

The Singapore Parent's *Ski Trip Planner*

Everything you need to plan a first family ski holiday — the honest budget, the packing list, the 20-week timeline, how to pick a room and a resort your family can actually live in for a week, and the eight questions to ask any operator before you pay a cent.



1 COACH : 3 KIDS, IN ENGLISH



FULLY GUIDED. NOTHING LEFT TO FIGURE OUT.

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Is your family actually ready?

The most common reason a first ski trip goes badly isn't the snow. It's a mismatch between what the family expected and what a week on a mountain with young children is really like. Three honest checks before you book anything.

1. Age

Four is the practical floor — most ski schools won't take a child younger, and the ones that do are usually running childcare with skis attached. Between 4 and 6, expect short lessons and a lot of hot chocolate. From about 7, children progress fast enough that by day three they're often ahead of their parents. That is not a joke, and it is the single most common thing parents report back.

2. Ability — yours, not theirs

If neither parent skis, that's fine. It's arguably easier: nobody has expectations, and everyone learns together. What doesn't work is one confident parent assuming they'll teach the kids themselves. Teaching your own child to ski is a well-known way to ruin a holiday. Book the lessons.

3. Temperature

A Singapore-raised child has never experienced -15°C — and with wind chill on an exposed chairlift or at the summit, the felt temperature can range from -10°C to -20°C . This is genuinely the biggest shock of the trip, and it's entirely solvable with the right layers — see the packing list on page 3. Children who are warm have a wonderful time. Children who are cold want to go home by 10am.

THE READINESS TEST

If you can answer yes to all three — the youngest is 4 or over, you've accepted that lessons are non-negotiable, and you're willing to spend on proper thermal layers — you're ready. Everything after this is logistics.

SECTION TWO

The 20-week planning timeline

Working backwards from a December departure. Start at 20 weeks — about five months — out: flights and hotel rates both get more expensive the closer you get, even when availability isn't the issue. Ski-school instructor slots are the one thing that can still run out even if you start early.

WHEN	WHAT TO LOCK IN
20 weeks out	Decide the resort and the dates before you shop flights. Pricing tickets first tends to lock you into a resort that fits the flight, not the other way around. Get both parents to agree on budget range before comparing options — this is the step families skip, and it's why the decision then takes six weeks.
18 weeks out	Book flights. This is the window that actually gets you the cheaper fares — December fares from Singapore climb steadily the closer you get to departure, and rarely come back down. Check whether your package includes them before you book separately.
16 weeks out	Confirm accommodation and pay the deposit. The better room categories in ski-in/ski-out properties for the school-holiday window go to families who book this early — wait until the last few weeks and you're choosing from what's left, at a higher rate.

WHEN	WHAT TO LOCK IN
7 weeks out	Book ski lessons and confirm the coach-to-child ratio in writing. Group sizes are the difference between a child who learns and a child who queues. Ask for the number, not the adjective.
6 weeks out	Check passports (six months' validity) and start any visa process. Sort travel insurance that explicitly covers snow sports — most standard policies don't.
4 weeks out	Buy or rent thermal layers. Buy base layers and socks; rent or borrow outer shells, which children outgrow in a season. Consider one indoor ski session in Singapore so the boots aren't a first-morning surprise.
2 weeks out	Confirm airport transfers, equipment sizing and dietary requirements. Give the operator every child's height, weight and shoe size — that's what ski fitting runs on.
1 week out	Pack to the checklist. Sort connectivity — if you're travelling to China, arrange an eSIM before you fly so WhatsApp and Google work on landing.
Departure	Carry all medication, one full change of clothes per child, and every charger in hand luggage. Ski gear in the hold, warmth on your body.

SECTION THREE

The packing checklist

Built for a family flying from a tropical climate into roughly -15°C . Print this page. The rule that matters: three layers, and never cotton against the skin — it holds sweat and then freezes.

LAYER 1 — BASE (PER PERSON)

- ☐ Merino or synthetic thermal top × 3
- ☐ Thermal leggings × 3
- ☐ Ski socks, knee-length × 4 pairs
- ☐ Regular underwear × 7

LAYER 2 — MID

- ☐ Fleece or light down jacket × 2
- ☐ Fleece trousers for evenings
- ☐ Long-sleeve tops for indoors × 3

LAYER 3 — OUTER

- ☐ Waterproof ski jacket (rent or borrow)
- ☐ Waterproof ski trousers
- ☐ Waterproof gloves × 2 pairs per child
- ☐ Neck gaiter or balaclava
- ☐ Beanie that covers the ears

ON THE SLOPE

- ☐ Ski goggles (UV, anti-fog)
- ☐ Helmet — usually included in rental
- ☐ SPF 50 sunscreen and lip balm
- ☐ Hand and toe warmer packs
- ☐ Small backpack for snacks

OFF THE SLOPE

- ☐ Waterproof winter boots with grip
- ☐ Swimwear — hot springs and water parks
- ☐ Indoor slippers
- ☐ Moisturiser (dry air is brutal)

DON'T FORGET

- ☐ Passports, six months' validity
- ☐ Travel insurance covering snow sports
- ☐ Medication, plasters, motion-sickness tablets
- ☐ Universal adaptor and power bank
- ☐ eSIM or roaming arranged in advance
- ☐ Familiar snacks for the picky eater
- ☐ **Baggage allowance checked on both legs — the domestic Changbaishan connector often allows less than your international flight**

BUY VS RENT

Buy: base layers, socks, gloves, goggles, beanie — cheap, personal, and they'll get used again.

Rent: jackets, trousers, skis, boots, helmets. Children outgrow outerwear in a single season, and hauling it through Changi is its own small misery.

SECTION FOUR

Where you sleep, and what everyone eats

Two things that don't show up in any brochure photo and quietly decide whether the week is a good one. Both are usually the reason a package looked suspiciously cheap.

Pick accommodation that suits your actual party

A tatami room sounds like a lovely bit of cultural texture right up until day three. If you're not used to sleeping on the floor, a body that has spent six hours on a mountain will let you know about it — and it compounds. By midweek you're stiff, badly slept, and the skiing stops being fun. Some people are completely fine with it. Know honestly which one you are before you book, and remember you're deciding for grandparents and teenagers too, not just yourself.

When a package looks dramatically cheaper than everything else, accommodation is almost always where the money came out. That usually means a 3-star property, and 3-star can mean any of the following:

- **A shared bathroom down the corridor** — common in Japan and entirely normal there, but it is a very different holiday with a six-year-old at 2am.
- **No lift**, and your room on the third floor, with ski gear.
- **A "family room" that's one room with a sofa bed** — four people, one space, no door between the kids and the adults for seven nights.
- **A twenty-minute shuttle** from the slopes each way, which is the difference between going back to the room at lunch and not.

None of this makes a cheap package a bad package. It makes it a different one. The mistake is paying less without knowing which of the above you bought. Ask for the exact property name and look it up yourself — not the star rating, the actual hotel.

ASK BEFORE YOU BOOK

Which property, by name? Beds or futons — and how many, in how many rooms? Private bathroom in the room, or shared? How far from the lifts, and is it walkable in ski boots? After a full day on snow, "we'll sort it out when we get there" is not a plan.

Check there's food your children will actually eat

Hangry children — hungry and angry — are the single hardest thing to manage on a holiday, and a ski holiday manufactures them: cold, tired, burning through calories, and a long way from a familiar kitchen. Nothing else on this list will wreck an evening faster.

What matters isn't whether the food is good. It's whether there's enough choice, for seven days running. A resort with one excellent restaurant is worse for a family than one with five ordinary ones, because by day four your child has decided they're done with it. Check for:

- **Variety across the week** — more than two or three places you can realistically get to.
- **At least one familiar fallback.** A recognisable chain near the resort isn't a failure of adventurousness. It's the thing that rescues day five.
- **Breakfast included, and what's in it.** A Western-style buffet with cereal and toast starts the day without a negotiation.
- **Lunch on the mountain** — where it happens, whether it's included, and whether the ski school handles it for children in lessons.
- **Allergies and dietary needs** — flag them in writing when you book, not on arrival.

And pack familiar snacks in your hand luggage. A known biscuit at the right moment has saved more ski holidays than any amount of planning.

THE END-OF-DAY MEAL DOES MORE WORK THAN YOU'D THINK

Everyone is cold, aching and slightly overwhelmed by about 6pm. A hot, satisfying meal that the whole family is happy with resets the entire day — and sets up whether anyone wants to get back on the snow tomorrow. It's worth choosing a resort for. Most people don't think about it until they're standing in one at dinnertime.

SECTION FIVE

What it actually costs

Ski holidays get quoted as a headline number and then bleed extras. Here's every line item a family of four should expect, so you can hold any quote — ours included — against a full list.

COST LINE	USUALLY INCLUDED?	WATCH OUT FOR
Flights	Sometimes	Quoted per adult; child fares and baggage often added later
Accommodation	Yes	"Family room" can mean one room with a sofa bed — ask for the configuration
Airport transfers	Varies	Resorts are often 2–3 hours from the airport
Ski lessons	Rarely	The single biggest add-on; confirm days, hours and group size
Lift / slope passes	Varies	Priced per day, per person, and adds up fast over a week
Equipment rental	Varies	Skis, boots, poles, helmet — check each is listed, not assumed
Thermal clothing	Almost never	Budget for it separately, whether buying or renting
Meals	Breakfast only, typically	On-mountain lunch is the quiet daily cost

COST LINE	USUALLY INCLUDED?	WATCH OUT FOR
Off-slope activities	Varies	Hot springs, water parks and snow parks are usually ticketed separately
Insurance	No	Must explicitly name snow sports, or you aren't covered
Connectivity	No	In China, a working eSIM is the difference between reachable and not

HOW TO COMPARE TWO QUOTES PROPERLY

Ignore the headline. Take both quotes, add every line above that isn't included, and compare the two totals. A package advertised at S\$1,200 per person with nothing bundled routinely lands higher than one at S\$1,800 that includes lessons, passes, rental and transfers. This one exercise saves families more money than any amount of shopping around.

SECTION SIX

Eight questions to ask before you pay

Ask any operator — including us. The quality of the answers tells you more than any brochure. Vague answers to questions 2, 4 and 7 are the reliable warning signs.

1 What is the exact coach-to-child ratio, and are lessons in English?

"Small groups" is not an answer. You want a number. 1:3 is excellent; anything past 1:8 and a beginner spends the week waiting.

2 Precisely what's included — and list what isn't.

A confident operator will volunteer the exclusions. Get it in writing, then check it against the table on the previous page.

3 How many hours per day are the lessons, and is lunch covered?

Half-day and full-day differ by more than price. Full-day without a lunch plan means you're collecting a hungry child mid-mountain.

4 Is there someone from your company on the ground for the whole trip?

A 24/7 phone number in another timezone is not the same as a representative at the resort. Ask which one you're getting.

5 What happens if my child hates it on day one?

Every family should ask. The answer reveals whether there's anything to do besides ski — and whether they've thought about children at all.

6 How far is the accommodation from the lifts?

Walking 400 metres in ski boots with a six-year-old is a twenty-minute negotiation, twice a day.

7 What's the payment schedule and the cancellation policy?

Deposit amount, balance due date, and what you get back at each stage. In writing, before the deposit leaves your account.

8 Will my phone work — and can my child eat the food?

The two questions parents feel silly asking and then worry about for six weeks. Ask them.

One resort worth knowing about

We plan trips to a single place, so treat this as a biased but specific answer to "where should a first family ski trip go?" We looked for four things in a family resort: reliable natural snow, slopes built for beginners without endless queues, a low coach-to-child ratio, and accommodation with real beds and private bathrooms. Changbaishan won on all four.

Changbaishan, in northeast China, sits on the 42°N snow belt — the same latitude band as the Alps, so the snow falls rather than gets made. The slopes were designed by Ecosign, the Canadian firm behind five Winter Olympic venues: 43 trails across 33km of piste, and 20 of those trails are wide, gentle and built for beginners. It's roughly eight hours from Singapore, and it's markedly quieter than the Japanese and Korean resorts everyone else is queuing for.

For families specifically, the details that matter: English-speaking instructors capped at four per group with a 1:3 coach-to-student ratio and standard liability insurance; floodlit night skiing until 9pm, which frees the daytime for everything else; and off-slope, a frozen crater lake, hot springs at -15°C, a water park, a snow park and ice fishing.

On the two things in section four: accommodation is international 5-star on site — Hyatt Regency, Westin, Sheraton — plus mid-range Wanda options, all proper beds and private bathrooms, no futons and no shared facilities at any tier. And there's a food street at the base of the mountain alongside the hotel restaurants, with a KFC and a McDonald's a short walk away. We mention the fast food deliberately: nobody is forcing a picky six-year-old into unfamiliar dishes on day one of a holiday.

Our packages run 7 days / 6 nights from S\$1,465 per person, and include transfers, equipment rental and fitting, helmets, lessons, daily breakfast, a hosted group dinner, an ETEX representative on site, 24/7 support, and a free eSIM so WhatsApp, Google and Instagram work normally the moment you land. Flights are optional and quoted separately, so you can compare us honestly against anyone else.

NEXT STEP

Price your family's trip in about two minutes

Our calculator gives you a full itemised total — hotel tier, lessons, rooms, everything — with no phone call and no salesperson. See the real number, then decide.

etextravel.com/price-calculator

Questions first? enquiry@etextravel.com · WhatsApp +65 8991 1043 · Instagram @etextravel

This planner is general guidance for families planning a first ski holiday and is free to share with anyone who'd find it useful. Prices quoted are 2026/27 season indicative rates and subject to availability and confirmation at the time of booking; flights are not included unless explicitly stated in your quotation.

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