



France

What: A ski-in, ski-out Alpine playground

Where: Avoriaz 1800 resort

How much: Five nights in a one-bedroom self-catering apartment at Premium Residence L'Amara (sleeps four) in April 2026, from £700 (pierreetvacances.com)

Who: Amanda Statham, contributing travel editor

So, you can ski straight from your door?

Yep. France's purpose-built, high-altitude resort is surrounded by more than 600km of pistes, meaning you can roll out of bed, get dressed and be on the slopes without having to catch a single bus or chair lift. Avoriaz is just 90 minutes from Geneva, and what it lacks in Morzine's picture-perfect Alpine chalets in the valley below, it more than makes up for with

spectacular scenery, ski-in, ski-out apartments and snow. I visited in April, right at the end of the ski season, and Avoriaz still had an impressive carpet of powder, while Morzine already resembled a summer Alpine holiday poster.

Okay... but what if I'm a complete beginner?

Not a problem. Ski school takes place at Le Plateau in the heart of the resort, which you can easily reach on foot. It boasts the best of Ecole Ski France's (ESF) instructors, who are old hands at getting people whizzing down the mountains in days. You'll be tackling the baby slope in less than an hour – a travelator means no exhausting climb back to the top – and within two hours you'll be a champion snowplougher. After only two days, expect to be grinning your way down the sun-drenched Proclou, a legendary green slope that has a tunnel, epic

Above: the magnificent scenery of Avoriaz 1800 resort. Right: Amanda enjoying the spectacular backdrop



bends and a wide stretch at the end – ideal for practising your turns.

And beyond the skiing?

Don't miss the chance to go on a snowshoe hike. I met my guide at the ESF office in the resort centre and was led through pine trees and cake-icing smooth slopes



'It was a holiday highlight to crunch home through the snow with a full belly and a happy heart'

to a viewing platform at La Mine, a former slate mine, where you can still see the winch that passed crates of slate up and down the mountainside – a forerunner to the first cable cars. I was transfixed by the view, with the valley of Morzine spread out below me, birds of prey circling above in the cloudless blue sky and the pines' scent filling the air.

A vast wellbeing area at Premium Residence L'Amara (my home for five nights) was very welcome after a day on the slopes – think: warm indoor pool, outdoor hot tub, spa treatments and stunning

wood-barrel saunas situated on a terrace overlooking the slopes. Skiing chews through energy, so refuelling is a sport in these parts. Whether that's with pasta, vin chaud and good times at legendary La Folie Douce or with fondue and charcuterie at Igloo Village, a restaurant and bar carved out of snow each season on the edge of a piste reached only on foot (or by ski). It was a holiday highlight to crunch my way home through the snow beneath the stars with a full belly and a happy heart.

Three more cool places to get your thrill



Paradise in Paradiski

You can reach the pretty French ski resort Peisey-Vallandry by train on the Eurostar Snow. Stay at L'Oree des Cimes, four-star chalets with a heated pool, hot tub, sauna and Vallandry ESF ski school on the doorstep. From £685pp with five sharing, including return train travel and seven nights in a self-catering two-bedroom flat, peakretreats.co.uk.



Eco luxury in Austria

Not only is five-star eco escape Das Goldberg Bad Hofgastein's only ski-in, ski-out hotel, it also boasts an infinity pool, sauna and relaxation rooms to chill in. Props, too, for the luxe suites and Fire Bar's après ski barbecue. There's even an in-house coffee roastery to help get you up and out on the slopes early doors. Rooms from £301pn, das.goldberg.at.



Beginner's bargain in Chamonix

Ski holidays sure aren't cheap, which is why we're introducing you to Action Outdoors, a non-profit that aims to get people moving in the fresh air. If you want to give skiing a go without breaking the bank, check out their four-day Ski Beginners course, which includes accommodation, lift pass, all meals, 12 hours of lessons and gear, in Argentière. From £599pp, actionoutdoors.co.uk.