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ski time in queenstown

Nestled alongside the pristine waters of Lake Wakatipu and surrounded by majestic, snow-capped mountains, sits Queenstown – the perfect winter holiday destination.

WORDS Ella Kinney

Whether you have an appetite for adventure, mountains and fresh air, or are more at home enjoying a delicious meal and fine wine next to a roaring fire, get away from the everyday and escape to Queenstown. The cosmopolitan town has a welcoming, vibrant energy that resonates across the region to make Queenstown a unique destination – and at no time is this more obvious than in winter and spring when skiers and boarders, or those just curious about snow, gather to lap up the fun. Big enough to offer a wide range of accommodation, activities, four ski areas, events, eateries and bars – yet small enough to make you feel like you belong.

Every year from June onwards, the region transforms into a winter wonderland, attracting winter-lovers and ski enthusiasts with its incredible lake and alpine scenery, crisp blue-sky days, easy access to some of New Zealand's finest ski and snowboard terrain and a vibrant après-ski scene.

The region's four ski areas: Coronet Peak, The Remarkables, Cardrona Alpine Resort and Treble Cone, are all located within a handy 20 to 90-minute drive of Queenstown. Open from June until late September or early October, depending on the mountain and weather conditions, Queenstown's ski areas offer a range of terrain for all levels



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– whether you're keen to conquer the basics, enjoy groomed runs, tackle off-piste, throw down some freestyle tricks or experience the thrill of night skiing.

This ski season is set to be one to remember in Queenstown, with upgrades and increased snowmaking facilities on all four ski fields. Coronet Peak's new Telemix six-seat chairlift with gondola cabins will make the mountain experience even more enjoyable for skiers, boarders and even sightseers who can now enjoy the view from the top of the ski field. The Remarkables' new Sugar Bowl six-seat chairlift and 2.5 km of new intermediate trails will provide excitement for The Remarkables fans. Cardrona Alpine Resort and Treble Cone fans will be stoked as the ski fields are operating a dual-mountain offering this winter, meaning pass-holders can access both mountains with the same ski pass.

Winter in Queenstown is just as much about skiing and snowboarding as it is about après-ski. The compact and vibrant town centre comes alive after dark and you're guaranteed to meet an eclectic mix of people on any night of the week.

When it comes to eating out, Queenstown's innovative and award-winning cafés and restaurants offer cuisine to suit every palate. Along with nearby Arrowtown, Queenstown is home to more than 150 eateries ranging from fine dining to fun dining. Stylish bars, sophisticated clubs, Kiwi pubs and late night hot spots also make Queenstown's après-ski atmosphere second to none.

If visiting local bars and trying new cocktails isn't your thing, there are plenty more local activities to keep you

The compact and vibrant town centre comes alive after dark and you're guaranteed to meet an eclectic mix of people on any night of the week.

occupied after you leave the ski field, including zipline tours, ice skating and plenty of indoor thrills.

For the ultimate in relaxation, enjoy some 'me time' at one of Queenstown's luxury day spas. A full range of treatments are on offer and it's the perfect way to revitalise mind, body and soul. Or, there are many ways to stretch and recover those tested legs, from languid yoga to Pilates, or even a multi-day retreat designed to help you reconnect with yourself.

For those who want to push the boundaries, you're guaranteed to get the blood pumping with a range of activities on offer: bungee jumping, jet boating, skydiving, ziplining, paragliding, quad biking or four-wheel-driving!

ABOVE / The Mt Nicholas Wharf is a great place to take in the lakeside view – whatever age you are. **RIGHT** / The Queenstown waterfront is a beautiful place with plenty on offer day and night. **PREVIOUS PAGE** / The Remarkables is just one of four ski fields within 90 minutes of Queenstown.





ABOVE / Taste the latest vintage in Gibbston, also known as the Valley of the Vines. Pictured here is the entrance to the Gibbston Valley Wine Cave. TOP / There is a ski terrain for all levels. From heli-skiing the expansive backcountry (left) to learn-to-ski slopes (right). RIGHT / Queenstown is a food lover's dream with over 150 bars and restaurants to discover.

For fun beyond the mountains, Queenstown's renowned wineries are just a short drive away.

If you're looking for one of those once-in-a-lifetime kind of experiences, why not try a hot air balloon flight, helicopter landing on a glacier, backcountry snowmobiling or a spot of heli-skiing?

For fun beyond the mountains, Queenstown's renowned wineries are just a short drive away. Gibbston, also known as the 'Valley of the Vines' produces some of the best Pinot Noir in the world thanks to the region's combination of shale soil and sharply defined seasons. ●



Queenstown

EVENTS GUIDE

The ski season extends into spring in Queenstown and with it comes a load of action-packed events. The Winter Games NZ runs across Coronet Peak, The Remarkables and Cardrona Alpine Resort from 21 August to 5 September.

Then there's Winter Pride (28 August – 6 September), and also the iconic Peak to Peak Winter Multisport Race on 12 September.

When spring breaks, it transforms the area with bright colours, green valleys and a sense of energy and playfulness. You can ski in the morning and play a round of golf or mountain bike in the afternoon! The spring snow conditions mean the atmosphere on the mountains is fun and lively; everyone has a good time in the sun as they reflect on an epic ski season.

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