**Villars**

**Categories**

**Good For**

Beginners

Intermediates

Snowboarders

Families

Environmental awareness

**Data**

**Beginner Runs**

28

**Intermediate Runs**

46

**Advanced Runs**

8

**Total Runs**

82

**Lifts**

54

**Chairs**

11

**Drags**

35

**Gondola Cable Cars**

8

**Parks**

4

**Pipes**

1

**Weather**

**Annual Snowfall**

6m (19.7 ft).

**Overview**

Popular from the late 19th century, Villars is one of the ski world’s classic resorts. The first lift went up here in 1936 – one of the earliest lifts anywhere that was purpose built specifically for skiers.

Always a popular resort with the Swiss locals, Villars has grown to accommodate international visitors who are attracted by its blend of traditional Swiss mountain village feel and modern ski resort facilities.

Located on a natural balcony in the Alps, it offers picturesque skiing and multiple options for non-skiers. The resort’s easy accessibility and reputation for sunshine on south facing slopes adds to the appeal, but also previously raised issues regarding snow cover. Fortunately, Villars receives a healthy dose each autumn before the sunshine starts and has also invested heavily in an environmentally-friendly (comparatively) snow making system to guarantee good conditions.

These days Villars markets itself especially as a family-oriented resort, offering a particularly generous arrangement for children who do not need to pay for lift passes until the age of nine. Much of the terrain does suit this market but with an area pass that encompasses more than 400km (250 miles) of runs in total, there’s something here for everyone.

**Location**

Villars is situated in the Alpes Vaudoises region of Switzerland, and affords views stretching from Mont Blanc past the Diablerets Glacier all the way down to the eastern end of Lake Geneva. The nearest low-lying town is the small wine-producing settlement of Aigle, but the resort is easily accessible from the cities of Lausanne and Geneva.

**Website**

http://www.villars.ch

**Piste Map**

http://www.villars.ch/en/page.cfm/PlanPistes

**Hit The Slopes**

Villars markets itself as a family-oriented resort, with an excellent arrangement for children whereby they do not need to pay for lift passes until the age of nine. The resort is most suited to beginner and intermediate skiers, as the majority of the slopes are wide and gentle.

But Villars does also offer some challenging areas for the experienced skier, including the Chaux Ronde and Les Bouquetins black slopes, the latter descending from the highest point of the Grand Chamossaire 2120 chairlift down to Roc d’Orsay at the base gondola station. A challenging 5km-long (3 mile) trail to the village is the longest in the region with a 900m (3,000 foot) vertical drop, and has been used in the past for downhill world cup racing. There are also some demanding mogul fields to encounter.

Those looking to explore the area can take advantage of its proximity to Les Diablerets, Gryon and the Diablerets Glacier – which are linked mainly by modern chairlifts. The Superpass ski pass allows skiers to further extend their choice to include the Gstaad ski area, which altogether grants access to 420km (260 miles) of pistes.

The Villars-Gryon-Diablerets ski area is generally open from mid-December until late April. The Glacier 3000 area is open from the beginning of December until May, and cross-country skiing is available here almost all year.

Off-piste skiing is limited in Villars itself and the snow can be patchy in early and late season, but good conditions are usually to be had at higher elevation areas. There are four terrain parks spread around the region, as well as various small jumps and a halfpipe for snowboarders.

There is a wide selection of reputable ski schools, distinguishable by their different-coloured uniforms. These include École de Ski Villars (tel: +41 24 495 4545; [www.villarsski.ch](http://www.villarsski.ch)) and École Suisse de Ski et de Snowboard (tel: +41 24 495 2210; [www.ecole-suisse-de-ski-villars.ch](http://www.ecole-suisse-de-ski-villars.ch)). There is an on-site ski hire operator and a range of alternative hire shops in the village.

It’s also worth noting that facilities for disabled skiers are particularly good in Villars. The non-profit Handiconcept Association ([www.handi-concept.ch](http://www.handi-concept.ch)) organises fund raising efforts and sources technology and expertise to offer handicapped people the best opportunities to practise snow sports.

**Villars**

**Resort**

1300

**Base**

1300

**Top**

3000

**General**

**Beyond The Slopes**

For a slower-paced approach to the slopes, the tourist office provides maps for seven snowshoe routes. Alternatively, stroll along the 27km (16 miles) of winter walking trails.

In Villars itself, there’s the Centre des Sports (tel: +41 24 495 1221), which offers indoor tennis courts, volleyball, badminton, football, unihockey (floorball), squash and a fitness room on its main site. The sports centre's smaller site has an ice rink and two indoor swimming pools.

A 30-minute train ride down the mountain is the picturesque Château d'Aigle, now converted into the Musée Vaudois de la Vigne et du Vin (Vine and Wine Museum) (tel: +41 24 466 2130; [www.museeduvin.ch](http://www.museeduvin.ch)), which has a fascinating array of objects charting the history of viticulture in the area.

A recommended day trip is a visit to Gruyère, with its strangely familiar castle (used in the film *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*) and chocolate and cheese factories.

**Family Fun**

The variety of ski and snowboard schools in Villars is a strong selling point for families, while La Trottinette nursery (tel: +41 24 495 8888; [www.latrottinette.ch](http://www.latrottinette.ch)) provides care for children up to six years old.

There are also plenty of activities off the slopes. In neighbouring Les Diablerets, Mountain Evasion (tel: +41 24 492 1232; [www.mountain-evasion.ch](http://www.mountain-evasion.ch)) offers a selection of fun activities, including sledging and the hair-raising night-time toboggan run. Switzerland's premium water park, Aquaparc (tel: +41 24 482 0000; [www.aquaparc.ch](http://www.aquaparc.ch)) in Le Bouveret – which is marketed as ‘the Caribbean on Lake Geneva’ – is 30 minutes away by train.

**Retail Therapy**

The village has a range of shops selling groceries, regional foods and wine. There are also several boutiques with fashion items, watches and antiques. Of particular note for children is the delightful toy shop, Les Paradis des Jouets (tel: +41 24 495 2801), while for parents, the Magasin Relay (tel: +41 24 495 2621) is the place to buy international newspapers.

**Splashing Out**

For adventurous visitors, Villars offers superb paragliding opportunities, available through Dimension 3 (tel: +41 79 435 2123; [www.dimension-3.ch](http://www.dimension-3.ch)) and Smith Paragliding (tel: +41 24 495 4141; [www.smith.li](http://www.smith.li)). Depart from various starting points and sail down the valley on a tandem flight accompanied by a qualified instructor.

**Apres Ski**

There are various venues for après-ski in Villars, with options to suit most tastes (and budgets). Le Blues Bar (tel: +41 24 495 2126) plays live blues and serves fondue and other traditional dishes. Charlie's Bar (tel: +41 24 495 7595) is a good place for televised sports events and live music – it also offers free entry to the adjoining El Gringo nightclub (tel: +41 24 495 7920; [www.elgringo.ch](http://www.elgringo.ch)). Also recommended is L’Arrivée, a typical wooden chalet at the bottom of the Eurotel village slope, offering some of the lowest prices in Villars for drinks and snacks.

The Moon Boot (tel: +41 24 495 1963; [www.moonbootlounge.com](http://www.moonbootlounge.com)) is one of the newer arrivals in the resort, and is rapidly making its mark as a popular cocktail bar and lounge.

**Eating Out**

Villars has always catered well for its visitors and this extends to its cuisine, ranging from French to Tex Mex. There are a number of good pizzerias, but the local Swiss food, based around regional cheeses, is strongly recommended.

Au Feu de Bois (tel: +41 24 496 3838; [www.hoteldugolf.ch](http://www.hoteldugolf.ch)) in the Hôtel du Golf dishes up French and Italian cuisine, including grilled meat straight from the fire in a stone-walled rustic restaurant, while Toscana (tel: +41 24 495 7921) has a strong reputation for excellent gourmet dining, especially its seafood, which it serves in a lovely, intimate, setting.

Other popular choices include Peppino (tel: +41 24 495 3131) for pizza and Swiss cuisine infused with local Alpine flowers and plants, and the romantic L’Alchimiste (tel: +41 24 495 2478) which serves tapas with a French twist, excellent steak tartar and delicious home made burgers.

**Transport**

**Getting There**

Nearest airport: Geneva International Airport (GVA).

Distance to resort: 110km (68 miles).

Driving time: 2 hours.

Nearest railway station: Villars (2 hours by train from Geneva via Aigle).

**Getting Around**

The lifts in Villars are easily accessible by foot; however, a free ski shuttle bus service is available all day. These lifts connect with two other resorts – Gryon and Les Diablerets. From Les Diablerets, there is access to the Glacier 3000 ski area. Gryon and Les Diablerets are also accessible by car or train from Villars.

**Hotels**

A blend of traditional Swiss mountain village and modern ski resort, the village has a mixture of picturesque chalets and smart hotels. There are several 3- and 4-star hotels in Villars, but renting a chalet, many of which are conveniently located near the slopes, is a good alternative (contact the tourist office or a bookings agency for current availability).

**Hôtel du Golf**

The family-run Hôtel du Golf is located 100m (328 feet) from the funicular railway line to the slopes, and also operates its own ski shuttle. Facilities here include three restaurants, a sauna, solarium, children’s games room and tennis courts.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

rue Centrale 152

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Villars

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

CH 1884

**Country**

Switzerland

**Telephone**

+41 24 496 3838.

**Website**

http://www.hoteldugolf.chClub Med Villars sur OllonOne of the older Club Meds that’s housed in a beautiful building, this establishment is highly regarded for its warm staff, good on-site restaurant and excellent childcare services.CategoryModerateThoroughfareXXXNeighborhoodXXXLocalityVillarsSub Admin AreaXXXAdmin AreaXXXPostcodeCH 1884CountrySwitzerlandTelephone+41 24 496 2222.Websitehttp://www.clubmed.co.uk/

**Chalet Royalp Hotel & Spa**

This 5-star hotel is the most impressive in the area, and is ski-in, ski-out with its own funicular railway stop to reach the main slopes and a run all the way back to the hotel, Guests here will enjoy spending their non-skiing time in the hotel's spa, three restaurants and private cinema.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

Domaine de Rochegrise

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Villars

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

CH 1884

**Country**

Switzerland

**Telephone**

+41 24 495 9090.

**Website**

http://www.royalp.ch