

FEATURE / SKIING ON A BUDGET



WHITE MAGIC

◆
A TRIP TO THE SNOW NEEDN'T COST THE EARTH. STEPHANIE WILLIAMS SHARES HER TIPS ON KEEPING DOWN COSTS IN THREDBO.

Gaining altitude,
Thredbo.
Destination NSW

WE ALL KNOW

skiing and boarding can be expensive, right? If you don't have your own

big 4WD, a private chalet and the latest gear it can be a bit daunting. But with a bit of careful planning and maybe just a touch of being a shameless cheapskate, you can get on the white stuff without blowing your budget.

In Australia, high in the Kosciuszko National Park, in the heart of the Snowy Mountains, Thredbo is the place to get alpine this season. It's got the goods – Thredbo is the oldest ski resort in Australia, celebrating over 50 years and the long runs are great for everyone, from beginners right through to black diamond showoffs.



Clockwise from main: Intrepid skiers; powder smiles for miles; snowboarder on jump. Thredbo

GETTING THERE

Bussing it down or carpooling with your mates is the first way to save. It's an easy drive from Sydney and Canberra and you can sort out your best fares through companies like **Greyhound**, **Murrays** and **SnoExpress**. Pack your car snacks and get your petrol well before you reach the mountains while prices are lower to save even more.

TICKETS PLEASE!

The biggest expense on the mountains is definitely your ski pass, but there are some ways you can save on those too. Skiing in the shoulder season is a gamble with how much snow coverage there'll be, but if there's an early or late season dump, you're laughing! There are four key date ranges within the season, so choose the one that represents the best value for you. Thredbo encourage you to 'Buy Early & Save' – if you buy your lift ticket, lessons or gear rental at least seven days in advance you can save up to 20%. Will you be in the village for a few days? If you ride more you can save more, so consider buying a multi day pass, rather than a new pass each day. And the savings extend to kids under 18 too. Thredbo have discounted kids pricing for everyone under the age of 18, as well as the Kids Ski Free promotion - when a adult buys one of the eligible three and five day passes, a child under 18 gets their lift pass free. There are some conditions around this so it's worth checking the fine print **online**.



Thursday nights come alive at the village

CHEAP EATS AND MOUNTAIN TREATS

There are loads of food options on the mountain to tempt your dollars from your wallet, but plan ahead and you can save money here too. Start your day with a hearty bacon and egg roll and coffee at the bottom of Friday Flat or a pastry from The Bakery in the village. For lunch take a break from the mountain and try Kebabz Café for big, hearty kebabs in a flash, or a salad roll from The Bakery if you're going healthy. After the ski day is over, your reward should always be a hot donut or three at the bottom of Friday Flat and a beer at the River Inn outdoor terrace. Cheaper dinner options are harder to find, but Alfresco Pizza is always a winner with good pizza at normal prices, including the all important BYO and the lively Thredbo Pub serves up counter meals before you kick on at Schuss Bar and Keller Bar. Spread your food dollar further though by planning a few self-catered meals using the YHA kitchen. Just make sure to pick up supplies well before you reach the village.

So don't let a little budget hold you back this season – first tracks are still within reach. If all else fails, there's always two-minute noodles for the truly hardcore budget powder hounds.

Food and drink doesn't have to cost you the earth. Thredbo



BOOK
NOW

WHERE TO STAY

THREDBO YHA

- ◆ (+612) 6457 6376
- ◆ thredbo@yha.com.au
- ◆ yha.com.au

WHERE TO STAY

Thredbo YHA offers the best value bed with a range of dorms and private rooms. It's in the heart of the village with beautiful views of the mountain, shouts you free Wifi and has kitchen facilities as well as a large drying room to sort out your gear each night. Book ahead as it's very popular.

SKI NZ

BOOK
NOW



Love skiing, snowboarding, snow shoeing or any and all fun on and off the piste? New Zealand is a snow enthusiast's haven with world-class ski fields on both islands. The mountains are high which means consistent snow that's topped up by snow making systems at most ski areas. There's plenty of downhill skiing and boarding but there's also heli-skiing, glacier skiing, Nordic skiing, terrain parks and dedicated beginner areas. Travelling from Australia to the South Island is easy with direct flights into both Queenstown and Christchurch.

In New Zealand, you're not stuck with

having to book accommodation on the mountain so backpacking delivers the best (and most social) bang for your budget buck. Most **YHAs near ski fields** offer amenities like drying rooms, gear storage and tuning stations with added bonuses of roaring fires and/or spa pools. YHA Ohakune even offers an on-site ski and board rental shop. While bonuses vary from hostel to hostel, you're guaranteed a good price, large kitchens and warm bed. But be sure to book for your alpine holiday early, once the white stuff hits the mountains our beds fill up fast!