

WHERE & HOW TO SKI IN CHAMONIX: THE COLLINEIGE PLAN

Chamonix has the most exciting off-piste skiing available in the world. It is, however, not always easy to find if you don't know the area. To take full advantage of the potential of the valley we have come up with itineraries that illustrate the variety of the area and possible trips that suit your level of skiing. According to your ability and obviously your budget we will organise any of these trips for you (several of the trips mentioned require a professional mountain guide.)

Beginners

Depending on your chalet, you will begin at either *Le Savoy*, *Les Planards* or *Les Chosalets*. All three areas are gentle, well equipped with beginner lifts and perfect for your adventure into the delights of 'La Glisse'. The professionalism of the instructors we choose guarantees the best approach to learning to ski and will soon have you testing your skills on the higher slopes of *Le Brevent*, *Les Houches*, *Le Tour* & even *Les Grands Montets*.

If there are others in your group, more experienced than yourself, we will often be able to arrange your skiing so as to meet up at lunch.

Expect to be able to 'cruise' down the blues and even sample the reds at the end of the week, depending obviously on your natural athleticism. Everybody learns at their own rate, and we will try to advise you with the help of the professionals on which slopes will suit you best. Bon Courage!



Take a day off! A long lunch at **La Maison Carrier** in Chamonix, some shopping in Megève or a trip through the Mont Blanc tunnel to **Courmayeur (Italy)** can provide a welcome break from the rigours of learning to ski.

Intermediates

This is not a complete or fixed programme but just an idea of some of the things you can do during the week.

- Warm up on the lovely south facing slopes of *Le Brevent*. Sunny first thing, Le Brevent is perfect for cold winter skiing. Gentle blues from the mid-station, more challenging reds from the Col Cornu or a not too difficult black from the top. Magnificent views of the Mont Blanc massif at lunch and perhaps finish the day with a beer at Le Brevent bar (Brev'Bar).

- Why not ski virtually into *Switzerland* from the back of *Le Tour* down to the village of *Vallorcine*. Ski the crisp north-facing red slopes and even try your hand at easy access off-piste sections in the trees. Reward yourself with a hearty meal at cosy Le Café Comptoir at the foot of the slopes.

- *La Vallée Blanche!* Unique and accessible to intermediate skiers this outstanding trip takes you through a white wonderland of glaciers, blue crevasses and overhanging seracs. In the wake of a *Chamonix guide* you are safe from potential danger, so relax at the refuge Requin halfway down and enjoy the views over lunch. A simply unforgettable day in the mountains.

- *Les Grands Montets* - The most exciting domaine in the world! Ski some of the lower slopes or venture a little off-piste. Finish the day with the Pierre à Ric and a couple of drinks at Les Marmottons.

Experienced

Make sure you have checked weather conditions and avalanche risk (3/5 is already a considerable danger!), and so many new and exciting routes will be open to you.

- From the back of Le Tour, head over towards Switzerland for a run down open snow bowls down to the village of Vallorcine. Rarely skied, you can make your own tracks on a great, gentle trip through the woods. Skied in the right condition this is ideal for perfecting your powder skiing.

- Find the most exciting slopes at **Les Grands Montets**! Known for its abundant snow, challenging reds, advanced black runs, and legendary off-piste routes. Follow the old hotel route for a drop of 2000m; only one lift and few other skiers. The Lavancher bowl, the Canadian bowl, the Italian bowl and La Pendant are all within your capabilities. Great snow and plenty of exhilaration.

- For those of you with a spirit for real adventure try a day's **heliskiing** from the Valgrisenche base in **Italy**. Make life easy on powder skis with this perfect approach to off-piste!



Advanced

In Chamonix the list is endless but here are a few ideas. Make sure you are always equipped with a beacon, a shovel and a snow probe before going out of bounds.

- **Les Grands Montets** - a warm up. From the top of the Bochard and the Herse, ski all the variantes and the little gullies away from the mainstream. Maybe the Canadian bowl from the top of Bochard and perhaps even ski the Lavancher bowl right down to the village to finish.

- **Envers du Plan** or **Vraie Vallée Blanche** - Demanding itineraries from the **Aiguille du Midi**. High mountain skiing at its most breathtaking. Fresh tracks through bowls of powder sometimes up to your knees. Ski across snowbridges and through crevasses (guide indispensable). In new snow you will never forget this one wherever else in the world you ski.

- The **Italian side** (late season). Through the tunnel and up the brand new **Skyway cable car** brings you up **Helbronner**, opposite the Aiguille du Midi. Ski back down into Italy on the Marbrées. Very steep at the top followed by bowl after bowl of exquisite spring snow. Ski back to Chamonix from Helbronner for a demanding but fabulous day's skiing.

- How are the legs? How about something different? **Ski touring** in Chamonix is limitless - so why not try a day trip. Get away from all the other skiers and really appreciate the peace of the mountains. Climb to the top of **Les Grands Montets** or the **Col du Passon** and ski the **Glacier d'Argentière** and even the **Glacier du Tour**, or one of the many highlevel routes from the Aiguille du Midi. If you enjoy it come back and try the **Haute Route - Chamonix to Zermatt**, 6 days across the Alps.