**Formigal**

**Categories**

**Good For**

Beginners

Intermediates

Experts

Snowboarders

Families

**Data**

**Beginner Runs**

26

**Intermediate Runs**

33

**Advanced Runs**

38

**Total Runs**

97

**Lifts**

21

**Chairs**

11

**Drags**

10

**Gondola Cable Cars**

0

**Parks**

2

**Pipes**

0

**Weather**

**Annual Snowfall**

6m (20 ft).

**Overview**

Formigal is one of Spain’s three largest ski areas with slopes spread over four valleys – in fact, it claims to be the country’s largest, although its competitors may disagree.

Unusually, the resort itself is not located centrally, but instead within the most westerly of the valleys. This means skiers move progressively further away from the resort and 6km (4 miles) east towards the French border as they travel further through the ski area. Slopes here are largely north facing, making the resort something of a snow pocket.

Like its fellow leading Spanish ski areas Baqueira-Beret and Sierra Nevada, Aramón Formigal – to give its official name – dates to the 1960s; although there were skiers here a decade earlier. Despite being mostly purpose built, Formigal is a relatively attractive resort, with buildings clad in local stone creating a traditional ambience in the centre.

The resort’s ski offering has been extensively modernised in recent years, in particular with the addition of Spain’s first eight-seater chairlift that replaced an old gondola known lovingly by locals as ‘The Egg.’ There are also long-term plans to complete a lift link to the nearest major ski resort neighbours a few kilometres away: Astún and Candanchú.

**Location**

Formigal is located in the upper Tena Valley of northeastern Spain’s Aragon Pyrenees mountains. The ski area is close to the French border, near the town of Sallent de Gallego in the province of Huesca.

**Website**

http://www.formigal.com

**Piste Map**

http://www.nevasport.com/classic/mapas/mapa\_10.JPG

**Hit The Slopes**

Formigal claims to be Spain’s largest ski area and it certainly offers an excellent mix of terrain with its near 100 runs including an excellent mix of beginner, intermediate and expert terrain. The resort is a great place for accomplished skiers as it offers almost 40 black-graded runs – a tally not matched by even some of the biggest resorts in the Alps.

For almost all guests, the day begins with a shuttle bus to the slopes. The nearest bus stop is around 500m (1,640ft) from the edge of the resort, but there are multiple entry points along the border road to France, so you drive or take the bus and start in any of half a dozen different spots.

The runs are fairly well distributed right across the four valleys, so relative beginners and experienced experts can ski right across the 6km-wide (4 miles) ski area from valley to valley and stick to terrain that suits their standard. Again, Formigal is different to most other ski areas, where it’s more unusually the case that all beginner runs are in one sector and all expert terrain is in another.

The average run length is a meagre 1.3km (0.8 miles), with the longest trail just 3.4km (2.1 miles) in length; so it is a case of many descents on many pistes. Luckily this is aided by fast, new queue-gobbling chairlifts.

The closest base to Formigal village is Zona Sextas, where the resort’s two terrain parks can be found. This is also the place to head for night skiing and it has direct access to the freeride area and the launch pad for the resort’s heliskiing operation.

Another fun option is the boardercross trail for beginners on the Furco slope. Opened in 2012, this fun area has 600m (1,970ft) of banks and small jumps to explore.

**Formigal**

**Resort**

1550

**Base**

1510

**Top**

2250

**General**

**Beyond The Slopes**

Most of the activities in Formigal when not skiing or boarding are still related to being on the snow. For example, you can rent a snow bike to slide around the slopes; try snowshoeing on one of two local marked walking circuits; or go dog sledding in the Valle de Izas on a specially designed route. There’s also a 2km-long (1.2 miles) permanent snowmobiling circuit at the base of the slopes in Anayet.

For the ultimate in relaxation after a day on the slopes, head to one of the resort’s spas to ease any aches and pains. Facilities generally include hydro-massage pools, saunas, steam rooms and a range of massages and beauty treatments. These options and more are available to residents and non-residents of the Hotel and Spa Aragon Hills (tel: 974 490 292; [www.aragonhills.es](http://www.aragonhills.es/)).

**Family Fun**

Formigal’s modernisation process in recent years has been heavily focused on its attractiveness to families. One of the main emphases has been put on providing quality facilities and fun activities for families besides skiing and boarding.

Ski school lessons are available to children aged five, while younger children wishing to take their first safe turns on the slopes can head to the Skitty learners’ area in Portalet.

The resort’s non-ski crèche (tel: 974 490 046) has two slopeside bases (at Sextas and Anayet) and can accept children aged from as young as four months old up to five years.

**Retail Therapy**

There’s limited shopping in Formigal itself, with a handful of mini-markets and ski shops, but neighbouring villages feature shops selling locally made crafts and souvenirs. There is a limited duty-free shopping experience on the French border, 6km (4 miles) away, with a few shops retailing consumer products at lower than usual prices.

**Splashing Out**

Heli-skiing is a rare treat for experienced skiers in Europe, but there is often the requirement to sign-up for a full heli-skiing holiday. In Formigal, however, it’s possible to purchase ascents from the Sextas base area near to the resort for just a few hundred Euros – still quite a lot for a ski run, but much less than those full holidays. Vertical descents of up to 1,700m (5,580ft) are possible – more than double the lift-served vertical.

At least five people need to book to make this activity viable for the operators, and packages include training in how to use avalanche rescue equipment, hire of special off-piste wide freeriding skis and the services of a mountain guide.

**Apres Ski**

A young crowd makes Formigal’s base village relatively lively in the ski season, particularly at weekends.

The place to kick-off après-ski in Formigal is La Terraza de Sarrios, near the main terrain park. It has a large terrace and music and is a good place to wind down and discuss the day’s thrills. Alternatively, head up to the San Miguel Bar at the top of the Garmet and Batalladero lifts for a few beers.

Later on, Marchica (tel: 974 490 000) at the main Sextas base is a lively slopeside après-ski pub with a sheltered outdoor terrace, live DJs and even the occasional fiesta.

**Eating Out**

There are about a dozen places to eat in Formigal, mostly in the resort’s hotels. But there are also some on-slope eateries that serve hungry skiers during and at the end of the ski day.

The local cuisine blends four regional influences: Basque, Catalan, French and Spanish. Seeking to highlight its regional identity, Formigal revamped its main mountain restaurant, Gemsbok (which used to have an Alpine theme with an evening meal followed by a torchlit ski back down to the resort). This is now an authentic Spanish *sidrería* (cider bar) that serves dishes featuring locally sourced produce.

It’s not all Spanish fare, however. La Yurta on the Rinconada slope is a traditional Mongolian yurt and serves up warming soup and cold meat dishes in a unique atmosphere; whilst Westfalia by the Garmet lift has a Bavarian theme and sells German appetizers such as *würstchen* (sausage).

**Transport**

**Getting There**

Nearest airport: Huesca Airport (HSK)

Distance to resort: 98km (61 miles).

Driving time: 135 minutes.

Nearest railway station: Huesca

Distance to resort: 95km (59 miles).

Driving time: 1 hour 20 minutes.

**Getting Around**

The majority of the resort is located about 500m (1,640ft) from the ski slopes. Car parking is available at the base of the slopes for those who drive.

Many of the larger accommodation providers organise their own a shuttle bus service to the lifts, while the free Navette shuttle bus runs around the resort base and to the areas of Sextas and Anayet.

**Hotels**

Formigal has a selection of apartment and hotel accommodation ranging from 1- to 4-stars. If you’d rather stay away from the resort centre and have your own transport, it’s also possible to stay in a traditional bed and breakfast or small family-run hotel in one of the small villages nearby.

**Hotel and Spa Aragon Hills**

Among the better quality hotels in resort, this 4-star option comes complete with a spa featuring a hydrothermal pool and a good quality restaurant. A shuttle service is available to the nearest lift, which is 400m (1,312ft) away.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

Calle San Sebastián

**Neighborhood**

Sallent de Gállego 22640

**Locality**

Huesca

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Spain

**Telephone**

974 490 292.

**Website**

http://www.aragonhills.es

**Hotel Abba**

This friendly 4-star relatively near the lifts boasts excellent facilities, including a spa and free Wi-Fi internet access. Rooms are available for up to four people, making it a good choice for families.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

Urbanizacion Formigal

**Neighborhood**

Sallent de Gallego 22640

**Locality**

Formigal

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Spain

**Telephone**

974 490 030.

**Website**

http://www.abbaformigalhotel.com

**Hotel Nievesol**

This family-run 3-star is conveniently in the heart of the resort village, just 500m (1,640ft) from the slopes and two minutes from the ski bus stop for the free resort shuttle service. Facilities here include a restaurant and a small games room.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

XXX

**Neighborhood**

Formigal

**Locality**

Huesca

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Spain

**Telephone**

974 490 121.

**Website**

http://www.hotelnievesol.com

**Hotel Valle de Izas**

A small but very popular 3-star, Hotel Valle de Izas has a long-standing reputation for good service and quality food. The hotel is approximately 3km (2 miles) from the ski slopes, but a bus service is available.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

Calle Francia 26

**Neighborhood**

Sallent de Gállego 22640

**Locality**

Formigal

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Spain

**Telephone**

974 488 508.

**Website**

http:// www.hotelvalledeizas.com

**Hotel Tirol**

This basic but cosy 2-star is a short walk from the base of the ski slopes and is also close to the main resort amenities. Facilities here include a bar, restaurant and free Wi-Fi internet access.

**Category**

Cheap

**Thoroughfare**

Calle San Jorge 2

**Neighborhood**

Formigal

**Locality**

Sallent de Gallego 22640

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Spain

**Telephone**

974 490 377.

**Website**

http://www.tirolformigal.com

**Hotel Balaitus**

This friendly 1-star is ideal for those on a budget. Rooms here are relatively small, but it’s home to a popular locals’ bar, has friendly owners and is handily in the resort centre.

**Category**

Cheap

**Thoroughfare**

Francia 18

**Neighborhood**

Formigal

**Locality**

Sallent de Gallego 22640

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

Spain

**Telephone**

974 488 059.

**Website**

http://www.hotelbalaitus.com