**Les Menuires**

**Categories**

**Good For**

Beginners

Intermediates

Experts

Snowboarders

Families

Après ski

**Data**

**Beginner Runs**

49

**Intermediate Runs**

24

**Advanced Runs**

6

**Total Runs**

79

**Lifts**

34

**Chairs**

14

**Drags**

13

**Gondola Cable Cars**

7

**Parks**

1

**Pipes**

0

**Weather**

**Annual Snowfall**

7.5m (25ft).

**Overview**

Built in the early 1960s boom years of French ski resort construction, Les Menuires was marketed as ‘the smile of the Alps’ – in part due to its vaguely smile-shaped concrete accommodation buildings. A few decades later, however, these had become a little tatty, leading some reviewers to ask: “Is this the ugliest resort in the Alps?”

But several decades on, many of the unattractive buildings have been demolished, a beautification process has been carried out, and Les Menuires is today known for its impressive attributes rather than its previously uninviting façades.

For starters, there’s doorstep skiing from a snowsure 1,850m (6,070ft) onto the world’s biggest ski region, the Trois Vallées (Three Valleys). Also, Les Menuires has a reputation as one of the more affordable of this region’s resorts. Add in the recent investment in off- and on-slope facilities, and there are all the ingredients for a fine ski holiday.

It should be no surprise, therefore, that Les Menuires, with its 26,000-plus guest beds across several areas, has emerged as one of the most successful resorts in France.

**Location**

Les Menuires is located in the Belleville Valley of the Savoy Alps in France, within the Massif de Tarentaise. It’s also part of the Trois Vallées – the world’s largest fully lift-interlinked ski area.

**Website**

http://www.lesmenuires.com

**Piste Map**

http://www.lesmenuires.com/hiver/plan-des-pistes-ski-trois-vallees-148.htm

**Hit The Slopes**

Thanks to its high altitude and a snow-making operation covering half of its vast area, Les Menuires is able to guarantee at least 80% snow cover to resort level throughout the season (early December to late April). The resort authorities have been confident enough in this statement to have introduced a guarantee allowing unused lift pass costs to be refunded if the cover is deemed insufficient.

Being in the midst of the world’s biggest lift and piste network, it’s no surprise there is a fantastic range of skiing for all abilities. But the first decision for many is not really where to go, but whether to buy a pass for the Belleville Valley or the full Trois Vallées pass, which also gives access to neighbouring Méribel and Courchevel. But as the ski area around Les Menuires covers 160km (100 miles) and the full Belleville Valley takes in 300km (187 miles), less adventurous intermediates may not feel the need to buy the full Trois Vallées pass, saving around 20% of the cost in the process.

Les Menuires has invested heavily in its facilities for beginners, most recently spending €300,000 on a beginners’ area with an easy-to-use conveyor lift, as well as the new, free-to-use Gaston’s blue piste at the top of the resort near Reberty. Reberty itself is now linked to La Masse via a six-seater chairlift, which was installed ahead of the 2012/13 season; while La Masse has a new fun zone and children’s park.

Intermediate and advanced level skiers will find hundreds of runs from some of the major summits; those with a smartphone can download the Les Menuires app, which shows 15 specially selected itineraries.

Freestyle skiers and boarders will have fun at the BK Park, while there’s a boardercross course and the free Acticross park for younger freestylers. Cross-country skiers, meanwhile, have 28km (17 miles) of tracks for both skating and classic techniques.

**Les Menuires**

**Resort**

1850

**Base**

1450

**Top**

2850

**General**

**Beyond The Slopes**

There's an increasingly wide range of activities in Les Menuires besides skiing and boarding, including the large SOGEVAB sports centre (tel: 04 7901 0883; [www.sogevab.com](http://www.sogevab.com/)), which offers squash and tennis courts, a heated outdoor pool and a spa. Other indoor options include Les Clarines Spa (tel: 04 7900 0076), which also operates a special children’s spa for six to 16 year olds. There are also two cinemas and a museum.

On the snow, adults can choose between activities ranging from dog sledding to snowmobiling, snowshoeing and the new addition of mountain biking on snow. Those who have a head for heights and want to see the stunning scenery from above can try microlight flights and paragliding.

**Family Fun**

Les Menuires is arguably the most family-friendly of the Trois Vallées resorts, with services for children of all ages. Le Club Piou-Piou (tel: 04 7900 6379), a non-ski nursery for babies from three months old in La Croisette, looks after children aged up to five years and can collect kids by minibus each morning. Just remember to reserve a place in advance and make sure to bring along the child’s vaccination certificate.

Children (three years and over) who are itching to learn how to ski can head to the École du Ski Français (ESF) (tel: 04 7900 6143; [www.esf-lesmenuires.com](http://www.esf-lesmenuires.com/)). This ski school offers lessons tailored to both learning and fun, with the percentage of tuition to games increasing as children get older, in line with the French national learning and certification programme.

The Roc’n Bob sledging course, covering a length of 4km (2.5 miles), is also a big family attraction. It’s available for anyone aged seven and over, while children ten and under (with a ski pass) can ride free on their parent’s toboggan. Alternatively, try the new rail-mounted Boukty on Speed Mountain toboggan course where you can race against the resort’s mascot, Boukty. If that’s not enough fun, children six and older can also have a go on snowmobiles and quad bikes.

In addition, Walibi Gliss, in the La Masse area, is a complete play park area for children with all the theme park characters from the Walibi theme parks that are popular in Northern Europe.

**Retail Therapy**

The choice of shops in Les Menuires continues to expand and is now nearing 100 outlets, but the onus remains on practicality and functionality rather than glitz and glamour. Similar to most resorts, a high proportion of these retailers are either ski and board stores or one of a variety of grocery shops ranging from *boulangeries* and *patisseries* to mini supermarkets. All the other essentials are present, including newsagents, photographic stores, banks with cash dispensers, dry cleaners, hairdressers and chemist shops. The largest concentration of shops is in the covered shopping centre in La Croisette.

**Splashing Out**

Vincent Jay, the renowned biathlete (and the first French gold Medal winner of the Vancouver 2010 Olympics) is a Les Menuires local. His sport is an exhausting and exhilarating mix of cross-country skiing and shooting from a standing or lying position. The ESF provides a two-hour introduction to biathlon, for which participants don’t need previous experience of cross-country skiing (though it helps) or shooting.

**Apres Ski**

Les Menuires isn’t the liveliest resort in France (which isn’t famed partying resorts anyway), but it isn’t the quietest either, with around 50 increasingly busy bars and nightspots. Le Challenge (tel: 04 7900 7852) and Le Mousse (tel: 04 7900 1616) in La Croisette are popular hangouts, while nearby Kube (tel: 04 7900 6510), just next to the sports centre, is a cocktail bar with a nice quiet atmosphere and weekly piano or jazz concerts. Those who want to dance their way through to the small hours should try the Leeberty disco (tel: 04 7900 6849), which is one of six late night bars and clubs in the resort.

There are also evening activities such as floodlit snowmobiling, snowshoeing and tobogganing to keep all ages entertained.

**Eating Out**

There are more than 50 places to eat in and around Les Menuires, with a good range of cuisines available for all budgets – from Italian and Mexican to the normal Savoyard purveyors of fondue and raclette.

A good budget option for families is Pizzeria La Bûche (Galerie de l'Adret, tel: 04 7900 7176) in La Croisette. The popular La Chouette (Immeuble Bellevue; tel: 04 7900 2126) also serves reasonably priced Savoyard specialities and a selection of fish dishes.

At the gourmet end of the restaurant spectrum, Le ‘K’ at Hotel Kaya (tel: 04 7941 4201; [www.hotel-kaya.com](http://www.hotel-kaya.com/)) is the place to go in Reberty; while on the mountain, Chalet 2000 (tel: 04 7900 6057; [www.hotel-chalet2000.fr](http://www.hotel-chalet2000.fr/)) offers family-friendly, high-quality service and an excellent sun terrace. La Maison de Savoie (tel: 04 7900 6106) is another with a stunning terraced area and serves a lunchtime *plat du jour* menu until 1600.

**Transport**

**Getting There**

Nearest airport: Chambéry Airport (CMF); Turin Airport (TRN).

Distance to resort: 115km (71 miles); 260km (162 miles).

Driving time: 1 hour 40 minutes; 3 hours.

**Getting Around**

The inter-quarter shuttle, which runs every 20 minutes between 0800 and 2000 (and less frequently thereafter until 2330), links La Croisette, Reberty 1850 and 2000, Le Hameau des Airelles, Les Fontanettes and Les Bruyères. A free inter-village shuttle bus also connects outlying villages; while every Wednesday a further free shuttle service runs between Val Thorens, Les Menuires and Saint Martin de Belleville (reserved for pedestrians and cross-country skiers only). The additional two quarters of Preyerand and Brelin are connected by a cable car service and lifts.

For most guests, it’s likely they will have direct access to the ski slopes with a good selection of shops and restaurants nearby; so there may not be too much of a need to make use of the various free shuttle bus services.

**Hotels**

In common with most large, French purpose-built resorts, about 90% of the accommodation in Les Menuires is in the form of apartments or residences. However, there are now a number of new, highly regarded hotels in Les Menuires; while many of the better and newer apartment complexes also have hotel-like facilities such as spas, bars and restaurants.

**Franceloc**

Despite the rudimentary requirement of guests having to rent bed linen if they don’t have it with them, the Franceloc apartment complex is one of the best of the value accommodation options in Les Menuires.

**Category**

Cheap

**Thoroughfare**

L'Orée des pistes

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Les Menuires 73440

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

04 7900 7408.

**Website**

http://www.franceloc.fr

**Le Skilt**

A popular 2-star hotel in the centre of La Croisette, the rooms at Le Skilt have balconies and cable TV. Wi-Fi internet access is available to guests.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

Avenue de la Croisette

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Les Menuires 73440

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

04 7910 4189.

**Website**

XXX

**Hotel Kaya**

One of Les Menuires’ 4-star offerings (until recently the highest classification in France), this contemporary hotel features a snooker room, lounge bar and library.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

Saint-Martin-de-Belleville

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Les Menuires 73440

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

04 7941 4201.

**Website**

http://www.hotel-kaya.com

**Les Clarines**

Built by acclaimed mountain architects MGM, Les Clarines is just 100m (109 yards) from the slopes. This 4-star residence is built in the traditional Savoyard chalet style in timber and stone. Inside, its facilities include a spa and beauty centre, a lounge area with open fire, free Wi-Fi access and a bakery and catering service.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

XXX

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Les Menuires 73440

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

04 5033 1096.

**Website**

http://www.cgh-residences.com

**Belambra Village Club Neige et Ciel**

The centrally located, family-orientated Belambra complex has 203 rooms with Wi-Fi access and TVs. A kids’ club is run on the premises and entertainment is provided for 11 to 17 year-olds.

**Category**

Cheap

**Thoroughfare**

Saint-Martin-de-Belleville

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Les Menuires 73440

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

04 7900 6230.

**Website**

http://www.belambra.fr

**Hotel Les Bruyères**

This hotel is the resort’s first carbon-neutral hotel. Guests here can expect regional and seasonal ingredients in its restaurant and there is also a comfy bar and lounge area with an open fireplace.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

Saint-Martin-de-Belleville

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Les Menuires 73440

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

04 7900 7510.

**Website**

http://www.bruyeres-hotel-menuires.com