**Pamporovo**

**Categories**

**Good For**

Beginners

Intermediates

Snowboarders

Families

**Data**

**Beginner Runs**

5

**Intermediate Runs**

11

**Advanced Runs**

3

**Total Runs**

19

**Lifts**

15

**Chairs**

9

**Drags**

6

**Gondola Cable Cars**

0

**Parks**

1

**Pipes**

0

**Weather**

**Annual Snowfall**

1.5m (4.9ft).

**Overview**

One of Bulgaria’s leading ski areas, Pamporovo has gone from strength to strength since its privatisation in the early years of this century.

Although still offering one of the most affordable winter sports options in Europe, the resort, located in the country’s Rhopdope Mountains, has shed some of its budget-only image. Now visitors can find several modern, 3- and 4-star properties gracing the base of the slopes, with similar investment being made on fast, comfortable chairlifts on the mountain.

Despite on-going expansion plans, the extent of the slopes remains very modest compared to the well known areas in the Alps, with less than 500m (1,640ft) of lift-served vertical. Consequently more advanced skiers will likely find themselves unenthused with the offering.

Pamporovo therefore is best suited to beginners and early intermediates, and due to its location as one of the most southerly resorts in Europe, it is also one of the continent’s sunniest ski areas.

**Location**

Pamporovo lies in the centre of the Rhodope mountain chain in southwestern Bulgaria, 260km (162 miles) from the capital Sofia. The range borders Greece and peaks at Mount Snezhanka, which is 1,926m high (6,319ft).

**Website**

http://pamporovo.me/

**Piste Map**

http://winter.pamporovo.me/en/activities/skiing-and-snowboarding/ski-zone-map/

**Hit The Slopes**

In spite of its low altitude, sunny weather and mild climate, Pamporovo usually enjoys a reasonable snowfall with a season lasting between late December and the middle of April. The automatic snowmaking system helps to maintain reliable cover on most of the terrain when snow is scarce, and there have also been recent improvements to the lift network with the addition of several quads and a six-seater chairlift.

Most of the main runs fan out from the peak at Mount Snezhanka, which has a viewing tower at the top. Advanced skiers and boarders have limited options, including the Snezhanka 2 black run (known as ‘The Wall’).

The majority of the runs are suited to beginners and intermediates, including the main beginners' ‘Tourist Track’, a 4.2km-long (2.6 miles) trail from the peak to the base. The ski schools here have a good reputation and employ over 100 qualified instructors, while ski gear can be hired at both Malina and Studenets.

In addition to over 37km (22 miles) of ski runs, there are also 38km (24 miles) of cross-country ski tracks and some off-piste opportunities for experts. The two main cross-country trails connect the villages of Studenetz and Mugla and Ardashla and Stoykite.

Snowboarders, meanwhile, can enjoy the fun park, which also includes a halfpipe – the first to be constructed in the country.

**Pamporovo**

**Resort**

1650

**Base**

1450

**Top**

1937

**General**

**Beyond The Slopes**

Night skiing is available from 1730 to 2230 on the Snezhanka 2 run, but there are also enough activities off the slopes to keep most visitors happy.

Among the more exhilarating activities is the chance to take a high-speed ride around the hills on a four-seater snowmobile. Within the resort itself, there is an ice skating rink and there is also the chance to see artisan craftspeople at work – Pamporovo is known as a centre of arts and crafts, in particular for its copper products and woven fabrics.

There are also a number of excursions available to nearby places of interest. Among these is Bachkovo Monastery, the second largest in Bulgaria, which is perched on the banks of the Chepelare River. Trips are also available to the peaceful Smolyan Lakes.

**Family Fun**

The ski school welcomes children from the age of eight, but the ski kindergarten caters for kids aged four to seven with half- and whole-day packages.

The Hotel Perelik (tel: +359 309 59100; [www.perelikhotel.com](http://www.perelikhotel.com)) has a large swimming pool (open to non-guests) and a hugely popular bowling alley, which are good options for children’s activities. There is also a small kid's play area outside the Hotel Murgavets.

**Retail Therapy**

Two small shopping centres provide the resort with most of its retail needs. The Pamporovo Shopping Centre has small shops selling snazzy shades, chunky silver jewellery and sports gear.

Opposite is a larger shopping centre (linking the Hotel Perelik and Hotel Murgavets). Its ground floor souvenir shop sells beauty creams made from local natural rose oil, painted ceramics, the ubiquitous Russian dolls and handmade crystal ornaments. The ground floor also has plenty of ski gear shops, including Select sports store, which sells all the top names in boots, skis and snowboards.

For self-catering visitors, there is a small 24-hour supermarket opposite the Hotel Murgavets.

**Splashing Out**

Indulge in a full Oriental therapeutic treatment at the luxury spa in the Hotel Pamporovo (tel: +359 309 59900; [www.hotelpamporovo-bg.net](http://www.hotelpamporovo-bg.net)); or puff away at the hotel’s Whisky and Cigar Bar.

**Apres Ski**

With beer still costing around £1 (€1.30) for a half litre and a moderate selection of lively venues to choose from, it’s no surprise that Pamporovo is as popular après-ski destination.

Alex’s Pub (tel: +359 309 99091; www.alexspub.com) is a popular venue at the base of the slopes where lots of people stop off for a beer and a pancake at the end of the day.

If you want something more Bulgarian you’ll find live traditional music plays nightly at the roomy *mehana* (traditional bar) that’s aptly named Bulgarian Village. This lively bar serves a large range of local dishes and has a roaring log fire.

**Eating Out**

There’s an ever increasing number of vibrant eateries springing up in Pamporovo, dishing up both local and international offerings.

Gloria Mar, one of a chain of half a dozen quality restaurants with that name, including one in capital Sofia (www.gloriamar-bg.com), is one of the best in town.

The large Chevermeto restaurant (tel: +359 426 30331; www.chevermetosz.com) in nearby Stara Zagora specialises in the Rhodope dish of *cheverme* (barbecued lamb), and also has live traditional music.

But if it’s a cheap, simple snack you’re after most of the bars serve pizza, burgers, pancakes or other fast food.

**Transport**

**Getting There**

Nearest airport: Plovdiv Airport (PDV).

Distance to resort: 85km (53 miles).

Driving time: 2 hours.

**Getting Around**

All major hotels run free shuttle buses to the ski centres of Studenets and Malina – the latter can also be reached on foot in 30 minutes. In addition, buses operate to the nearby ski resort of Chepelare, 10km (6 miles) to the north. It can also be possible to travel by bus to the small snowboarding centre of Momchilovtsi, 12km (7 miles) to the east.

**Hotels**

There is a range of accommodation to suit all budgets and tastes, but the majority of accommodation in Pamporovo is in the form of hotels. These range from luxury 5-star options with excellent facilities to basic 1-star offerings. As a purpose-built resort, the majority of accommodation in Pamporovo consists of large modern-looking buildings, with a few in a traditional Alpine style.

**Hotel Murgavets**

This large 4-star hotel in the centre of the resort has a selection of rooms and apartments with decent facilities. The hotel also offers spa facilities, a restaurant and shops.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

Smolyan

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Pamporovo

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

1202

**Country**

Bulgaria

**Telephone**

+359 309 58310.

**Website**

http://www.murgavets-bg.com

**Hotel Orlovetz**

A 5-star hotel with 105 spacious and light rooms featuring contemporary décor, Hotel Orlovetz boasts a spa, pool and a health centre. The hotel’s Sky Bar affords wonderful views of the resort.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

Smolyan

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Pamporovo

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

1202

**Country**

Bulgaria

**Telephone**

+359 309 59000.

**Website**

http://www.hotelorlovetz.com

**Hotel Rodopi**

Located in a quieter area of the resort, the Hotel Rodopi is a 15-minute walk from the main road junction. Although its double rooms are small, the refurbished apartments are larger and good value.

**Category**

Cheap

**Thoroughfare**

Smolyan

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Pamporovo

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

1202

**Country**

Bulgaria

**Telephone**

+359 309 58442.

**Website**

XXX

**Apartments Snezhanka**

Convenient located with spacious apartments complete with kitchens, Apartments Snezhanka boasts an on-site spa with affordable treatments and a popular Irish-themed bar.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

57 Kniaginia Maria Luiza Blvd

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Pamporovo

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

1202

**Country**

Bulgaria

**Telephone**

+359 877 302 172.

**Website**

www.snezhankaapartments.com

**Hotel Extreme**

The newest 4-star hotel in the resort, all of Hotel Extreme’s rooms come with balconies, mountain views, bath tubs, and free Wi-Fi. Located 300m (984ft) from the ski slopes there’s also free parking and a swimming pool with spa available to guests.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

Smolyan

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Pamporovo

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

1202

**Country**

Bulgaria

**Telephone**

+359 879 933 308.

**Website**

http://www.hotel-extreme.bg/

**Dafovska Hotel**

This central 3-star hotel houses a spa and restaurant and offers Wi-Fi to guests. The hotel is named after Olympic and European biathlon champion Ekaterina Dafovska and has memorabilia from her glistening career on show.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

Smolyan

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Pamporovo

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

1202

**Country**

Bulgaria

**Telephone**

+359 309 59721.

**Website**

www.dafovskahotel.com