**Courchevel**

**Categories**

**Good For**

Intermediates

Experts

Snowboarders

Families

Non-skiers

Après ski

Snow reliability

Environmental awareness

**Data**

**Beginner Runs**

27

**Intermediate Runs**

82

**Advanced Runs**

10

**Total Runs**

119

**Lifts**

60

**Chairs**

18

**Drags**

31

**Gondola Cable Cars**

11

**Parks**

1

**Pipes**

0

**Weather**

**Annual Snowfall**

5.3m (17ft).

**Overview**

One of the best known ski resorts in France, and indeed the world, Courchevel is part of the world's largest fully lift-linked ski area, the vast Trois Vallées (Three Valleys). It is also one of the highest and most snowsure ski resorts in the Alps.

Courchevel has attracted skiers since the mid-1940s but shot to prominence a decade later from the 1950s and 60s, when it became a popular destination for the jet set. Half a century later, that reputation remains and you can find the same calibre of hotel (the resort claims to have the highest concentration of luxury accommodation in the world), restaurants and shops that you would find in St Moritz or Aspen. In other words, the best there is.

Indeed, in 2009 when France finally decided to grade hotels up to five stars, in keeping with most of the rest of the world (previously the highest grading in the country was 4-star deluxe); five of the first 11 hotels in France to be rated 5-star were in Courchevel. That list has continued to grow since and the resort now has more than 10 5-star hotels – more than any other ski area in the world. However, it is possible to enjoy a ski holiday in Courchevel on the same budget as any other ski resort if you avoid high price terms such as ‘5-star' or ‘exclusive'.

You might also choose to stay in one of the four villages below the main resort at 1,850m (6,069ft). Courchevel Moriond (1650), Courchevel Village (1550), Courchevel Le Praz (1330) and Courchevel Saint-Bon are slightly downmarket compared to Courchevel (1850), as well as being further down the mountain, but are still very nice – some now even boast 5-star hotels and chalets of their own. The different areas are linked into the lift network, which is powered by renewable energy, making the region among the greenest ski areas.

**Location**

Courchevel is located in the Savoie Alps of southeastern France, close to the Swiss and Italian borders. It is part of the large Trois Vallées ski area, within the Tarentaise Valley.

**Website**

http://www.courchevel.com

**Piste Map**

http://www.courchevel.com/plan-station.php?alti=domaine

**Hit The Slopes**

With 150km (93 miles) of pistes, the Courchevel Valley makes up a quarter of the Trois Vallées ski area, with its total of 600km (373 miles) of runs and nearly 200 lifts – but the local area on its own has much more than most resorts can offer.

Beginners need not pay out for a lift ticket from day one, as there are a dozen lifts operating free of charge for first timers on nursery slopes near to the resort's various bases. Beginners can then progress onto ideal terrain (wide blues and greens) further up the ski area.

Average ability skiers will find more lift-linked skiing for them in Courchevel and the Trois Vallées than anywhere else on the planet, with 237 blues and reds in total.

Experts also have a huge choice, including the famous ‘Ugly Sisters' couloirs and steep mogul fields such as Jean Blanc. Heli-skiing over into Italy (it’s illegal in France), off-piste tours and many other advanced-level ski activities can be organised through the local ski schools or the mountain guides’ office.

The ski season in Courchevel runs from early December to the end of April.

**Courchevel**

**Resort**

1850

**Base**

1100

**Top**

2738

**Trois Vallées**

**Resort**

1100

**Base**

1300

**Top**

3200

**General**

**Beyond The Slopes**

There is a wide choice of activities in Courchevel besides skiing and snowboarding. Staying outdoors; snowshoeing, quad biking, ice karting, toboggan runs, snow rafting or a leisurely sleigh ride are available to those with expendable energy. While indoors, Le Forum at Courchevel has an Olympic-sized ice-skating rink, 13m-high (45ft) climbing wall, games room and a bowling alley. Spa facilities are available at multiple locations.

For those with a head for heights, paraglide or hang-glide above the resort, or take a helicopter, balloon or scenic plane flight – with the option of learning to fly the plane yourself.

Unlike many ski resorts, culture is a key part of life in Courchevel. More unusual opportunities include a cultural tour of Courchevel, cookery courses with Michelin-starred chef Michel Rochedy, or language lessons in a resort where some 60 different nationalities are normally present. And, after years of collaboration with the renowned Galeries Bartoux, Courchevel has established itself as a centre of contemporary art in the mountains, with galleries in the resort and ski area.

**Family Fun**

From 18 months upwards, children can be cared for by the École de Ski Français (ESF) (tel: 04 7908 0772; [www.esfcourchevel.com](http://www.esfcourchevel.com)) at its nurseries in Courchevel and Courchevel Moriond. Here, children can discover the joys of playing in the snow and, for the most adventurous, the first thrills of skiing. A full list of nurseries and childminders is available from the tourist office.

The resort has also initiated a world first on the slopes, with a clever system involving magnets helping to keep kids safe on chairlifts. When the lifts close, toboggan runs are set up in front of the villages; the longest is 2.3 km (1.8 miles) running down from Courchevel’s slopes. After 10 minutes of descent through the forest, tight bends and many thrills and potential spills, participants reach the main village, from where they can take a fast gondola back up – this is free after 1645.

Off the slopes, Le Forum sports centre in Courchevel has a rope swing and ‘mini-guides' course for children. There's also a specially designed bowling alley for children aged five and over, and the resort's cinemas show family films in school-holiday periods.

**Retail Therapy**

With more than 150 shops in Courchevel as a whole, the resort is a shopaholic’s paradise. The majority of stores are concentrated in the main Courchevel resort and, as you would expect given its upmarket reputation, these include the kind of designer fashion, jewellery, lingerie and perfumery boutiques you would find in the most exclusive districts of Paris, London or New York. Among these are Christian Dior and Louis Vuitton (beside the Hotel Cheval Blanc), Hermès and Valentino (place du Tremplin), Quiksilver (Le Forum) and jewellers Julian Joailliers (Espace Diamant).

There are, of course, plenty of ‘ordinary’ shops too, ranging from to souvenir shops to bakeries. Among these is Cooperative Latière de Moûtiers (Rue de la Chapelle; tel: 04 7908 0361; [www.beaufortdesmontagnes.com](http://www.beaufortdesmontagnes.com)), a purveyor of tasty local food produce in Courchevel La Praz.

**Splashing Out**

Courchevel's Animation Services (tel: 04 7922 0107; [www.animationservices.net](http://www.animationservices.net)) can organise amazing treats and feats limited only by imagination and budget. Its ‘Declaration of Love' concept involves a series of 20 increasingly wonderful surprises, many set against spectacular mountain scenery, with the aim of leaving the woman or man in your life lost for words.

**Apres Ski**

Courchevel ski resort is too sophisticated and too ‘French’ to get terribly rowdy (resorts in France have a reputation for low-key nightlife). But there are lively bars to be found on occasion, especially in Courchevel where most of the après-ski nightlife is concentrated.

There are a handful of lively après-ski nightclubs here, including: La Grange (rue Park City; tel: 04 7908 1461; [www.groupetournier.com](http://www.groupetournier.com)), Les Caves (Porte de Courchevel; tel. 04 7908 1274; [www.lescavesdecourchevel.com](http://www.lescavesdecourchevel.com)) and La Mangeoire (Park City, 73120 Courchevel, tel. 04 7908 0209). These stay open until the early hours, often until 0400.

In terms of the bar scene, Le Tremplin (Place du Tremplin; tel: 04 7908 0619; [www.tremplin-courchevel.com](http://www.tremplin-courchevel.com)) has a party feel and can become crowded, whilst Le Coyotte (Porte de Courchevel) portrays a more sophisticated image.

**Eating Out**

When it comes to gastronomy Courchevel is hard to beat, offering a large choice of restaurants for every taste and budget.

Gourmands are spoilt for choice, with seven eateries accounting for 12 stars in the Michelin Guide. Among the most famous is Le Chabichou (rue des Chenus; tel: 04 7908 0055; [www.chabichou-courchevel.com](http://www.chabichou-courchevel.com)), which holds two of these. Here, chef Michel Rochedy provides inventive cooking with meals served in the wonderful dining room; or, if you don't want to mix with the 'riffraff', a private lounge.

There are, of course, many other options on offer elsewhere in the resort; including Italian, Asian and Savoyard food. For traditional Alpine food such as crêpes, fondue and raclette, La Crêperie du Moulin (place du Tremplin; tel: 02 4307 7720; [www.creperiedumoulin.fr](http://www.creperiedumoulin.fr)) in Courchevel is the best option.

**Transport**

**Getting There**

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

Distances to resort: 110km (69 miles); 141km (88 miles).

Driving times: 1 hour 20 minutes; 2 hours 10 minutes.

Nearest railway station: Moûtiers.

Distance to resort: 23km (14 miles).

Driving time: 30 minutes.

**Getting Around**

A free shuttle bus service runs between Courchevel's various villages until late at night. In some cases it is also possible to take gondola lifts between villages as some run until 1930. For many years, the resort has been giving ever greater prominence to pedestrians and endeavouring to reduce motorised traffic in the village centres through road improvements and by increasing underground parking.

**Hotels**

There’s a wide range of slopeside accommodation in the form of traditional wood-clad apartments, private chalets and hotels in Courchevel. The resort has something to satisfy everyone, from ritzy hotels and grand chalets to moderately priced options. Chalets are a popular choice in the resort, with many boasting saunas, steam rooms and catering.

**Le Paddock**

A good option for those on a budget, Le Paddock provides comfy yet stylish accommodation in the main Courchevel area. Just 100m (328ft) from slopes, this hotel features Wi-Fi internet access, a TV corner and massage service.

**Category**

Cheap

**Thoroughfare**

rue des Verdons

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

73120 Courchevel

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

04 7904 1635.

**Website**

http://www.paddock-hotel.com

**Le Kilimandjaro**

One of twelve luxury hotels in Courchevel proper, and one of the first in France to be graded 5-star, the Kilimandjaro has 30 rooms and suites spread between seven interlinked chalet-style buildings. There is also a first-class spa here to ease post-ski aches and pains.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

Rue de l' Altiport

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Courchevel 1850

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

73120

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

04 7901 4646.

**Website**

http://www.hotelkilimandjaro.com

**Hôtel Les Monts Charvin**

Built in 1955 by one of Courchevel’s early fans, Maurice Charvin, Hotel Les Monts Charvin dates from the pre-concrete construction era of the resort, so is full of traditional charm. This 3-star hotel provides an affordable option that is also good for families.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

Impasse des Verdons

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

73120 Courchevel 1850

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

04 7904 1910.

**Website**

http://www.lesmontscharvin-courchevel1850.com

**Le Strato**

One of the newest 5-star hotels in resort, the chic Le Strato hotel balances its luxury services with the discretion and intimacy of a private chalet.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

route de Bellecôte

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

73120 Courchevel

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

04 7941 5160.

**Website**

http://www.hotelstrato.com