**Méribel**

**Categories**

**Good For**

Beginners

Intermediates

Experts

Snowboarders

Families

Après ski

Snow reliability

**Data**

**Beginner Runs**

42

**Intermediate Runs**

23

**Advanced Runs**

8

**Total Runs**

73

**Lifts**

45

**Chairs**

17

**Drags**

13

**Gondola Cable Cars**

15

**Parks**

1

**Pipes**

4

**Weather**

**Annual Snowfall**

5m (16.4ft).

**Overview**

Strict building regulations in Méribel have seen the resort avoid the concrete blight seen in many French ski towns, and its chalet-style architecture has allowed it to retain its traditional Alpine atmosphere.

Méribel ski resort (along with its 1970s neighbour Méribel-Mottaret), caters to all levels of skiing ability, and it remains one of the most popular centres for British skiers and snowboarders in particular. Its prime location in the middle of the famous Trois Vallées (Three Valleys) ski area – the world’s largest lift-linked ski area – gives access to a staggering 600km (375 miles) of groomed pistes and some of the best off-piste terrain in the Alps.

Despite its traditional ambience and French charm, Méribel does not hold back when it comes to partying. Unlike many French resorts, which have a reputation for low-key nightlife, Méribel has become known on the ski scene for its choice of bars and venues in which to unwind into the small hours.

**Location**

Méribel lies in the Savoie region of the French Alps, above the town of Moûtiers, with Courchevel to the east, and Les Menuires and Val Thorens to the west. Méribel-Mottaret is a few hundred metres uphill from Méribel Centre, with the shapely peak of Mont du Vallon (2,952m/9,685ft) dominating the head of the valley beyond.

**Website**

http://www.meribel.net

**Piste Map**

http://ski-area.meribel.net/fileadmin/RM/Plan\_des\_pistes/plan\_meribel.pdf

**Hit The Slopes**

The ski season in Méribel lasts from early December to late April, and offers fairly reliable snow cover. Failing that, almost half of the slopes are armed with snow cannons that provide a constant white coating, as long as temperatures are low enough.

The lift system radiates from two central hubs at Chaudanne and Mottaret, linking Méribel to the neighbouring resorts of Courchevel, Les Menuires and Val Thorens, which make up the vast Trois Vallées area. This grouping of pistes is so big that skiers need not ski the same run twice during a week in the resort.

Méribel is a solid family resort, best suited to intermediates, but with good beginners' areas. Beginners can practise on the green pistes below the Altiport, before progressing to the easy blues beneath the mid-station of the Tougnette chairlift and the Marmotte, Biche, Geai and Belette blues on the Saulire side.

Most intermediates will want to bag the Mauduit – a challenging red that was once an Olympic downhill course – and the two long, exhilarating red pistes that descend from the summit of Mont du Vallon.

Classic black runs include La Face (another former Olympic downhill) and the mogul fields of Les Bosses and Bartavelle. There’s also plenty of epic off-piste terrain on Mont du Vallon and Mont de la Chambre, and further off-piste action in nearby Courchevel and Val Thorens.

Freestylers can choose between two snow parks: one accessed via the Arpasson chairlift, and the other from the Plattières gondola.

Visitors can sign up with one of several ski schools, the largest of which is the École du ski Français (ESF) (tel: 04 7908 6031; [www.esf-meribel.com](http://www.esf-meribel.com)). Equipment hire is also widely available in the resort.

**Méribel**

**Resort**

1450

**Base**

1100

**Top**

2952

**General**

**Beyond The Slopes**

Méribel offers a wide range of non-skiing activities on the slopes, including snowshoeing, dog sledding and snowmobiling.

The resort itself boasts an Olympic ice skating rink, swimming pool, cinema, bowling alley, various wellness areas (featuring Jacuzzi, hammam, sauna and massage areas) and a fitness centre. For something a little different, take a 90-minute horse-drawn carriage tour of the resort or an hour-long tour to the lake.

For further options, take a trip to the neighbouring town of Brides-les-Bains, which has a casino; or take to the air with a paragliding trip over the mountains with TandemTOP (tel: 04 7900 4567; [www.parapente-meribel.fr](http://www.parapente-meribel.fr)).

**Family Fun**

The École du ski Français (ESF) (tel: 04 7908 6031; [www.esf-meribel.com](http://www.esf-meribel.com)) operates 'Les Saturnins' day care for children aged 18 months to three years old and a ski kindergarten in the snow garden. Children can then progress to the usual group lessons taught to the French national testing standard throughout childhood.

If the little ones are tired of the piste, take them dog sledding or ice skating; or try out the water slides at Méribel's swimming pool (tel: 04 7900 5821).

Childcare services include the British-run Merinannies (tel: +44 (0)7860 925 055; [www.merinannies.co.uk](http://www.merinannies.co.uk)) and the Meriski holiday agency (route du Mussillon; tel: +44 (0)1285 648 518; [www.meriski.co.uk](http://www.meriski.co.uk)), the latter of which has its own crèche.

**Retail Therapy**

The main shopping offering in Méribel is tailored to ski gear and outdoor clothing. Check out Fat Face (Galerie des Cimes, route du Centre) for clothes; Freeride (Le Tremplin, route Albert Gaçon; tel: 04 7900 4241; [www.freeride.fr](http://www.freeride.fr)) for gear; and Méribel Optic (Le Tremplin, route Albert Gaçon; tel: 04 7900 5277; [www.meribel-optique.com](http://www.meribel-optique.com)) for sunglasses.

For chic ski accessories, head over to Sport Boutique (Place de l'Office du Tourisme, tel: 04 7908 6300; [www.sport-boutique.com](http://www.sport-boutique.com)) in Méribel Centre, right next to the tourist office.

The resort also has a number of independent shops, including Le Maison Braissand (Les Glaciers; tel: 04 7908 5690; [www.maisonbraissand.com](http://www.maisonbraissand.com)), which offers homemade irresistible chocolates, ice cream and cakes.

**Splashing Out**

Treat yourself to a romantic, gourmet dinner at Restaurant Le Blanchot (tel: 04 7900 5578; [leblanchot.com](http://leblanchot.com)) at Altiport, with its great setting, intimate atmosphere, excellent cuisine and wicked desserts. The restaurant is also open during the day and has a large terrace nestled amongst the trees.

**Apres Ski**

Après-ski action kicks off at the Rond Point Bar (tel: 04 7900 3751; [www.rondpointmeribel.com](http://www.rondpointmeribel.com)) at the mid-station of the Rhodos gondola. Here, live bands play six days a week, from 1700 to 1900, with dance moves lubricated by Méribel's notorious toffee vodka.

For a more relaxing evening, L’Aviatic Lounge Bar in the Altiport Hotel (Altiport; tel: 04 7900 5232; [www.altiporthotel.fr](http://www.altiporthotel.fr)) offers fine wines and cocktails, and has sumptuous leather chairs and an open fire perfect for re-energising during any lingering post-ski comedown.

End the night – or early morning to be more precise – in Dick's Tea Bar (route de Mussillon; tel: 04 7908 6019; [www.dicksteabar.com](http://www.dicksteabar.com)), a venerable Méribel institution, where revellers can dance till 0400 to the resort's best line-up of resident and guest DJs.

**Eating Out**

Be prepared to reach deep into your pockets if you plan on dining out as Trois Vallées eateries, including restaurants in Méribel, are notoriously expensive – although if you look beyond the main street and snow front, you’ll generally find lower prices.

Among the few reasonably priced options is Zig Zag (Le Châtelet; tel: 04 7900 4740), a cosy little lunch spot near the foot of the Ramées chairlift. Alternatively, the moderately priced restaurant in the Le Croix Jean-Claude hotel (tel: 04 7908 6105; [www.croixjeanclaude.com](http://www.croixjeanclaude.com)) in nearby Les Allues offers inventive local cuisine using seasonal ingredients.

Those who like to splash out can flex the plastic at Altiport Hotel (tel: 04 7900 5232; [www.altiporthotel.fr](http://www.altiporthotel.fr)), which boasts not one, but three high-quality eateries; including Le Zinc Brasserie with its large terrace, and L’Annexe, which serves regional specialities such as raclette and fondue. Away from this complex, Le Bistort de l’Orée (Le Rond-Point; tel: 04 7900 5030; [www.meribel-oree.com](http://www.meribel-oree.com)) sources regional ingredients for its top-quality local fare.

**Transport**

**Getting There**

Nearest airports: Chambéry Airport (CMF); Geneva International Airport (GVA).

Distances to resort: 96km (60 miles); 180km (112 miles).

Driving times: 1 hour 15 minutes; 2 hours.

Nearest railway station: Moûtiers.

Distance to resort: 19km (12 miles).

Driving time: 30 minutes.

**Getting Around**

A free bus service runs every half hour, linking Chaudanne in the centre of Méribel to Mottaret, Rond Point, Altiport, Belvédère and Les Allues – this can often become very crowded during the peak season. Timetables are available from the tourist office.

It is possible to ski from Méribel to all the other resorts in the Trois Vallées ski area.

**Hotels**

Méribel features mostly pleasant chalet-style architecture and is one of the more tastefully designed French resorts, with a lot of individual chalets and low-rise buildings. Accommodation in Méribel is very much based around chalets, including a range of luxury options with saunas and hot tubs, as well as more budget-friendly versions. There is also a selection of excellent hotels in Méribel, though the majority are not cheap.

**Chalet La Boua**

Barely a snowball throw from the lifts at Chaudanne, this cool little chalet offers bed and breakfast accommodation in stylish, wood-panelled bedrooms complete with en-suite showers.

**Category**

Cheap

**Thoroughfare**

Route de la Chaudanne

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Méribel-Mottaret

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

04 7904 1475.

**Website**

http://www.laboua.fr

**Les Crêts**

These Pierre & Vacances-run apartments in Méribel-Mottaret sit right on the slopes, offering easy ski-in, ski-out access. Each unit is kitted out with a modern kitchen, dining area and living room with satellite TVs.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

Le Châtelet

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Méribel-Mottaret

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

08 9270 2180.

**Website**

http://www.pv-holidays.com

**Le Kaïla**

The first 5-star hotel in Méribel, Le Kaïla offers luxury accommodation in chalet-style comfort in Chaudanne. Among its amenities are an opulent Nuxe spa and a restaurant serving local specialities using seasonal ingredients.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

Route Albert Gacon

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Méribel

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

04 7908 8903.

**Website**

http://www.lekaila.com