



Les Deux Alpes delivers affordable, snow sure ski breaks well into spring

Book an affordable family ski break with **Ski France** at Hôtel Ibiza in Les Deux Alpes with fabulous kids-go-free offers and cheap UK flights



In search of a snow sure and affordable family ski break Caroline Milns discovers delightfully retro vibes at Hôtel Ibiza hotel amid the slopes of Les Deux Alpes.

Nestled in the southern French Alps between sunny Alpe d'Huez and extreme ski mecca La Grave, Les Deux Alpes is a surprisingly affordable family ski break considering it offers glacier skiing up to 3600m, the highest altitude slopes in France.

Indeed, 80% of the resort slopes are above 2600m, making Les Deux Alpes one of the most snow sure resorts in France, so conditions were impeccable for our pre-Christmas trip, but the season here stretches right into mid-April.

Why we chose Hôtel Ibiza for our family ski break?

We were staying at the Hotel Ibiza, a family-focused half-board hotel owned and operated by **Ski France**, who have carved out a niche offering luxury, yet affordable, family ski breaks, in attractive ski accommodation across the French Alps. What is especially eye-catching is their kids-ski-free package; where kids can stay half board for no extra charge in a selection of family rooms.

Eschewing traditional star rating systems, which they believe are no more than a box ticking exercise, **Ski France** have instead developed a winning formula for what guests really want from a ski holiday: friendly service; great unpretentious food with a different offering each evening; epic breakfasts; large reception areas with table football, pool and table tennis tables; well-priced wine and cocktails, plus the all-important wellness areas – Hôtel Ibiza has both a swimming pool and spa.

Quite how that is not 4-star is beyond me, but they took the view to downgrade to become a very spacious 3-star, with 60 well-proportioned rooms all coming with indulgently huge and super comfortable beds.



Located in a prime position at the top of main resort area, a short walk from the bars, boutiques and bowling alley, the bar and restaurant have huge communal spaces, with wood clad floors in rich, cosy colours where guests can spread out and relax without ever feeling like the hotel is overcrowded.

Drawing on the Ibiza name as inspiration, the interiors have a musical vibe, and were originally re-designed for a winter version of the Ibiza Rocks festival. Funky retro band posters clad corridor walls, taking parents on a trip down memory lane and rows of vinyl LPs line the teen break-out areas.

The new Jandri lift is a real game-changer for Les Deux Alpes

After settling in, we collected our skis from the convenient hotel ski shop and headed straight to 'Le Strike Bowling Alley', a cute little retro place off the main street. This was a fun way to kick off the trip with a few lucky strikes!

We then headed back to celebrate at the hotel's lavish buffet. Each night has a different headline act, from moules frites to Mexican or sushi, plus there's a fresh salad bar, as well as a dessert buffet and selection of grills and stews.

The next day we were up with the lark, for First Tracks with the ski patrollers, a popular activity that can be booked through the tourist office and a fantastic way to start a skiing day.

We met at the base of the new Jandri lift which is a real game-changer for Les Deux Alpes. Looking decidedly space-age this new two-stage gondola cuts the journey time from the base of the village to the base of the glacier from 40 to 17 minutes, and that is without factoring in any reduction in queues.

The frameless gondola windows look like giant cinema screens, with the stunning panoramic scenes even better in the morning light. And sashaying down a deserted sunrise mountain on pristine groomed corduroy was the best snow of the week. Pure Bliss!

Authentic experiences add even more value to this affordable family ski break

We had the slopes to ourselves for a couple of hours before heading to Chalet de la Toura for a high-mountain breakfast of croissants and platters of ham and cheese, along with much-appreciated frothy hot chocolates: all part of the Fresh Tracks programme.

We also learned how the pisteurs prepared the slopes for the day, and why the mountain is especially well suited to families. As well as nursery slopes right at the base, the glacier has some fantastic greens and gentle blues ideal for developing beginners and early intermediates. While for stronger skiers what gives Les Deux Alps the edge is its multi-level, multi terrain skiing; you can start at the glacier at 3600m and ski all the way down to the village of Mont de Lans at 1300m, 2300m of vertical descent without using a lift.

The last treat of the day was a visit to quaint Venosc, a tiny, picturesque French village on the edge of the resort accessed by cable car. We wandered down cobblestone lanes, shopping in chic petit boutiques and stopping to enjoy hot chocolate, French style. Inevitably we ran out of time, so had to run for the last cable car to whisk us back up to Les Deux Alps centre. The fun filled day came to end



and we were lured back into the spacious hotel lounge bar with Crémant on tap and another bountiful buffet dinner.

Yooner Sledging is our new fave way to get down the slopes

Our last day was spent enjoying the vast slopes on offer at this fantastic resort. We also shared a delightful lunch back at Chalet de la Toura, eating 'Pinsas': pizzas inspired from Ancient Rome, as well as other Italian specialties on the menu.

However, fun on the slopes is not just limited to skis, as that afternoon we tried 'Yooner Sledging'. This unique, fun way of getting down the slopes is suitable for all abilities and mercifully safer than a sledge. Essentially it's sit-on fat ski, that you hold like a western saddle, steer by leaning, and brake with your feet. We quickly got the hang of it and made easy work of careering down a long blue run, the ultimate high-octane thrill.

The final word must go to the hotel staff from all over the world who gave us an overwhelming feeling of warmth and welcome. Back at the hotel, the all-day dessert station was the icing on the cake, providing round the clock sustenance for hungry skiers, and was especially popular post-yooner! A great way to round off a wonderful trip!