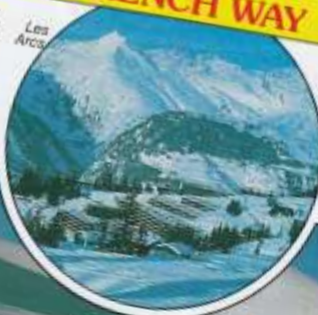
La Plagne, with its seven satellite villages, is another good example of sculpting the mountain for skiers. All the

runs link, are well signposted and you nearly always ski right back to your hotel or apartment.

The high-rise building here has block after block of apartments peering down on the convenient. So is the huge indoor shopping precinct at La Plagne and the escalators that whisk you straight up to the very doors of the telecabine. There are some nice long runs at La Plagne, often down to lower villages, like Montchavin.

The French also have good traditional resorts like Chamonix, and of course the vast Trois Valées ski region, claimed to be the world's biggest. The Trois Valées is made up of the three Courchevel villages, two in Meribel and the purpose-built stations of Les Menuires and Val Thorens. Altogether there are 400 miles of skiing to suit all standards, a magic winter wonderland, with reliable snow record. I can recommend Meribel, at the heart of this immense ski region, as the ideal place for touring it.

Continued over



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**Doing it the French Way**

Ski flights to Denver were £244 return in 1980 – half today's price. They became ever cheaper when low-cost flights pioneer Sir Freddie Laker started doing London- LA returns on his Skytrain for under £200.

## THE GREAT SKI DREAM

**YOU'VE** heard about it—but only seen it in the ski films. You've dreamt about it—but thought you'd never afford it.

But now the great American ski dream—Colorado—is easily available and at an affordable price.

Western Airlines, one of America's major carriers, have opened up a scheduled service from Gatwick to Denver, capital of the Rockies. The fare is £244 (apex return) and once in Denver you are within hours of legendary resorts Aspen, Vail, Steamboat, Copper Mountain, Purgatory, Winter Park, Keystone, Breckenridge and many more.

The legend of Skiing the Rockies is built on the 'great American fluff'.

This is not a description for crumple, but a very apt description of powder. Skiing the Rockies is an unforgettable experience. Here's a quick round up of top resorts.

**ASPEN:** The most famous American ski name. One of the largest skiing areas in North America with four separate mountains, Aspen Mountain, Aspen Highlands, Buttermilk and Snowmass. Aspen is known as the capital of Ski and Fun. Its apres ski is excellent and so is the service, which is rivalled only by the Swiss.

You can bus to Aspen from Denver by Continental Trailways (about 5 hrs) or 40 minutes by Aspen or Rocky Mountain Airways, or hire a car for the 210 mile drive and leave yourself mobile to ski other great Rocky Mountain ski resorts.

**VAIL:** Second ski capital of the Rockies, claims the largest ski mountain in the States. On the north side of Vail Mountain are smoothly groomed and pisted runs—on the south side giant alpine snow bowls. They even have snowmaking machines to ensure top snow conditions.

Get to Vail by Continental Trailways from Denver about 3 hours, or a short hop by air.

**COPPER MOUNTAIN** is only eight years old as a ski resort, but it has rapidly built a reputation as one of the great Colorado ski areas.

The unique aspect of Copper is the grading of runs from easy to expert east—so experts make straight for the east side. Copper is an Americanised French ski station—aking 9,600 to 12,000 ft with a completely self-contained centre including shops, nightclubs, discos, restaurants and a wide range of luxury apartment accommodation.

**WINTER PARK:** Linked with Mary Jane (yes that is a ski area) it has over 54 lifts and 2,100 vertical feet, and the summit at 11,125 ft, the skiing is steep and deep. Winter Park is an hour's drive from Denver.

**PURGATORY:** What a name to live up to! and with over 40 runs of endless skiing, experts will find the powdered or moguled twisting trails 'purgatory' by the end of a long ski day.

Durango, the main town, is loaded with atmosphere of the old west and country and western!

Purgatory can be best reached by Frontier Airline Service from Denver to LA Plate, 37 miles from the ski area.

**BRECKENRIDGE:** Peak 8 and Peak 9 are the two mountains of Breckenridge—a crazy ski town in the heart of Summit County. The flavour of the resort is real old west with Victorian style nightspots, chandeliers and all.

Breckenridge, 9,600—11,800 ft, is one of the oldest ski areas in the region. Two hours from Denver by Continental Trailways.

Tour operators featuring in the Rockies are: Ski America, Neilson's Rocky Mountain Ski Dream programme and Swans/Inghams.

**Home to Aspen and Happy Hour**

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## Midlands Ski Show

Bingley Hall  
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Sunday 1st Nov. 11am - 8pm

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## The Great Ski Dream

American skiing is discovered by GSG – we went out to Breckenridge in 1980 and wrote it up as a guaranteed-snow paradise – and European skiers flocked there a few years later when Europe had no snow.