



DON'T MISS: Snag up to 50% off big-ticket items like vacuums and sofas in Argos's January sale



The Telegraph

# The perfect ski holiday in Méribel, the beating heart of France's biggest ski area

Telegraph Ski & Snowboard

30 October 2024 · 10-min read



Méribel is at the centre of the world's largest ski area - Sylvain Aymoz

There are plenty of reasons to love Méribel, not least for its pretty, chalet-style architecture, wooded surroundings and friendly, village atmosphere. But the prime reason, for keen snow-sport fans, is its central position within France's huge Trois Vallées ski area.

Founded by British skier Peter Lindsay in 1938, Méribel's developments now extend high up a west-facing slope, including the villages of Mussillon and Altitude 1600 to the east and Rond Point and Belvedere to the west. A vast number of chalets, and an increasing amount of self-catering apartments and hotels too, provide plenty of choice for accommodation and enough beds to sleep the resort's growing fan base, who return year after year.

Stay on track with the essential facts from the resort below, and scroll down for our insider guide to a day on the pistes, expert ratings and advice. For further Méribel inspiration, see our guides to the resort's best accommodation, restaurants and après ski.

- [On the slopes](#)
- [Who should go](#)
- [Where to stay](#)
- [How to get there](#)
- [When to go](#)
- [Essential information](#)

## Inside the resort

The combination of extensive slopes, superb location and attractive architecture makes Méribel one of Europe's safest bets for a great ski holiday.

The villages of Méribel Centre range from 1,600m to 1,700m in altitude; the highest is Altiport (1,700m). Feeding into Méribel by shuttle bus and Olympé 1 and 2 gondola, which had newly revamped cabins in 2021/22, are the lower, outlying resorts of Brides les Bains (600m), Les Allues (1,200m) and Méribel Village (1,400m), and at the top of the valley is Méribel-Mottaret at 1,750m, a satellite resort.

To the east are the resorts of [Courchevel](#) and La Tania, and to the west, [Les Ménuires](#) and [Val Thorens](#). Together with Méribel these combine to make one of the largest linked ski areas in the world, with more than 600km of pistes – Les Trois Vallées.

Access to Méribel's neighbouring resorts and the giant ski area as a whole are impressively slick. The Saulire Express gondola whisks up to 2,400 people an hour from the centre to the Saulire peak at 2,700m, taking 12 minutes. From Mottaret, the fast, six-seat Bouquetin chairlift reaches 3 Marches at 2,704m – there's also the Combes chairlift from Mottaret which helps reduce queuing times on busy days.



Méribel oozes Alpine charm - Sylvain Aymoz

Mont Vallon is the highest point in Méribel's local ski area at nearly 3,000m, this combined with the lofty summits and slopes on Saulire and 3 Marches means good snow throughout the season, even if it can get a little slushy in March. On the downside, Méribel's high, wide slopes are unsheltered and not great on poor-weather days, while experts lament a lack of challenging terrain.

Méribel caters well for the alpine shopper, with a number of technical clothing outlets in the resort, plus shops selling designer brands and interior design. The best bakery is Glaciers on Route de la Montée in the centre of the resort, while the Maison de la Presse on the same street sells British newspapers. For local Savoyard cheese, head for La Fromagerie at Galerie des Cimes near the centre. Twice weekly (Tuesdays and Fridays), there's a small market on the Route de la Chaudanne.

The Olympic Centre built for the 1992 Albertville Winter Olympics is open daily, offering a 25m indoor swimming pool, children's pool, water slide, fitness centre, climbing wall, spa and indoor ice-rink. Snowshoeing, horse-sleigh tours, snowmobiling and walking routes are also available in the resort.

The resort has an unrivalled selection of good-quality, upmarket chalets in its various sectors, but there is also a decent selection of hotels and self-catering apartments. There's no denying that the thousands of international visitors who come here every winter know how to party in style. A branch of the French on-mountain après experience, La Folie Douce, at the mid-station of the main Saulire gondola, gets loud at 3pm before the clientele migrate to the Rond Point, aka The Ronny, just above the main village, with live bands and a fantastic, up-for-it atmosphere, or to Jack's Bar, at the foot of the slopes.

## On the slopes

For beginners, the gentle green slopes at Altiport, reached by the Morel chair from the satellite village of Altiport 1600, and the nursery slopes at Rond Point make a good starting point. Dedicated beginner and young children's areas also include La Sittelle, accessed by the fast, six-seat Bouquetin chairlift which, in 2021/22, replaced the Plattières 3 gondola from Mottaret and which, since 2022/23, offers a large terrace with views of Mont Vallon. Also Le Rossignol, accessed by the Chatelet chair and Le Doron at the foot of the pistes in Mottaret.

Its sheltered setting means the blue and red runs leading into the resort are protected by the steep-sided mountains and enjoy more settled weather conditions than in the adjacent broader valleys.



There are plenty of miles to clock up on the slopes - sylvain cochard

Two reds, the Gypaete piste, (accessed via the Cherferie chairlift) and the Daguet piste (accessed via the black La Face piste) are best-suited to intermediates, who can also enjoy some of the area's best pistes south of Mottaret, at the head of the valley, accessed by the Bouquetin chairlift. For the more experienced, the red Combe Vallon piste from the top of the Mont du Vallon gondola at 2,952m is a good option, or the Face run (created for the downhill races in the 1992 Olympics) from the top of the Roc de Fer at 2,294m.

This summit has been redeveloped for this winter (2024/25), to encourage families and groups to make the most of the stunning views. There's a new picnic area, with tables and hammocks and a large terrace with a photo booth.

For experienced skiers who want to try out some challenging descents, there's a new black ibex piste and the summit sector of the Saulire offer

to a total of over 600km of pistes served by 200 lifts. Usefully, local lift passes of two days or more can be upgraded on a daily basis to include the whole of the Trois Vallées, but, unless the weather is forecast to be particularly poor, most people opt for the straightforward Trois Vallées pass.

Queues can be a big issue in Méribel. If possible avoid the Chaudanne at the start of ski school (usually around 9.15am) and the runs to Mottaret in the late afternoon, when overcrowding is also a problem.

The Moonpark terrain park is suitable for all levels, halfway up the mountain on the Tougnette gondola from Chaudanne, and next to the Arpasson drag lift. DC Area 43 Snowpark is 1,200m long with a mini-skate ramp, rails and an airbag. It's served by the Chatelet lift above Mottaret.

P'tit Moon is a mini-boardercross with banked turns for children aged seven to 12 years, located above the mid-station of the Rhodos gondola, which leaves from Chaudanne, and served by the Côtes draglift.

Moon Wild, also on the western slopes, by Altiport, is a wooded area for children with animal sculptures and information boards explaining the local flora and fauna. Other areas for small children include the Inuit Village accessed by the Altiport chairlift or Rhodos Gondola.



The 3 Vallées is the largest linked ski area in the world - Sylvain Aymoz

---

## Who should go?

Méribel's 150km of local slopes suits [intermediates](#) well – the majority are blue, with around 25 per cent red, and under 10 per cent being green or black. Further afield and the huge Trois Vallées ski area is hard to beat for variety. The resort has a lively [après atmosphere](#), boosted by a large seasonaire population and array of bars and restaurants. It's an all-rounder that's hard to beat.

---

## Where to stay

Accommodation in Méribel is mostly in upmarket chalets, but there's also a good selection of hotels and self-catering apartments, plus an increasing

efficient private minibuses transfers – and the hourly resort buses run regularly and are free of charge. Accommodation in the lower, outlying resorts of Brides les Bains, Les Allues and Méribel Village, and at the top of the valley, Méribel-Mottaret (1,750m) is generally more affordable.

### How to get there

Among the long-established catered chalet specialists are Purple Ski ([purpleski.com](http://purpleski.com)) with five luxury chalets sleeping up to 14; F and P Travel ([fandptravel.com](http://fandptravel.com)) which offers a mix of catered and self-catered properties and high-end hotels; and Bramble Ski ([brambleski.com](http://brambleski.com)). Inghams ([inghams.co.uk](http://inghams.co.uk)) has a selection of more affordable options, including the centrally-located, self-catering Résidence L'Hevana, a good option for families. Ben's Bus ([bensbus.co.uk](http://bensbus.co.uk)) operates from Geneva, plus a range of private transfer companies cover the resort. Moûtiers is the closest train station to Méribel. It's about 20km from the centre of the resort, with transfers provided by Altibus ([altibus.com](http://altibus.com)). Travelski Express ([uk.travelski.com](http://uk.travelski.com)) offers train-based packages from the UK.

### When to go

**Opening date:** December 7 2024

**Closing date:** April 21 2025

Efficient snow-making and sheltered, north-facing slopes mean Méribel is snowsure, despite its relatively low altitude. There may be green patches at first, but the base depth is usually good by January when the slopes are at their quietest. Note that queues for lifts at Chaudanne, the base area, can be long in peak school holiday times. The season runs from December 7 to April 21, 2025 and New Year's Eve sees a spectacular firework display in the valley. Sound Clash, an outdoor party in Méribel Centre, takes place on April 5, before the atmosphere gears down for Zen Altitude from April 9 to 12, a celebration of well-being and relaxation.

### Know before you go

### Essential information

- **Fire (pompiers):** dial 18
- **Emergency services from mobile phone:** dial 112
- **Tourist office:** See [ski-resort.meribel.net](http://ski-resort.meribel.net), the website for the Méribel Tourist Board, for weather reports, lift status, webcams, traffic details and local event listings. Pick up maps, leaflets and other information from one of the offices, located in Méribel centre and Méribel Mottaret.

## The basics

- **Currency:** Euro
- **Telephone code:** from abroad, dial 00 33, then leave off the zero at the start of the 10-figure number.
- **Time difference:** +1 hour

## Local laws and etiquette

- When greeting people, formal titles (Monsieur, Madame and Mademoiselle) are used much more in French than in English.
- The laws of vouvoiement (which version of “you” to use) take years to master. If in doubt – except when talking to children or animals – always use the formal vous form (second person plural) rather than the more casual tu.
- When driving, it's compulsory to keep fluorescent bibs and a hazard triangle in the car in case of breakdown. Since 2021, it's also compulsory to have snow chains in your car or winter tyres from the beginning of November until March.





[Sign in](#)

[Mail](#)

[Life](#) [Royals](#) [Shopping](#) [Celebrities](#) [Style](#) [Family](#) [Health](#) [Home & Garden](#) [Travel](#) [Horoscopes](#)

LATEST STORIES



Wales Online

Huge Welsh attraction loved by millions of families up for sale for £4.5m

Local residents, regional visitors, and holiday makers have all made special memories at this tourist attraction that's now up for sale

a day ago



Manchester Evening News

'I think a trip to the local baths and a Greggs would have felt like more of a treat - and been a damn sight cheaper'

"Upon entering the reception, it was obvious the place is a little dated. But the pleasant staff and warm welcome more than made up for the rather drab interior."

6 hours ago

Ad • BrightLifeDaily.com

Incroyable:La calculatrice indique la valeur de votre maison instantanément (jetez un...



INSIDER

I paid \$400 for a roomette on a 15-hour Amtrak train. The 23-square-foot space was more comfortable than I expected.

Step on board a newly upgraded Amtrak Superliner sleeper car on the California Zephyr and see inside a roomette I booked for a 15-hour journey.

a day ago



Wales Online

The stunning sand dunes which buried a once-thriving Welsh town

A pub said to be one of Wales' most haunted is also located on the beautiful nature reserve's doorstep

10 hours ago



INSIDER

After years in economy, I took my first long-haul flight in business class. Here are 10 things that surprised me.

My first business-class seat on a long-haul Air New Zealand flight included fine dining, hot towels, and turn-down service.

2 days ago

Ad • eToro Market Updates

Le Bitcoin franchit la barre des 90 000\$ ! Explorer les Causes de la Hausse des Prix

Le Bitcoin franchit la barre des 90 000\$ ! Découvrez les facteurs clés qui poussent à cette flambée ...



Worried about flying? These airlines have been ranked the safest in Europe for 2025

AirlineRatings has released its rankings for the safest airlines to fly with in 2025, and several European airlines feature. View on euronews a day ago



BuzzFeed

People Who Work For Airlines Are Recounting Their Most Bizarre Or Most Frustrating Days On The Job, And Ew, Ew, Ew, Yikes, And OMG

"The smell. My goodness."

3 hours ago

Ad • eToro Market Updates

Le Bitcoin Passe la Barre des 90 000\$ – Un Marché Haussier est-il en train de Naître ?

Explorez la hausse massive du Bitcoin au-delà de 90 000\$ et demandez-vous s'il s'agit du début d'un ...



KameraOne

Elephants bathe in the sea with tourists on Thailand beach

This is the adorable moment two elephants bathe with a group of tourists on a beach in Koh Chang, Thailand on November 23.

a day ago



Wales Online

18 brilliant restaurants and places to eat within an hour's drive from Cardiff well worth the journey

If you fancy traveling outside the Welsh capital for a great dinner out there are some brilliant options

10 hours ago



Bradford Telegraph and Argus

Town with 'excellent views at every turn' among Britain's prettiest

Find out which town in West Yorkshire has been crowned among the prettiest in Great Britain according to a travel expert at The Telegraph.

a day ago

Ad • Outbyte Driver Updater

Most Computer Owners Don't Know This. Do It Today!

This Could Be the Most Important Tip You Read This Year



Yahoo Life UK

Going on 13 extreme day trips cured my fear of flying

Claire Howard's flying phobia was so severe she could barely set foot on a plane, but finally she set herself a challenge that changed her life.

2 days ago



Wales Online

The little road you've never heard of boasting Wales' best views

It's a simple road over a common but the sights are out of this world

a day ago

Ad • Start Surveys

Earn Money Today with makesurvey.online [Join Now]

Get paid to share your thoughts with makesurvey.online. Join today and start earning.



York Press

Nearby town beats York for 'magical experiences' say residents and visitors

YORK residents and visitors have voted that the 'Best magical Experience' can be found outside the city.

2 days ago



Business Insider

The 10 busiest airports in the world, ranked

According to data released by OAG, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport was the busiest airport in 2024. See the other airports in the top 10.

a day ago



HuffPost

I Went To A Nudist Swingers Resort Without My Girlfriend. Here's What Happened.

"What awaits a monogamous lesbian on vacation by herself with mostly heterosexual couples looking to play? A lot of fun."

18 hours ago

Ad • Topexpensive.com

The 10 Most Expensive Restaurants In The World



Bournemouth Echo UK

All the destinations you can fly to from Bournemouth Airport in 2025

Corfu, Majorca and Iceland are some of the spots people can travel to from Bournemouth Airport in 2025.

9 hours ago



Isle of Wight County Press

The Isle of Wight County Press A-Z of the Island

We take you through the alphabet of the Isle of Wight.



an hour ago