

The Winter Olympic Games

Winter Olympic History

The Winter Olympics is a major international competition of winter sports that are held once every four years, with leading athletes coming together to participate from countries all around the globe.

The first Winter Olympics took place 98 years ago in 1924, in Chamonix, France, with just 16 nations participating.

They were developed because it became necessary to have an international Olympic competition solely for sports practiced on ice and snow, rather than competing simultaneously with all other sports in the Olympic Games.

Since its establishment in 1924, the Winter Olympic Games have been hosted on three continents in 12 different countries around the world, some of which have hosted them more than once. The countries are the United States, France, Austria, Canada, Japan, Italy, Norway, Switzerland, Germany, (former) Yugoslavia, Russia and South Korea.

However, there has never been a city in the **Southern Hemisphere** to host the Winter Olympic Games, which are held in the month of February.

Southern Hemisphere - the half of Earth that is south of the Equator, which includes:

Antarctica, Australia, New Zealand, most of South America, one third of Africa, several islands off mainland Asia, and most of the Pacific Islands in Oceania.

The only time the Games have ever been interrupted were in both 1940 and 1944 due to the Second World War.

The most recent Winter Olympics was held in Pyeongchang in South Korea, in 2018.



The 2022 Olympic Games

The next Winter Olympics will be held in the city of Beijing in China in February 2022. Beijing also hosted the 2008 Summer Olympic Games. This is the first time that the Winter Olympics will be hosted by a city that has also hosted the Summer Olympics.

The event will kick off on the 4th February with what is sure to be a spectacular opening ceremony at the Beijing National Stadium (also known as the Bird's Nest). It concludes on the

20th February with a closing ceremony, where the Olympic flag will be handed over to the Mayors of the Italian cities of Milan and Cortina-D'Ampezzo, who are the hosts of the next Winter Olympic Games in 2026.

During the 17 days of the Beijing Winter Olympics, there will be 80 nations competing in 15 different winter sports. The events will be held in 26 different indoor and outdoor venues around the city, with some events taking place in the towns of the neighbouring Hebei province - 140 miles from Beijing.

The mascot for the 2022 Winter Olympics is a panda wearing a shell made from ice, resembling an astronaut's suit. The Panda, which is China's national animal, is called Bing Dwen Dwen. In Mandarin Chinese (the official dialect of China), 'Bing' means ice and symbolises purity and strength. 'Dwen Dwen' means strong and lively and represents children.

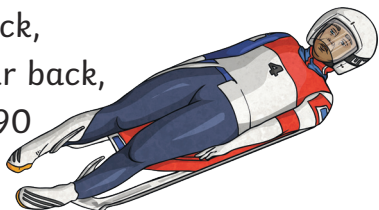
The Winter Olympic Sports

The Winter Olympic Games have evolved since their establishment in 1924, when only five sports were included.

The 2022 Winter Olympic sports include: alpine skiing, biathlon (cross-country skiing and rifle shooting), bobsleigh, cross country skiing, curling, figure skating, freestyle skiing, ice hockey, luge, Nordic combined (cross-country skiing and ski jumping), short-track speed skating, skeleton, ski jumping, snowboarding and speed skating.

luge

The luge - sledging down an ice track, feet-first on your back, reaching up to 90 miles per hour.



skeleton

The skeleton - riding head-first on your front on a flat sled down an ice track, hitting speeds of up to 80 miles per hour.



Great British Success at the Winter Olympics

58 competitors from Great Britain competed in 11 of the sports at the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea. They won five medals in total, one gold and four bronze, ranking them 19th in the medal table.

Lizzy Yarnold became the first British athlete to win a gold medal in two consecutive Winter Olympics when she won the women's skeleton title.