

Key figures

The database generates further key figures which allow conclusions about specific characteristics and regional varieties of the world's largest ski resorts. They are also suitable indicators about the quality of the resorts:

VTM (vertical transport capacity) per km of runs

This parameter indicates the space available on the runs - the higher it is, the more skiers will be visiting during high season and fill the runs to full capacity. North American ski areas have less VTM per km of runs than areas in the Alps indicating that they are less crowded. Of the Top 100 in the category length of runs, Big Sky in Montana has the most favourable ratio between VTM and length of runs, the lifts can only carry 44,000 vertical meters per hour and km of runs. In Daemyung in South Korea the figure is 524,000. At full capacity, the slopes are twelve times more crowded than at Big Sky.

Runs per square km of ski area

This key figure describes the intensity with which a ski area is developed. In general, European resorts provide less kms of runs within a given boundary area, thus the areas in North America are used more intensively.

Nevertheless, the highest figure amongst the Top 100 is achieved by Tres Valles in Chile with 11.6 slope kilometers per square kilometer and Alta-Snowbird in the USA as well as Mammoth Mountain with 10.8 km/km².

The lowest figure can be found at Sella Ronda with only 2.7 km/km² (excluding Sellastock 4.4 km/km²), the Jungfrau area with 3.1 km/km² and the ski area Parsenn (Davos) with 3.5 km/km². Matterhorn Ski Paradise, Skicircus Saalbach-Hinterglemm und Weisse Arena (Laax) are 3.8 km/km² each.

VTC (vertical transport capacity) per lift

This key figure indicates the modernity of the ski lifts as more modern ones usually have a higher transport capacity.

The only resort world wide with a VTC of over 1 mio meters per lift and hour is Kronplatz in South Tyrol (1,016181 VTM/hr/lift). Even the bunny slopes are served by gondolas.

Kilometers of runs per lift

This key figure describes the efficiency of the lifts. The option of accessing a large number of slopes with only a few lifts is particularly evident in North American resorts with a lot of snowfall that allows for creating a lot of runs without being forced to equip all of them with snomaking. At Revelstoke Mountain Resort (Canada), each lift accesses 14.1 km of runs on average.

On the other hand, the Top 100 include a number of resorts where a lift only accesses one kilometer of runs. In the largest ski areas by kilometers of runs, one lift services about three kilometers of runs on average (magic carpets not included).

Capacity – visitors in relation to VTM

Supplying vertical transport capacity (VTC) is expensive for ski resorts – not just in construction but also in operation costs. Looking at the number of visitors in relation to VTC is relevant in terms of the success of the resort. However, visitor numbers also depend on the days of operation which can fluctuate. The length of the season is not considered.

The highest figure among the Top 100 is achieved by Korean resort Daemyung with 219.9 visitors per 1,000 VTM supplied. Based on a quad chairlift with a capacity of 2,000 people/hr and 200 vertical meters this means a total visitor number of 88,000 per winter – who would not construct a lift as profitable like this? The largest alpine resorts arrive at numbers between 50 and 70 visitors per 1,000 VTM. In the middle of the Top 100, these parameters are even lower which indicates that larger ski areas attract more visitors per supplied capacity unit.

Some resorts which have not qualified for the Top 100 in any of the regarded categories still achieve higher figures due to their proximity to urban agglomerations. Indoor ski slopes achieve high figures too on account of being in operation for 365 days per year.

For the serious skier, the opposite is more interesting: as many vertical transport meters as possible as this allows to accumulate a lot of kilometers without waiting in lift lines: Sun Valley resort in Idaho features prominently with a figure of 27.2 VTM per visitor.

Visitor capacity – visitors per kilometer of runs

While the VTC per kilometer of runs provides a theoretical parameter in terms of visitor capacity (the maximum number of people using the lifts which can be achieved), the comparative parameter of visitors per km of runs establishes the actual number of visitors. However, it has to be considered that visitor numbers per year fluctuate according to season, peak days, length of season and character of the skiing area (destinations with a large number of bed nights vs day trip resorts)

The highest figure amongst the Top 100 was registered at the Jisan Forest Resort with 116,511 visitors per kilometer of runs and year. At the opposite end of the scale is the Swiss resort of Obersaxen–Surcuolm–Lumnezia with only 1,280 visitors per kilometer of runs.

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