

White magic

Be spellbound by Les Arcs 1950, the picturesque pocket of the Paradiski piste

Surely you can't find charm and calm in a big, boisterous ski resort? Or perhaps you can. Step forward, Les Arcs 1950, which is tucked away quietly in the 435km of ski runs across the Paradiski in France, one of the largest ski areas in the world.

It's all a numbers game at Les Arcs, which is located in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region – the ski fanatics' favourite. There are resorts at various altitudes, including 1,600km, 1,800km, 2,000km and, of course, 1,950km – the latest addition to their piste portfolio, built in the early 2000s.

You can ski all around Les Arcs 1950, which boasts a surprising number of places to eat considering how compact the area is. There's also a spa to soothe aching muscles and a handful of options for evening entertainment. And if you tire of what's available here, just a lift ride or ski away are the attractions of the larger resorts.

Les Arcs likes to undergo regular improvements, the latest of which is a heated seat lift, as well as the less technical, but equally welcome, picnic areas on the slopes. But nothing will match a dip in a slope-side jacuzzi watching the skiers sashay by.



Les Arcs 1950
Le Village

On the run

You'll be feeling blue for all the right reasons here, because Les Arcs boasts blue runs at every possible turn, making it an ideal destination for families and mixed-ability groups. Every standard of skier will meet their perfect match, whether it's above or below the canopy of trees, with 200km of piste to play on and all with fantastic connections. The blues

tend to verge on the narrower side, so opt for the Mont

Blanc and Renard runs.

For a traffic-free adventure, try the red runs of Peisey-Vallandry – Aigle, Morey and Myrtilles – but be prepared for skiing on a series of steeper slopes. The best of the black run bunch are above Arc 2000, served by the Varlet gondola, where you're likely to find sizeable moguls. Off-piste playgrounds can be reached by the Varlet gondola and the Aiguille Rouge cable car. When visibility is poor, or if you're

in the mood for a leisurely ski, La Forêt – a tree-lined route – is the most photogenic of them all.

Take five

There's not a large selection of slope-side eateries, but the various resorts offer all you could need. Relaxed choices include Wood Bear Café, with sandwiches, quiche and cake, while Le Savoy at Arc 2000 has a cabin feel, offering hearty classics from fondue to fries. And Le Chalet de Luigi in Arc 1950 doesn't disappoint, offering all the carbs you're craving during a day's skiing. For more decadent dining,

Le 2134 rooftop can brag about having the best views, while La Table des Lys and La Vache Rouge do food with the finesse only the French can give.

Party animals have the option of Club Med and La Folie Douce, which is scheduled to open next year, and at O'Chaud at Arc 1950, you can expect dancing on the bar. If you're after a more sophisticated soirée, there are authentic Mongolian yurts where you can do wine tasting in a toasty tent. For families, not too far away is the Mille 8 Leisure Complex, which has a toboggan run that's floodlit in the early evening.

When it comes to accommodation, there are a variety of options to suit every budget, the super-luxe five-star Taj-I Mah boasts balconies looking straight out onto the slopes, as well as an indulgent spa with stunning views. The self-catered apartments at Le Village offer everything you need, including a heated outdoor pool and jacuzzi. For an authentic snow experience, you can spend a night in a hotel made of ice at the Village Igloo, with dinner, breakfast, and plenty of warm blankets available. It'll be a night to remember!

Need to know

- Download the resort's Yuge app, where you can track your progress and clock up your miles.
- There are several options for lift passes, but it's worth spending a little extra so you can cover the whole of the large Paradiski area.
- Evolution Ski School (Evolution2.com) cater to every type of ability, from nervous beginners to thrill-seeking experts.
- The nearest airports are Geneva, Lyon and Grenoble. Snowlinx taxis offer transfers, and there is a train station at Bourg St Maurice, where you can take a funicular train to Arc 1600, and there are free buses to Arcs 1800, 1950 and 2000
- Erna Low offers seven nights at the five-star Pierre & Vacances Residence Arc 1950 Le Village from £923 per apartment (sleeps four). Go to Ernalow.co.uk to book.

What to pack



Goggles, £135, Oakley

Ultimate Snow Service Gloves, £39.99, Superdry

Wavelite Ski Jacket, £159.99; Glamour Ski Pants, £139.99, both O'Neill

Line Miner Snow Hiking Boots, £49.99, Decathlon