**Verbier**

**Categories**

**Good For**

Intermediates

Experts

Snowboarders

Après ski

Snow reliability

**Data**

**Beginner Runs**

19

**Intermediate Runs**

20

**Advanced Runs**

15

**Total Runs**

54

**Lifts**

34

**Chairs**

12

**Drags**

11

**Gondola Cable Cars**

11

**Parks**

1

**Pipes**

0

**Weather**

**Annual Snowfall**

5.8m (19ft).

**Overview**

The iconic Swiss resort of Verbier, with its world-class terrain and legendary après-ski, remains among the top ski destinations in the Alps.

Aside for its reputation as a ski resort for the rich and famous - Richard Branson owns a chalet here, available to rent through his Virgin brand - Verbier’s main attraction, in a similar way to Chamonix and St Anton, is for its steep and exciting off-piste terrain.

Groomed runs for beginners and intermediates are available, but they aren’t anything special, and in some cases more limited than at other leading resorts, so it’s a mistake to come here looking for hundreds of kilometres of intermediate cruising terrain.

However, expert skiers will be spoilt for choice, with numerous challenging runs including an impressive lift-served vertical, one of the world’s largest, crowned by the Mont Fort glacier.

For many years the resort has had lift and piste connections to neighbouring slopes, which together formed, Les 4 Vallées (the 4 Valleys), Switzerland’s largest ski area with 410km (255 miles) of piste. However, there have been disagreements on revenue share between the various participating lift companies and the pass has been teetering on the verge of collapse in recent seasons, so it’s currently unclear if it will survive.

**Location**

Verbier is situated on the eastern side of the Val de Bagnes, within the Valais canton. This French-speaking part of Switzerland is in the southwest of the country, close to the borders with France and Italy.

**Website**

http://www.verbier.ch

http://www.verbierbooking.ch

**Piste Map**

http://www.verbierbooking.ch/multimedia/docs/2013/10/plan\_hiver\_1314.pdf

**Hit The Slopes**

Verbier is the main gateway to Les 4 Vallées ski area that features a sophisticated network of cable cars and gondolas providing easy access to 410km (255 miles) of marked runs, as well as some of Europe's best lift-served off-piste skiing. Queues for these lifts are normally minimal, although there can be bottlenecks in busy areas.

The resort’s high altitude and extensive snowmaking facilities means snow cover is not normally a problem throughout the season, especially on the Mont-Fort Glacier. As such, the ski season in Verbier – and Les 4 Vallées as a whole – runs from mid-November until late April.

Beginners and intermediates are fairly well catered for in Les 4 Vallées with various schools, including the Swiss Ski School (tel: +41 27 775 3363; [www.verbierbooking.ch](http://www.verbierbooking.ch)) that offers introductory courses in skiing and snowboarding. There are nursery slopes for beginners and some easy runs at Savoleyres, La Chaux and Lac des Vaux to explore once they have mastered the basics.

Experienced skiers and boarders will enjoy some of Europe's steepest descents, including the infamous Mont-Fort and the World Cup downhill run in neighbouring Nendaz. There are also the demanding mogul fields, powder bowls and couloirs of vertiginous Tortin, Chassoure and Mont Gelé (classified as unpatrolled ‘itinerary routes', though technically off-piste).

Some of the ski schools offer advanced freeride clinics and heli-skiing. There is also a superb terrain park for boarders to enjoy.

**Verbier**

**Resort**

1500

**Base**

1400

**Top**

3330

**General**

**Beyond The Slopes**

Winter sports enthusiasts can explore extensive marked winter hiking trails or opt to have a go at ice climbing, dog-sledding, curling, ice skating and tobogganing in Verbier and its surrounds.

Non-skiers can visit the resort's Alpine Museum (rue de la Bérarde) at le Hameau, and spend time in the village with its galleries, cinema, shops, tea rooms, swimming pool complex and spa facilities. For a more structured itinerary, there’s the option to join in the tourist office's themed walks and visits to local sights.

For those craving something a little more adrenaline-inducing, there’s an opportunity to see the slopes from above on a paragliding trip, or to explore the mountains on a guided climbing tour.

**Family Fun**

Verbier offers good facilities for families, with considerable reductions on lift pass prices (children under six are free). Most ski schools offer tuition for children. The Swiss Ski School's kids’ club (tel: +41 27 775 3363; [www.esecure.ch/verbier](http://www.esecure.ch/verbier)) has its own drag lift and takes children from three years and upwards.

Other family facilities include nursery slopes, a 10km-long (6 mile) toboggan run from the top of Savoleyres to La Tzoumaz, a children’s playground, adventure trails and climbing walls.

Childcare options include Les Schtroumpfs (tel: +41 27 771 6585) for little ones aged from three months to three years, and Arc-en-Ciel (tel: +41 27 771 4469) nurseries from 18 months upwards.

**Retail Therapy**

Verbier has an extensive selection of more than 70 shops, including small fashion boutiques, specialised wine shops, art galleries and independent shops selling local products – the most exclusive establishments are mostly in Place Centrale and Rue de Médran. There is also the usual ski resort offering of grocers, convenience stores and ski rental shops in Verbier.

**Splashing Out**

For the ultimate in money-no-object Alpine chic, stay at The Lodge (tel: +41 27 775 2244; [www.thelodge.virgin.com](http://www.thelodge.virgin.com)); an exclusive hideaway located in the wooded fringes of the resort. Rustic, but luxurious, this chalet-hotel sleeps 18 (plus six children in the Kid's Bunk room), and boasts its own mini ice rink, indoor and outdoor pools, tailor-made cuisine and a stylish spa to soothe aching muscles after a day on the slopes.

**Apres Ski**

Verbier is as well known for its partying as its demanding skiing. In fact, the intoxicating mix of fashionable bars, traditional-style pubs and cosmopolitan clubs (open until the small hours) creates one of the most exciting après-ski scenes in the Alps.

Popular watering holes include Le Fer à Cheval (tel: +41 27 771 2669; [www.feracheval.ch](http://www.feracheval.ch)) which has a sun terrace and can get very busy and Pub Mont-Fort (tel: +41 27 771 9062; [www.pubmontfort.com](http://www.pubmontfort.com)) famous for its shots selection and happy hour from 1600 to 1700 each evening.

After dinner, rub shoulders with celebrities and Verbier's beautiful people into the early hours at The Farm Club (tel: +41 27 775 4000; [www.hotelnevai.com](http://www.hotelnevai.com)), an Alpine institution that has thrilled clubbers for more than 40 years.

**Eating Out**

Restaurants in Verbier offer everything from light mountain snacks to gourmet cuisine. There are more than 60 restaurants to choose from and many of the best eateries here feature the hearty cuisine and fine wines of the Valais region.

On the slopes, dine at Cabane du Mont-Fort (tel: +41 27 778 1384; [www.cabanemontfort.ch](http://www.cabanemontfort.ch)) for nourishing soups and sandwiches; head to much-loved La Marmotte (tel: +41 27 771 6834) for fantastic rösti; or savour regional dishes at the celebrated Chez Dany (tel: +41 27 771 2524).

In the village itself, Au Vieux-Verbier (tel: +41 27 771 1668) serves traditional Swiss mountain fare, while Le Caveau (tel: +41 27 771 2226), specialises in fondue and raclette.

For a lighter meal the Offshore Café (tel: +41 27 565 2137; [www.offshorecafe.com](http://www.offshorecafe.com)) is one of the world’s longest established snowboarding venues, welcoming customers for 30 years. It’s open from 0800 to 2000 daily and is famous for its breakfasts.

**Transport**

**Getting There**

Nearest airport: Geneva International Airport (GVA).

Distance to resort: 161km (101 miles).

Driving time: 2 hours.

Nearest railway station: Le Châble.

Distance to resort: 8.5km (5 miles).

Driving time: 15 minutes.

**Getting Around**

Verbier is small enough to explore on foot, but free buses also run throughout the resort every five to 15 minutes during the day. There are no bus connections with the other resorts in Les 4 Vallées, for which taxis should be ordered.

**Hotels**

Verbier is very much a chalet town, with something for everyone. There are more luxury chalets here than you’ll find anywhere else (including several 5-star options). Given the size of Verbier, there are surprisingly few apartments and guesthouses; although nearby Le Châble has inexpensive bed and breakfast options for those on a budget. There are also a number of hotels in the resort, including a selection of 4-star, as well as a few simpler accommodation choices.

**Hotel Ermitage**

Hotel Ermitage is a traditional outfit with modest but clean rooms, a small spa and a good on-site restaurant. Wi-Fi access is available to guests.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

Carrefour Central 18

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Verbier

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

CH 1936CountrySw

**Country**

XXX

**Telephone**

http://www.ermitage-verbier.ch

**Website**

Sir Richard Branson's Alpine escape opened in 2007 and is available for exclusive weekly hire for up to 18 guests in nine stunning rooms and suites. Among the incredible facilities here are an indoor pool, ice rink, disco and driver on call 24 hours a day.

**Hotel Vanessa**

A stylish four start hotel in the resort centre with a shuttle to the slopes, Hotel Vanessa has pleasant rooms, a spa area with large Jacuzzi and good food at the on-site restaurant.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

Chemin des Vernes 1

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Verbier

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

CH 1936

**Country**

Switzerland

**Telephone**

+41 27 775 2800.

**Website**

hotelvanessa.ch

**W**

Too trendy for a full name, W is a luxury hotel that opened near the slopes at the start of the 2013-14 season to rave reviews. Well located for both slopes and town, the hotel benefits from excellent facilities, including an indoor/outdoor pool, a spa and gym.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

Rue De Medran 70,

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Verbier

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

CH 1936

**Country**

Switzerland

**Telephone**

+41 27 472 8888.

**Website**

www.wverbier.com