

GUIDE TO THE THREE VALLEYS RESORTS

The Three Valleys encompasses the world class resorts of Courchevel, Méribel and Val Thorens; as well as Les Menuires and Orelle. Each bring their own strengths and appeals, with a resort or area for everyone, and every budget.

Courchevel

Renowned as one of the most upmarket of the Three Valleys resorts, Courchevel consists of five connected villages: Courchevel, Moriond, Village, Le Praz and La Tania. Courchevel offers world class skiing; with wide open pistes, carefully crafted beginner areas, stunning tree runs, and challenging couloirs and off-piste terrain. Although often considered an intermediate resort Courchevel offers something for skiers of all levels. Due to its location on the far side of the piste map, Courchevel Moriond also stays relatively quiet.

Méribel

Méribel is situated in the middle of the Three Valleys ski area. With the Courchevel and Belleville valleys in easy reaching distance Méribel is a popular choice for skiers, but as a result it can get pretty busy at the central hubs and through fares of Méribel and Méribel Mottaret. If you like tree skiing, then the runs into Méribel Village are a good choice. Or to give your legs a challenge take on one of the two long runs which descend from Mont Vallon. If you're planning on skiing in Méribel it's worth noting that the St Martin side of the Méribel valley is best skied in the morning while it's in the sun, leaving the Courchevel side until the afternoon.

Val Thorens

The highest of the Three Valleys resorts, Val Thorens or "VT" as it's often known, offers snow-sure skiing throughout the season, making it a popular and safe choice, especially early or late season. Its high-altitude location means it can get quite chilly so be sure to wrap up warm and layer up if you're spending the day there. It's also lacking forested pistes due to its altitude, making it challenging in low visibility. But if it hasn't snowed recently, then a day trip to VT is well advised, as there's always good snow to be found.

Les Menuires was built in the '60s, which is evident from the architecture! While it doesn't have a reputation for its looks, it does offer some great skiing, and is easily reached from St Martin. Les Menuires is an intermediates' paradise with lots of long cruising blues, perfect for building confidence and technique.

Orelle

There is in fact a fourth valley reachable by skis within the Three Valleys ski area. The lesser-known resort of Orelle is situated in the Maurienne Valley and is accessed by one of three cols on the far side of Val Thorens. It's actually in this valley that you will find the "Sommet des 3 Vallées", or highest point of the Three Valleys, at 3230m. Worth the trip for a photo opportunity!

THREE VALLEYS ACTIVITIES

Here are some of our top tips for things to do during your stay in the Three Valleys:

Tobogganing

Tobogganing has come a long way from the old-style wooden sleds of yesteryear. Think formula one bends and high-speed straights and you'll be on the right tracks! Val Thorens boasts the longest toboggan run in Europe, with a 45min descent from the top of the Peclet Funitel with the CosmoJet. Over in Les Menuires you've have Speed Mountain, which is a little like a roller coaster crossed with a luge track – toboggans run down a metal track (you can control the speed!) Further afield there's Mission Black Forest in Méribel where you'll descend 470m over 3km in 28 turns. And in Courchevel there's Moriond Racing, with a 3km descent incorporating tight hairpins and plenty of tunnels.

Zip Wire

If you've a head for heights and like your holidays packed full of adrenaline then you The Tyrolienne might float your boat. You take off from the top of Orelle at 3230m and glide between the valleys for about 1 min 45 seconds. The views are outstanding as long as you don't mind looking down onto a huge drop.