

[By Sue Chappel](#)

Whistler BC Canada is an exceptional winter destination ski resort, but you do not have to pay exceptionally high prices to enjoy its breathtaking beauty and unbeatable terrain diversity.

Whistler is affordable once you know the local money-saving secrets.

Here are 9 local tips for getting maximum Whistler value, while enriching your vacation experience to create beautiful lifetime memories.

Tip #1- Be Date-Flexible

Most ski vacation destinations have holiday date-driven pricing grids. Some vacation dates will cost you more (like New Year's), while, others will cost you a lot less.

Fortunately, most seasonal price fluctuations have little to do with snow conditions, and more to do with consumer demand!

Whistler is no different.

What does this mean for you?

You will pay a lot less, get great snow conditions and avoid crowds by planning your vacation around non-peak holiday dates.

Here are some of Whistler Blackcomb's best kept secret vacation dates, when you can expect to get the hill to yourself and get better accommodation value:

- Nov. 24-Dec.23 2005
- Jan. 3-Feb. 18 2006
- Mar. 1-March 15 2006
- Apr. 1-10 2006

Tip #2- Reduce Your Whistler Accommodation Costs by Arriving and Departing a Few Days Earlier or Later During Peak Holiday Periods

If you are planning on visiting Whistler during peak holiday dates like Christmas, New Years, Spring Break or Easter, try to arrive and leave day or two earlier or later.

This will not affect the total number of days that you enjoy Whistler, but could limit the number of nights for which you are paying top accommodations dollar in peak holiday season, which can often translate into many hundreds of dollars in accommodation savings.

Limit the number of nights that you stay in the most expensive seasons by adjusting your arrival and departure dates to include cheaper seasonal rates.

Tip#3-Plan Vacation Dates Around Lift Ticket Seasonal Pricing Dates

Like accommodations, Whistler lift ticket seasonal price ranges also reflect peak holiday dates. Lift tickets cost more during peak holiday periods.

In cases where your lift ticket may overlap date-driven price ranges, the total price you pay for a Whistler Blackcomb lift pass is determined by the date-driven price scale in which your first skiing/riding day falls.

Plan your vacation around starting to ski/ride within a date-driven price range with the lowest lift ticket prices, even if you start on the last day of that date-driven ticket season price. As long as your first day falls in the best price range, your entire ticket price will fall within the cheaper range.

For example, the 2005/2006 ticket window price for 5 or 6 day tickets that start November

24-December 23 inclusive, is \$335.00 CAD + 7% GST. The same 5 of 6 day ticket that starts December 24-January 1, 2006 will cost you \$360.00 CAD + 7% GST.

In this example, if you start skiing/riding on December 23, 2005, your entire lift ticket will cost \$335.00, even though most of your skiing/riding days will be in the more expensive seasons.

Tip #4-Take Advantage of Pre-Booking Incentives

Whistler Blackcomb heavily rewards customers who pre-book their lift tickets online.

Pre-purchasing your 5 or more day discount Whistler lift tickets for your 2005/2006 ski vacation by October 31, 2005 will save you 18-35% on your passes, without any date exceptions. In addition to great savings, you also get a free adult ski/snowboard group lesson on your first day of skiing/riding with every 5 or more day ticket purchased by October 31, 2005.

For example, purchasing a 6 of 7-day lift ticket starting on December 23, 2005, will reward you with a savings of \$128 CAD and a free adult ski or snowboard lesson, providing that you purchase it by October 31, 2005.

What if you can't book your vacation by October 31, 2005?

You still save 5-20% on tickets pre-purchased within 72 hours of picking them in the resort.

Tip #5-Be Aware of Date-Driven Promotions & Plan Accordingly

In addition to early booking incentives, Whistler Blackcomb also offers Whistler Discount Discovery Weeks, when the resort's most popular ski and snowboard programs are 50% off.

There are no booking deadlines to qualify, and the promotion takes place during 11 different Whistler ski season weeks.

If you book your vacation to fall within these date ranges, you would save \$260 on a 5-day kids ski or snowboard Adventure Camp, or \$50/day per adult group lesson.

Tip #6-Don't Just Focus on Ski-In/Out Accommodation

Staying in a Whistler ski-in/out location will cost you a lot more per night, but often does not result in a better ski vacation experience.

Why?

Slope side properties tend to be smaller, more expensive, and less accessible to Whistler Village.

Thanks to a fantastic free Whistler shuttle system, getting to and from the slopes and Whistler Village from most resort locations is easy, fast and free. You don't have to pay more for the location convenience of slope side accommodation to enjoy the benefits of being close to everything, including the slopes.

Take the time to look at ALL accommodation options within a 10-minute walk to the lifts. You will often get more square footage, amenities and accessibility to Whistler Village conveniences for the same, or less, money.

Tip #7-Book Accommodation Directly with Owners

Booking your accommodation directly with owners offers you the benefits of wholesale accommodation prices, a personal home, and a personal, locally knowledgeable resource person when you need it.

Renting directly from owners enables you to bypass all unnecessary middle agent fees and commissions.

There are over 470 Whistler homeowners who now rent their condos privately and directly to

Whistler visitors. Booking online directly with owners is easy, secure and guaranteed.

If you have never rented directly from an owner before, we recommend that you review these Whistler condo booking tips.

Tip #8-Book Other Vacation Services Direct with Local Businesses to Avoid Middle Agent Fees

Booking activities such as heliskiing, snowmobiling and ground transportation directly with local businesses is another way to save money.

Some Whistler BC accommodation companies work directly with local partners and pass on all referral commissions to their guests as savings. These Whistler BC discount consumer-direct programs help you save money, but more importantly, you get expert, friendly service directly from knowledgeable local residents who are eager to help you discover Whistler's beauty and secrets!

Tip #9-Take the Time to Research Flights

With gas prices expected to climb even further, it is worth it to take the time to research flights.

Using consolidator services like Expedia.com, Travelocity.com and CheapTickets.com offer the benefits of rapid price comparison and easy online bookings, however, you should also check prices for booking direct with airlines. You will sometimes get better deals and seats. Most airlines now offer easy online bookings and seat selection. Even if there is no price difference, but you can get better seats, it is worth your effort.

Conclusion

Although these tips are Whistler BC-specific, they can also be generally applied to any other ski resort destination. They each have their own promotions and incentives.

Reward yourself with maximum value by taking the time to research pricing and resort promotional programs and try to plan your dates accordingly. Book directly with owners and local businesses for friendly service, local expertise and consumer-direct value.

Above all, remember that in the end, vacations are not about how much money you saved, but about whether or not you created a brilliant lifetime memory with your friends and family. Whistler is an unforgettable place where you can rest, rejoice and renew with your loved ones. Saving money is just the icing on the cake!

Sue Chappel owns and manages AlluraDirect.com, Whistler Blackcomb's largest directory of over 470 owner-direct [Whistler BC chalets and condo rentals](#) and [Whistler condo booking tips](#). AlluraDirect.com also enables Whistler visitors to save hundreds of dollars by self-creating consumer-direct [Whistler ski packages and accessing Whistler deals](#) such as those described, that bypass typical middle agent fees and commissions. Enjoy consumer direct savings on accommodations, discount lift tickets, heliskiing and more by visiting her web site.

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