A guide to ski holidays in Alpe d'Huez, the snow-sure French resort that has it all

The best places to stay, eat, drink and ski in the French resort with slopes for everyone from beginners to experts

Telegraph Ski

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Spanning 250km and five villages, Alpe d'Huez's slopes are hard to beat Credit: Getty/Benjamin Valette

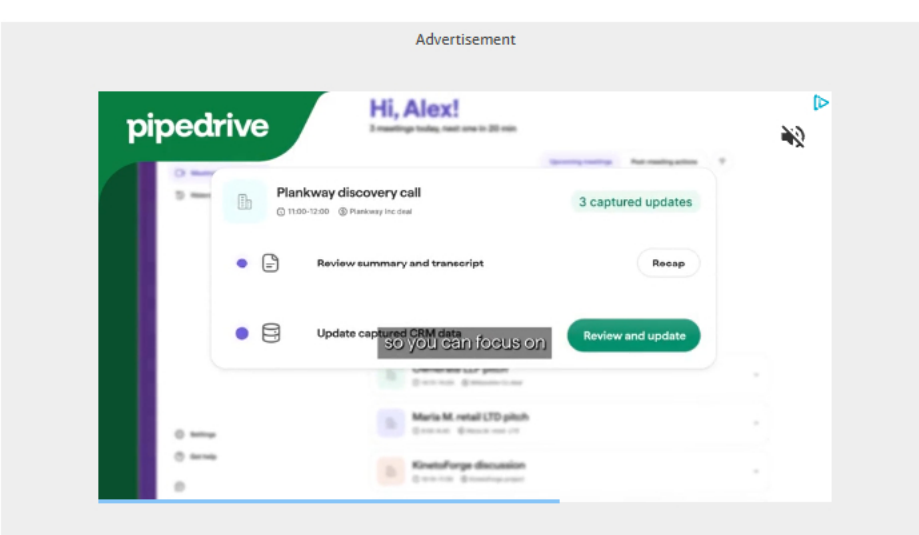
Few resorts in the Alps match Alpe d'Huez for all-rounder slopes. Skier or snowboarder, the terrain here is as well suited to experts as it is to beginners, while confident intermediates will have a ball.

The resort has grown spectacularly in stature since Polish engineer Jean Pomagalski installed the first drag lift in France here in the 1930s, powered by a Perkins Engine from a First World War American truck. Today, Alpe d'Huez has the fifth-largest ski area in France, with 250km of slopes encompassing the slopes of the outlying villages of Auris, Villard Reculas, Oz en Oisans and Vaujany.

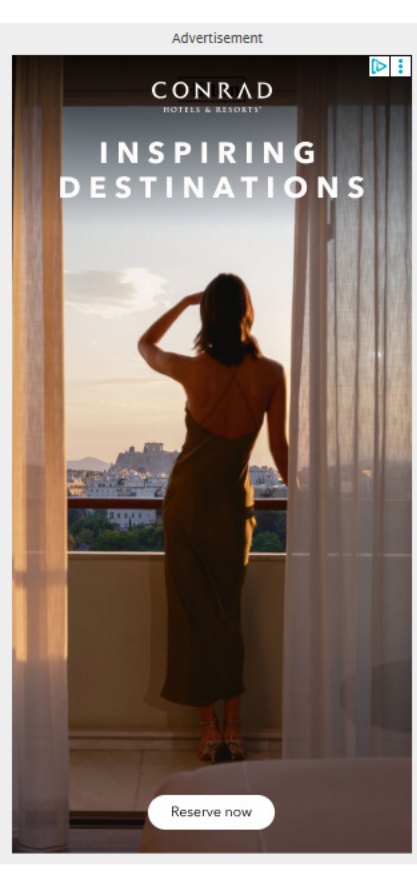
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Modernisation continues under the Altitude 3300 programme, which will include further replacement of old lifts, with improvement work on the Pic Blanc and Sarenne areas planned beyond the 2026/27 season.

In this guide:

- Resort guide
- Piste guide
- Where to stay
- When to go

Fast facts | Alpe d'Huez, France

Resort height	1,860m
Total ski area size	250km
Slope height	1,120 - 3,330m
Number of lifts	67
Lift pass price *	From €336.50
Nearest airport	Grenoble Isère (100km), 1 hour 45 minutes
Nearest station	Grenoble (63km), 75 minutes
Resort webcam	alpedhuez.com/en/winter/webcams

*six-day lift pass price for 2026/27

Resort guide

Alpe d'Huez has great pistes for all standards, a large 250km ski area and reliable snow cover. The slopes go from 1,135m up to a heady 3,330m, while the resort's Sarenne glacier, at the high point of Pic Blanc, helps to ensure sufficient snow cover for a long season that stretches from early December to mid-April. What's more, it's just a 90-minute drive from Grenoble, the nearest airport.

The village is located at 1,860m on a sunny plateau above the valley town of Bourg d'Oisans, and over the decades it has developed at random, resulting in an architectural hotchpotch split into eight small districts, or *quartiers*.

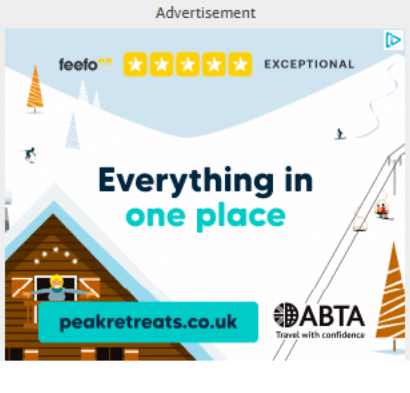
There has been a strong campaign with financial incentives from the town council to renovate some of the older buildings, but there's no denying the village still harbours some examples of 1960s concrete blocks and A-frame buildings – and without its customary softening blanket of snow it falls barely short of ugly.



Alpe d'Huez has had many makeovers over the years Credit: Getty/Mathieu Lassalle

The best places to stay are at the top end of town, close to the main slope-access lifts at the Rond Point des Pistes, or in the ski-in/ski-out Bergers district. This chalet suburb in the eastern corner of the resort is close to nursery slopes and a couple of chairlifts to mid-mountain.

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The slow Télécentre lift provides free access to Rond Point from the lower quartiers of the village; the huge two-stage Grandes Rousses gondola, also known as the DMC, leaves from Rond Point to mid-mountain. Alternatively, there's the 10-person Huez Express gondola that serves Huez, and the Alpe Express lift, which goes from the Vieil Alpe quarter (near the tourist office) to the Bergers and l'Eclose quarters.

There is a wealth of other activities on offer too, including ice driving, swimming in heated outdoor and indoor pools, ice skating, dog sledding, aerial activities such as paragliding, heli and plane flights, and snowshoeing. The sports centre offers more than 30 activities.

Our ratings

Beginners 5/5	Snow reliability 4/5	Après 4/5
Intermediates 5/5	Off piste 5/5	Off slope facilities 3/5
Experts 5/5	Village charm 1/5	Shops 2/5
Snowboarders 4/5	Families 4/5	Food 3/5
Terrain parks 4/5	Budget 3/5	Scenery 4/5
Extent 5/5	Luxury 2/5	

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Piste guide

Alpe d'Huez lies on a sunny plateau with slopes that reach to the far corners of an extensive ski area, which links the villages of Auris, Villard Reculas, Oz en Oisans and Vaujany. The resort village sits at the foot of the dominant Pic Blanc, though the 3,330m summit itself is not visible from the village. As a result, the sheer range and severity of the higher slopes comes as a stomach-churning surprise.

Main access to the Pic Blanc summit is via the two-stage DMC jumbo gondola from the resort, also known as the Télépherique des Grandes Rousses, followed by a cable car. The DMC - Altitude 3300 Project oversaw the renovation of the DMC G1 station, with the Télépherique des Grandes Rousses renamed Telecabines du Pic Blanc.

Beginners

Alpe d'Huez is home to some of the most extensive nursery slopes in the Alps. The two main beginner areas, at the Bergers end of the village and on the slopes served by the first stage of the DMC gondola, are accessed by a choice of drag-lifts, chairlifts and a chondola (a hybrid gondola/chair) as well as the DMC. The two areas are linked by easy pistes, and a dozen green runs offer a variety of beginner terrain to progress to that few other resorts can match. For 2026/27, the themed green run, "Marcel's Farm" in Signal is having a makeover, and a family piste is opening in Vaujany.

Intermediates

The ski area is also ideally suited to strong intermediates who enjoy the feeling of going somewhere each day, well beyond the central and often crowded runs just above the resort. The linked resorts of Oz and Vaujany on one side of Alpe d'Huez, and Auris on the other, have substantial ski areas. When snow conditions allow the runs down to the farming hamlet of Villard Reculas are some of the most enjoyable in the region.



The dominant Pic Blanc reaches 3,330m Credit: Cyrille Quintard

Experts and off-piste

Pic Blanc is the starting point of the Sarenne run, which at 16km is the longest black run in the Alps. However, it is renowned more for endurance than difficulty; while it is a long way down, there are no particularly butterfly-inducing pitches and half of its grand length is a gentle run down a riverside path through the gorge of the same name.

Far scarier is Le Tunnel, a much more direct black run, also from the summit of Pic Blanc. After emerging from the rock corridor that gives the run its name comes the beginning of one of the most forbidding black runs in the Alps – an often icy mogul field where a fall can result in a 100m slide or worse.

As well as these black pistes, a short climb from the top of the Pic Blanc cable car gives access to some truly superb off-piste.

Snowboarding

Alpe d'Huez also has a giant terrain park suitable for all standards with a full range of jumps and obstacles as well as a ski cross course. Vaujany's ski area also has a smaller park better suited to beginners and intermediates.

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Who should go?

Everyone will be content with the resort's snow record and quick transfer time from Grenoble, but beginners in particular will flourish here – as well as some of the most extensive nursery slopes in the Alps, there's also lots of opportunity to progress to more challenging terrain. The ability to ski to linked resorts such as Oz, Vaujany and Auris will please intermediates who like to clock up the miles and experts can find enough to challenge them too.



The Sarenne run is the longest black run in the Alps Credit: Lionel Royet

Where to stay

Most people stay in self-catering apartments in Alpe d'Huez, though there are chalets and hotels, including apart-hotels, at all price points. The resort's Cognet quartier is close to both the main DMC access gondola at the Rond Point des Pistes and the nightlife, so offers the best of both worlds. The Vieil Alpe quartier, also known as the old town, is more convenient for nightlife than access to the mountain, while the lower quartiers of Passeaux and Eclose are connected to town and slopes by lifts through the village. For ski-in/ski-out, the Bergers district has chalets close to the piste.

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How to get there

Many mainstream UK tour operators offer packages to Alpe d'Huez, including Crystal, Inghams, Ski Solutions and self-drive specialist, Peak Retreats. There's also a big, all-inclusive Club Med in the Bergers quartier. The closest airport is Grenoble, and Grenoble SNCF railway station, served by high-speed TGV trains from Paris and Lyon, is 90 minutes away. Other airports include Lyon and Chambery, both better bets than Turin or Milan. It's also worth noting that the road between Bourg d'Oisans and the resort is known for its hairpin bends.

When to go

Alpe d'Huez has a long season. The Sarenne glacier at the top of Pic Blanc helps ensure good snow cover despite the resort's south-facing aspect and characteristically sunny weather. January is the quietest month and the best time to find value. Early March is another good time to visit, before the Tomorrowland Winter Festival gets going. The iconic festival brings some of the world's best electronic DJs to the resort from March 20 to 27, 2027. There's also an annual Comedy Film Festival that takes place in mid-January.

Alpe d'Huez's snow record

Season dates	December 5, 2026 to April 24, 2027
*Average snow base depth	101cm
*Best month for snow	March (base 137cm / snowfall 78cm)**

*Source: onthesnow.co.uk; ** Month with max snow base

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Last updated: March 26, 2026. Change in upper and lower snow depth is weekly, published by resorts. Powder rating is based on change in upper snow depth. Terrain open estimated from latest resort statistics.

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Know before you go

When driving, it's compulsory to keep fluorescent bibs and a hazard triangle in the car in case of breakdown. It's also compulsory to have snow chains in your car or winter tyres from the beginning of November until March.

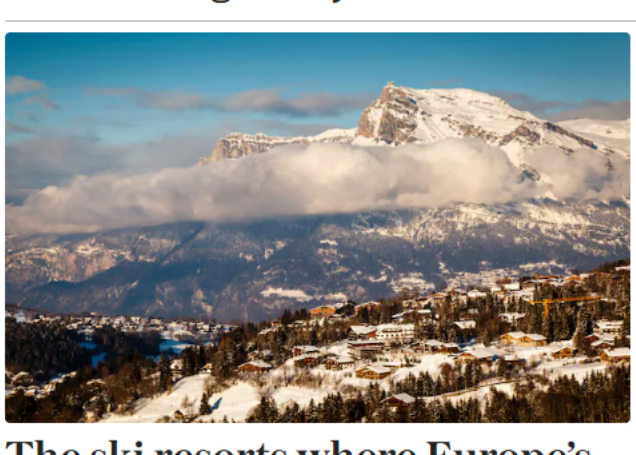
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Whether you're planning a family trip to the Alps or a bucket-list powder tour of North America, our ski experts are here to help you plan the perfect trip to the mountains.

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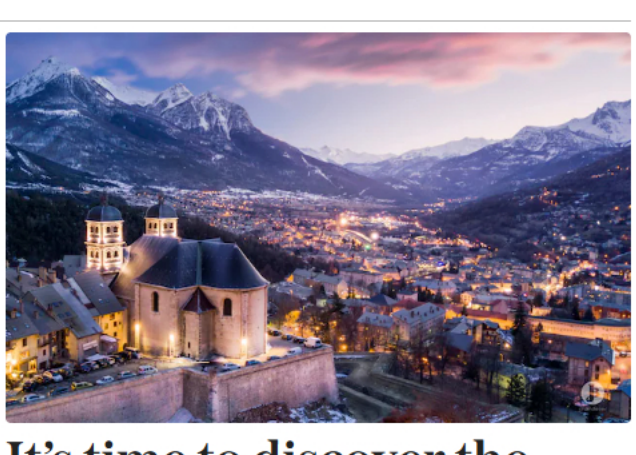
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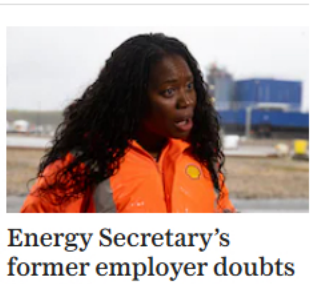
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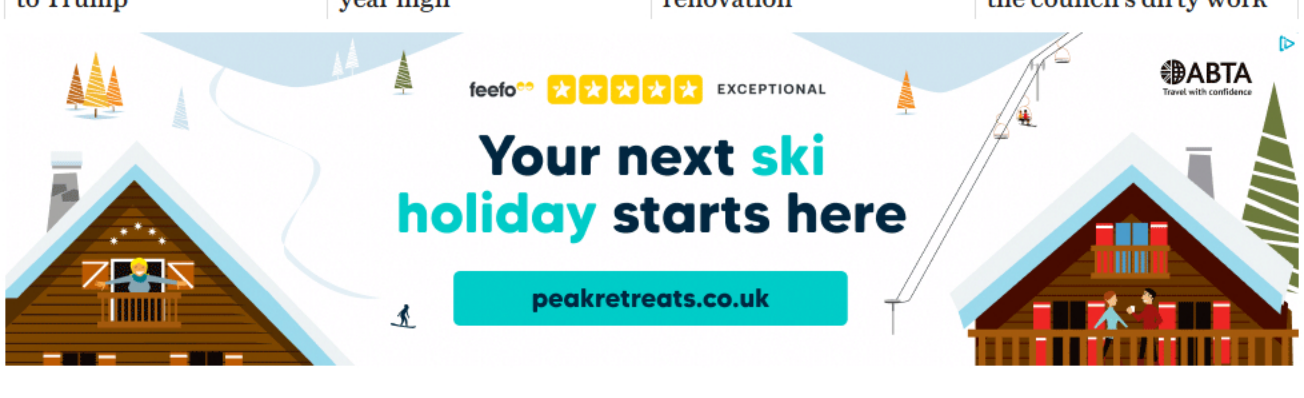
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