

Skiers face lift in cost of flights to resorts

By **Oliver Gill**

THE cost of flights to ski destinations has risen by a fifth this winter as enthusiasts race to get back on the piste after three years of disruption, according to the boss of easyJet.

Johan Lundgren, the chief executive, said that customer revenue – which comprises fares, charges for extra baggage and seat reservations – is expected to rise by 20pc in the winter months.

But although demand for ski trips at the weekend and in the school holidays is strong, the easyJet chief said cheap tickets are available on weekdays.

Ski trips have been disrupted by Covid-related travel restrictions for the last three years – last winter as a result of the omicron variant.

Mr Lundgren's comments come as easyJet posted record profits over the key holiday months.

But booming returns this summer failed to drag the budget airline out of the red over the course of its fiscal year.

easyJet racked up a £208m pre-tax loss in the year to September.

Mr Lundgren said legacy airlines, such as British Airways, will come under pressure as families grapple with a squeeze on household incomes and carriers struggle with soaring costs.

He said: “easyJet does well in tough times. Legacy carriers will struggle in this high-cost environment. Consumers will protect their holidays but look for value.”

While easyJet's costs are lower than the likes of British Airways, they are higher than many of its competitors, such as Ryanair and Jet2. This is in part because easyJet focuses on more expensive “primary airports” – for instance, London's Gatwick instead of Stansted.

Mr Lundgren refused to commit to easyJet returning to profitability in the airline's next financial year. City analysts expect annual pre-tax profits to be around £200m in the 12 months to September 2023. Returns in 2022, however, were a “mixed bag”, they said.

