



Downhill all the way... the Upper Inn valley, Serfaus

There are skiing activities just for children

Guy, six, enjoys his first go on the slopes

Kinderhotel Lowe, which is child-friendly

I HAD heard skiing was dangerous but this was ridiculous. We hadn't even boarded the plane and my six-year-old son Guy was being seen by a paramedic.

He'd hit his head on the bottom of some metal seats (don't ask how!) and blood was pouring out of an inch-long cut.

Thankfully, medical science came to the rescue, the wound was "glued" back together and we were making our way on to our delayed – luckily for my chastened son – GB Airways flight to Innsbruck in Austria.

Two hours later we arrived, only to find that Guy's luggage hadn't made it on to the plane with us. By now I was wondering if we should turn round and fly home again.

But once the paperwork was sorted we headed off for the Alpine town of Serfaus, part of the skiing region of Serfaus-Fiss-Ladis, set on a high plateau in the Tyrol.

During the hour-long drive in the dark I could only just make out the Otztal Alps looming around us. At last, we arrived at Serfaus. Guy and I tumbled out into the knee-deep snow, our breaths taken away by the enchanting log cabins sprinkled with Christmas lights like fairy dust.

Getting to our rooms at the four-star Kinderhotel Lowe was a very welcome relief. The first thing we did was go out on to the balcony and check out the view of the 3,000m-high Samnaun mountains. It was cold but the view was magical – huge peaks gleaming majestically in the moonlight.

The room was lovely, large – and hot. It was practically T-shirt weather inside, compared with the almost arctic temperatures outside – well, zero degrees anyway. To describe it as a room is unfair as it was really more of a suite.

As well as the en-suite toilet and bathroom (in separate rooms) the living area had a table and chairs, and a double bed for the parents. The children have their own bedroom so the adults get some privacy.

There were lots of practical touches, such as coat hooks on the wall, rubbish bins and large storage areas – not just wardrobes for clothes but cupboards for other gear, which if you're travelling with children you need.

As it was a Kinderhotel, which specialises in family accommodation, the room had a changing mat and a bottle warmer. If you are happy to leave your children asleep while you eat your four-course gourmet meal in the restaurant below, there is a listening-in service so you can check on them.

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If you want to eat out, it's possible to book a babysitter. For older children who might not want to go to bed so early, there's a huge playroom – 600 sq m of fun-and-games over two floors – for them.

The hotel restaurant was outstanding. For children's tea there was a buffet with enough choice for even the pickiest of children, while for the adults there's a four-course meal that you choose the

night before – and the food is most definitely of better quality than you might expect from a family hotel.

This is haute cuisine – and it's all included in the price. As are all the meals – breakfast buffet, lunchtime buffet, afternoon tea and in the evening both the kids' buffet and the adults menu – and drinks (except alcohol).

The breakfast was truly impressive. Five types of muesli, kids cereals, adult cereals, fruit, yoghurts, pastries, toast, cheeses and meats, plus a vast array of hot choices.

The three mornings I ate there were not enough to try everything, and believe me I tried. In fact, I was amazed I still fitted into my ski suit after the breakfasts I indulged in. Obviously I needed

to fuel my days on the slopes as I learnt to ski! Although given our delightful hotel I was tempted to bypass the trauma of learning to ski in my late 30s and just luxuriate there.

But Guy wasn't persuaded, so to get to the ski rental outlet we took the Tube. That's right, the tiny town of Serfaus has an underground which was built more than 20 years ago to prevent cars bringing the village to a standstill. And unlike the London Underground, it's free – but then it only has two carriages and four stops, although they manage to transport up to 2,000 passengers per hour on the hovercraft train.

However, as we weren't skiing on the first day because Guy didn't have his ski suit (due to the lost luggage) we left our boots and skis at the check-in for the next day. But we still went up on to the chairlift to the middle Komperdell station.

The lack of ski suit didn't hold Guy back and we hired a sledge from the take-off centre and attacked the snow in the family park area.

We laughed and laughed as we slid down slopes at hair-raising speeds and landed with a phlumpph in the snow.

Finally, after lunch at the self-service restaurant at the Komperdell, Guy's suitcase turned up. So we headed back down on the gondola to the kids' free ski area – the Murmli Park in the centre of Serfaus – for his first mini ski session.

And yes, at age six, my son is a better skier than I am.

The next day, we headed back up the gondola and we both had a day's skiing lesson.

By the end of the day Guy was doing runs down the slopes while I was still trying to learn how to stop. That's not because I had a bad teacher, it just takes time, and as we'd only gone for two days (and missed a day due to lost luggage) that's what I ran out of.

Which was a real shame as people I talked to both on the slopes and at the hotel told me the skiing there is some of the best they've experienced. One skier I met had actually been coming back every year for the past ten years because he likes the runs here so much.

So, whether you're a keen skier, a beginner or just there for the apres ski, Serfaus and the Hotel Lowe tick all the boxes.

The scenery is outstandingly beautiful, the food delicious, the hotel and the staff more than welcoming and the skiing amazing – or will be when I've mastered the turns.

What's the deal?

STARTING price for seven nights at Kinderhotel Lowe (www.loewebaer.com/en) for two adults and two children: £1,530 (children aged three to four). Ski school included in the hotel price until Jan 24. Flights from £18 per adult to Innsbruck with EasyJet (www.easyjet.com). Transfer from airport to Serfaus-Fiss-Ladis in a private hire car from about £105. Seven-day ski pass about £147 per adult. Adult ski lessons at Skischool Serfaus: about £48 per day.