

Ski Queenstown 2017 - The Ultimate Guide

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Fancy skiing in July? And I don't mean summer skiing. I mean winter-style, powder-covered ski runs. Queenstown's 2017 Ski Season is almost here. And we've got the ultimate guide to skiing in Queenstown for you.

Queenstown is **the** place to visit if you want snow sports action during the Southern Hemisphere's winter season. If you're from up north (and by this I mean anywhere from Europe to Auckland) Queenstown might not be your first choice of ski resorts. But when the slopes are dry in Europe and North America there are few better options than this little town at the edge of the world. Queenstown's superb skiing and snowboarding facilities make it the Southern Hemisphere's premier destination for winter sports. The International airport, range of accommodation options, top-class instructors, and Kiwi hospitality are just some reasons for making the trip. It's worth it, trust me. ha When travelling overseas I'm often asked the following question, "Can you ski in New Zealand?" I'd like to make it perfectly clear. Yes, you can. The New Zealand ski season goes from June to October. Queenstown, in particular, is well set up to take advantage of the snowy mountains nearby.

Skiers and snowboarders are well catered for in the land of the long white cloud and there's no shortage of ski fields and places to stay. Queenstown is a place built around the adventure sports industry and the town becomes a haive of snow sports activity in Winter. Kiwis love getting out on the snow and visitors from overseas love the friendly atmosphere and the easy-going attitude.

All prices listed are in \$NZ. Bookmark this page as I'll be updating it on a regular basis.

Why Ski Queenstown?

Here are some great reasons to choose Queenstown as your ski destination in 2017

The Seasons are Reversed Down Under If you live in the Northern hemisphere then your on-piste skiing is limited (or non-existent) between May and September. But that's when the season is in full swing down under.

Good Value Skiing and snowboarding can be expensive. But New Zealand is one of the best value destinations for both sports. Now, I'm not comparing Val d'Isere or Zermatt to the [Remarkables](#) but if you're looking to hit the slopes for a week or two without breaking the bank, you have a good option down south.

[Accommodation](#) in the town has increased in price considerably in recent years. Queenstown is

now one of New Zealand's most expensive places to rent an apartment or hotel. It sometimes feels like the entire country wants to either own property here or move here. I can understand that. It's a beautiful town full of [amazing things to do](#). It also still keeps a small town vibe going despite the hordes of tourists at the height of summer and winter. However, there are [bargains to be found](#). Not all accommodation is expensive. Airbnb for example, can be very good value. Depending on when you go you can score some good value deals and keep your money for the [Queenstown nightlife](#).

Friendly Atmosphere Kiwis are a friendly bunch. If you've ever been outside of the major cities in New Zealand you'll be amazed at how open and friendly they are. Note: That's not to say that city-dwellers are unfriendly, but they live a different pace of life and can come off as a bit hurried – New Zealanders are still one of the most [friendly people in the world](#), even with the big cities included. Wellington and Auckland regularly make the top 10 list of [friendly cities in the world](#). Queenstown, with its even more laid back attitude and smaller town feel welcomes visitors with open arms.

From the ski lift assistants to the hotel receptionists to the bartenders, you will find yourself chatting about anything and everything. There are no false pretences here. They're doing it because they want to. And there's also a sense of pride in welcoming foreigners to this island on the edge of the world. Getting to Godzone (as the locals call it) is a bit more difficult than getting to Chicago or London. New Zealanders appreciate visitors for the very fact that they made the effort to visit this paradise on the edge of the world.

Award-Winning Facilities Queenstown's Ski Resorts regularly win awards for the [Best Ski Fields in New Zealand](#). Queenstown's accommodation options also win accolades for [World's Best Ski Hotels](#). Standards are high and visitors often comment about how well set up the town is to cater for snow sports enthusiasts.

Snowboarders are still loved In many other countries, the main ski slopes are 90% populated with skiers. Snowboarding isn't as cool as it used to be up north but in QT snowboards are as common a sight as the traditional two-planks.

Night Skiing If carving up the slopes in the daylight is not enough for you, try night skiing at [Coronet Peak](#). If you've never tried skiing at night be prepared for a completely different experience. It's a lot of fun and gives a completely different perspective of the mountains and ski runs.

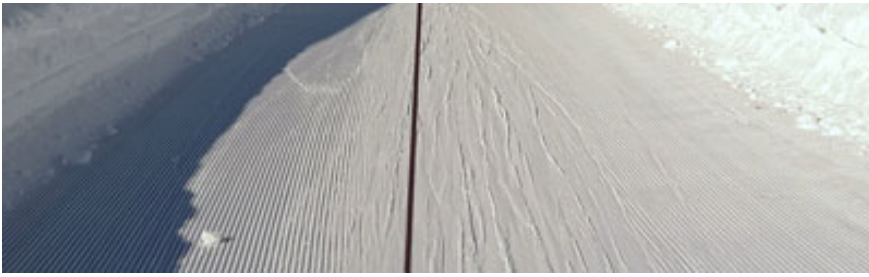


Tips and Essential Info

Useful information and things you should know before you get here.

Ski Lifts





T-bar Ski Lift

T-bars are very popular on New Zealand ski fields. If you haven't used one of these before then you might be in for a few tumbles. Skiers find T-bars easier to manage than boarders. It's a little harder for snowboarders to maintain balance as they only have one connection to the ground while the bar can pull them from side to side. Unfortunately, you won't get much chance to practice using t-bars unless you wait until one lift is not busy. Otherwise, it's trial by fire. The most important thing to know is that you just need to maintain your balance and direction. Once you get the hang of it, the process is like riding a bike.

Next most popular is the double chairlift. To use these you'll need a bit of practice as two people must position themselves correctly as the chair approaches and sit down at the right time (one seat per person, thanks). If you're with someone more experienced than you just copy their movements. As soon as you sit down, pull the overhead bar down to in front of you and relax till it's time to jump off. Once again getting on and off is a little harder for snowboarders as you will have one foot attached to the board and the other free.

You might also see the magic carpet at the Remarkables. A magic carpet is a surface lift, essentially a moving floor, like you see at many airports. The lift transports riders in a standing position up gentle slopes. Basic stuff, but they work well for beginners and children.

There are no cable-car ski lifts in New Zealand, although Cardrona is planning on building a [Chondola](#).





Riding the ski chair lift up the Remarkables

Weather

It's rare to experience the biting cold winds that skiers in Europe or North America experience on certain days. The slopes are at lower altitudes here and the temperatures don't drop quite as far or for quite as long as up north. Wrapping up warm is essential but when the sun shines you can really feel the heat. The combination of (comparatively) low altitudes, low air pollution, and the unfortunate [lack of ozone](#), means that the sun can be intense.

On that point, don't forget your [sunscreen](#). Put it on even on cloudy days. Any parts of your body that are exposed should get a healthy dosing of a high factor sunscreen that protects against all the harmful rays.

Get the [Queenstown Ski and snow reports](#) here and make sure you are up to date with the latest conditions.

Treeless pistes

Trees don't grow above the snowline on any ski area in NZ so you don't get the picture postcard views of pine trees and snow that you might be used to. You also don't have fear crashing into one. Take the good with the bad!

Sleeping Arrangements

Accommodation on-piste is limited or non-existent in almost all ski fields in New Zealand. Even when it is, we're talking about a couple of shacks. Visitors and locals stay in the town or surrounding areas, like Wanaka, Cromwell, or Glenorchy. Cardrona offers on-mountain apartments that range from studios to 4-bedroom units. See the [Accommodation](#) section for more information

Plan Ahead

If you plan on spending the entire day on the slopes, make sure you get there before the lifts start. Hit the trails early on (despite the fact that the snow might be a bit packed) and when the crowds

hit the trails early on (despite the fact that the snow might be a bit packed) and when the crowds build, take a break. Get back into the action when the crowds are doing lunch. Break again, and then ski till the lifts close. Planning your day like this means you'll get the most out of your ski pass. Fewer people on the lifts and ski runs.

Bring a [packed lunch](#), just in case. Food at almost all of the ski areas is overpriced and not great tasting. This isn't France (where it's just over-priced). Pack some water bottles and if you're a coffee fan, either brew your own and take it in a thermos flask or ask one of the local Queenstown coffee shops to fill your thermos. It's not cheap to fill a flask with barista coffee but it's cheaper than buying the sludge available on the mountain. You'll also avoid the coffee queue. New Zealand has a great coffee culture, but these high standards haven't reached the ski fields yet.

Ski Trail / Ski run / Groomed Run / Piste Ratings

Depending on where you're visiting from you might need to familiarise yourself with the ski trail ratings. European skiers will be used to a colour-coded system for ranking the difficulty of a slope. Green means beginner and black is for experts. New Zealand shares the same system as the US, Canada, and Australia. It's a system that gives a better indication of difficulty than the European version.

Queenstown Ski Fields





If you're staying in the centre of town it won't take you more than 40 minutes to drive to 3 of the 4 ski fields listed below. The exception is Treble Cone, which is situated close to Wanaka and is a bit harder to reach in Winter. Each ski area has its own unique style and atmosphere. The Queenstown-Wanaka area has arguably the best of New Zealand's ski resorts. Yes, the North Island Ski Resort of Whakapapa is the biggest in the country and has the longest season, but it lacks certain things that Queenstown has in spades. Namely [accommodation](#), [nightlife](#), views, and not to mention the diversity of ski slopes. The weather up north can close the entire snow area. In Queenstown, you have the choice of four different fields, one of which is sure to be open.

Season passes in New Zealand are better value than in other countries where day passes are the norm for visitors. If you're staying for any length of time, check whether a long-term ski pass is worth buying. It usually is.

The Remarkables



Queenstown's best-known ski fields are located on a mountain range known as the Remarkables. A pretty apt name for some spectacular mountains. If you've ever seen a picture postcard photo of the town with some snow-covered peaks in the background then you'll have seen the Remarkables. As it's one of the better-known areas to ski, it can get quite busy. The area itself is not that large so make sure you choose your days well. Avoid school holidays and weekends.

Make sure to check the [snow coverage](#) as the Remarkables can be very hit and miss when there isn't good snow cover. They have snowmaking machines to improve the snow cover. But sometimes this isn't good enough. This particular mountain area doesn't receive as much snow as, [Coronet Peak](#), for example. Always check ahead, preferably with a local who is not involved with the ski field in any way.

One of the best things about this ski area are the terrain parks. Park riders will love the Burton sponsored park and the freestyle oriented feel of the place. The three terrain parks and north facing bowls are very popular with snowboarders.

The Remarkables boasts some great off-piste ski terrain, which is very popular with local skiers and boarders. There's side country terrain to suit all levels. And the Remarks' proximity to Queenstown means it has one of the most accessible ski terrains in the country.



Skiers and snowboarders hike on the top of The Remarkables Ski Area

Lifts: 1 x 6 seater , 3 x 4 seater (quad), 3 x magic carpets Vertical Drop: 468 m vertical drop Highest lift accessed point: 1943m Ski Area: 385 hectares Distance from Queenstown: 28km Hours: Open from 9 am to 4 pm daily. Opening date for the 2017 season:10th June Best for Beginners and Experts. Intermediate skiers and boarders might be better off at one of the other fields, or off-piste at the Remarks. A great spot to learn to ski before heading off to ski areas with larger terrains and longer runs. Adult Lift Pass cost for The Remarkables 2017 season: \$119 for one day, \$570 for six days. Pre-season lift pass sale price: 6 days for \$485. A season pass, which gets you access to The Remarkables, Coronet Peak, and Mt Hutt costs \$799 pre-season and \$999 Full Price.

Check out this video of the terrain at the Remarkables

Coronet Peak





The views from the top of New Zealand's [first commercial skifield](#) are amazing. Trust me when I say that even non-skiers should make the hike to the top. You can thank me later.

Coronet Peak receives more visitors than any other on the South Island. Intermediate skiers (which is the category that most snow sports enthusiasts fall into) will love Coronet Peak's groomed runs. There's an excellent terrain park and more advanced riders can check out the black runs dotted around the ski field.

If day-skiing is not enough for you, don't worry! On the weekends you can also get some night skiing at Coronet Peak.

Be warned: Coronet Peak has the unfortunate nickname: Concrete Peak. The slopes are lower than many slopes in New Zealand and sometimes the precipitation falls as rain, and not the much-needed snow. Once night comes or the temperature drops this rain and slushy snow freezes and makes the slopes bomb proof. You certainly don't want to fall at these times. Landing on concrete at speed will see you visiting the lovely medical staff in the local A & E.

Lifts: 1 x 6 seater, 4 magic carpets Vertical Drop: 460m Highest lift accessed point: 1659m Ski Area: 280 hectare Terrain Park: 2 Distance from Queenstown: 16km Hours: 8 am to 4 pm daily and 4 pm to 9 pm from Jul – Sep Open date for the 2017 season: 11 June (estimated) Adult lift Passes for Coronet peak is a short drive (20-30 minutes) from most places in Queenstown. 8 Lifts / 462 m vertical drop / 280 hectares Lifts: 1 x 6 seater, 2 x 4 seater (quad), 1 x T-bar, 4 x magic carpets Situated 18km from the centre of town. In July to September night-skiing goes from 4 pm to 9 pm, on Fridays and Saturdays. Best for Intermediate skiers and snowboarders. Prices for Coronet Peak ski passes are the same as those for The Remarkables.

This video gives you an idea of what Night Skiing at Coronet Peak is all about

Cardrona



The grandly named Cardrona Alpine Resort is a favourite ski field for many kiwis. Some call it the "Best ski field in New Zealand" and the "best ski experience in the Southern Hemisphere". It's got a bit of everything. Facilities are good and there are hundreds of ski and snowboard instructors available to help improve their game. Cardrona should be your first choice if you've just arrived in town but have never been on skis or a snowboard before. It has some of the best lifts and is a

great family-oriented ski area.

Cardrona has [6 cafés and restaurants](#) to cater for coffee addicts, pie-lovers, and pizza fans. There's nothing here to write home about. The Captain's Cafe is as school-canteen looking as you can get. And the take-away coffees can often be throw-away coffees. However, there's a bit of choice and probably something to suit all comers.

Check out the [Cardrona snow and ski report](#) for up to date snow forecasts and current conditions.

Lifts: 1 x 8 seater, 3 x 4 seater, 1 platter, 3 magic carpets Vertical Drop: 600m Highest lift accessed point: 1860m Ski Area: 345 hectares Terrain Park: 2 Half Pipes, 4 parks and 1 gravity cross course Distance from Queenstown: 58km Hours: 9 am to 4 pm daily Open date for the 2017 season: 10th June Adult lift Passes for Cardrona cost \$110 per day at peak season. \$475 for a Flexi 5-day pass. Season passes cost \$799 (until may 31) and \$999 thereafter.

A video of skiing at Cardrona in 2016

Treble Cone



Treble cone is my personal favourite ski field in New Zealand. It has the largest ski area in the South Island and the longest vertical drop of all ski fields close to Queenstown. The views from Treble Cone are on a par with the best of the other ski areas on the south island. Treble Cone's season pass prices are the most expensive of the four options but for many people, the extra expense is worth it. This is not a beginner ski zone so if you're just starting out head to one of the other fields to break your skis in. Intermediate and advanced skiers and snowboarders will love Treble Cone. Snowboarders, in particular, seem to love it. Powderhounds give Treble Cone the nod with the awards of 'Best overall resort' and 'Best overall terrain' in New Zealand.

Lifts: 1 x 6-seater, 1 x Quad, 1 x T-bar (surface platter), 1 x magic carpet Vertical Drop: 700m Highest lift accessed point: 1960m Ski Area: 550 hectares Terrain Park: Jazz Park & Jazz Kid's Fun Trail Distance from Queenstown: 90km Hours: 9 am – 4 pm Open date for the 2017 season: 22nd June Adult lift Pass prices for Treble Cone cost \$110 per day or \$475 for a 5 day Flexi-pass. A Flexi-pass gives you the added advantage of access to Cardrona on the same ticket. Hit the slopes in TC one day and the pipes and terrain park of Cardrona the next. A season pass (unlimited) costs

\$1399 <http://www.treblecone.com/lift-passes/ski-lift-passes/>

A high-quality video showing Treble Cone's best parts

How to get to Queenstown's Ski Areas

The most common way to get to each of the ski areas is to drive. Other options are the many bus transport companies that drop people off in the morning and pick them up after a day on the slopes. The cost depends on the ski resort. From the town factor the following rough costs for getting to each ski area and back (return – prices are in NZD) **Coronet Peak: \$20-30 Cardrona: \$45-55 The Remarkables: \$30-40 Treble Cone: \$50-65** [Kiwidiscovery](http://www.kiwidiscovery.com/) runs buses to all fields every day. They also offer season passes of the buses which can work out pretty economical if you're planning on staying for a while and skiing every day.

<http://www.onestopsnowshop.com/queenstown-ski-snowboard-mountain-transport.html> One Stop Snow Shop (love the name) offers

[NZSki](http://www.nzski.com/), the umbrella company for Coronet Peak and The Remarkables, runs a bus service called the **Snowline Express**. The bus leaves from the Queenstown Snow Centre Every 20 minutes from 8 am to 11.30 am on a daily basis heading to the Remarkables. For Coronet peak, the outward journey bus starts at 8 am and finishes at 12 pm. Return trips from both ski areas start at 1.30pm. A return ticket costs \$20.

Driving from Queenstown to Treble Cone will take at least 90 minutes so leave early. If it's very snowy you'll need to take a longer route (via [Cromwell](http://www.cromwell.co.nz/)) and this adds another 20 minutes to the journey. Kiwi Discovery provides a shuttle service from QT to TC every day at 7 am (from your accommodation) or 7.30 am from the Kiwi Discovery Shop in the centre of town. The shuttle returns at 4.15pm daily. The cost is \$52 per adult. If you buy the transport and lift pass together you can save around \$25 on the lift pass cost. You can even fly to Treble Cone from Queenstown in a light aircraft. If you're planning on doing an aerial sightseeing tour anyway, this might kill two birds with the one stone. <http://www.glenorchyair.co.nz/>

When to Go

When does the Queenstown Skiing season start? It depends on the ski field but the season starts in most places in the second week of June. The Remarkables is usually the last ski resort to open for business.

July provides the coldest temps and the highest quality snow, August has the advantage of longer days while still maintaining winter conditions, but does get quite busy. September features beautiful spring days, skiing both powder and spring corn snow! Pretty much take your pick! And remember that in New Zealand our valleys and towns are pretty much snow free all winter so there is plenty of opportunity to build other activities into your visit to the South Island ~ Hugh Barnard, Harris Mountains Heliski

The New Zealand snow season dates fall at the ideal time for northern hemisphere snow enthusiasts keen to keep riding. The ski season down here starts soon after the ski resorts of Europe, the US, Canada, and Japan close.

Mid-August typically is the most reliable winter snow. Don't forget to try out SnowFarm cross country skiing! ~ Judy Knight, Outside Sports

When does Queenstown's ski season finish? Queenstown's snow season ends sometime between September and October. Again, this will be different for each resort. Generally speaking, the last ski run happens in October. Many local skiers say that August is the best time to ski Queenstown.

August is a very consistent month for both snow condition and weather ~ Euan Paterson, Snowbiz

The first two weeks in July are the winter holidays for schoolchildren so factor this into your plans. It's always super busy around these times. The first week in July can also be hit and miss sometimes, as far as snow goes. So if you are looking for more reliable snow coverage and fewer bodies on the slopes plan for late July or early August.

August / September are my picks for weather powder and sunshine. We have a good base by then and the weather systems seem to clear out a lot faster leaving dry powder and blue skies. What more could you want? ~ Tom Beatson, Snowboard Workshop

Accommodation

One of the first things you'll need to do when planning your ski holiday is to find accommodation. A shortage of ski passes is unlikely, but Queenstown is very popular at certain times of the year so make sure you book ahead. If you plan on staying in the peak ski season you should aim to book accommodation at least a month in advance.

Public holidays in New Zealand and busy periods during Queenstown's skiing season

- 5th June – Right before the opening dates is the Queen's birthday. Yes, that's the Queen of England, and in New Zealand we love her because we get a paid day off work. If you plan to be here at this time you might find accommodation a bit pricier due to the long weekend.
- 8th July to 23 July – School Holidays.

If you haven't booked at least a few weeks ahead then you might want to try the [Hotel Tonight app](#) for last minute options.

Booking Options

[Hotels.com](#) offers discounts and exclusive deals for signed up members. I've used this website to book accommodation all over the world and the exclusive price deals can be very competitive. Once you've stayed 10 nights you get another night for free.

[Airbnb.com](#) is a great choice if you prefer accommodation that feels more like home.

[HotelsCombined.com](#) is a hotel booking aggregator which provides a list of hotels in Queenstown based on price or other factors.

Try [Agoda](#), an Asia/Pacific focused travel aggregator for recommended hotels in Queenstown and watch out for discounts.

Recommended places to stay

Super Budget Backpacker: *You'd sleep on the snow if it would mean saving a few dollars, but you'll settle for a dorm room* Check out the quirkily-named [Absoloot Value Accommodation](#). It's one of the cheapest options for the budget traveller and gets a fantastic 8.7/10 on Booking.com. It's close to the lakefront and the city centre so getting to the ski fields won't be a problem. Prepare food for the day and night in the communal kitchen but pack earplugs if you're staying in a dorm. Backpackers like to party and QT is a party town so don't expect to sleep like a baby here.

[Flaming Kiwi Backpackers](#) is one of the highest-rated backpackers in town. It also happens to be one of the best value accommodations in Queenstown.

[Nomads Queenstown Backpackers](#) gets the nod from visitors to Hotels.com and hostels.com. Some acquaintances of mine stayed there and had only good words to say about it. Check for prices here.

FlashPacker and budget travellers: *Slightly upscale from backpacker level – no smelly socks and shared toilets* The Shotover Lodge at Arthur's Point is a solid choice for fans of Coronet Peak. The ski area is only 9km away. The Lodge is located a little bit outside of town but if you have your own transport then it's a great location with equally good prices for budget travellers.

Mid-Range to Expensive: *A good 3-4 star (and sometimes 5-star) hotel is just right for resting after a hard day carving up the snow* The [Earnslaw Lodge](#), located at 77 Frankton Rd, is a 3-star motel with restaurant. Customers rate the customer service highly and You can store your ski gear here at night or when you have a non-snow day. The hotel is a short work to the centre of town and there's a really beautiful view of the lake from many of the rooms. Stay here if you want a spectacular view at a mid-range price.

The [Central Ridge Boutique Hotel](#), located near the Queenstown Gardens, has a bar, sauna, and coffee shop. With only 13 rooms this boutique hotel sells out fast so make sure you book well ahead. Prices are quite reasonable and great deals are available on both Hotels.com and Expedia. The beds are huge and the location is one of the best in town.

Luxury: *You're an internet millionaire, movie actor, Saudi prince, or head of state* Bill Clinton stayed at the [Millbrook Resort](#) in 1999 and he made good use of the golf course. We don't recommend golfing in the snow but it might be an option when the mountain is closed.

The [Matakauri Lodge](#) will be right up your street if you happen to be a Royal. Kate and Will (heard of them?) stayed here in 2014.

The [Hilton Queenstown Resort & Spa](#) was recently voted the country's [best Ski Hotel](#). If you can afford it this is one the best places to base yourself for a great holiday.

On The Mountain Cardrona is the only ski resort in this guide offering [on-piste accommodation](#). There are studio, 1-bed, 2-bed, 3-bed, and 4-bedroom apartments available. The biggest advantage with these mountain apartments is that you are literally on the slopes. Walk out the door and ski for 1-minute to the groomed trails. You're right in the action. The disadvantage is that when the weather is bad there's not a whole lot else to do. If the mountain road closes you are essentially trapped, while the rest of Queenstown enjoys the great nightlife. Still, it's a great way to experience skiing in a style Europeans are used to. Book in advance to secure these apartments as they are limited and sell out fast.

Camp Queenstown And finally, there's the option of camping. This is for hard core winter sports enthusiasts. Or for complete nutters. I'm not sure. Camping when it's hovering below zero degrees celsius isn't fun. Mountaineers do it, but they have to. Camper van accommodation is an alternative and can be a lot more comfortable. It's still going to be cold though. But if you're up for

the challenge, one of the closest campsites to the town centre is the [Queenstown Lakeview Holiday Park](#). The [Queenstown Holiday Park Motels Creeksyde](#) is also reasonably convenient and very popular.

Off-Piste Action



If riding the advanced groomed trails is too easy for you and you've tried all the double black diamond trail, there are a couple of options to take it to the next level. **Heli-Skiing** If you want to ride untouched snow, un-groomed runs, and powder, this is the way to go. Using a helicopter to reach difficult to get to terrain is the ultimate in off-piste action.

Based out of Queenstown's international airport, [HeliWorks](#) offers day and multi-day skiing and boarding trips to all mountain ranges near Queenstown and Wanaka, and also to Mountain Cook and the Central Southern Alps. You can even go HeliFishing. Sounds like cheating, but who's counting?

They've been around for almost 40 years so the HMH Team know a few things about skiing and boarding with helicopters. [Harris Mountains Heli-ski](#) offers trips from Queenstown and Wanaka and travels as far as [Mt Cook](#), the highest mountain in New Zealand. The total area covered is over

3000 square kilometres. That's a lot of terrain. Harris Mountains can offer you plenty of snow action options in a wide range of snow and weather patterns. The business partnership with [The Helicopter Line](#) ensures a supply of a modern fleet of state of the art Helicopters and specifically trained mountain pilots. You'll be safe with these guys.

The best thing about skiing in Queenstown? Apart from the stunning views, terrain seemingly custom designed for heli-skiing, it's the chance to ski top quality powder snow in the southern hemisphere winter. That's what makes this part of the world so special. Many of our guests are year round heli-ski junkies who get their fix right through the northern summer. And they keep on coming back for more. ~ Hugh Barnard, HMM

If you can't find fresh snow on the groomed trails, try a day's heli-ski adventure. You might be the first person to ski a particular line in the mountains.

Budget Fuel for the slopes

Although Queenstown has become something of a foodie hub in recent years (one could say the same for the entire country), there are still budget choices available. I'd recommend going the whole hog and experiencing not only the slopes but the fine cuisine available in the town. However, if your budget only stretches to fine ski runs then check out some of the options below. Eating on or near the slopes is pricey and Queenstown's top restaurants charge a hefty price. Plan ahead if you want to stretch those dollars.

Queenstown Supermarkets

Supermarkets will be the best bet for food if you've booked accommodation with a kitchen. Even if you're in a hotel or hostel with no cooking facilities you can still prepare healthy (or not-so-healthy) cold snacks and meals for your day on the slopes.

The three main supermarkets in Queenstown are Countdown, PAK'nSAVE, and New World. These chain supermarket stores can be found in major towns throughout New Zealand. The quality is good and there's some difference in prices between the three. PAK'nSAVE is generally the [cheapest](#) but doesn't stock as big a range as the other two. This is the store to shop at if you're looking for the cheapest ingredients for your on-piste sandwich. Try New World for a larger variety and a few more luxury items to put in your hamper.

There are also smaller supermarkets, or mini-markets, like Four Square and FreshChoice. FourSquare is expensive in Queenstown so be warned. If you're on a budget it's not your best choice.

Cheap Eats [Thai Siam](#), Queenstown's own Thai food restaurant, does a lunch special for \$12. You have the choice of yummy Pad Thai (my favourite), Tom Yum Chicken, Green curry, and more. All are delicious and great value. I love Thai food, so I'm biased, but try it out if you haven't already and be pleasantly surprised.

If you can get in the door, [Fergburger](#) makes huge burgers, which might appear expensive, but are filling enough to share. FergBaker is also a great place to fill up on pastries, bread, and cakes. We're not saying it's healthy but it's fuel for the mountains. Ferg's is so popular that it's pretty much a tourist attraction these days. They've kept the prices reasonable and the quality hasn't slipped. A solid, dependable choice.

[Pita Pit](#) is super popular and it's easy to see why. Big, juicy pitas filled with chicken, beef, lamb, or vegetarian options, for around \$10-12. This is a great place to hit if you're coming down off the hill and ravenous after a day of skiing. You won't have to wait long and your tummy will thank you.

[Erik's fish and chips](#) is one of my favourite places to eat in Queenstown. It's a sort of permanent food truck that offers deep-fried cod, chips (or fries to our American friends), and coffee. Everything is superb and won't break the bank. Check it out.

It doesn't open until 10 am but the Empanadas (meat or cheese filled pastries from Argentina) from [Empanada Kitchen](#) are heavenly, and cheap. If you're hitting the slopes in the afternoon these can be great snacks to carry up the hill.

Ski Shops – Ski and Snowboard Rental and Repair

Queenstown's adventure sports stores are open all year around. For adventure-seekers, this town never sleeps. Some of the dedicated ski shops, on the other hand, close during the summer months, but you'll find them well stocked and busy in winter. If you bring your own skis or snowboard equipment to Queenstown and you hit the slopes a lot, you might need some repairs. Fear not, there are plenty of ski workshops to choose from in this town. Here are my recommendations:

Outside Sports Calling on 22 years of retail expertise in Queenstown, [Outside Sports](#) offers the complete package for visitors. Arrive with nothing and leave fully kitted out thanks to the helpful staff and competitive prices. There's free customer parking out the back. (Queenstown's parking spaces are very limited, take advantage of the parking and get everything you need).

The on-site workshop offers a combination of tuning and repair for customers and tuning of rental

skis. The workshop team's aim is to tune gear to customers specifications on modern, automated [Wintersteiger](#) machine. Locals and overseas customers who want a knowledgeable equipment tune pack into the workshop at the height of the ski season. They come for the expertise provided by long-term technicians who have run the workshop for years.

The main advice from the team is to be careful when snow is insufficient. Most of the damage to skis happens when there's not enough snow to cover all the rocks. The Workshop offers a great deal on pre-season tune-ups for your skis, but it's only available for one week prior to the ski field opening dates. Call ahead

Outside Sports is located at 9 Shotover Street, beside the Alpine Supermarket.

SnowBiz Now in their 15th year, the team at [Snowbiz](#) take great care to continually replace equipment and maintain current gear in their workshop.

Coronet Peak and The Remarkables remain strong favourites with the long-time locals ~ Euan Paterson, Snowbiz

The shop has seen an increase in clients from China in recent years, thanks to their country's improving economy. European and North American customers are also on the rise. The workshop team maintains not only their rental fleet but also the skis and snowboards of customers. According to Snowbiz, the most common cause of damage (Apart from the obvious damage caused by foreign objects) is the failure to regularly hot-wax skis and snowboard throughout their lifetime.

Snowbiz is located at 7 Duke St and is open from 7.30 am to 9 pm every day.

Browns Concentrating on quality, style & exclusivity, [Browns Ski Shop](#) presents a skiwear collection each season, selected by Fizz from the best labels around the world. The website lists a number of reasons why you should [rent your ski gear](#) here. Changing from skis to snowboard and vice versa during the rental period is free. Great if you want to learn a discipline.