**Morzine-Avoriaz**

**Categories**

**Good For**

Beginners

Intermediates

Snowboarders

Families

Non-skiers

Après ski

**Data**

**Beginner Runs**

7

**Intermediate Runs**

49

**Advanced Runs**

8

**Total Runs**

64

**Lifts**

49

**Chairs**

17

**Drags**

26

**Gondola Cable Cars**

5

**Parks**

9

**Pipes**

1

**Weather**

**Annual Snowfall**

9m (30ft).

**Overview**

Morzine and Avoriaz are two neighbouring, but very different ski resorts in the Portes du Soleil area, one of the world's largest ski regions. Both have grown remarkably in international significance and in dimensions – with about 20,000 tourist beds currently available in each – however, they are very different in style and heritage.

Morzine is one of the original ski resorts in the Alps, with skiers having visited here for more than 80 years. It’s located at quite a low altitude and is built in a traditional chalet style.

On the other hand, Avoriaz, 800m (2,625ft) above Morzine, was stylishly purpose-built in the late 1960s to a futuristic design using traditional wood and sloping roofs, in order to blend in to the surrounding environment. Avoriaz is also France's first car-free resort and its authorities are quick to emphasise its environmental credentials.

The Prodains lift between the two resorts was replaced midway through the 2012/13 season, greatly improving the speed and capacity of the connection. Among other recent developments, the large Aquariaz thermal swimming and leisure complex opened at the base of the slopes in Avoriaz, offering a great place for family fun.

**Location**

Avoriaz and Morzine are located in the Haute Savoie department of the Rhône-Alpes region in the southeast of France, near the border with Switzerland.

**Website**

http://www.morzine-avoriaz.com

http://www.avoriaz.com

**Piste Map**

http://www.morzine-avoriaz.com/piste-maps-morzine.html

**Hit The Slopes**

Both resorts are at the heart of the Portes du Soleil ski area, which incorporates the skiing at 12 villages on either side of the French-Swiss border.

The skiing here is not quite fully interlinked, however, otherwise it would be more widely acknowledged as the world's biggest ski area (as it claims to be). Its 650km (407 miles) of runs total more than the Trois Vallées, which is popularly regarded as the world's biggest as all its runs are lift-linked – but who's splitting hairs?

Needless to say, with such a huge area there's a vast choice of terrain suiting accomplished skiers, intermediates and also beginners looking to take on their first few runs. The snow is reliable in both resorts, with Avoriaz offering the most snowsure slopes and Morzine having invested heavily in snowmaking – the ski season in both resorts runs from mid-December until mid-April.

The ski area between the two resorts is known as Super Morzine and offers plentiful options, but those staying in Morzine may instead opt for the ski area on Le Pleney/Les Chavannes rather than Mount Ranfolly, which is shared with another neighbour, Les Gets.

From Avoriaz, it’s easy to head over to the Swiss resorts like Champéry, with brave skiers having the option of taking the infamous Swiss Wall black run down (many others descend on the chairlift).

**Morzine-Avoriaz**

**Resort**

1800

**Base**

1000

**Top**

2277

**General**

**Beyond The Slopes**

Both resorts have a wide range of activities off the slopes. At Avoriaz there's a cinema, bowling alley, ice rink and fitness centre. Morzine's indoor ice rink stages national league ice hockey matches as well as providing leisure skating, while the resort also has a bowling alley, games bar and two cinemas.

The twin resort now boasts two large swimming complexes. Along with the new Aquariaz in Avoriaz, which has a tropical-themed indoor water park, Morzine has also recently added a new water sports centre (tel: 04 5079 0169) with family pools, a wellness area, three saunas and two hammams.

Outdoors, choose from a variety of activities, including sleigh rides, winter hikes, snowshoeing, dog sledding, guided snow biking tours and snowmobiling excursions. For something a little special, gaze in awe at the mountain scenery while hang-gliding, paragliding or on a helicopter tour; or sledge down from Pléney for a night-time meal in the middle of the woods. For those with a penchant for underwater activities, try a guided scuba dive beneath Lake Montriond, offered by Caméléon Production (tel: 04 5075 9400; [www.cameleon-organisation.com](http://www.cameleon-organisation.com)).

Morzine’s heritage can be discovered through watching its artisan craftspeople at work. Tour a slate miner’s workshop, discover how cheese is made, or marvel at the skills of the local potter.

**Family Fun**

Both resorts are well-equipped for families with good nursery provision (from three months of age) and a choice of high-quality children's ski schools. Avoriaz also has the added attraction of its safe, car-free status, whilst Morzine has the traditional resort charm and wide choice of off-the-slope activities.

Morzine has been given the Family Plus award (a national award for resorts that are especially good for children) for its facilities for families. Among the attractions here is a huge programme of free entertainment and activities for children, as well as a special sledging run and a dedicated children’s ski area. A free guide is available from the tourist office with details of the various activities on offer. Activities organised for older children include alcohol-free disco nights for teenagers at L'Opéra Discoteque.

Avoriaz has built a particularly strong family-friendly reputation with its Village des Enfants (tel: 04 5074 0446), which offers a host of activities beyond skiing, including skijoring for children, where they are towed on skis behind a pony.

**Retail Therapy**

Although there are about 25 shops covering all the basics in Avoriaz, Morzine is the better destination for shoppers with 100 or so choices. This is thanks, in part, to its status as a long-established market town dating back to well before the arrival of winter sports.

Morzine's wide selection includes stylish boutiques, jewellers and chocolatiers. Visitors also have the option of taking an empty backpack and skiing over to one of the Swiss resorts such as Champéry for Swiss souvenirs and delicacies.

**Splashing Out**

Spend an hour drifting above the slopes aboard a hot-air balloon with Caméléon Production (tel: 04 5075 9400; [www.cameleon-organisation.com](http://www.cameleon-organisation.com)). As the route depends to some extent on wind direction, the operators cannot guarantee the exact landing point, but they do promise to return customers to the resort.

**Apres Ski**

Both resorts can become lively after the ski day is over, perhaps more notably in Avoriaz, as French purpose-built resorts are rarely so animated.

There is a small selection of après-ski bars in Avoriaz, including Le Yéti (582A Route de L'Alpage; tel: 04 5074 1278) and Le Shooters (73 Place du Snow; tel: 04 5074 0722). The sole nightclub in Avoriaz is Le Yak (39 Place du Snow; tel: 04 5049 5166).

The vibrant après-ski scene in Morzine has developed massively over the last few years, with popular venues including Chaudanne wine bar (590 Route de la Plagne; tel: 04 5079 1268) for electro-jazz. Another favourite is Le Robinson (62 rue du Bourg; tel: 04 5079 0978), a Morzine institution that’s owned by Rosine and Jean-Marc, who are both over 70 years old. Their clientele includes trendy snowboarders and skiers who appreciate the relaxed atmosphere and the famous Mutzig beer.

There are more options for late clubbing in Morzine than at its neighbour, with L’Opera Discoteque (Route Pleney; tel: 04 5079 1665) open until 0500, as well as the bustling Le Laurys (60 route des Udrezants; tel: 04 5079 0610) and The Cavern (Immeuble Capitale; tel: 04 5074 2279) bars.

Morzine (and the Portes du Soleil area as a whole) hosts the annual Rock the Pistes ([www.rockthepistes.com](http://www.rockthepistes.com)) après-ski music festival, which puts on pop and rock concerts at various sections of the ski area every March. Attendance is free for those with a ski pass.

**Eating Out**

There are around 20 restaurants in Avoriaz, predominantly serving French mountain staples or pizza. Among these is La Table du Marché (40 place des Dromonts; tel: 04 5074 0811; [www.christophe-leroy.com](http://www.christophe-leroy.com)) in Hôtel des Dromonts, which has set high standards for its innovative gourmet cuisine thanks to the efforts of award-winning owner/chef Christophe Leroy.

There is a slightly bigger selection of restaurants in Morzine, with about 30 eateries, including a wide choice of traditional French establishments. Among the options for local specialities is the cosy La Grange (60 Chemin de la Couttetaz; tel: 04 5075 9640; [www.lagrangemorzine.com](http://www.lagrangemorzine.com)), and La Ferme de l’Alpage (337 Route de la Plagne; tel: 04 5079 1239), which is owned and run by the local *fruitière* (cheesemaker) and understandably has a mostly cheese-based menu.

For gourmet fare, L'Atelier d'Alexandre (9 Place de l'Office de Tourisme; tel: 04 5079 0079; [www.hotel-lesamoyede.com](http://www.hotel-lesamoyede.com)) in the Samoyède Hotel is run by the son of the owners and has been awarded two Chef’s Hats – a high grade from the famous Michelin gourmet guide – for his efforts.

**Transport**

**Getting There**

Nearest airport: Geneva International Airport (GVA).

Distance to resort: 75km (47 miles) to Morzine; 90km (56 miles) to Avoriaz.

Driving time: 1 hour 10 minutes to Morzine; 1 hour 30 minutes to Avoriaz.

Nearest railway stations: Cluses; Thonon-Les-Bains.

Distance to resort: 28km (17 miles) to Morzine; 35km (22 miles) to Avoriaz (from either station).

Driving time: 40 minutes to Morzine; 1 hour to Avoriaz (from either station).

**Getting Around**

Walking, on skis or travelling by horse-drawn sleighs are the main means of getting around Avoriaz. Morzine also has a relatively compact centre, but a bus service links the wider area and there are more than a dozen taxi operators. A cable car descends from Avoriaz to a midway point above Morzine, which is served by the village bus service. The two resorts are linked by the new lift service.

**Hotels**

The twin resorts of Morzine and Avoriaz vary in style and accommodation. Whilst Avoriaz is a mixture of futuristic design and traditional chalet-style buildings, Morzine has a cosier, quaint vibe. There are around 50 hotels in Morzine, as well as a wide choice of chalets and apartments and a handful of guest houses. Avoriaz has slightly less choice but is still well-equipped with a good selection of hotels and chalets.

**Au Coin de Feu**

A British-run, luxury catered chalet where attentive service is the priority. The slopeside Au Coin de Feu offers various rooms, including a honeymoon suite with a four-poster bed and a hot tub.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

2740 route des Ardoisières

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Morzine

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

04 5074 7521.

**Website**

http://www.chillypowder.com

**Hôtel des Dromonts**

This traditional-style 3-star Avoriaz hotel has been recently refurbished and houses a gourmet restaurant run by Chef Christophe Leroy. Its central location affords views of the ski slopes and easy access to the village’s amenities.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

40 Place des Dromonts

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Morzine

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

04 5074 0811.

**Website**

http://www.christophe-leroy.com

**Hotel L'Ours Blanc**

A pleasant little 2-star hotel with a family atmosphere, Hotel L'Ours Blanc is handily located 500m (1,600ft) from the Super Morzine cable car and the sports centre.

**Category**

Cheap

**Thoroughfare**

Route des Bois Venants

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Morzine

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

04 5079 0402.

**Website**

http://www.oursblanc-morzine.com