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01 The Saône River in Lyon, France © Shutterstock  
02 The Capilano Suspension Bridge with Canyon Lights © Destination Vancouver/Capilano Suspension Bridge Park

# The golden gateways

These six cities will charm you with their alpine style and family-friendly activities. The best part? They're all located within a few hours' drive of some of the world's best ski resorts. **BY IMOGEN WILHELM**

## Lyon FRANCE

One of France's oldest cities, Lyon, is the gateway for many ski adventures. Spend the day at Lyon's closest ski resorts including Plans d'Hottonnes, Autrans-Méaudre, Les 7 Laux, Chamrousse and Alpe du Grand Serre. Or, travel a little further to hit the pistes at Val d'Isère, Courchevel, Méribel, Chamonix and La Plagne. Leave time to discover everything this charming ancient city has to offer - but be warned - the list is very long. [lyon-france.com](http://lyon-france.com)

## Vancouver CANADA

Vancouver locals have three ski resorts all around 30 minutes drive from the city centre - Grouse Mountain, Cypress Mountain or Mt Seymour. And Whistler Blackcomb, with its 200-plus runs, is about 90 minutes' drive north. Go ice skating or take the kids bike riding in Stanley Park, visit a host of fascinating museums as well as Granville Island with its legendary market. Don't miss taking the kids to the Capilano Suspension Bridge with its glittering lights in winter. [destinationvancouver.com](http://destinationvancouver.com)

## Queenstown NEW ZEALAND

Queenstown is a ski family's paradise. There are four ski resorts within close range - Coronet Peak, The Remarkables, Cardrona and Treble Cone - plus enough family activities to keep you occupied for weeks. Take the kids for a spin on the iconic jet boats, or board the *TSS Earnslaw*. Go hiking and ziplining or take in the views from the Skyline Gondola. Kids will love the ride - but they'll love the luge at the top even more. [queenstownnz.co.nz](http://queenstownnz.co.nz)

## Innsbruck AUSTRIA

Tucked away in the Alps, Innsbruck is replete with 13 nearby ski resorts. Among these are Nordkette, Patscherkofel, Axamer Lizum, Muttereralp and Kühtai. There are plenty of smaller slopes and children's areas as well. Innsbruck offers a Ski Plus City Pass to make visiting ski areas and local attractions simple. Take the kids to Alpenzoo, the 'highest zoo in Europe'. Or why not take a llama hike to make some shaggy new friends? [innsbruck.info](http://innsbruck.info)

## Denver COLORADO

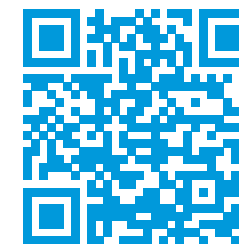
Spend a few days in the Mile High City to acclimatise before heading to one of the many ski resorts within a few hours' drive. Denver is less than two hours from Winter Park Resort, Vail, Copper Mountain Resort, Keystone Resort and the Loveland Ski Area, among others. The city itself is a year-round playground. Families will love the Denver Firefighters Museum and History Colorado Center. You'll find a free ice skating rink at Skyline Park and check who is playing at Red Rocks. [denver.org](http://denver.org)

## Sapporo JAPAN

Hokkaido's capital, Sapporo, is a favourite skiing destination with Sapporo Teine and Sapporo Kokusai Ski Resort less than a one hour drive away, and Rusutsu Resort, Furano Ski Area, Niseko United around two hours. Be sure to check out the annual winter events including the Sapporo Snow Festival and the German Christmas Market. Visit one of the city's many onsens, then catch a chairlift to the Mount Okura Observatory for knockout views. [sapporo.travel](http://sapporo.travel)

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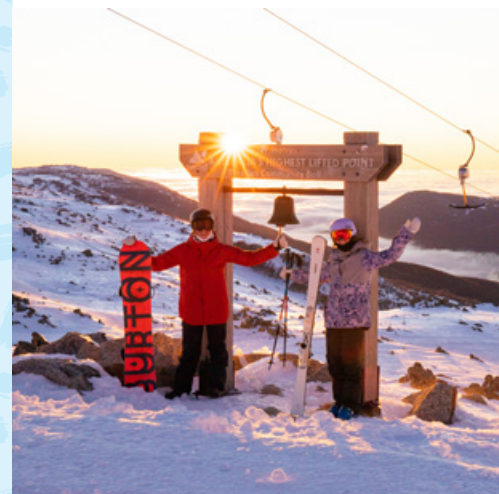
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## JAPAN

### Best things to do in Hokkaido

From Sapporo's food scene to witnessing the drift ice phenomenon, this is the ultimate Hokkaido bucket list.

🔍 'Hokkaido'

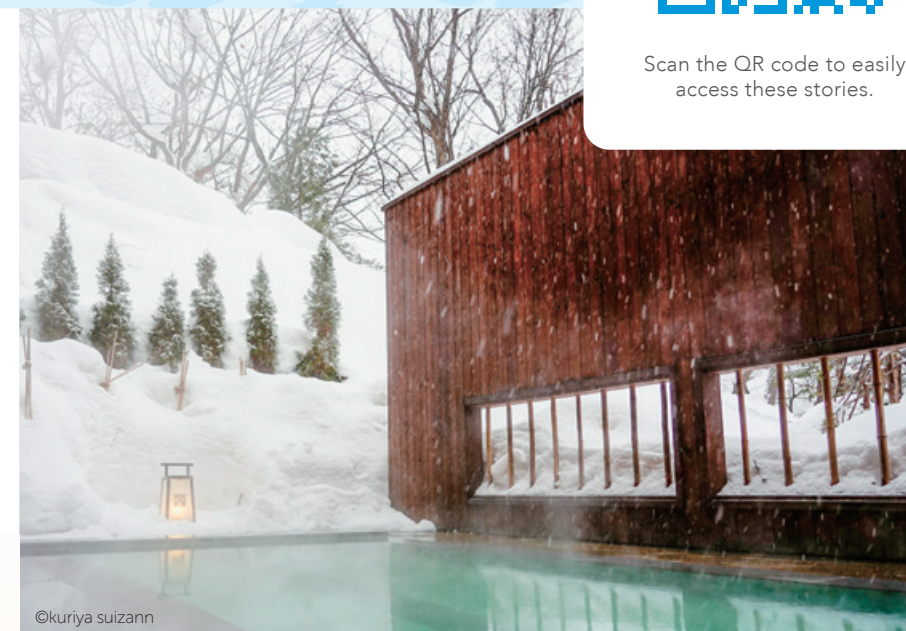


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## AUSTRALIA'S BEST FAMILY SKI RESORTS

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## THE BEST COLORADO SKI RESORTS FOR KIDS

The state has 28 major ski areas and they all offer something different. To help you decide we've rounded up the best Colorado ski resorts for families.

🔍 'Colorado ski'



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## ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO NEW ZEALAND SKI RESORT

Discover the latest family travel deals to help you save money on your next holiday.

🔍 'New Zealand ski resorts'



Steamboat Resort © Cara Wagstaff

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