The 20 best ski resorts in France and holidays to book in 2022

Ski holidays in France are back as the Government announces the end of the ban on UK arrivals

By Dave Watts
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British skiers will soon be back on the slopes in France | CREDIT: Elina Sirparanta

After a month-long hiatus, due to the untimely travel ban imposed by the French Government, ski holidays in France are back.

From the luxurious corners of Courchevel to the family-friendly slopes of Morzine and the adrenaline of Chamonix, here's where to go and the best packages to book if you're joining the race to return to the French mountains this winter.

Fun for all the family

La Rosière

Set on a shelf on the sunny side of the Isère valley, La Rosière is a great place for the whole family – from little kids to grandparents. The ski area links to La Thuile in Italy to give 154km of mainly easy slopes, with a few tougher reds on the French side. Kids have a wonderful fun run, with objects to ski through and bells to hit. There's a lovely cleared path through the woods that is lit at night, a lift pass that allows non-skiers to admire the views from the summit and a special snowshoeing map.

How to do it: Seven nights in a two-bedroom apartment sleeping up to six people in the 4-star residence Le Lodge Hemera with Ski Collection (023 9289 0960; skicollection.co.uk) costs from £2,020 including a Eurotunnel crossing with a FlexiPlus upgrade on most dates.

Morzine

Morzine is a well established resort that is as popular in summer as it is in winter. Priding itself on its ability to appeal not only to skiers and families, but non-skiers well, the resort has its own ski area with 110km of pistes that is shared with Les Gets, offering terrain for all standards. Keen skiers will also want to explore some of the slopes in the rest of the huge Portes du Soleil area. There are a couple of fun areas for kids on the local slopes and it's a great area for snowshoeing, ice skating, watching weekly ice hockey matches and snowmobiling; there's even a good aquatic centre.

How to do it: Seven nights at the 4-star Hotel Les Champs Fleuris with Ski Solutions (020 3944 7053; skisolutions.com) costs from £1,039pp.

Morzine is a year-round mountain resort

Les Saisies

A small, sunny, modern resort, built mainly in chalet style, Les Saisies is part of the extensive Espace Diamant ski area that's little-known by Britons but has 192km of mainly easy cruising slopes. Its local area is ideal for beginners and intermediates and it sells itself firmly as a family destination for all ages. It was the venue for the cross-country events in the 1992 Winter Olympics and the local loops are excellent. Walking is also popular with 25km of specially prepared routes and even the leisure centre is impressive.

How to do it: Seven nights in a two-bedroom apartment sleeping up to six people in the 4-star Chalet des Cimes costs from £1,256pp with Peak Retreats (023 9283 0310; peakretreats.co.uk). Includes a Eurotunnel crossing with a FlexiPlus upgrade on most dates.

Arc 1950

One of five resorts in Les Arcs, Arc 1950 is perhaps the most interesting – a stark contrast to the apartment blocks of the other purpose-built villages. Opened in 2003, it was designed to reflect the traditional Savoie style of wood and stone. Car-free and compact, the resort is not only a pleasant and safe place to wander around, but opens right onto the slopes. Here, there's something for everyone, from easy cruising to serious steeps. Arc 1950 is linked by a free gondola to Arc 2000 that works late into the night. In addition, there are special pedestrian passes, good walks, tobogganing and some really fun areas for kids.

How to do it: Seven nights in a superior two-bedroom apartment sleeping up to six people with Erna Low (020 7584 2841; ernalow.co.uk) costs from £1,562pp. Includes a FlexiPlus Eurotunnel crossing.

Luxury lovers

Courchevel

If it's a spot of indulgence you're looking for, Courchevel has more luxury 5-star and Palace hotels than anywhere in France outside of Paris – offering quality service and facilities at top-notch prices. It also has eight Michelin-starred restaurants as well as a range of plush chalets and apartments to choose from. You can even fly into its own airport in the middle of the ski area. Most importantly, the skiing is excellent and varied as well, with something to suit all standards. As well as its own 150km it is linked to the world's biggest ski area, Les 3 Vallées with 600km of pistes.

How to do it: Seven nights in the plush K2 Palace with the Oxford Ski Company (01993 899 420; oxfordski.com) costs from £6,400pp.

Courchevel is one of the most glamorous resorts in Europe | CREDIT: David André/ Courchevel Tourisme

Megève

With a history that goes back to the 1920s, Megève is one of France's most traditional resorts. It has a splendid traffic-free centre with an open air ice rink, horse-drawn sleighs, upmarket shops, cobbled streets, and a fine church. For the luxury lover, there's no shortage of 4- and 5-star hotels and Michelin-starred restaurants waiting to pamper you. The extensive ski area suits intermediates best, with lots of easy cruising and immaculately groomed pistes. The views of Mont Blanc from many of the slopes are spectacular and the pistes tend to be delightfully quiet outside of weekends and peak season.

How to do it: Seven nights B&B at the 5-star M de Megève with Stanford Skiing (01603 477471; stanfordskiing.co.uk) costs from £2,100pp including transfers; excluding flights.

Val Thorens

When Val Thorens started in the 1970s it had basic rather than luxury facilities. But it has gradually become more and more upmarket and there are now four 5-star hotels and six 4-stars. There are also some very luxurious and spacious (by French standards) apartments. Nearly all are ski-in, ski-out and the snow that you step out onto is usually the best in Les 3 Vallées due to the resort's high altitude – at 2,300m, There are slopes to suit all standards, making it popular with groups and there's a great choice of restaurants to pick from, including one with a Michelin star.

How to do it: Seven nights in the 5-star Hotel Pashmina with Ski Collection (023 9289 0960; skicollection.co.uk) costs from £2,060pp; includes a Eurotunnel crossing with a free FlexiPlus upgrade on most dates.

Val Thorens is the highest resort in Europe | CREDIT: OT VAL THORENS

Val d'Isere

A resort best suited to strong and keen skiers, Val d'Isère has mainly blue and red runs on offer, as well as plentiful and varied off-piste skiing. It is linked to Tignes and between them there are 300km of pistes. But it is also home to luxurious accommodation and fine dining options. There are seven 5-star hotels to choose from , plus a fine selection of restaurants on and off the mountain – including two in the resort with Michelin stars. Those travelling with beginners or people who have been off the slopes for a few years and are keen for a refresher course are spoiled for choice when it comes to ski schools too. As well as the more standard offerings, off-piste specialists Alpine Experience features small guided groups every morning.

How to do it: Seven nights in the 5-star Hotel Christiania, right by the slopes, with Alpine Answers (020 7801 1080; alpineanswers.co.uk) costs from £1,659pp.

Adventure addicts

La Grave

Different from every other ski resort, La Grave is a small roadside hamlet and except for a short solitary piste at the very top of the mountain, the terrain is entirely off-piste. A guide is essential and the mountain is for experts only. It is accessed by a single, three-staged gondola and while only a few routes are shown on the resort's map of the mountain, there are plenty of ways down – many of them steep and dangerous. Be warned: this isn't for the faint-hearted and sadly there are fatalities here every year. Day trips can be arranged from nearby Les Deux Alpes and Serre-Chevalier.

How to do it: Seven nights in the Skier's Lodge (0033 4 76 11 03 18; skierslodge.com) costs from £1,340pp including six days guiding; excludes flights and transfers.

La Plagne

La Plagne's 225km of pistes are a huge playground but it is also linked by a double-decker cable car to Les Arcs, giving access to a vast joint area of 425km of pistes, with something to suit all ability levels. The Fun Slope is the longest in Europe at 1.6 km and is perfect for children and beginners. For the more experienced, there are some black runs (mostly left ungroomed) but the real attraction is the off-piste. Classic routes include the north face of Bellecôte down to Peisey-Nancroix (with a vertical of 2,000m) and the beautiful out-of-the way route over the Cul du Nant glacier and the Vanoise National Park to Champagny.

How to do it: Seven nights at Chalet Ammonite in Plagne 1800 with Mountain Heaven (0151 625 1921; mountainheaven.co.uk) costs from £599pp, excluding flights and transfers.

La Plagne is part of the Paradiski area | CREDIT: Elina Sirparanta

Tignes

Tignes is a high, snowsure purpose-built resort linked to Val d'Isère, giving it 300km of shared pistes and a huge amount of off-piste terrain. There are plenty of steep black runs, many of which are left ungroomed, so huge moguls form. Serious challenges include the long black from Tovière to Tignes-le-Lac and the Face black from Bellevarde down to Val d'Isère, on which World Cup races are held. There are off-piste opportunities all over the area but one of the best adventures is to ski off the back of Col du Palet away from all signs of civilisation down to Champagny (linked to La Plagne's ski area) and come back by taxi.

How to do it: Seven nights at Chalet Hotel Aiguille Percée with Mark Warner (0207 3618 880; markwarner.co.uk) costs from £999pp.

Chamonix

Chamonix's epic off-piste and ski touring terrain draws in huge numbers of expert skiers, many of whom become addicted to the place and end up making it their home. The attractions include five main ski areas, fabulous off-piste, a town steeped in Alpine tradition and truly spectacular scenery. The off-piste is pretty much endless and there's lots of really steep stuff. But even fit, adventurous intermediates can tackle the Vallée Blanche – a classic off-piste run of 24km (2,800m vertical) surrounded by the stunning glacier vistas of Mont Blanc. There are serious black pistes too – especially in the Grand Montets ski area.

How to do it: Seven nights at 4-star Refuge des Aiglons with Ski Weekend (01392 878353; skiweekend.com) costs from £945pp, including transfers but excluding flights.

Chamonix is a mecca for die-hard skiers | CREDIT: Patrik Lindqvist/Chamonix.com

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Beyond the slopes

Serre Chevalier

With 250km of varied slopes spread over a wide area, an excellent snow record and lots of trees for skiing in snowstorms, Serre Chevalier is a great resort for skiers of all standards. If you're travelling with a non-skier, it also has plenty to offer off the slopes. Briançon (one of four main places to stay) is home to a World heritage-listed 17th Century fortified old town that is well worth exploring while the fabulous Grands Bains thermal spa offers the perfect place to unwind. For something a little more adrenaline-fuelled, there's ice driving, tobogganing, fatbiking, ski-joering (being pulled along on skis by a horse) and even a new 1.1km long zipwire.

How to do it: Seven nights in the 3-star Hotel Plein Sud with Crystal Ski (020 3451 2821; crystalski.co.uk) costs from £646pp.

Méribel

Set at the heart of Les 3 Vallées, with its 600km of slopes, Méribel is the perfect position for exploration on skis, with Courchevel in one direction and Les Menuires and Val Thorens in the other. But don't be lured only by the variety on offer, Méribel has lots of activities to try beyond the slopes, too. The Olympic Park centre's facilities include the ice rink where the Olympic events were held in 1992, a pool with a water slide, a gym and a climbing wall. Other activities include cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, a zipwire and even a fun treasure hunt. For something a little slower paced, there are a number of spas that are open to the public for massages and treatments.

How to do it: Seven nights in Chalet Aline with Skiworld (0330 102 8004; skiworld.co.uk) costs from £771pp.

There's plenty to do off the slopes in Méribel

Alpe d'Huez

With 250km of fabulous pistes and off-piste, Alpe d'Huez will keep every standard of skier happy for a week. One star attraction is the 16km Sarenne run with a vertical drop of around 1,800m from the top of Pic Blanc. When taking a break from the slopes (and recovering from that drop) there's a splendid indoor-outdoor pool, a separate indoor pool, an Olympic-sized outdoor ice rink, a big gym, a climbing wall, archery and badminton. The Alpine Coaster sled on rails is definitely worth a ride while the cross-country loops and cleared paths for walking are extensive.

How to do it: Seven nights in the 4-star Hotel Pic Blanc with Inghams (01483 319 477; inghams.co.uk) costs from £1,199pp.

Montgenevre

Based on an old rustic village right on the Italian border, Montgenèvre has recently been updated and is full of smart new developments. For a small place, there's plenty on offer. The local ski area – one of the snowiest in the French Alps – has lots of varied slopes while the resort is also part of the Milky Way circuit, which extends to Sauze d'Oulx in Italy and offers 400km of slopes. Meanwhile, the 1.4km Monty Express sled ride on rails – the longest in France – makes for an exhilarating ride. The resort is also home to a splendid aquatic centre, an outdoor ice rink, snowmobiling and parapenting.

How to do it: Seven nights in the plush Hotel Anova with Crystal (020 3451 2821; crystalski.co.uk) costs from £948pp.

Unwind and reset

Brides les Bains

A relaxing and inexpensive place to stay, Brides les Bains is a small town with thermal waters linked by gondola to Méribel and the heart of Les 3 Vallées ski area – the biggest linked area in the world. If you're more interested in putting your feet up than strapping your boots on, the recently refurbished Grand Spa Thermal is a great place to be pampered. Featuring a large thermal pool, herbal and aromatic steam rooms, a sauna, indoor and outdoor Jacuzzis, a tea room and a sunbathing terrace, there are plenty of packages to choose from (excluding accommodation) including seaweed body wraps, massages and beauty treatments.

How to do it: The winter relaxation spa access package costs from £25pp (0033 479 552 344; thermes-brideslesbains.com); treatments additional.

Seven nights at Hotel Altis Val Vert with Ski Weekends (02380 206971; skiweekends.com) costs from £625pp including transfers; excludes flights.

Avoriaz

Purpose-built Avoriaz is built on a cliff with fine views over the Morzine valley and a traffic-free snow-covered main square. It is in an ideal central position for exploring the 600km of mainly intermediate pistes of the Portes du Soleil ski area which spans the French-Swiss border. The Aquariaz leisure centre (child £5.85, adult £9.20; avoriaz.com) is perfect for families, featuring a fun pool with exotic jungle type vegetation, a bubble pool, waterfall, half-pipe water slide and outdoor whirlpool with great views. Meanwhile, the Deep Nature spa at the Amara residence is open to the public and offers massages, treatments, a sauna, steam room and outdoor hot tub.

How to do it: Seven nights for a two-bedroom apartment in the premium 5-star residence L'Amara with Skiline (020 8313 3999; skiline.co.uk) costs from £3,234 based on six people sharing; includes flights and transfers.

Relax at altitude in Avoriaz | CREDIT: Pierrick Verny

St-Lary-Soulan

Combining an attractive traditional village with one of the largest ski areas in the Pyrenees, St-Lary-Soulan is home to 100km of slopes. The terrain is best suited to intermediates and beginners, but there's lots to keep you amused besides downhill skiing. The natural Thermal Spa is renowned for its health treatments while nearby the Sensoria Rio has a fun indoor pool with rock pools, caves and lots of bubbles plus two outdoor pools – all served by thermal waters and kept at 32C. There's also a steam room, sauna, outdoor hot tub and gym, while the Nuxe Spa offers massages and beauty treatments (saintlary.com).

How to do it: Seven nights in a two-bedroom apartment sleeping up to six in the 4-star residence La Domaine de l'Ardoisiere with Lagrange (020 7371 6111; lagrange-holidays.co.uk) costs from £360pp.

La Clusaz

The centre of La Clusaz is a lovely rustic, unspoiled French village with shops catering for locals as well as tourists. The main square is a delightful place to wander around while the major lifts are only metres away and go up either side of the valley, accessing 125km of varied runs in five connected sectors – giving you a satisfying feeling of travelling around. There are really good high altitude cross-country loops too. The fabulous Aquatic Centre (espaceaquatique-laclusaz.com) has big indoor and outdoor pools, plus pools for kids, a sauna and a gym. Several hotels have spas that are open to the public, offering access, massages and other treatments.

How to do it: Seven nights at the 3-star Hotel Alpen Roc, which has its own heated pool and wellness facilities, with Skiline (020 8313 3999; skiline.co.uk) costs from £999pp.

**Always go with a qualified mountain guide when going off-piste. Hotel prices are based on two people sharing on a half-board basis and include flights and transfers unless otherwise stated.*

What's new in France this season

The 'fastest' gondola

A new €22-million lift has opened in Les Menuires, claiming to be the fastest in the country. The Pointe de la Masse gondola, which sits next to the existing Masse 1 gondola, whisks skiers up to 2,778m at the top of La Masse mountain, covering over 1,000m of vertical, in eight minutes.

La Masse gondola has opened up a whole new ski area | CREDIT: Vincent Lottenberg/OTLesMenuires

Happy birthday, La Plagne

The popular resort of La Plagne celebrates its 60th anniversary this winter. Once popular with budget-seekers, the resort has upped its game with the opening of The White Pearl Lodges & Spas (04 85 58 07 58; cgh-residences.co.uk) in Plagne Soleil – the resort's first five-star offering.

A daring run

Courchevel has opened a new black piste this winter, as the popular five-star resort prepares to host the Alpine World Ski Championships in 2023. The new L'Eclipse spans 3.3km, making it one of the longest runs in the resort's ski area, and with a 970m vertical drop and an average incline of 30 per cent, one of the most daring.

The return of the ski train

Now that France is reopening, the new direct rail service to the French Alps, which has replaced the popular service axed by Eurostar, will finally be able to run. Departing London St Pancras on Friday evening and arriving at Moûtiers and Bourg Saint Maurice the following morning, the Travelski express will run on weekends throughout the season (0800 260 5082; uk.travelski.com)

The ski train is back but under a new name | CREDIT: Daniel Elkan

Upgraded connection

A new €40million lift connection has opened between Europe's highest resort Val Thorens in France and lesser-known Orelle in the neighbouring Maurienne valley, in the form of a fast, two-part gondola – 'Orelle' and 'Orelle-Cime Caron.' The journey transports skiers and pedestrians in 20 minutes from Orelle village to the top of Cime Caron.

Lucy Aspden

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