**Val Thorens**

**Categories**

**Good For**

Beginners

Intermediates

Experts

Snowboarders

Families

Après ski

Snow reliability

Environmental awareness

**Data**

**Beginner Runs**

11

**Intermediate Runs**

59

**Advanced Runs**

8

**Total Runs**

78

**Lifts**

32

**Chairs**

15

**Drags**

9

**Gondola Cable Cars**

8

**Parks**

1

**Pipes**

0

**Weather**

**Annual Snowfall**

10m (33ft).

**Overview**

Skiers and boarders who are concerned about a lack of snow can rest at ease with Val Thorens ski resort, as it is a safer bet than any other resort in the Alps.

As Europe's highest major resort at 2,300m (7,546ft) – Val Thorens is surrounded by six glacier and six mountain peaks above 3,000m (9,843ft), including the famous Cime Caron (3,200m/10,499ft) – its slopes can be covered even if links to the rest of the vast Trois Vallées (Three Valleys) area are unusable; and its access to the Péclet glacier means there are almost always some open runs.

The purpose-built Val Thorens ski resort is ideal for those who would rather live without the hassle of walking in boots or catching buses with bulky gear, as it’s easy to ski to and from most accommodation.

However, skiing in Val Thorens does have a few negatives. Firstly, although some recent buildings have been designed in greater harmony with the environment, much of the original architecture is charmless. And, secondly, because all the terrain is above the trees, it can be difficult (if not impossible) to ski in very poor visibility. But these are minor issues that fail to detract from the resort's obvious attractions of snowsure slopes and its location within one of the world’s biggest ski areas.

**Location**

Val Thorens is in the French Savoie region and forms part of the massive Trois Vallées ski area. Its dominant summit is the 3,562m (11,686ft) Aiguille de Péclet.

**Website**

http://www.valthorens.com

**Piste Map**

http://www.valthorens.com/pdf/plans/ski/Plan\_3\_Vallees\_2012-13\_BD.pdf

**Hit The Slopes**

The ski season runs from late November until early May in Val Thorens, which is one of the most snowsure ski destinations in the world due to 90% of its terrain being above 2,000m (6,562ft). It even offers a ‘snow cover guarantee’ to visitors if the snow fails to live up to its billing.

The Trois Vallées (Three Valleys), of which Val Thorens is a part, is arguably the world's biggest and finest winter sports area, with pistes suitable for every type of skier. These range from easy runs and leisurely cruisers to the challenging and extensive off-piste skiing available with guides.

Beginner skiers and boarders use the gentle, if sometimes crowded, nursery area along the foot of the slopes near the village. They then progress onto easy blue runs slightly higher up, just above the resort. There is a good choice of ski schools here, including the École du Ski Français (tel: 04 7900 0286; [www.esf-valthorens.com](http://www.esf-valthorens.com/)) and École de Ski Internationale Prosneige (tel: 04 7901 0700; [www.prosneige.fr](http://www.prosneige.fr/)).

For intermediates needing to build confidence, there are miles of wide and relatively undemanding pistes connected by a lift network that not only dwarfs most others but involves little walking or pushing on skis.

Advanced skiers will be tested by the Combe de Caron, a long and difficult black run from the top of the Cime de Caron cable car, which is also the starting point of the off-piste Lac du Lou run. In fact, the resort is well-known for its myriad of off-piste options, which should be tackled with a guide.

Skiers have the choice of three lift passes: Val Thorens-Orelle (150km/93 miles of pistes), Belleville Valley (300km/186 miles) or Trois Vallées (600km/373 miles). But take care not to miss the last connecting lifts, as taxi rides from linked resorts can be very expensive.

**Val Thorens**

**Resort**

2300

**Base**

1850

**Top**

3230

**General**

**Beyond The Slopes**

Val Thorens is a resort designed specifically for skiers (but has grown to also accommodate boarders), but there are several alternative activities. For example, Val Thorens Nature (tel: 06 0956 7500) and the École de Ski Français (ESF) (tel: 04 7900 0286; [www.esf-valthorens.com](http://www.esf-valthorens.com/)) organise half-day snowshoe outings, while Val Tho Motoneige (tel: 04 7900 2146; [valthomotoneige.wordpress.com](http://valthomotoneige.wordpress.com)) arranges snowmobiling tours. Tobogganing and snow mountain biking are also available.

Petrol heads, meanwhile, will enjoy ice karting or taking ice driving lessons on Europe's highest permanent ice circuit (tel: 06 7478 2513; [www.icedrivingacademy.com](http://www.icedrivingacademy.com/)).

A new addition for the 2013/14 season is the highest zip wire in Europe at the top of the Bouchet chairlift, an adrenalin-fuelled experience with the added bonus of incredible mountain views.

Among the various indoor activities, the SOGEVAB sports centre (Galerie de Caron; tel: 04 7900 0018; [www.sogevab.com](http://www.sogevab.com/)) has a swimming pool, sauna and steam room in which to relax, as well as tennis, squash and badminton courts for sporty types.

**Family Fun**

Val Thorens has dedicated children's learning areas with magic carpet lifts at the base of the slopes. An introduction to skiing is available for children aged three and over, with full lessons from the age of four from the École de Ski Français (ESF) (tel: 04 7900 0286; [www.esf-valthorens.com](http://www.esf-valthorens.com/)), while younger kids can spend time at the school’s nursery and Piou Piou club.

On the slopes, the free Baby Fun toboggan area is open to the little ones over the age of two. Over-fives can whizz down the resort's 6km-long (4-mile) toboggan run, which plunges 700m (2,300ft) – the ESF organises torchlit descents on the route for children during school holidays.

Indoor fun can be had in the SOGEVAB sports centre (Galerie de Caron; tel: 04 7900 0018; [www.sogevab.com](http://www.sogevab.com/)), which has plenty to keep kids busy, including a trampoline and bouncy castle.

**Retail Therapy**

The shops in Val Thorens are unlikely to excite dedicated shopaholics, but there are a few options away from those catering to ski holiday essentials. The many shops in the Galeries de Caron and Péclet in particular cover a good range, but winter sports gear outlets predominate.

For a real taste of the region, peruse the offerings at La Belle en Cuisse (Rue Caron; tel: 04 7900 0430; [www.la-belle-en-cuisse.fr](http://www.la-belle-en-cuisse.fr)), which stocks Alpine Beaufort cheese, cured game and other delicious Savoyard specialities, which are all locally produced.

**Splashing Out**

Treat yourself to two-Michelin-star rated cooking at Restaurant Jean Sulpice (Résidence l'Oxalys; tel: 04 7940 0071; [www.restaurant-loxalys.fr](http://www.restaurant-loxalys.fr/)). Sample the eight-course Le Gran Perron tasting menu from chef Jean Sulpice, who produces a range of his expertly presented signature dishes, including two desserts.

**Apres Ski**

There are a number of options for lively après-ski in Val Thorens. Tango bar in Hôtel Tango (Rue de la Boucle 73; tel: 04 7900 0270; [www.langleyhotels.eu](http://www.langleyhotels.eu)) treats those fresh off the slopes to live music; while other popular post-ski bars include the British-influenced Frog and Roast Beef (Rue de Gébroulaz; tel: 04 7900 7671; [www.thefrogandroastbeef.com](http://www.thefrogandroastbeef.com/)) and Rhum Box Café (Galerie Péclet; 04 7901 0236; [www.rhumbox.fr](http://www.rhumbox.fr)), with its assortment of rums. Later in the evening, clubbers should head to Klub Summit (Place de Péclet; tel: 04 7906 4822; [www.klubsummit.com](http://www.klubsummit.com)) and Malaysia (Place Caron; tel: 04 7900 0525; [www.lemalaysia.com](http://www.lemalaysia.com)) to party into the small hours.

Val Thorens also offers a range of after-dark activities away from the bars. One particularly enjoyable activity is dining at the foot of the Péclet glacier after arriving by snowshoe or snowmobile and then returning by toboggan. The excursion can be organised by École de Ski Internationale Prosneige (tel: 04 7901 0700; [www.prosneige.fr](http://www.prosneige.fr/)). Those seeking some musical entertainment in the mountains should attend one of the weekly classical or jazz concerts every Tuesday in the church.

**Eating Out**

There are around 60 restaurants in Val Thorens, mainly offering French cuisine focused on Savoyard regional specialities. However, a wider choice of cuisines ranges from Mexican to pizza and vegetarian speciality restaurants.

Recommended eateries in the resort include the two-Michelin-star Restaurant Jean Sulpice (Résidence l'Oxalys; tel: 04 7940 0071; [www.restaurant-loxalys.fr](http://www.restaurant-loxalys.fr/)) and the more affordable alternative of La Joyeuse Fondue (Rue du Soleil; tel: 04 7900 0388), which serves tasty mountain specialities in an intimate setting.

**Transport**

**Getting There**

Nearest airports: Chambéry Airport (CMF); Geneva International Airport (GVA); Lyon-Saint Exupéry Airport (LYS)

Distance to resort: 112km (70 miles); 160km (100 miles); 193km (121 miles)

Driving time: 2 hours; 2 hours 45 minutes; 2 hours 45 minutes.

Nearest railway station: Moûtiers.

Distance to resort: 37km (23 miles).

Driving time: 1 hour.

**Getting Around**

Val Thorens is a pedestrian-only resort. Cars must be parked outside the village centre except when unloading or loading. There is a free shuttle service between car parks and accommodation.

**Hotels**

Val Thorens has a surprisingly good choice of accommodation for a purpose-built ski resort, with generally more comfortable and stylish options than most would expect. The availability of higher standard hotels and apartments is growing year on year, and there is now a large selection of apartments and hotels in Val Thorens.

**Résidence Le Montana**

Conveniently located for the amenities of the village, including the children’s nursery, this 4-star ski-in/ski-out residence is part of a large complex with restaurants and a spa. Accommodation here is in the form of apartments for up to four people.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

Rue du Soleil

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Val Thorens

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

04 7900 2101.

**Website**

http://www.vmontana.com/fr

**Hôtel Le Val Thorens**

Boasting a guest-only spa area, a choice of eateries and lovely views of the surrounding mountains, the 4-star Hôtel Le Val Thorens exudes contemporary Alpine charm.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

Place de l’Eglise

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Val Thorens

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

04 7900 0433.

**Website**

http://www.levalthorens.com

**Résidence Le Valset**

Résidence Le Valset offers pleasant self-catering studios/apartments for two to eight people with kitchenettes and balconies. Entrance to selected sports facilities is included in the price for those staying here.

**Category**

Cheap

**Thoroughfare**

Place des Arolles

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Val Thorens

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

04 7900 0888.

**Website**

http://www.odalys-vacances.com

**Hotel Altapura**

This option was Val Thorens’ first 5-star hotel and has light and airy rooms with modern designer touches. Within this opulent 79-room residence are three gourmet restaurants and a luxury spa offering a range of treatments and relaxation areas.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

Rue du Soleil

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Val Thorens

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

04 8036 8036.

**Website**

http://www.altapura.fr

**Hôtel Le Sherpa**

Accommodation at Hôtel Le Sherpa is in the form of traditional Savoyard-style rooms that have plenty of charm. Among the amenities at this hotel on the fringes of the village are a wellness centre, sauna, hot tub and steam room.

**Category**

Moderate

**Thoroughfare**

Rue de Gébroulaz

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Val Thorens

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

04 7900 0070.

**Website**

http://www.lesherpa.com

**Hotel Koh-I Nor**

This newly opened 5-star hotel features a range of luxury rooms, suites and apartments. Pampered guests here can enjoy two restaurants that are overseen by Michelin-starred chef Yoann Comte, and relax in the luxury spa.

**Category**

Luxury

**Thoroughfare**

XXX

**Neighborhood**

XXX

**Locality**

Val Thorens

**Sub Admin Area**

XXX

**Admin Area**

XXX

**Postcode**

XXX

**Country**

France

**Telephone**

04 7931 0000.

**Website**

http://www.hotel-kohinor.com