



What's your

SNOW SCENE?

Whether you're a powder junkie (not that kind) or
it's the first time you've ever tried it, here's how to
find the winter-vacation tribe to match your vibe...



So what and where is it?

The buzzy resort of Méribel is situated dead centre of France's Trois Vallées (Three Valleys), so it has the best access to neighbouring ski resorts Courchevel and Val Thorens, too.

OK, but why here specifically?

Even if you're not the biggest skiing or snowboarding fan, there's still plenty here that will offset the partying (there's *lots* of partying) and endless selfie-taking. Take snowshoeing, for example, which is when

you strap on what look like the red plastic floaters that lifeguards sprint down the beach holding, only with added metal teeth, to (hopefully) prevent you from stacking it in icier parts, and head off on a leisurely walk around the valleys. Ask a guide to direct you to the lake, then reward yourself with a swig of *génépi* (a herbal liquor favoured by Alpine folk) when you arrive and allow yourself a moment or two to bask in the blissful silence.

Another reason to love Méribel? It's one of the first places where you can dine in a ski-lift gondola – well worth a photo or 12. Once the last of the black-run lovers have cleared the Saulire mountain, TéléFondue (Telefondue.com, open from January to March) offers an evening of panoramic views and pungent local melted cheeses, slabs of bread and local wine, kicked off beforehand with drinks in a giant igloo.



Get me there

A week at Le Chalet Iona, from £1,250 per person for 12 people, all-inclusive; Chalet-iona.com. A six-day lift pass costs £212 per adult. Flights from £49 (Easyjet.com). For more, see Ski France; Skifrance.co.uk.

Who am I going to meet?

A happy, rowdy bunch of Brits and “seasoners” (easily identifiable by the fact that they are whizzing past you at 50 miles an hour wearing identikit cream cashmere headbands), who are all united by their common love of good beats, table-dancing and booze, glorious booze (unlike nearby Courchevel, which is where the money happens – go if you fancy a day of Russian-oligarch-spotting). You'll also have the opportunity to twerk with pro dancers in full unicorn regalia up at La Folie Douce (yes, the rumours about this crazy

open-air party bar are all true). Meribar (the busiest watering hole at the bottom of the slopes) is the place to be if you're on the hunt for hot wine and tall men with excellent jawlines and the perfect ratio of facial hair to cheekbones.

And where do I stay?

We recommend you grab 11 of your best mates and book the gorgeous Chalet Iona. It's unbeatable, as are the panoramic mountain views from the dining room (which you can also take in while you're basking in the private Jacuzzi) – the entire set-up is divinely decadent. ♦

Good luck finding your chalet



WORDS AMANDA STATHAM, DANIELA SCOTT, JENNIFER SAVIN. PHOTOGRAPHS MARGARETHA OLSCHESKI/TRUNK ARCHIVE/FOLIO ID, GETTY IMAGES, SHUTTERSTOCK, VISIT FINLAND/HARRI TARVAINEN, ADAM BRUZZONE