**Villars**

**Categories**

**Good For**

Beginners

Intermediates

Snowboarders

Families

**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**

Villars ski resort, situated on a natural balcony with southern exposure, offers picturesque skiing, family facilities and multiple options for non-skiers.

There have been inhabitants in the Villars area since the first peasants started farming here in the 12th century. But it was not until the first train line was installed from Bretaye in 1913 that the area started to take to skiing, with one of the first ever ski lifts being built here in 1936.

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.

Villars’ ski area is well serviced with links to the traditional village of Gryon across the valley, and more challenging skiing and snowboarding opportunities in neighbouring Les Diablerets. Until recently, the rather low altitude of the area and sunny slopes did occasionally cause snow cover problems, but the 2010 improvements in snowmaking facilities have gone a long way towards combating the issue.

**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, offering a particularly generous arrangement for children who 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, one of which (Chaux Ronde) is classified as a black run – albeit a relatively easy one. 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 means 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: 024 495 4545; [www.villarsski.ch](http://www.villarsski.ch)) and École Suisse de Ski et de Snowboard (tel: 024 495 2210; [www.ecole-suisse-de-ski-villars.ch](http://www.ecole-suisse-de-ski-villars.ch)). There is an on-site ski hire operation and a range of alternative hire shops in the village. Facilities for disabled skiers are also available.

**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: 024 495 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: 024 466 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 (route du Col de la Croix; tel: 024 495 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 (rue de la gare; tel: 024 492 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 (route de la Plage 122; tel: 024 482 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 (rue Centrale; tel: 024 495 2801), while for parents, the Magasin Relay (Ancienne Gare; tel: 024 495 2621) is the place to buy international newspapers.

**Splashing Out**

For adventurous visitors, Villars offers superb paragliding opportunities, available through Dimension 3 (tel: 079 435 2123; [www.dimension-3.ch](http://www.dimension-3.ch)) and Smith Paragliding (tel: 024 495 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. Le Blues Bar (place de la Gare; tel: 024 495 2126) plays live blues and serves fondue and other traditional dishes. Charlie's Bar (route des Hôtels; tel: 024 495 7595) is a good place for televised sports events and live music – it also offers free entry to the adjoining El Gringo nightclub (route des Hôtels; tel: 024 495 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.

**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.

L'Alpe Fleurie (place de la Gare; tel: 024 496 3074; [www.alpe-fleurie.com](http://www.alpe-fleurie.com)) has outside space with mountain views and serves local specialities, including fondue. Au Feu de Bois (avenue Centrale 152; tel: 024 496 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.

**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.

**Chalet Royalp Hotel & Spa**

This 5-star hotel is the most impressive in the area, and is situated right next to the slopes. Accommodation is arranged in rooms, suites and apartments. 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**

XXX

**Country**

Switzerland

**Telephone**

024 495 9090.

**Website**

http://www.royalp.ch

**Hôtel du Golf**

The family-run Hôtel du Golf boasts three restaurants as well as 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**

XXX

**Country**

Switzerland

**Telephone**

024 496 3838.

**Website**

http://www.hoteldugolf.ch

**La Griotte**

A typical Swiss chalet offering hostel-style rooms with two, four or six beds, La Griotte is a good option for groups. The hotel is located in neighbouring Chesières village, next to the free ski-bus stop, a kilometre or so from the Roc d’Orsay gondola.

**Category**

Cheap

**Thoroughfare**

rue Centrale 31

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Villars

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Switzerland

**Telephone**

024 495 2960.

**Website**

http://www.hostelvillars.ch