**Aviemore**

**Categories**

**Good For**

Beginners

Intermediates

Experts

Snowboarders

Non-skiers

Après ski

**Data**

**Beginner Runs**

7

**Intermediate Runs**

6

**Advanced Runs**

9

**Total Runs**

28

**Lifts**

11

**Chairs**

0

**Drags**

10

**Gondola Cable Cars**

1

**Parks**

1

**Pipes**

0

**Weather**

**Annual Snowfall**

Unavailable.

**Overview**

Aviemore is one of Scotland’s most popular year-round tourist destinations, with a list of things to do in the area so long that it can rival the choice of activities at resorts like Aspen or St Moritz.

People have been skiing in the area for more than a century, but the first ski lifts were built only in the early 1960s and for two decades Cairngorm Mountain was the place to ski for celebrities, as well as generations of British skiers who all learned their first turns here. Cairngorm Mountain’s ski slopes are about 16km (10 miles) from the base resort town of Aviemore.

Along with dozens of things to do in and around Aviemore itself, such as steam train rides and clay pigeon shooting, there are many well-known attractions within an hour's scenic drive. Among the most notable are Loch Ness, Culloden Battlefield (the site of the last battle on British soil), the Queen's summer residence of Balmoral, and a number of famous whisky distilleries.

**Location**

Aviemore is located in the Cairngorms National Park in northern Scotland, nestled within the Spey Valley in the Grampian Mountains.

**Website**

http://www.cairngormmountain.org

**Piste Map**

XXX

**Hit The Slopes**

Cairngorm Mountain’s somewhat variable snow cover means the ski centre can be open from early December through to June. However, the skiing can be limited at any time during that period if a warm spell melts all the snow in January or an extreme weather event such as gale-force winds closes the slopes – the strongest ever gusts in the United Kingdom have been recorded here.

Beginners will normally take the funicular up to a flat area of nursery slopes at the top of the Ptarmigan area, at almost 1,100m (3,609ft). The altitude of the slopes means this is one of the most snowsure areas on Cairngorm Mountain, and the centre manages to keep at least some of the area open here, even in a bad year.

Most of the marked trails are suited to intermediate skiers, but there are also some steep runs for the more advanced. The most challenging run is the West Wall black at Coire na Ciste, while The White Lady down to the Sheiling station can also be taxing when the bumps build up.

There's also a terrain park for free riders, the scope of which varies to some extent depending on snow conditions; while smaller areas are also set up at various points when conditions are good.

**Aviemore**

**Resort**

537

**Base**

537

**Top**

1097

**General**

**Beyond The Slopes**

Remarkably, Aviemore can perhaps offer more activities and attractions than any other ski resort in the world. Along with the royal palaces, ancient battle grounds, mythical monsters and world-famous distilleries, other possible outings include the Royal Dornoch and Castle Stuart (home of the Scottish Open) golf courses, stunning beaches such as those at Nairn (much loved by Charlie Chaplin), and one of the world's most scenic rail trips to John O'Groats – the most northerly settlement on the British mainland.

Aviemore town itself has a long list of facilities and activities on its doorstep. Outdoor pursuits include a fishing lake, many beautiful walks, hiking and mountain biking trails, a steam train line, and the more unusual attractions of all-weather dog sledding and a reindeer farm. Indoors, visitors can make use of the town’s swimming pool complex and cinema.

**Family Fun**

Aviemore is very much a family-friendly resort with high-quality accommodation and excellent leisure facilities, from a swimming pool to steam train rides. The Hilton Coylumbridge Resort (tel: (01479) 810 661; [www.hilton.co.uk](http://www.hilton.co.uk)) has particularly good facilities, including a great soft play area for younger children.

On the ski slopes, the resort tries hard to be family orientated, with well-trained and friendly staff, but practical problems can include long queues, overcrowded restaurants, old lifts, extreme weather and hazard-strewn ski runs that can make the experience challenging for some families. This is even more noticeable for visitors who have previously been ‘pampered’ on immaculately smooth, relatively empty runs with comfortable modern lifts in Europe or North America.

On the other hand, Britain's best skiers, including its only Olympic medallist Alain Baxter, learned their skills on Cairngorm Mountain, and there's a thriving youth ski racing club here.

**Retail Therapy**

Aviemore has a good selection of about 25 shops covering all holiday essentials, as well as a smattering of souvenir and gift retailers selling local products. There are also half a dozen well-equipped sports shops throughout the resort, where skiers and boarders can buy ski gear and accessories.

**Splashing Out**

The Rothiemurchus Estate (tel: (01479) 812 345; [www.rothiemurchus.net](http://www.rothiemurchus.net)) controls much of the land around Aviemore and offers dozens of activities, including clay pigeon shooting for anyone 12 years and over (children accompanied by adults), and will happily take beginners. Different packages are available; the best being the ‘gold experience’ for two hours, which includes gun, cartridges, clay targets, protective eyewear and hearing protection with professional safety instruction.

**Apres Ski**

Aviemore has great craic (fun) that can easily match some of the better-known après-ski night spots in the Alps. The Winking Owl (Grampian Road; tel: (01479) 810 646; [www.thewinkingowl.net](http://www.thewinkingowl.net)), the oldest pub in the town, specialises in local real ales and whiskies. Aviemore also has its own award-winning microbrewery, with a range of creatively named specialities; while the wider Spey Valley is also famous for its whisky.

**Eating Out**

There is a good choice of more than 20 cafés and restaurants in Aviemore catering for most tastes and budgets. The selection ranges from award-winning fish and chip shops to gourmet restaurants. Be sure to enjoy local cuisine – including salmon, haggis and venison – while in and around the resort. The Ptarmigan Restaurant (tel: (01479) 861 336) at the top of the funicular is the United Kingdom's highest restaurant at almost 1,100m (3,600ft) and serves everything from soup to spicy Highland sausage casserole, using local ingredients where possible.

**Transport**

**Getting There**

Nearest airports: Inverness Airport (INV); Aberdeen International Airport (ABZ); Dundee Airport (DND); Edinburgh Airport (EDI).

Distances to resort: 48km (29 miles); 150km (93 miles); 175km (108 miles); 205km (127 miles).

Driving time: 45 minutes; 2 hours 5 minutes; 2 hours 10 minutes; 2 hours 30 minutes.

**Getting Around**

Aviemore is located on the East Coast rail line with direct services from Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness and cities in England on the East and West Coast Main Lines between London and Scotland. Trains from London King’s Cross take about seven hours to reach the resort; while overnight sleeper trains from London Euston take around 11 hours.

A ski bus service links Aviemore town to the ski slopes in about 20 minutes. For those with their own transport, there is a large car park at the base of the funicular lift and an overflow car park below, which is linked by a free shuttle bus.

**Hotels**

There is a good selection of accommodation in Aviemore and in the Cairngorms in general. Most of the accommodation is in the form of bed and breakfasts, guest houses and family-run hotels. There are also self-catering options such as private houses to rent, log cabins and chalets, as well as a hostel for those on a budget. None of the accommodation is directly on the slopes, and all require a short trip to the lifts.

**Hilton Coylumbridge Resort**

A large 4-star resort complex covering 26 hectares (64 acres), the Hilton Coylumbridge Resort is located alongside the main road from Aviemore to Cairngorm. There is a wide range of facilities on-site, and this hotel is particularly excellent for families with its children’s play park and family deals at its restaurants.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

XXX

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Aviemore

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

PH22 1QN

**Country**

United Kingdom

**Telephone**

(01479) 810 661.

**Website**

http://www.hilton.co.uk

**Cairngorm Hotel**

One of the leading independent hotels in Aviemore, this 3-star option is located in the heart of the town.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

Grampian Road

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Aviemore

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

PH22 1PE

**Country**

United Kingdom

**Telephone**

(01479) 810 233.

**Website**

http://www.cairngorm.com

**Academy Hotel**

This budget accommodation option, formerly known as the Freedom Inn, is located in the Macdonald Aviemore Highland Resort complex. It is well appointed with spacious rooms.

**Category**

Cheap

**Thoroughfare**

Grampian Road

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Aviemore

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

United Kingdom

**Telephone**

(01479) 815 100.

**Website**

http://www.macdonaldoffers.co.uk