**Courmayeur**

**Categories**

**Good For**

Intermediates

Experts

Snowboarders

Après ski

Snow reliability

**Data**

**Beginner Runs**

12

**Intermediate Runs**

15

**Advanced Runs**

4

**Total Runs**

31

**Lifts**

18

**Chairs**

8

**Drags**

4

**Gondola Cable Cars**

6

**Parks**

1

**Pipes**

0

**Weather**

**Annual Snowfall**

7m (23ft).

**Overview**

Courmayeur ski resort, an enchanting little mountain town of cobbled piazzas and slate roofs, offers skiing with a dash of ‘real’ Italy, as well as sensational views over the Mont Blanc massif – or Monte Bianco as it’s known on this Italian side of Western Europe’s highest mountain.

There are stylish Italian fashion boutiques, delicatessens hung with salamis and local cheese, fragrant cafés frothing with cappuccinos, and more bars and restaurants in Courmayeur than most people would believe. Between skiing and dinner, fur and Gucci-clad Milanese parade in a nightly *passeggiata* along pedestrianised Via Roma.

The skiing in Courmayeur is further from the centre of town than in many resorts. Buses link Courmayeur town to the cable car at Entrèves and to the gondola at Dolonne; while the giant 130-person cable car that swings from the edge of town up to Plan Checrouit is also some distance from the resort's heart.

**Location**

Courmayeur is at the head of the Aosta Valley in the Italian Alps. It is in the lee of the 4,810m-tall (15,780ft) Mont Blanc (the highest mountain in Western Europe), and is the first village on the Italian side of the Mont Blanc tunnel.

**Website**

http://www.courmayeur-montblanc.com

**Piste Map**

http://www.courmayeur.co.uk/images/courmayeur-piste-map.jpg

**Hit The Slopes**

Courmayeur’s skiing is contained within the Col Checrouit and Val Veny valleys and is not extensive; though there are enough red and blue runs to keep an intermediate entertained for a long weekend.

The slopes above Val Veny face north, and keep their snow well – more so now that snowmaking is extensive throughout the pisted area. The Col Cecrouit slopes face eastwards, however, and can often be left wanting compared to the neighbouring valley. The season in the resort as a whole usually runs from mid-December until mid-April.

The few black runs and mogul fields are short, but the lure for experts is the off-piste skiing reached by cable car up to Cresta Youla, Cresta d'Arp and the Vallée Blanche – the world’s longest lift-served off-piste ski run.

Beginner skiers have a few areas in which to learn, including Plan Checrouit and Pre de Pascal, at the top of the lift from Entrèves. But once they have mastered the basics there is limited terrain to explore.

Freestyle skiers and boarders, meanwhile, are attracted to the 500m (1,640ft) boardercross run near the top of the Plan de la Gabba chairlift. In addition, a new terrain park created in the heart of the ski area features a wide variety of jumps and rails for all ability levels, plus a big air bag for safer landings.

For more sedate skiing, there are 35km (22 miles) of gentle cross-country trails along the Aosta Valley floor.

**Courmayeur**

**Resort**

1224

**Base**

1210

**Top**

2763

**General**

**Beyond The Slopes**

The indoor Forum Sport Centre (Via dello Stadio; tel: 0165 1852 591) offers winter sports, including a huge skating rink and curling. It also provides facilities for indoor tennis and squash, a golf driving range, climbing wall, gym and sauna.

The six linked cable cars over the Mont Blanc massif to Chamonix (that cross high above the famous Vallée Blanche in France) comprise perhaps the most spectacular cable car journey in the world. This is currently being upgraded at a cost of more than €100m with the installation of new state-of-the-art lifts, one with revolving cabins, due for completion during 2014.

**Family Fun**

Courmayeur is not the ideal family resort, but there are a range of services dedicated to children. Among the limited child-only attractions, kids can play at the resort’s playgrounds, while the Forum Sport Centre (Via dello Stadio) provides endless sporting opportunities for children.

Those wishing to ski can learn at the Monte Bianco Ski School (Strada Regionale 51; tel: 0165 842477; [www.scuolascimontebianco.com](http://www.scuolascimontebianco.com)), which segments children by age as well as ability. The school also offers a crèche and kindergarten service for infants from six months to 12-year-old children at Plan Checrouit, as well as the option of a second location in the resort centre on Via dello Stadio.

**Retail Therapy**

With just about every designer clothing name from Milan having a presence on Via Roma, the main shopping street, Courmayeur is a fashionista's heaven. There are also numerous independently run wine and speciality food shops in Courmayeur, offering products from the region.

**Splashing Out**

Courmayeur is one of the few places in the Alps where heli-skiing is still offered. What’s more, skiers are picked up straight from the piste, so there is no wasting time. Single or multiple drops are available on the Aiguille des Glacier or Fortin Summit from Società Guide Alpine (tel: 0165 842064; [www.guidecourmayeur.com](http://www.guidecourmayeur.com)).

**Apres Ski**

Après-ski in Courmayeur begins on Via Roma with freshly squeezed orange juice and vodka amid loud music at the American Bar (Via Roma 43), or cocktails and canapés in the back room of the Caffé della Posta (Via Roma 51).

The best nightlife is 3km (2 miles) up the valley at La Palud, by the Mont Blanc tunnel entrance (a 10-minute taxi ride away). Jimmi's (Strada La Palud 23) in Hotel Astoria is the loudest, open the latest and attracts an 18 to 30s crowd; while Hotel I Maquis (Strada della Brenva 10) in Entrèves has a clientele more advanced in years. In Courmayeur centre, the liveliest disco is Poppy's (Via Circonvallazine 48).

**Eating Out**

There are plenty of restaurants in Courmayeur and its surrounds. Maison Vieille (Col Checrouit; tel: 337 230 979; [www.maisonvieille.com](http://www.maisonvieille.com)) is a cosy mountain refuge with a roaring log fire, and offers steaming plates of polenta and local sausage served by the effusive owner Giacoma. The popular Christiania (Plan Checrouit; tel: 0165 843 572) has an igloo bar, and serves hearty hot pasta dishes and pizza.

For a fancy night out, Petit Royal at the Hotel Royal e Golf (Via Roma 87; tel: 0165 831 611; [www.hotelroyalegolf.com](http://www.hotelroyalegolf.com)) provides one of Courmayeur's top gourmet experiences, with food served amongst original mountain-themed décor.

**Transport**

**Getting There**

Nearest airports: Geneva International Airport (GVA); Turin Airport (TRN).

Distances to resort: 108km (67 miles); 142km (88 miles).

Driving times: 1 hour 15 minutes; 1 hour 30 minutes.

**Getting Around**

There are buses from Courmayeur centre to Entrèves and Dolonne, though these are not very regular. There is no bus to the Plan Checrouit cable car, but some hotels run courtesy minibuses.

**Hotels**

This traditional Italian village has charming cobbled streets and well-preserved buildings with accommodation ranging from the luxury to the affordable. As such, there is a full range of traditional chalets, apartments and hotels in Courmayeur.

**Hotel Bouton d'Or**

A small bed and breakfast run by friendly Andrea and Patricia Casale Brunet, Hotel Bouton d’Or offers rustic décor, baths and fantastic views.

**Category**

Cheap

**Thoroughfare**

Strada Statale 26

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Courmayeur

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Italy

**Telephone**

0165 846 729.

**Website**

http://www.hotelboutondor.com

**Royal e Golf**

One of the most elegant hotels in Courmayeur, Royal e Golf has luxuriously appointed rooms, a sauna, Turkish bath, fitness centre and an outdoor hot tub.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

Via Roma 87

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Courmayeur

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Italy

**Telephone**

0165 831 611.

**Website**

http://www.hotelroyalegolf.com

**Hotel Aigle**

This friendly family-run hotel offers half-board accommodation in Entrèves. Its restaurant has a reputation for good, home-cooked food.

**Category**

Cheap

**Thoroughfare**

Strada La Palud 5

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Entrèves

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Italy

**Telephone**

0165 869 700.

**Website**

http://www.hotelaigle.com