**Cauterets**

**Categories**

**Good For**

Beginners

Intermediates

Snowboarders

Families

Non-skiers

Après ski

Snow reliability

**Data**

**Beginner Runs**

4

**Intermediate Runs**

14

**Advanced Runs**

2

**Total Runs**

20

**Lifts**

13

**Chairs**

4

**Drags**

7

**Gondola Cable Cars**

2

**Parks**

1

**Pipes**

0

**Weather**

**Annual Snowfall**

Unavailable.

**Overview**

Cauterets ski resort offers a fantastic combination of historic Pyrenean spa town charm and a relatively modern ski area with a reputation for huge snowfalls and picturesque scenery.

Due to its long history as a predominantly summer destination, thanks to the renowned healing waters of nearby Lourdes, Cauterets has a healthy year-round operation that is not reliant on the ski business. This has contributed to the resort having more character and a better selection of shops and restaurants than many well-known purpose-built French ski towns that exist only for the winter snow sports market.

The skiing in Cauterets is most suited to beginners and intermediates, while the wide, sunny Cauterets Valley is perfect for cross-country skiing – the area at Le Pont d’Espagne, in particular, offering a range of spectacular circuits.

**Location**

Cauterets ski resort is located in the Cauterets Valley in the heart of the French Hautes-Pyrenees, close to the Spanish border and 7km (4.5 miles) from the Pyrenees National Park.

**Website**

http://www.cauterets.com

**Piste Map**

http://uk.cauterets.com/winter/domains/piste-maps

**Hit The Slopes**

Due to its great snow record, the ski season in Cauterets generally lasts from early December to the end of April. Somewhat unusually, there can also be the interesting aspect of ‘winter in the mountains and summer in the valley' towards the end of the season, when it's hard to believe the ski season is in full swing up above whilst visitors are sunbathing in Cauterets village below.

The Cirque du Lys ski area is of a moderate size and will keep most recreational level skiers happy for at least a week. Reached by a fast, modern Doppelmayr gondola lift from Cauterets village, the ski runs here extend to more than 36km (23 miles).

The majority of the terrain in Cauterets ski resort is made up of long blue and red (easy to intermediate) cruisers up to 6km (4 miles) in length. There are a couple of steeper blacks: Orchis and Combe du Barbat, to challenge more experienced skiers; while off-piste and ski touring courses are also available from the The French Ski School (ESF) (tel: 05 6292 5816; [www.esf-cauterets.com](http://www.esf-cauterets.com)).

Freestyle skiers and boarders will enjoy the resort's terrain park, which incorporates 10 table tops, a hip, five rails, a beginner's line and a kilometre-long boardercross course.

The ESF, which is situated at three locations in the ski area (in the centre of the village, at Cirque du Lys and at Le Pont d'Espagne) offers lessons for all ages, with special classes for young children.

**Cauterets**

**Resort**

900

**Base**

1697

**Top**

2450

**General**

**Beyond The Slopes**

The old spa town has a range of recreational facilities, including extensive shopping, a cinema, nine spa baths and a casino. For sporty types, there are indoor tennis courts and an ice rink; while for something a little more ‘French’, play a game of boules.

Away from the village, excursions are organised to the religious pilgrimage site of Lourdes. The town is home to the Grotto of Massabielle in the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes, the site of a bubbling spring where the water is thought to have healing qualities. Day visits to other areas of the Pyrenees National Park are also an option from the resort.

On the snow, there are cleared winter hiking routes, as well as snowshoeing excursions organised in the Pont d'Espagne sector, a few kilometres from the village. This area also has its own small downhill ski centre and extensive cross-country ski tracks.

**Family Fun**

There is plenty on offer for families in Cauterets. On the mountain, the ski area is compact and unintimidating with large, efficient and easy to use lifts, making it a safe place to ski as a family. Families of four or more can purchase discounted lift tickets if purchased at the same time for the same duration.

Baby facilities such as changing mats are available to hire from the Tourist Information Office (Place Foch; tel: 05 6292 5050). Children from two months to four years can join Les Marmottes day nursery (Place Bordenave; tel: 05 6292 5701), whilst older children aged up to seven can join the Cirque de Lys ski school, which offers fun learning and activities on the slopes.

Activities for young children include supervised play at Aux 4 Vents (32 avenue Mamelon Vert; tel: 05 6245 1042) indoor activity centre, which welcomes three to 12 year-olds. The resort’s cinema, ice rink, thermal pools and merry-go-round are also a draw for families.

**Retail Therapy**

One of the major retail centres of the French Pyrenees, Cauterets has more than 90 shops, which is more than most ski resorts can offer.

Among the retailers are quirky outlets and long-established family businesses. L'Harfang des Neiges (6 rue Richelieu), for example, sells local arts and crafts, including paintings, sculptures, wood engravings and a local speciality: chalet shoes.

Another popular local product is boiled sweets, which were first made in the 19th century to take away the sulphurous taste of the spa water. Several shops demonstrate the production of such treats, including Confiserie Marinette (6 avenue du Mamelon Vert; tel: 05 6292 5307).

**Splashing Out**

Take a mud bath with a difference at Les Bains du Rocher Spa (avenue du Docteur Domer; tel: 05 6292 1420; [www.bains-rocher.fr](http://www.bains-rocher.fr)), which offers a mud wrap using specially imported mud from the Dead Sea. The treatment cleans, refines and purifies the skin and eases nervous or muscular tension that has been worked up both on and off the slopes.

**Apres Ski**

There's nothing better after a day on the slopes than relaxing in one of the thermal spa baths for which Cauterets is famous. You can even buy a special ‘Aquaschuss' lift ticket that covers ski lift and spa access over one or six days. The Bains du Rocher (Avenue du Docteur Domer; tel: 05 6292 1420; [www.bains-rocher.fr](http://www.bains-rocher.fr)) is one of the leading complexes.

For livelier après-ski in Cauterets, there's a choice of around 40 bars, most of which double up as restaurants or cafés. Among these is Le St-Trop (2 rue Richelieu; tel: 05 6292 5702), a pub that does great cocktails. Alternatively, visit the casino, which has slot machines, blackjack tables, a cinema and the Hold ‘Em café that turns into a nightclub on Friday and Saturday nights.

**Eating Out**

There is a large selection of restaurants in Cauterets and its environs offering a great range of cuisine. Among these are several crêperies, pizzerias and Alpine specialists serving fondue and raclette. La Sierra (8 rue de Verdun; tel: 06 8357 1806) serves *garbure*, a local soup speciality made with meat and vegetables, while Les Trois Couronnes (Galerie Aladin; tel: 05 6292 0214) is one of the most highly regarded restaurants here – despite its less than illustrious location in a shopping arcade – and cooks up dishes using locally sourced produce.

**Transport**

**Getting There**

Nearest airport: Lourdes-Tarbes-Pyrénées Airport (LDE); Pau Pyrénées Airport (PUF).

Distance to resort: 45km (28 miles); 75km (47 miles).

Driving time: 50 minutes; 1 hour 45 minutes.

**Getting Around**

Much of Cauterets can be accessed on foot, but the ski area is reached by gondola from the edge of the village. To reach the Pont d'Espagne and the Pyrenees National Park, take one of the regular shuttle buses from the bus station at Place Clemenceau (shuttles operate when there's a minimum of five passengers). Alternatively, there is a taxi service from Place Clemenceau.

**Hotels**

The village has predominantly apartment-based accommodation but there are also a dozen hotels in Cauterets, most of them family-run traditional establishments in the 1- to 3-star category.

**Hotel Pas de l'Ours**

This friendly budget hotel in central Cauterets has been renovated from a traditional building and houses a small but popular restaurant.

**Category**

Cheap

**Thoroughfare**

21 Rue de la Raillère

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Cauterets

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

05 6292 5807.

**Website**

http://www.lepasdelours.com

**Hôtel-Résidence Le Lys**

An attractive 2-star renowned for its wellbeing services (including Taï Chi Qi Gong, traditional Thai massage and Korean relaxation), Hôtel-Résidence Le Lys has a cosy lounge area with an open fireplace, and a games room.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

Rue de la Féria et Boulevard Latapie Flurin

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Cauterets

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

05 6292 1111.

**Website**

http://www.hotelresidencelelys.com

**Balnéo Aladin**

A comfortable and modern 3-star, Balnéo Aladin is one of the best hotels in Cauterets village. Guests here are granted free access to the balneotherapy centre and its five pools, and they can dine at the on-site restaurant that serves a buffet dinner.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

11 Avenue du Gén Leclerc

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Cauterets

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

05 6292 6000.

**Website**

http://www.hotelbalneoaladin.com