

## Ski Properties in Bulgaria

Traditional winter ski regions are now in serious competition for overseas property buyers seeking to buy ski property. Bulgaria and Ukraine offer lower prices and superb Ski resorts all at a fraction of the cost of the more established resorts.

With summer memories fading as the temperature begins to drop, many holiday travelers' thoughts are turning towards the winter and the best places to ski. The Alps have been the traditional European ski destination, with countless Brits buying up second homes for their skiing holidays. Prices in most Alpine destinations have long since exceeded the average person's range, and so other destinations are becoming more and more popular.

Eastern Europe has become the place for many international travelers and investors looking for affordable second homes where they still can enjoy skiing and winter holidays. In recent years Bulgaria has been one of the most popular ski destinations for home buyers, and Ukraine is now the next up and coming destination.

Bulgaria has a well-developed ski industry, and the slopes aren't too difficult to get to with some very close to the major cities. The most popular and developed resorts in Bulgaria are Bansko, Borovets and Pamporovo. Pamporovo is the southernmost ski resort in Bulgaria and gets quite a bit of sun. Bansko is one of the newest resorts in the country. As a result, it has some of the best accommodation with plenty of off-plan property available for investors and vacationers. Borovets has hosted World Cup ski events and is easily accessible from the capital of Sofia.

Bansko ski resort is situated in the South-Western part of Bulgaria at the foot of one of the most beautiful Bulgarian mountains - Pirin, which represents a natural preserve and is included in the World Natural Heritage list.

The distance between Sofia and Bansko is 170 km. The nearest International Airport is the one in Sofia. Transfer time from Sofia to Bansko is 2,5 hours.

The town of Bansko is located on 925 m. above the sea level, while its skiing area is at 2000-2500 m.

Bansko is the leading ski resort of Bulgaria. The skiing area of Bansko has been improved significantly with brand new lifts and pistes. The total investment in the resort's new skiing area is over a 100 million euros.

Bansko has the best snow record among all ski resorts of Bulgaria, offers great skiing and busy Apres ski life. It combines the nature of Pirin mountain with the atmosphere of the old Bulgarian towns.

A brand new Gondola starting from the town is taking the skiers and boarders to the top.

The skiing conditions in Bansko are excellent. Pirin mountain has a predominantly Alpine character with 2 peaks towering above 2900 m. However, the slopes offer runs and tracks for all types of skiers and will suit both beginners and experts.

Pamporovo is located in the most southern part of Rhodopi mountain, the nearest bigger town is Smolyan. Surrounded by clean and unspoiled nature, pine woods and beautiful mountainous sceneries, the place is a perfect spot for recreation and relaxation in the crystal clear air and sports activities in the ski resort. A major motorway construction is underway from Smolyan to nearby Greece (just 30 km), which is expected to boost tourist inflow from Greece. The road is expected to be completed by the end of 2006, which can ease a nice 2 hour trip to the nice Aegean Sea in Greece.

Pamporovo claims to be the sunniest mountain resort in Europe (270 days of sun per year on average). There is an efficient lift system. Currently, there are total of 20 ski slopes of a total of 25km pisted run. New ski runs and lifts are being developed.

Traveling to Pamporovo is easy in the winter using the charter flights to the city of Plovdiv, which is 80km away. Cheap charter flights are arranged in the ski season by many British and international travel agents, including Balkan Holidays and First Choice making Pamporovo the ideal place to invest in a Bulgarian ski resort property!

The property market in Pamporovo ski resort is not so well developed as in Bansko, but still offers great potential. Unlike Bansko, Pamporovo has been initially developed as a resort area, which now leaves room for better development planning and infrastructure. Future plans about development of new ski facilities and even adjacent resort areas like Stoykite and Perelik is what drives the market.

Property prices in Pamporovo, still well below Bansko prices, vary depending on their distance to the ski lifts and the property facilities. The proximity to the Plovdiv airport and the Greek border (and Aegean Sea) provides for an easy access to Pamporovo, so the property prices will probably continue to grow in the next years.