**Sierra Nevada**

**Categories**

**Good For**

Beginners

Intermediates

Snowboarders

Families

Non-skiers

Après ski

**Data**

**Beginner Runs**

57

**Intermediate Runs**

52

**Advanced Runs**

7

**Total Runs**

116

**Lifts**

18

**Chairs**

15

**Drags**

1

**Gondola Cable Cars**

2

**Parks**

1

**Pipes**

0

**Weather**

**Annual Snowfall**

7.5m (25ft).

**Overview**

Sierra Nevada, meaning “snow capped mountain range”, is Europe’s most southerly major ski resort. Standing alone on a vast massif towering 3,478 m (11,411ft) above the Mediterranean Sea, its resort base is high above the treeline and affords stunning views of the region.

Despite its southerly location, the resort generally has a good snowfall record and commonly boasts a 5m to 6m (16ft to 20ft) snow base – one of the deepest in Europe – by early spring and can stay open until the start of May.

The resort also has extensive snow-making facilities. However, this did not help in 1995 when it was due to host the FIS Alpine Skiing World Championships. These were cancelled due to inadequate cover and staged successfully the following year instead.

Although the resort facilities are largely closed down outside of the ski season, Sierra Nevada is still a popular destination year round because of its status as the highest point of mainland Spain. Towards the start and end of the ski season, Sierra Nevada’s relative proximity to famous Andalusian beach resorts such as Málaga makes it perfect for ski and beach combined holidays.

The resort was created in the late 1960s at the same time as a wave of new high-altitude purpose-built resorts in the Pyrenees and the Alps. As with many of these, its original apartment complexes are now 50 years old and some are suffering the ravages of time. One key difference from resorts in the Alps and Pyrenees, however, is that Sierra Nevada has thankfully followed the Japanese and North American model of having mostly chair and gondola lifts, rather than countless drags.

**Location**

Sierra Nevada is located within the provinces of Granada and Almería in Spain’s southernmost mainland region, Andalusia. The area is also home to the highest point of mainland Spain (Mulhacén at 3,478m/11,411ft), which has the cities of Granada and Almería on its foothills. The ski slopes are located within the Sierra Nevada National Park.

**Website**

http://www.sierranevadaski.com

**Piste Map**

http://sierranevada.es/estacion/en-pista/plano-de-pistas-interactivo.aspx

**Hit The Slopes**

Sierra Nevada’s 105km (65 miles) of runs are for the most part easy to intermediate, and are wide and fast, providing excellent conditions for confident beginners or those who just want to zip around the mountain without too many challenges. Complete beginners can make the most of the dedicated area up by the Borreguiles mountain restaurants, where several different ski schools compete to provide the best service.

Despite having staged world-class alpine skiing events, the options for advanced skiers are fairly limited, with a small choice of black runs and a rarity of fresh powder. However, many of the runs were laid out by international resort designers and include slopes pitching at up to around 30 degrees – the Monachil sector is challenging, and a steep run down from Valeta II to Borreguiles is regarded as one of the most demanding descents in Spain.

For added variety, almost every type of snow sports facility is available on Sierra Nevada’s slopes. There is, for example, a parallel slalom course where you can compete against a friend; a ski-cross course where you can indulge in an exciting descent on the fluctuating track; and the Parque Sulaya terrain park for snowboarders and freestyle skiers with a big range of jumps and rails. Additionally, there are 5km (3 miles) of cross-country tracks to explore.

It’s possible to be first on the slopes on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings before the lifts open to the public by taking the Al-Andalus gondola with a guide. There’s a small fee for this and it must be booked in advance (tel: 902 708 090 – option 2).

**Sierra Nevada**

**Resort**

1202

**Base**

1202

**Top**

3305

**General**

**Beyond The Slopes**

One thing Sierra Nevada offers its visitors is choice; and there’s a huge range of things to do in the resort away from skiing or snowboarding. All of these activities are centrally managed and can be booked through the Sierra Nevada Club (tel: 902 708 090 – option 2).

The Mirlo Blanco recreation area offers a huge range of activities, including snow tubes, ski bikes, mini skis and even an archery range.  There’s also a ‘snow coaster’ – akin to a downhill roller coaster – that covers a 450m-long (1,500ft) track over a 250m (820ft) vertical, on which you can speed up to 40kph (25mph).

Other on-snow options include snowshoeing tours, snowmobiling excursions or mountain biking on snow. For something truly stunning, take a trip up to the Veleta summit by ski cat for sunrise and sunset viewing out over the magnificent national park vista below.

Off the slopes, the YHI Spa in the Meliá Sol y Nieve hotel (tel: 958 480 300; [www.melia.com](http://www.melia.com/)) is a major attraction with its rich menu of treatments and a wealth of relaxation facilities, including a spa pool and hydrothermal circuit.

**Family Fun**

Sierra Nevada is a very family-friendly resort, with affordable accommodation, suitable dining options, easy access to the slopes, child care and ski school tuition. The numerous green and blue ski run options are perfect for families wishing to ski together.

Young children can play and learn to ski at three different ‘snow gardens’; while non-ski nursery care (Plaza de Andalucía; tel 958 481 081) is available for children aged four months to 12 years in Pradollano, near the gondola base station.

Most of the popular non-ski activities are also open to families with young children, including children’s snowmobiling on a small circuit using special kid-sized snowmobiles.

**Retail Therapy**

Although not really a shopper’s paradise, there are about 20 shops in Sierra Nevada ski resort. Most of these, however, are either ski rental outfitters, mini markets or ‘holiday essential’ shops such electronics retailers, souvenir outlets and chemists. The greatest concentration of shops is in the central Plaza de Pradollano shopping arcade.

**Splashing Out**

Thanks to warm thermals from the sea below, Sierra Nevada is a great place to paraglide. Take a 15 to 30 minute tandem paragliding flight from 3,000m (9,800ft) above sea level and admire the stunning views of the national park and beyond on your descent to Pradollano.

**Apres Ski**

Sierra Nevada attracts a young crowd alongside its family visitors, and is one of the more animated Spanish resorts come nightfall. There are half a dozen clubs and bars to cater for those looking for a fun-filled night.

Jaleo Bar (Galeria Comercial, Plaza de Pradollano; tel: 958 481 123) is one of the most popular venues. It opens at 1630 daily, initially as a coffee bar, but then converts to a ‘disco pub’ with live DJs from 1030 until the small hours. Disco Pub Wall Street in the Hotel Nevasur (Calle Virgen de las Nieves; tel: 958 480 350; [www.gruporeino.com](http://www.gruporeino.com/)) is another animated late-night option.

If you want something a little quieter, La Bodeguita (Bajos Hotel Melia; tel: 958 48 04 00) wine and tapas bar might be more suitable. It’s friendly and rustic; although there is a karaoke machine that’s wheeled out on request.

**Eating Out**

With around 30 separate places to eat – ranging from simple tapas bars to fine dining restaurants – there’s a good dining choice in Sierra Nevada.

The resort’s proximity to the Mediterranean Sea means seafood is something of a forte at several local establishments. For example, you can sample everything from red mullet to mussels and octopus at the small but popular El Mar (Plaza de Pradollano; tel: 958 480 841).

A special dining night is available on Saturdays with a gondola ride up to the atmospheric Alcazaba (902 708090 – option 2) mountain restaurant in Borreguiles, where a range of set menus is available. If the weather is good, you can dine amid stunning views on the terrace and ski back down to the resort.

**Transport**

**Getting There**

Nearest airport: Granada Airport (GRX).

Distance to resort: 47km (29 miles).

Driving time: 60 minutes.

Nearest railway station: Granada.

Distance to resort: 32km (20 miles).

Driving time: 45 minutes.

**Getting Around**

The original resort development is quite compact, meaning it is easy to reach the majority of the main facilities on foot. Chairlifts and pistes connect the top and bottom of the resort.

A ski bus service operates from approximately 0800 to 2100 between the centre and more remote areas of the resort. There is a bus station at the base of the resort and some accommodation has parking areas for visitors with cars.

**Hotels**

As a purpose-built ski resort, Sierra Nevada unsurprisingly has largely apartment-style accommodation and low- to mid-range hotels. However, some newer establishments have raised the bar on what remains a predominantly 1- to 3-star standard resort, with a handful of 4- and 5-star rated options.

**Hotel Rumaykiyya**

Perched on an elevated promontory away from the resort centre, this 5-star hotel boasts elegant Alpine-style rooms with a good range of facilities and excellent service. It is conveniently located just a short chairlift ride to the slopes.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

Urbanizacion Sol y Nieve

**Neighborhood**

Monachil

**Locality**

Sierra Nevada 18196

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Spain

**Telephone**

958 482 508.

**Website**

http://www.vinccihoteles.com

**Meliá Sol y Nieve**

Until recently, this 4-star hotel was the most highly rated hotel in the resort and its key asset remains its central location. Its premium slope-facing rooms are the best choice here, as they are generally quieter than those overlooking the village.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

Plaza de Pradollano

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Sierra Nevada 18196

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Spain

**Telephone**

958 480 300.

**Website**

http://www.melia.com

**Hotel Telecabina Montana**

A friendly 2-star in an excellent location next to the lifts, Hotel Telecabina is a good choice for families as some rooms feature multiple beds. Guests here can eat on-site at La Bodega restaurant.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

Plaza de Andalucia

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Sierra Nevada 18196

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Spain

**Telephone**

958 482 000.

**Website**

http://www.hoteltelecabina.com

**Inside Plaza Sierra Nevada**

This recently renovated apartment complex is next to the resort’s main square with parking below, so you do not necessarily need to use your car again once you have arrived in the resort. Apartments are available for up to six people and each comes complete with a kitchenette.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

Plaza de Andalucia 1

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Sierra Nevada 18196

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Spain

**Telephone**

902 156 301.

**Website**

http://www.eissierranevada.com/apartamentos.html

**Hostal El Duende Blanco**

Although a fair walk up the hill from the resort centre, this hostel can be reached relatively easily by chairlift during the day. Rooms here are generally small, but it is a good option for those on a budget.

**Category**

Cheap

**Thoroughfare**

Virgen de la Nieves

**Neighborhood**

Edificio America

**Locality**

Sierra Nevada 18196

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Spain

**Telephone**

958 481 110.

**Website**

http://www.elduendeblanco.com

**Hostal Yeti**

This affordable hostel accommodation just 50m (164ft) from the lifts features light and spacious rooms. Wi-Fi internet access is available and ski rental and lift passes can be organised from the 24-hour reception.

**Category**

Cheap

**Thoroughfare**

Edificio Sapporo

**Neighborhood**

Edificio America

**Locality**

Sierra Nevada 18196

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Spain

**Telephone**

958 481 292.

**Website**

http://www.hostalyeti.com