**Chamonix**

**Categories**

**Good For**

Intermediates

Experts

Non-skiers

Après ski

Snow reliability

**Data**

**Beginner Runs**

16

**Intermediate Runs**

52

**Advanced Runs**

12

**Total Runs**

80

**Lifts**

47

**Chairs**

16

**Drags**

16

**Gondola Cable Cars**

15

**Parks**

1

**Pipes**

0

**Weather**

**Annual Snowfall**

11m (36 ft).

**Overview**

Adorned with accolades, including housing the world’s longest lift-served run – the famed off-piste Vallee Blanche descent – and being the site of the first ever Winter Olympic Games in 1924, Chamonix is arguably the most famous ski resort in the world.

In the shadow of the incomparable Mont Blanc, the extensive slopes offer a challenge to even the most skilled skiers and snowboarders. However, there are numerous options for lesser-mortals and thanks to a lively après-ski scene that continues to flourish, the resort has blossomed into an excellent destination regardless of your competency on the snow.

The compact town of Chamonix is choc full of hotels, apartment complexes, restaurants and shops, all together creating a vibrant and often cosmopolitan feel as visitors from all over the world arrive in droves, year round.

The overall ski area, more accurately titled The Chamonix Valley, has expanded to incorporate a series of separate villages and ski areas, including Les Houches, Le Brévent, La Flégère, Grand Montets and Balme, which are spread along the valley. Of these, however, only Le Brévent and La Flégère are linked by lifts, while the others are serviced by regular buses.

**Location**

Chamonix is situated in the Haute-Savoie region of France, in the French Alps. It is bordered by Switzerland and Italy and dominated by the Aiguilles de Chamonix mountain chain, part of the Mont-Blanc Massif that peaks at the top of Mont Blanc (4,810m /15782ft in height).

**Website**

http://www.chamonix.com

**Piste Map**

http://www.chamonix.com/ski-areas,22,en.html

**Hit The Slopes**

For good skiers, both on- and off-piste options are sensational; but competent snow sports enthusiasts should not overestimate their ability, as Chamonix offers some of the world's most challenging terrain. Snow conditions can vary enormously and lower slopes can be unreliable unless it's a good season, but the upper slopes are high enough to guarantee snow cover – as a consequence, the ski season in Chamonix runs from mid-December until early May.

Chamonix specialises in the spectacular, such as the wonderful 24km-long (15-mile) Vallée Blanche off-piste run from the top of the 3,842m (12,605ft) Aiguille du Midi – famously the longest lift-served run in the world – and the magnificent off-piste options of Grands Montets, for which an accompanying ski guide is essential.

The lift system for each individual area is generally good, and queues are even short at the base lifts during peak periods due to major investment in new lifts on key access routes. It's frustrating for some, however, that with the exception of Le Brévent and La Flégère, none of the ski areas are lift linked.

Away from the downhill slopes, there is an extensive terrain park at the Grands Montets that includes several challenging options for different ages and levels of expertise.

The École de Ski Français (ESF) (tel: +33 450 532 257; [www.esfchamonix.com](http://www.esfchamonix.com)) and independent operator Evolution 2 (+33 450 559 022; [www.evolution2-chamonix.com](http://www.evolution2-chamonix.com)) are based in the town centre, and are well regarded. These companies are especially good at more specialist training, such as off-piste skiing and ski touring.

Skiers will have no problem hiring gear since the town is inundated with ski rental shops, and there are also hire centres at the base of each ski area.

**Chamonix**

**Resort**

1035

**Base**

1035

**Top**

3842

**General**

**Beyond The Slopes**

As befits a large, year-round tourist town, Chamonix has a wide range of activities and cultural attractions to keep skiers and non-skiers of all ages entertained.

Among the many non-ski outdoor activities in Chamonix there is the option of snowshoeing, tobogganing, dog sledding, skijoering (being towed behind a pony on your skis) and ice climbing.

In the centre of town, there's a well-equipped sports complex that has an indoor ice rink and climbing wall. For the less active – or for those who want to rest their weary post-ski muscles – there's a cinema, bowling rink, alpine museum, exhibition centre and a unique rock crystal museum.

**Family Fun**

One of the most popular ski schools for youngsters is the Evo2 Panda Club (tel: +33 450 555 357; [www.panda-club.com](http://www.panda-club.com)) in Argentière near the base of the Grands Montets cable car, which takes children from the age of three. The ESF Piou-Piou Club (tel: +33 450 532 257; [www.esfchamonix.com](http://www.esfchamonix.com)) in Chamonix also has great facilities for children above the same age.

With options such as tobogganing and ice skating, it's easy to keep younger children occupied. Older non-skiing children with a head for heights will love the two-stage Aiguille du Midi cable car ride from the edge of town outside the morning rush hour, from 0900 until 1000.

**Retail Therapy**

There's a great range of shops in the pedestrianised town centre, including a selection of top-end ski gear retailers, such as Patagonia and Peak Performance (249 and 231 rue Paccard respectively); while for ski hardware, try ChamSport (432 rue Joseph Vallot). Just down the road is Chanel (101 rue Paccard), one of many well-known boutiques in Chamonix; and there are some stylish home design and deco shops. Visitors here can peruse the wide range of souvenir shops that feature many local products, from cheese and wine to traditional wood carvings.

**Splashing Out**

An unforgettable day out is to ski the Vallée Blanche, the world’s longest lift-served ski run. Participants should be strong intermediate skiers and, most importantly, be able to cope with shuffling down a snowy ridge with a near 3,000m (9,843ft) sheer vertical drop on one side and a large descent on the other, from the Aiguille du Midi to start of the ski run. After that feat, skiers will then need enough strength in their legs to climb the 200 or so metal steps up from the glacier to the lift at the bottom – but it's well worth the effort.

Skiers will definitely need the services of a guide to descend the glacier safely due to hidden and shifting crevasses that claim a victim or two each year from the tens of thousands who scale the route. Contact the Compagnie des Guides (tel: +33 450 530 088; [www.chamonix-guides.com](http://www.chamonix-guides.com)) at the Maison de la Montagne in the centre of town for further information.

**Apres Ski**

Chamonix arguably has the best apres ski scene in France. There are plenty of lively bars for party goers, more sophisticated lounges for a quieter soiree, and everything else in-between.

Recommended venues include The Mix bar Located in the main party area of the town of Chamonix ([www.mixchamonix.com](http://www.mixchamonix.com)) which is open until 2am nightly, and Les Caves du Pèle (tel: +33 450 218 080; [www.caphorn-chamonix.come](http://www.caphorn-chamonix.come)) where live DJs get the crowd going most evenings.

The newly-opened Quartz bar within the luxurious Hameau Albert 1er hotel ([www.hameaualbert.fr/le-quartz-bar](http://www.hameaualbert.fr/le-quartz-bar)) has interior décor entirely inspired by crystals and glaciers and is a favourite amongst Chamonix’s well-heeled crowd.

**Eating Out**

Chamonix may be most famous for its mountains but the foodie scene is phenomenal with nearly 200 establishments catering to all tastes and budgets.

For an authentic mountain town ambience, try Le Bistrot (tel +33 450 535 764; [www.lebistrotchamonix.com](http://www.lebistrotchamonix.com)) on avenue Aiguille du Midi, known for its quality fare that’s been rewarded with a Michelin star.

Some of the best-value traditional Savoyard fare is found at La P’tite Verte (tel: +33 450 530 065) on Charlet Straton, in Argentière. The local dish ‘farcon’, a speciality made with grated potatoes, bacon, prunes, raisins, eggs and cream is not to be missed.

If you ever get tired of the heavy Savoyard cuisine then numerous international eateries are available in abundance, including Papillon (tel: +33 450 966 513; papillonchamonix.com), one of the most popular businesses in town, that serves light, fresh cuisine inspired by flavours from across the globe.

**Transport**

**Getting There**

Nearest airports: Geneva International Airport (GVA); Lyon-Saint Exupéry (LYS).

Distances to resort: 100km (62 miles); 226km (140 miles).

Driving times: 1 hour 10 minutes; 2 hours 30 minutes.

**Getting Around**

A free ski bus service links all the ski areas, which, without a car, is the only way of reaching some of the further outlying slopes. The train service is also free and is a good option for connecting to La Flégère or Vallorcine ski areas, as the stations are very close to the lifts.

**Hotels**

This bustling resort has plenty of hotels set within beautiful old buildings flanking the village’s cobbled streets. As befits a resort of its stature, there is a wide range of accommodation in Chamonix, including chalets (both catered and self-catering),numerous hotels, and lots of apartments – especially in Chamonix Sud.

**Auberge du Manoir**

The Auberge du Manoir is a friendly and affordable family-run hotel, a short walk from the resort centre. The place is clean, serves tasty food and has helpful staff.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

8 Route du Bouche

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

74400 Chamonix

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

F 74400

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

+33 450 531 077.

**Website**

http://www.chalethotelchamonix.com

**Hameau Albert 1er**

This well-placed luxury 5-star Relais & Chàteaux hotel has a mix of contemporary and traditional rooms, and is home to the extravagant Michelin two-starred Albert 1er gastronomic restaurant.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

38 Route du Bouchet

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

74400 Chamonix

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

F 74400

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

+33 450 530 509.

**Website**

http://www.hameaualbert.fr

**Hotel Montana**

A friendly, traditional 4-star chalet hotel that is ideally placed for skiing above Argentière; Hotel Montana houses a Jacuzzi, sauna and games room.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

24 Clos du Montana

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

74400 Chamonix

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

F 74400

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

+33 450 541 499.

**Website**

http://www.hotel-montana.fr

**Hotel Les Aiglons**

Complete with an outdoor spa and restaurant with panoramic views, the chic Hotel Les Aiglons is just 100m (328ft) from the Aiguille du Midi cable car station and a short walk to the resort centre.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

270 Avenue de Courmayeur

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

74400 Chamonix

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

F 74400

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

+33 450 559 093.

**Website**

http://www.aiglons.com

**Hotel Le Morgane**

This eco-friendly 4-star hotel is ideally located just footsteps from the Aiguille du Midi cable car and Chamonix town centre. All rooms have balconies with mountain views of either Mont Blanc or Brévent. The hotel also boasts a spa and Michelin-starred restaurant.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

145 Avenue de l'Aiguille du Midi

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

74400 Chamonix

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

F 74400

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

+33 450 535 715.

**Website**

http://www.morgane-hotel-chamonix.com

**Grand Hotel des Alpes**

The four-star Grand Hotel des Alpes is centrally located with well appointed rooms, good facilities, high service standards and friendly, helpful staff. Wi-Fi access is available to guests and some rooms include a balcony.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

Rue du Docteur Paccard, 75

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

74400 Chamonix

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

F 74400

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

+33 450 553 780.

**Website**

www.grandhoteldesalpes.com