

## **How to Prep for Your XC Ski Holiday to Australia**

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Hitting the trails during winter season is one of the most anticipated activities of the year for many folks in NSW – and with such a breathtaking expanse of wilderness to choose from, it's no wonder that **Perisher Valley** is one of the most sought-after destinations on the intrepid cross country map. If you're a beginner or an expert coming in from town or further afield, the folk at Perisher XC welcome you. There are great places to stay with a delightful selection of food and beverages, and the Valley is easy to reach. It's the perfect place for XC skiing for visitors from abroad and locals alike – here are a few tips for getting you started.

### **Visiting Australia**

As one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world, finding information about Australia is easy. You can check with your local travel agency as well as several resources online including the official tourism website of Australia and the official **Department of Immigration** website. This will provide you with information you need to know like documentation, health and safety, seasons, points of interest, and more.

Everyone entering Australia is required to have an **up to date passport**, and non-Australian citizens will also need an appropriate visa covering the duration of their stay as well as sign an Incoming Passenger Card. Travellers who wish to drive while in Australia can use their existing driving license of their native country, but it is advisable to obtain an **International Driving Permit (IDP)** beforehand; many rental companies require an IDP and it can also be used as another form of identification. Another important piece of documentation to consider is a written note from your doctor if you are bringing **medication** which will be checked through customs. If you are carrying your own **skiing equipment**, always check airline regulations beforehand for the amount of space you are permitted. Failure to do so can result in large fees; by pre-booking you can find good deals on transporting your cargo beforehand.

### **Health and Safety**

While Australia has an undeniable reputation as one of the most dangerous countries in the world because of its wildlife, it's fairly easy to stay safe provided you follow a few common sense rules. Before trekking off into unknown territory, make sure that you know where you are going and that you are **equipped to deal with any emergency situation**. Carry maps, a compass, water, extra clothing, insect repellent, mobile phone, and first-aid kit – this applies to backcountry (or off-piste) skiing as well as hiking, camping, and mountain biking etc. in the bush.

**Backcountry skiing** is recommended for advanced skiers only. These are trails which are more secluded, not regularly maintained, and generally cover more challenging terrain. It's important to know what you're getting into before heading out into the wilderness; prepare efficiently, and you will have the adventure of a lifetime.

While it is not mandatory to get any vaccinations for Australia, travellers are advised to use insect repellent especially when visiting the Northern Territory and Western Australia which is at high-risk for Murray Valley encephalitis, Ross River virus infections, and other mosquito-borne diseases. Travellers should purchase **health and/or travel insurance** in case of an accident. Australia's healthcare system only covers citizens of specific countries.

### **Grabbing a bargain**

Except for flights from Southeast Asia, travellers will need to book long-haul to Australia. Long-haul flights can be expensive, but visitors who are prepared to travel economy class, are flexible with their arrival and departure dates as well as airport location can benefit from some good bargains. Using multi-search sites like *SkyScanner* can also provide some excellent deals, while *LateRooms* and *Hotels.com* are also useful for finding accommodation. Travellers

can also browse incognito and look for and book their flights at certain times of the day and week to benefit from lower prices.

One of the best ways to save is to also look for **vouchers** online for visiting popular attractions. Fortunately, there are a range of apps as well as websites offering several deals. Travellers can also save money on currency exchange by travelling with a currency card and buying travel money – keeping track of the exchange rate and changing little sums at a time can help build up a good amount of money in advance.

Last but not least, pack everything, bring your camera, and get ready to hit the trails... the great outdoors beckon, and you're ready for them.

*Sources:*

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