**Val d'Isère**

**Categories**

**Good For**

Beginners

Intermediates

Experts

Snowboarders

Families

Non-skiers

Après ski

Summer skiing

Snow reliability

**Data**

**Beginner Runs**

83

**Intermediate Runs**

46

**Advanced Runs**

25

**Total Runs**

154

**Lifts**

87

**Chairs**

45

**Drags**

34

**Gondola Cable Cars**

8

**Parks**

1

**Pipes**

0

**Weather**

**Annual Snowfall**

6m (20ft).

**Overview**

Val d'Isère ski resort is a traditional French Alpine village with centuries of history and beautiful stone chalets, which contrasts starkly with neighbouring Tignes' purpose-built apartment blocks. Skiing began here in the 1930s, but really took off after WWII and has continued to grow in popularity ever since.

Today, Val d'Isère is a lively resort with busy shops, restaurants and a buzzing nightlife that attracts a large smattering of British and Scandinavian ski bums. The resort centre has been extensively redeveloped in recent years and is now largely pedestrianised.

Val d'Isère ski resort is also a leading competition venue. It held several events during the 1992 Winter Olympics and most recently was host venue of the 2009 Alpine World Ski Championships. Staging these two events, in addition to regular World Cup competitions, place it in an elite group of five resorts worldwide that have staged all three levels of world-class international competition.

Together with Tignes, Val d'Isère forms part of the 10,000-hectare (25,000-acre) Espace Killy ski area, home to some of France's best on- and off-piste terrain and one of the world’s biggest lift-served verticals.

**Location**

Val d'Isère is located in the southeastern French region of Savoie in the Western Alps, close to the Italian border.

**Website**

http://www.valdisere.com

**Piste Map**

http://www.valdisere.com/valdisere/en/glisse/domaine\_skiable/plan\_des\_pistes

**Hit The Slopes**

The main ski season in Val d'Isère runs from early December until early May. Summer skiing is available on the Fornet glacier for about five weeks from mid-June until mid-July.

A combination of mostly modern cable cars, gondolas, funiculars and chairlifts whisks skiers up from Val's centre, as well as from the nearby villages of La Daille, Le Laisinant and Le Fornet.

There are nursery slopes at the Solaise and La Daille bases, while Bellevarde is a good area for progressing beginners – although less so for snowboarders due to some long flat sections – with its wide-open, easy green runs. New starters can learn with École du Ski Français (tel: 04 7906 0234; [www.esfvaldisere.com](http://www.esfvaldisere.com)), Snowfun (tel: 04 7906 1979; [www.valfun.com](http://www.valfun.com)), Evolution 2 (tel: 04 7900 7729; [evolution2.com](http://evolution2.com)) or Oxygène (tel: 04 7941 9958; [oxygene-ski.com](http://oxygene-ski.com)), which are among the numerous operators vying for attention of beginners.

There are some cruisey reds and blues from Bellevarde down to La Daille, including the Coupe du Monde OK run that suits intermediates looking for a challenge. Santons is a nice blue-graded gully in the other direction, and takes skiers back into town.

The Solaise area across the valley offers further greens, blues and reds, with an ‘up-and-over' chairlift to the furthest away terrain by the Col de l'Iséran, from which it’s possible to ski right down to Le Fornet.

Advanced skiers and riders, meanwhile, can speed down the black Face on Bellevard with its jarring moguls. But it’s off-piste terrain where Val d'Isère really comes good, with some of the best options in the world. Experienced off-piste skiers should try the Couloir des Pisteurs with its narrow descent, while those with less experience or bravery can head for the Pays Désert above Le Fornet.

Freestylers can play in the terrain park in the Bellevarde area with its jumps, rails, boardercross course and dedicated lifts.

A pass for the entire Espace Killy region (that includes Tignes, which is connected by two chairlifts) gives skiers 300km (186 miles) of slopes to explore.

**Espace Killy**

**Resort**

1850

**Base**

1550

**Top**

3450

**Val d'Isère**

**Resort**

1850

**Base**

1785

**Top**

3300

**General**

**Beyond The Slopes**

Aside from downhill skiing, Val d'Isère has 21km (13 miles) of cross-country trails to enjoy, as well as an assortment of the usual ski resort activities of dog sledding, snowmobiling, ice climbing, snowshoeing and ice skating. Among the more unusual activities is the chance for visitors to have a go at biathlon (tel: 06 9803 8144), which involves cross-country skiing and shooting.

Indoors, there's an excellent new sports centre with a swimming pool complex. While a cinema can provide endless hours of entertainment come the end of the ski day.

For something a little different, sign up for a patisserie class at Maison Chevallot (tel: 04 7906 1609; [www.chevallot.com](http://www.chevallot.com)) with resident pastry chef Patrick Chevallot, who can help to equip customers with the skills needed to replicate delicious French pastries at home.

**Family Fun**

Nursery care is provided by Le Petit Poucet (Les Hameaux de Val; tel: 04 7906 1397; [www.garderielepetitpoucet.com](http://www.garderielepetitpoucet.com)), which caters for ages three and up (free pick-up is available from accommodation). Le Village des Enfants (Le Rond Point des Pistes; tel: 04 7940 0981; [www.valdisere-levillagedesenfants.com](http://www.valdisere-levillagedesenfants.com)) accepts children from three to 13 for fun activities and ski lessons. For pushchairs, travel cots, high chairs and other bulky baby essentials, contact Hors Piste, which can rent the required items – the tourist office can provide more details (tel: 04 7906 0660; [www.valdisere.com](http://www.valdisere.com)).

On Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 1730, kids can try a new activity at the special 'fun zone'. This could be airboarding (a form of bodyboarding on snow), snake glissing (tobogganing on joined-up sledges), curling or snow football. Alternatively, take the kids to watch the cows being milked every day at 1800 at Ferme de l'Adroit (tel: 06 0899 1320; [www.fermedeladroit.com](http://www.fermedeladroit.com)).

**Retail Therapy**

Shopaholics will not be disappointed, with more than 70 shops in Val d'Isère. Among these are numerous ski and snowboard retailers and many well-known sports clothing outlets, including Quiksilver, Billabong, The North Face and Columbia. There's also the usual selection of newsagents, tobacconists and supermarkets.

Aside from these mountain essentials, there are various souvenir shops to peruse; or for that special gift for a loved one, head to one of three jewellers in the resort. Art-lovers also have a good choice of small galleries, including the Gallerie Jane Griffiths (tel: 04 7907 8933; [www.galeriejanegriffiths.com](http://www.galeriejanegriffiths.com)), which showcases work from various artists.

**Splashing Out**

Get behind the wheel of a BMW at Val's ice driving circuit, La Daille (tel: 06 7949 4923; [www.circuitvaldisere.com](http://www.circuitvaldisere.com)), which offers half-day or full-day tuition in the art of sliding around in a car while miraculously still being in control.

**Apres Ski**

Val d'Isère is renowned for its après-ski scene and is definitely one of the livelier resorts after dark in the French Alps, which are generally not too lively.

For some early evening relaxation, try the cocktails at Le Bananas (tel: 04 7906 0423) at the foot of the slopes; or unwind with musical entertainment at the stylish Café Face (Immeuble Christiania; tel: 04 7906 2980; [www.cafeface.com](http://www.cafeface.com)), which has live daily acts from 1700 to 0200. Le Saloon Bar (Avenue des Télépheriques; tel: 04 7906 0158; [www.saloonbar.com](http://www.saloonbar.com)) is particularly popular with ski season workers.

Finish the night off with a turn on the dance floor at Le Graal (Route de la Balme; tel: 06 1679 5290; [www.graalclub.com](http://www.graalclub.com)) or the famous (and raucous) Dick's Tea Bar (Les Crêtes Blanches; tel: 06 2017 8954; [www.dicksteabar.com](http://www.dicksteabar.com)).

**Eating Out**

There's no shortage of restaurants in Val d’Isère, many of which dish up traditional regional cuisine. Of these, La Raclette in Hôtel l'Avancher (Route du Prariond; tel: 04 7906 0200; [avancher.com](http://avancher.com)) has been serving customers its ‘Valaisanne’ raclette for more than 40 years. For a fine dining treat, enjoy the gastronomic delights of Michelin-starred Le Table de l'Ours in Hôtel les Barmes de l'Ours (Chemin des Carats; tel: 04 7941 3700; [www.hotel-les-barmes.com](http://www.hotel-les-barmes.com)).

Val d’Isère has plenty of snack bars for those who just want to grab a quick bite. The Billabong Coffee Shop (Immeuble le Kandahar; tel: 04 7906 0954) is good for burgers, shakes and wraps. Or, if skied-out limbs are not in the mood for budging, Flash Pizza (Immeuble Iséran; tel: 04 7941 9606; [flashpizzavaldisere.com](http://flashpizzavaldisere.com)) does home delivery.

**Transport**

**Getting There**

Nearest airports: Chambéry Airport (CMF); Geneva International Airport (GVA); Grenoble-Isère Airport (GNB); Lyon-Saint Exupéry Airport (LTS).

Distances to resort: 145km (90 miles): 180km (112 miles); 210km (131 miles); 220km (137 miles).

Driving times: 2 hours; 3 hours; 3 hours; 3 hours.

Nearest railway station: Bourg-Saint-Maurice.

Distance to resort: 32km (20 miles).

Driving time: 40 minutes.

**Getting Around**

Most of Val d’Isère village is easy to explore on foot for those who are either staying in or visiting the centre. For those wishing to explore away from here, a free bus connects the outlying villages and different lift bases. In addition to the chairlift connection, there is a bus service between Val d’Isère and Tignes.

**Hotels**

Accommodation in Val d’Isère is all about chalets, with something to suit every need and budget. There are properties at every level of the market, including extremely luxurious options with their own saunas, hot tubs and even swimming pools. But there are also more than 30 hotels in Val d’Isère – most of which sit in the high-end category – as well as hundreds of apartments.

**Hôtel les Barmes de l'Ours**

This 5-star hotel has a ‘wow factor’ with its innovative décor and boasts a spa with a pool and Jacuzzi, three restaurants and a lounge bar.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

Chemin des Carat

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Val-d'Isère

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

04 7941 3700.

**Website**

http://www.hotel-les-barmes.com

**Hôtel Les Lauzes**

A pleasant chalet-style hotel close to the lifts, Hôtel Les Lauzes offers rooms with balconies and free Wi-Fi internet access.

**Category**

Cheap

**Thoroughfare**

Rue de l'Église

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Val-d'Isère

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

04 7906 0420.

**Website**

http://www.hotel-lauzes.com

**Hôtel Tsanteleina**

This 4-star hotel in the village centre has been run by the same family since 1948. The hotel has an impressive spa, a cosy bar and a restaurant that serves a seafood buffet every Friday.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

Olympique

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Val-d'Isère

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

04 7906 1213.

**Website**

http://www.tsanteleina.com