

Report

for the slopes



Pictures: ISTOCKPHOTO/GETTY

Ski whizz: Val d'Isere and, inset, family fun on the slopes

A YES, you can — and at £2.70 a day I thoroughly recommend it (carreneige.com/en). If you injure yourself seriously, mountain rescue will come and summon a helicopter if necessary without demanding a credit card while you lie in pain. This is valid for claims of up to £45,175, including repatriation.

However, for safety you should also have a full-blown UK winter sports policy for troubles off the slopes. Remember, during December European Health Insurance Cards remain valid, although they will cease to provide public health care in Europe for Britons from January.

Q I KEEP seeing tour operators offering money-back guarantees, but how safe is my cash really?

A IF YOUR resort closes prior to departure, your tour operator is obliged to return your money in full under such money-back guarantees.

Other companies may let you rebook at a later date or another destination. Insurance is unlikely to be useful as most insurers do not cover Covid-related claims.

Carefully read the small print on cancellation policies. Crystal's 'Holiday Promise' provides free amendments up to 28 days before departure and free changes if you develop Covid before travelling.

It also provides medical cover, accommodation and return flights if you catch the disease in resort. But the company will only offer trips to countries on the 'travel corridor' list.

Q WILL I get a better break if I book now for January, or should I wait and book later in the season?

A IF YOU want the pick of the reduced volume of holidays on offer, book now: it's a buyer's market.

However, if you wait, you will have a better idea about travel restrictions and a holiday in March or April could be a safer bet. And don't write off February half-term — 'travel corridors' without quarantines could still be introduced by then.

Best to play it by ear. In all cases there is one huge silver lining: the slopes will probably be quieter than ever.

DEALS TO BOOK ... IF YOU DARE

■ **CHALET** du Berger in Val d'Isere, France, sleeps 16 and costs from £965pp from March 21 half-board, flights and transfers included (leski.com).

■ **CHALET** Corbeau in Les Menuires, also in France, sleeps up to 17 and has availability in February half-term; from £5,937 for a family of three with one child up to four years from February 14, travel included; childcare with supervised lunches from £119 extra (skifamille.co.uk).

■ **ASIAN-THEMED** four-star Hotel Banyan in St Anton, Austria, is a five-minute walk from the main lifts; from £1,495pp B&B from March 21 with flights and transfers (skisolutions.com).

■ **EDEN** East is a chalet-apartment sleeping four in the smart Fontbelle area of Alpe d'Huez, France; from £1,389pp half-board on January 17 with flights and transfers (vip-chalets.com).

■ **CHALET** Benoit in the Plagne Soleil area of La Plagne in France is a comfortable ski-in-ski-out chalet with a hot tub; from £1,651pp half-board (a saving of £137) from March 6 with lift pass and ski hire (skiworld.co.uk).

■ **HOTEL** Aurach is in the village of the same name in the Austrian Tirol, a 3km ride by ski-bus from Kitzbuhel; from £665pp half-board from January 2 with flights and transfers (crystalski.co.uk).

Checking in... Captain Sir Tom Moore

100-year-old former British Army officer



EARLIEST HOLIDAY MEMORY?

GOING to wonderful Whitby in Yorkshire as a boy in the 1930s and staying in a little boarding house. It was a 90-mile car journey and took three hours in our Rover 8.

FIRST TRIP ABROAD?

TRAVELLING to Switzerland at the age of 18 with my late Uncle Arthur, such a lovely man.

ANY TIPS ON DEALING WITH MOZZIES?

IT WAS hard to avoid them when I was in the Fourteenth Army in Burma (below) during World War II, but malaria tablets, mosquito nets and a good slap helped keep the little beggars at bay.

ANY FOND WORLD WAR II TRAVEL MEMORIES?

I WENT to Darjeeling and Kashmir by train while on leave to see Dal Lake by Shalimar Gardens because of a popular song, and had a holiday romance — quite something during the war.

DID YOU SEE MUCH OF INDIA DURING WORLD WAR II?

YES, quite a lot. I got to visit Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, which helped sow a lifelong interest in the Indian subcontinent.

HAVE YOU BEEN BACK SINCE THEN?

YES, three times. I've visited India twice and went to Nepal to see Everest when I was in my 90s — the trip of a lifetime.

DREAM DESTINATION?

I'D LOVE to drive the length of Route 66 in America in a Bentley.

MOST MEMORABLE HOLIDAY?

GOING to Cape Town with my daughters Lucy and Hannah ten years ago. The city has such a wonderful natural setting, not to mention attractions such as Table Mountain and Cape Point.

HOLIDAY FROM HELL?

WE ONCE hired a campervan for a

family holiday, but it was damp and musty inside. It was also a long way from the loos — you had to jump in the car each time you wanted to spend a penny.

YOU'VE LIVED IN SPAIN — ANY TIPS?

YES, winters in Spain can actually be quite cold and the buildings aren't designed for such weather — so if you visit during the winter months be sure to pack an extra jumper or two.

FAVOURITE PLACE IN THE UK?

MY HOME county of Yorkshire — I have so many happy memories of the Dales, riding my bicycle and exploring the beautiful countryside.

WHEN DID YOU LAST TRAVEL ABROAD?

I SPENT two weeks at a villa in Menorca with my daughter Hannah and her family in July 2015. We relaxed on the beach, did a bit of sightseeing and tried the local cuisine. Bliss!

■ **CAPTAIN** Sir Tom Moore's autobiography *Tomorrow Will Be A Good Day* and his children's picture book *One Hundred Steps* are both out now (*Michael Joseph, Puffin*).

YORK MEMBERSHIP

