AN INSIDER’S GUIDE TO

CHÂTEL

BY

NINE & TENNE
# Contents

**Introduction** 3

**Châtel** 4

Chatel ................................................. 5
Best restaurants ..................................... 6
Best bars .............................................. 7
Best shops ........................................... 8
Activities ............................................ 9
Weather ............................................. 10
Getting to Châtel ................................ 11
Accommodation ................................. 12
  Apartments
  Hotels
  Chalets

**Winter** 13

The ski area ........................................ 14
Snow record ....................................... 15
Beginners ......................................... 16
Intermediate ...................................... 17
Advanced ......................................... 18
Snowboarding ................................... 19
Mountain restaurants ....................... 20
Ski schools ....................................... 21
Ski hire ............................................ 22
Non-skiers ....................................... 23

**Summer** 24

Overview ......................................... 25
Walking ........................................... 26
Family activities ............................... 27
Road biking ..................................... 28
Mountain biking .............................. 29
Other activities ............................... 30
Day Trips ......................................... 31
Mountain restaurants ..................... 32
INTRODUCTION

If you’re looking for a holiday destination in beautiful surroundings, with lots of activities, easy access and authentic charm – look no further than Châtel.

Deciding on a holiday destination isn’t always easy – whether you’re holidaying with family, friends, or as a couple it’s so important that your chosen spot ticks all the boxes for everyone in the group. For ski holidays or summer alpine breaks Châtel certainly has much to offer, and we hope this guide will help you plan your perfect holiday in Châtel.
Châtel is a beautiful village in the French Alps full of traditional mountain charm and breathtaking scenery. Originally a small farming community, Châtel has grown over the years to become a world-class ski resort as well as a very popular summer destination. Agriculture however remains at the heart of the area and once the snow has melted each year the local Abondance cows roam the pastures in great numbers.

The resort of Châtel sits on the French/Swiss border at 1200m above sea level, and in between Lake Geneva and the Mont Blanc mountain range. This location provides exceptional climate and quick easy access at just a 90-minute drive from Geneva airport.

As a ski resort Châtel is hard to beat in our opinion, with an ideal combination of great snow, fast access to skiing and a massive area to explore, as well as the charm and beauty of an authentic alpine village. As part of the huge Portes du Soleil ski domain the area offers over 650km of pistes in 12 interlinked resorts and 2 countries – a truly unique experience!
**Best Restaurants in Châtel**

Gastronomy is taken seriously in Châtel, and there’s a good choice of high quality restaurants as follows:

**Le Fiacre**
Fantastic service, bustling atmosphere and varied menu will await you at the Fiacre in the centre of the village. The ‘a la carte’ includes steaks, duck, or fish on sizzling plates, great pizzas and a selection of Savoyard specialities including a very good tartiflette.
http://www.lefiacre74.com/

**Hotel Restaurant Fleur de Neige**
This fine hotel offers an exceptional dining experience in its restaurant open to guests and general public. We recommend the set menus that offer four or five courses of excellently prepared and presented food. In the Summer take a table on the beautiful terrace overlooking the mountains and valley below. A really special place.

**Le Pierrier**
For Savoyard specialities such as Fondue and Pierrade it’s hard to beat the Pierrier. The rustic alpine styling inside creates a lovely atmosphere and the service is generally very good. Another delicious option on the menu is the Chateaubriand (rib of beef) served for 2 people with some of the best dauphinoise potatoes in the valley.
http://www.pierrier.com/restaurant_chatel.php

**La Poya**
La Poya takes its name from a traditional French/Swiss term describing the journey to the high pastures that alpine cows take in the Spring. The restaurant has a very authentic feel with exposed wood and plenty of references to the valuable cows of the region. This small but perfectly formed establishment offers delicious and elegant dishes and the service from the owner-run team is always seamless.
http://www.lapoya.fr/

**Insider’s Tip**
In high season (both summer and winter) most restaurants offer 2 evening sittings at 7pm and 9pm. Always book in advance! For lunchtime outings, ask if there is a ‘Menu du Jour’ which is generally a 3-course meal for around €15-€18.
**Best Bars in Châtel**

Châtel is a family resort first and foremost and while there are plenty of good bars it certainly doesn’t offer a mecca of après-ski or nightlife. Having said that, there are some lovely places to enjoy a beer or a glass of wine, and special nights with DJs or live bands are available in the peak seasons.

**Bar L’Avalanche**
A popular favorite among English tourists and locals / seasonnaires, the ‘Av’ is a friendly British-run pub offering weekly après events from Open Mic nights to DJ appearances and live bands.
204 Route du Linga. Tel: 04 50 81 67 97

**La Godille**
Cozy bar in the centre of the village opposite the carousel. Nice outside tables in the summer and great vin chaud in the winter.
84 Route du Centre. Tel: 04 50 72 57 69

**Nazca**
Châtel’s hippest bar with stylish interiors, cocktail menu and regular DJ’s and live bands. Comfy sofa style seats outside are great for après ski or summer afternoons.
207 Route de Vonnes. Tel: 06 15 85 40 53

**L’isba**
Small local bar with outdoor seating – open all day from morning coffee to last orders. In the evenings the ‘club’ room downstairs plays host to DJ nights with mainly a French crowd.
66 Route du Linga. Tel: 04 50 73 23 46

**Insider’s Tip**
Check out the blackboards outside bars for happy hour times, and most have Facebook pages where they publicize special DJ or band nights.
Best Shops in Châtel

For a spot of retail during your stay in Châtel we would recommend:

**Poterie Savoyarde Traditionelle (The Pot Shop)**
This is a must for pottery lovers! A selection of beautiful coloured pots and tableware, all hand crafted on-site. Each piece is marked on the base ‘Châtel, Fait Main’ (hand made in Châtel) and has the potter’s initials. Ideal and unique pressies or keepsakes to take home.
*Below Hotel Le Choucas, Route du Vonnes.*

**Couleur Bois (The Wooden Toy Shop)**
For children’s gifts head to this lovely shop with handmade wooden toys and games.
*258 Route de Vonnes.*

**Atelier de Theo**
This interiors store features iconic Savoyard style furniture and accessories for the home, as well as a good (but not cheap) selection of children’s toys and games.
*390 Route des Freinets*

**La Lavandiere**
Cute shop with household gifts, fabrics and accessories.
*209 Route du Linga*

**Le Grenier de Châtel**
For local cheeses, saucissons, wines and liqueurs this is probably the best one-stop shop.
*Route de Vonnes*

**Insider’s Tip**
Visit the local market that takes place every Wednesday morning for fresh produce (fruit & veg), cheeses, flowers, and other local delicacies. In the winter the market takes place below the church square on Route de Meurba, and in the summer on the church square itself.
Activities in Châtel

As well as all the activities on the mountain, Châtel has the following attractions in the village centre:

**Carousel**
Ideal to amuse little ones, the carousel is right in the centre of the village and operates day and night. Check opening times with the tourist office.

**Bowling Le Chaudron**
Fun and well-equipped bowling centre open most afternoons and evenings. Also features a large bar and games area with table football, pool and air hockey.
55 Route du Boude. Tel: 04 50 81 68 27

**Ice Skating**
Situated next to the lake at the top of the village this outdoor artificial skating rink is available for use all-year round with all equipment available to hire. In the winter months if conditions allow, a further rink is made on the frozen lake itself.
208 Route des Argeats. Tel: 04 50 73 34 12

**Forme d’O Aquatic Centre**
Fantastic facility offering indoor and outdoor swimming pools, plus spa areas with saunas & steam rooms. There’s also a gym and treatment area for massages.
188 Chemin de L’Etringa. Tel: 04 50 72 04 31

**Insider’s Tip**
*In the summer look for an accommodation provider who is part of the MultiPass scheme. This enables you to buy a ticket (roughly €2 a day) to gain free entry to many of the attractions in the area for the duration of your stay.*
Weather in Châtel

Châtel's position between Lake Geneva and Mont Blanc creates a unique microclimate that contributes to great weather through the seasons.

In the winter Châtel's ski lifts are open from early December right through to late April and the resort boasts a fantastic snow record, thanks to that microclimate among other things! Daytime temperatures through the winter can vary greatly from month to month so make sure get advice from your accommodation provider about the best time for your group.

During the summer season of July to September Châtel generally enjoys warm sunny conditions with temperatures reaching around 30 degrees in the daytime and cooling pleasantly in the evenings. There are occasional thunderstorms and rain (which can be heavy but mostly quick) but on a positive note they do clear any humid air!

Weather reports in the area are usually pretty accurate so it’s advisable to check if you’re heading off for a day of hiking in the local mountains, and indeed in the winter as well to make sure you benefit from the best sunshine and powder days!

For the best weather forecasts visit:
http://www.chatelweb.com/
http://chamonix-meteo.com/chamonix-mont-blanc/weather/

Insider’s Tip

Avoid the month of May in Châtel when the weather is often rainy and also most shops and restaurants close after the busy winter season.
Getting to Châtel

Châtel is ideally located in the Northern French Alps between Lake Geneva and the Mont Blanc range. Access is quick and easy compared to a lot of mountain resorts, and it’s possible to use the following methods of transport:

By Air
The nearest International airport is Geneva in Switzerland, which is serviced by a number of large operators such as Easyjet, Swiss Air, and British Airways.
Once you arrive at Geneva, the transfer to Châtel is just under 2 hours by car. Your accommodation may include airport transfers, particularly if you’re staying in a catered chalet, but otherwise there are various options:

Transfer Companies
Alpaca Transfers - http://www.alpacatransfers.com/
Professional Transfers - http://www.professionaltransfers.com/

Car Hire

Train
The closest train stations are Thonon Les Bains (France) and Aigle (Switzerland). From both locations a taxi transfer will also be required so check with your accommodation provider or contact one of the transfer companies listed above.

By Road from Calais
It can be useful to have a car while staying in Châtel – both in the winter and summer seasons. The journey from Calais takes around 9 hours and is fairly straightforward. If you’re driving in the winter make sure you’re fully equipped with the correct tyres for the conditions, or at the least get some snow chains - even if you drive a 4x4.

Insider’s Tip
If you plan to use one of the transfer companies, or take the bus from Geneva airport it’s essential to pre-book. Swiss regulations restrict transfer companies from ‘selling seats’ at the airport so make sure you’ve booked your places before you arrive!
Accommodation in Châtel

There’s a wide range of accommodation options in Châtel to suit all requirements and budgets; from compact self catered apartments to luxurious catered chalets and hotels.

Apartments
There’s been a huge increase in good quality apartment complexes in the last few years, many of which are classed as ‘Residences’ as they offer hotel-like services or facilities such as shared swimming pools and gyms. The best of these is the Chalets D’Angele, situated just below the village centre on the Route de Bechigne.
http://www.cgh-residences.co.uk/summer/residences/chatel.html

Hotels
Many of the hotels in Châtel have been family owned and run for generations – there are no big chain hotels here! As such, the reception you’ll receive is warm and friendly and the hotels themselves are presented in typical Savoyard style. Those with the best facilities such as spas, pool, bars and restaurants are the:
Hotel Macchi - http://www.hotelmacchi.com/fr/hotel-chatel-4-etoiles

Chalets
Chalet holidays can often offer the best of both worlds with good quality private accommodation together with the services of a team of staff, from drivers to chefs. NINE & TENNE offers an exclusive selection of chalets in Châtel, available with both self-catered and fully catered packages. The chalets are of exceptional quality and are well located with easy access to the resort centre and the lifts.
http://nine-tenne.com/

Insider’s Tip
Ask your accommodation provider if they can arrange your ski passes so that on your first morning you can get straight on the slopes and avoid any queues at the ticket office.
The ski area

Châtel sits half way between Lake Geneva and Mont Blanc, and is part of the World’s largest interlinked ski area; The Portes du Soleil. Undiscovered by many British holidaymakers, the Châtel ski area is a hidden gem that you will want to return to year after year.

There are five different lift stations in Châtel to access the ski area, so it’s very easy to get on the slopes and start exploring the 12 different resorts that make up the Portes du Soleil. The area offers unrivalled discovery skiing; and all the resorts are very well linked so you can ski in France one day and Switzerland the next, Morzine in the morning, and Châtel in the afternoon.

The skiing in Châtel and the Portes du Soleil is brilliant for all abilities as there are plenty of gentle greens and blues through the trees for beginners, free-flowing red runs for intermediates, and a great selection of blacks and off-piste for the semi-pros.

If you’ve not skied in the Portes du Soleil before, Châtel is a perfect choice of resort because it has some of the best skiing in Europe and also sits right in the heart of the Portes du Soleil with easy access to all of the other resorts for those who want to venture further afield.

Insider’s tip

Skiing in and out of Switzerland is great fun, and don’t worry you don’t need your passport! However it is quite useful to have some Swiss coins in your pocket for coffee or hot chocolate stops. Many of the Swiss restaurants do take Euros but it will cost you more than paying in the local currency.
SNOW RECORD

Châtel and the Portes du Soleil have a fantastic snow record, in fact Avoriaz often has the best snow coverage in the Alps; much better than some of the higher and more famous resorts. There are several reasons for this:

1. Châtel is situated very close to Lake Geneva. When warm air travels over the lake it picks up water, the air is then forced up over the mountains where it cools and falls as snow over Châtel and the Portes du Soleil.

2. Many of the slopes in Châtel are north facing, so the snow is protected from the sun and the slopes retain a good snow quality and depth.

3. Châtel has invested heavily in snow making facilities so if the Alps are having a poor snow year there is always great skiing in Châtel.

4. Châtel was originally a farming town because the mountains are very grassy. This is great for skiing as well because the slopes require much less snow cover than more rocky resorts such as Meribel or Flaine.

INSIDER'S TIP

Many people believe that a ski season finishes in March, however this is far from true. April offers some of the best and most snow sure skiing of the season. Spring snow, sunny weather and quiet pistes make April an excellent time of year to ski, especially with children.
BEGINNERS

Châtel is a tree-lined resort, which creates a very picturesque environment that can also protect skiers from the elements such as wind and cold. This makes it an ideal resort for beginner skiers or young children, as it’s hard enough to learn to ski without worrying about the altitude or exposure of a slope.

The Châtel ski area at Pre La Joux is brilliant for beginners with a selection of drag lifts at the bottom and a magic carpet which is ideal for very young skiers as its much easier than drags or chair lifts. The Bellete green run is a great beginner slope, 3km in length which very gently zigzags through the trees, so providing a great ski experience compared to repeating short draglifts.

The Super Châtel ski area located just above the village is a beginner’s paradise as there are lots and lots of very easy green and blue runs with fantastic views over the Abondance valley. Once you exit the Super Châtel telecabin it’s very easy to see all of the lifts and slopes in-front of you, so it’s very easy to navigate and a very safe and comfortable area for first time skiers.

INSIDER’S Tip

Once you’ve got to grips with your snow-plough it’s possible for beginner skiers to ski into Switzerland for lunch. Take the Chermilion draglift out of Super Châtel and then head over the top towards Chaletneuf. This will take you into Switzerland where you will find a couple of long but easy draglifts with some amazing, gentle blue runs and the Chaletneuf restaurant. This is a really unique experience for first week skiers to start exploring the Alps.
**INTERMEDIATE**

The Portes du Soleil is the largest linked ski area in the World with over 650km of pistes. There are 122 blue runs and 100 red runs – that is a huge amount of intermediate skiing and it’s virtually impossible to ski them all in one week. But what makes the Portes du Soleil so special is that it’s a new adventure everyday; it’s possible to plan a new route to a new resort everyday of your holiday.

It’s not only the quantity but also the variety that makes Châtel and the Portes du Soleil such an amazing ski area. The Lindaret valley adjacent to Châtel is a perfect example of this. At the top of the valley head to the top of the Mossette chairlift, which at almost 2500m has amazing views in all directions. There is a choice of wide free flowing red, blue or black runs which join together further down onto a fast blue which is perfect for practicing your downhill schuss. Then there are several chairlifts, which lead to some of the prettiest tree lined skiing in the Alps. It’s an amazing valley with such variety that you could ski it all day without getting bored and this is only one of many amazing places to ski in the Portes du Soleil.

**INSIDER'S TIP**

*The Donkeys above Plaine Dranse in Châtel is an off-piste section ideal for intermediate skiers. Located between the Cornebois and Combe chairlifts, it’s equivalent to an off-piste blue and there are lots of hidden valleys and little jumps that make this a unique playground in the snow.*
Undiscovered by many, Châtel and the Portes du Soleil is a mecca for advanced skiing. There are currently 32 black runs in the Portes du Soleil with the most famous being the ‘Swiss Wall’, which drops down from Avoriaz into Les Crosets. This is a very long and super steep mogul field - not for the faint hearted!

Because the Portes du Soleil is so large there is something for all advanced skiers depending on your preference and snow conditions; from steep couloirs to powder bowls, jump parks to mogul fields – no matter how hard you want to push it, you won’t be disappointed.

The Linga and Pre La Joux ski areas are great for advanced skiers because they are pretty steep, however on the Châtel doorstep the Super Châtel ski area is amazing on a powder day; because it’s predominantly a beginner area the off-piste stays relatively untouched. This area also links directly with the Torgon free ride in Switzerland which is a controlled off-piste zone allowing for safe backcountry style skiing.

**Insider’s Tip**

*To really experience the best of Châtel’s advanced skiing we highly recommend hiring a guide for a morning or day. It’s the only really safe way to venture off the beaten track and find the best snow. If you’re lucky they will take you down ‘La Leche’, a 600m powder bowl which you can see from Châtel, so you can admire / show off your route over an après ski beer in town.*
The snowboarding in Châtel and the Portes du Soleil is pretty cool. There is a large selection of jump parks, boarder cross, freestyle areas, and limitless off-piste.

The most popular hangout for snow boarders is ‘The Stash’. About one mile long the Stash is a range of natural jumps, rails, wall rides and log jibs designed by Burton Snowboards. Hidden amongst the trees in the Lindarets valley, the Stash uses natural terrain or wooden obstacles to create a playground for snowboarders and freeriders. There are three slopes to choose and plenty of more unmarked routes creating a unique slope experience.

Closer to home, Châtel has an exciting jump park and boarder cross in Super Châtel with jumps and rails for all abilities. In Pre La Joux the Donkeys is an easy off piste playground, ideal for snowboarders with natural jumps, drops and half pipe valleys.

**Insider’s Tip**

*If you really want to see the mountains and explore off-piste then split-boarding is the sport for you. Split-board technology has really developed in the last few years ensuring the touring and riding experience is world class. Châtel has endless backcountry terrain, both high altitude and tree lined. We highly recommend a guide for your own safety and enjoyment.*

[www.bluechillisnowsports.com](http://www.bluechillisnowsports.com)
Mountain Restaurants

Châtel and the Portes du Soleil have lots of brilliant options for lunches on the mountain. We recommend:

**La Cremaillere, Les Lindarets (Goats Village)**
This is our favorite restaurant in the Portes du Soleil. It has a wide range of salads, omelets and local specialties however we always choose the plat du jour, which is accompanied by the best sauté potatoes and Savoyard cabbage in the world.
Tel. +33 450 741 168

**Chez Denis, Plaine Dranse, Châtel**
Located at the top of the Pierre Longue chairlift it’s possible for beginners and non-skiers to get here. Chez Denis is a very cute and rustic old farmhouse serving local specialties such as Berthoud and tartiflette that Denis the owner makes with cheese produced on his own farm.
Tel. +33 450 733 629

**Le Toupin, Les Crosets (Switzerland)**
On a sunny spring day Le Toupin has one of the best balconies in the Portes du Soleil with amazing views of the Dents Blanche. The atmosphere is relaxed and informal, and the menu is varied and well presented.
Tel. + 41 24 79 15 48

**Le Corbeau, Morgins (Switzerland)**
Le Corbeau has arguably the best views of the Dents du Midi and the south facing terrace is a real suntrap on a fine day. The menu is small, however their cheese croute is a proper mountain feast and their vin chaud served in little crockery boots is a must.
Tel. +41 244 771 383

**Chez Creppy, Plaine Dranse, Châtel**
Located in the middle of the Châtel ski area, Chez Creppy has self-service and table service options, both of which are very good. The menu has a great variety of salads, steaks and local specialties.
Tel. +33 450 733 119

**Insider’s Tip**
Most restaurants have two sittings 12pm and 2pm, so plan your day accordingly and it’s always a good idea to book in advance.
Ski school

It’s very important to choose the right ski school to ensure you get the most from your time on the slopes and return home a better skier. Whether you’re a first time skier or an experienced black run skier a good lesson will always be beneficial.

Blue Chilli

An English-run ski school with some of the best and most dynamic ski instructors in the area. They currently have four instructors offering private lessons for all abilities, and it’s best to book well in advance, especially during peak weeks.

www.bluechillisnowsports.com

ESF

The ESF has an office located in the middle of town and provide group lessons from either Pre La Joux or Super Châtel. They have lots of English speaking instructors, so be sure to specify your language preference when you book.

www.esf-chatel.com/en

Insider’s Tip

If you are skiing with friends of a similar ability it’s a good idea to share a private instructor, as the quality of instruction and personal attention you will receive is better than a large mixed group.
**Ski Hire**

Having the right equipment is very important, as you will want comfy boots and the latest in ski technology to suit your ski ability. We recommend the following rental shops, offering excellent equipment and service levels.

**Skihire 2U**

Ski hire 2 U offers a unique service as they deliver your equipment to your holiday accommodation when you arrive. They then collect everything at the end of your holiday, and what’s more if you have any issues during your stay they will come to the slopes or your accommodation whenever is convenient to solve the problem.

[www.skihire2u.com](http://www.skihire2u.com)

**Ski Set**

Located at the foot of the Barbosine chairlift, Ski Set offer the best equipment and service in the Petit Châtel area. This is a family run business who pride themselves on having a broad range of skis and boots for all abilities.

[www.skiset.co.uk/ski-resort/chatel/shops/ski-services/](http://www.skiset.co.uk/ski-resort/chatel/shops/ski-services/)

**Vertical Horizons**

With English speaking staff and top of the range equipment, the service at Vertical Horizons is always super efficient and friendly. Located just below Châtel by the Loy campsite on the way to Linga, they also have a very impressive boot fitting department if you want to treat yourself to a new pair of boots.

[www.verticalchatel.com](http://www.verticalchatel.com)

**Insider’s Tip**

If you are a regular skier it’s a good idea to buy your own ski boots as they will be a lot more comfortable, however we recommend hiring skis because ski technology improves every year and airline ski carriage is about the same price as a weeks hire.
Non-Skiers

Châtel is a great resort for non-skiers as there are plenty of activities to enjoy without racing down a ski slope. Here we have listed some of our favorites;

Snowshoe walking
Snowshoe walking is a great way to explore the mountains and get a close look at the natural beauty of the area without strapping on some skis.
The best local guide is Lolo Tel. +33 680 150 585

Husky rides
Located just down the road in La Chapelle is a husky ride center which gives you the option to drive the sledge yourself or sit back relax and let a guide take you.
Tel. +33 688 539 791

Spa treatments
Holidays provide the perfect opportunity to relax and pamper yourself with a massage, manicure or facial.
Forme d’o: www.chatel-formedo.com/en/
Hotel Macchi: www.hotelmachi.com

Shopping
Châtel is a charming traditional mountain village with a lovely selection of shops selling local produce and specialties. There is also a fantastic market on Wednesday mornings which is a great place to buy some of the local cheese and dried meats.

Swimming
Châtel has recently invested in a state of the art leisure complex with indoor / outdoor swimming pool, and a separate adults only pool with sauna and steam room facilities.
Forme d’o: www.chatel-formedo.com/en/

Ice-skating
Lac de Vonne is a beautiful mountain lake, which freezes over in the winter. It's a lovely place for a walk or there's also an ice skating rink at the far end.
Tel. +33 450 733 412

Insider’s Tip
Just because you’re not skiing doesn’t mean you can’t head up the mountain. Its possible to go up the Super Châtel Telecabine or the Pierre Longue chairlift as a pedestrian, making it easy to meet your skiing friends for a fondue lunch in one of the wonderful mountain restaurants.
OVERVIEW

If you’ve not visited the Alps in the summer before, we’re sure you’ll be blown away by the stunning scenery and huge amount of activities to enjoy. The mountains of Châtel and the Abondance valley are among the most beautiful in the whole of the Alps. There are 3000m peaks, low valleys with streams and waterfalls, and endless mountain pastures with cows happily grazing.

Over the last fifty years Châtel has developed into one of the best year-round alpine resorts in Europe however it’s lost none of its Savoyard charm or farming heritage. There are currently over sixty active farms in the valley mostly producing the local Abondance cheese.

The weather in Châtel over the summer months is usually very pleasant with temperatures in the high 20s, however there is always a slight breeze so it doesn’t get overly hot. Please be aware however that you are still in the mountains so it is possible to get an occasional storm.

Châtel is a wonderful place to visit in the summer if you are an outdoors person because there is an abundance of activities such as white water rafting, walking, tennis and golf to name just a few. The village center is always busy in the summer as well with plenty of shops, bars and restaurants to discover.

INSIDER’S TIP

If you’re coming to Châtel during the summer, pack for all weather! Being in the mountains means conditions can change during the course of a week (and even during a day!) so from sun hats to rain jackets make sure you are well equipped.
Walking

Châtel makes a perfect base for alpine walking holidays for people of all ages and fitness levels. There are lots of trails all around Châtel and the Abondance valley so no matter where you are staying in Châtel you can simply walk out of your door and start exploring the mountains and the beautiful scenery.

One of the best summit walks in the area is the Mont du Grange, which is the largest mountain in the valley. It is a protected nature reserve and you will usually spot some mountain goats, chamois or even deer. The best starting point is just below Col du Bassachaux, where there’s a fairly flat section for the first hour before a steep climb to the summit where you will find amazing views of Mont Blanc and the surrounding Alps. The walk takes about 4-5 hours and there is a brilliant restaurant at the Col du Bassachaux to recharge the batteries.

All of the walking trails in the area are well signposted and the Tourist Office will provide maps with suggested routes. There are also several guides working in the area, which can be a good idea if you want to try something more challenging. When heading into the mountains we recommend always taking a rucksack with water, snacks, map, charged mobile phone and warm clothing.

Insider’s Tip

For true adventurers, why not combine a walking route with a truly unique overnight stay in a mountain refuge? We recommend Chalet des Tinderets on the Mont de Grange: www.refuge-abondance.com/
Family Activities

For adventurous and outdoorsy families, Chatel is an ideal summer destination. Not only is there amazing scenery and beautiful views around every corner, but there’s an endless array of activities for families of all ages.

Walking

Enjoy one of the many signposted walks for families that allow discovery and learning about the rich and diverse countryside. Some are even suitable for an off road buggy so even the little ones can enjoy the mountain.

Bob Luge

The bob luge is always a favorite with children and adults alike! Set among the trees at Pre La Joux, it’s a ride of 650 meters with 7 bends and an average speed of 7 m/s. Tickets are available to buy on-site or at the Tourist Office.

DevalKart

DevelKart is another firm favorite with children aged 10 and over. Just next to the bob luge at Pre La Joux, there are 20 unpowered karts to steer down the slope at the speed of your choice. Tickets are available to buy on-site or at the tourist office.

Miniature Golf

Miniature golf is available at the 18-hole mini course at Loy, just below the village center. You can also try out the classic French game of boules here on the free pitches.

Tel. +33 450 733 229

Tennis

Châtel has 8 courts in two stunning locations; fun and fitness for all the family.

Tel. +33 683 890 375

Swimming

Châtel has recently opened a modern leisure center with an indoor / outdoor swimming pool ideal for children of all ages.

www.chatel-formedo.com/en/

Insider’s Tip

A fairly easy and interesting walk for children is to Lac d’Arvoin. Starting from the car park above the top of the Panthiaz lift station, follow the signs past the farm and through the woods. The walk takes about 30 minutes each way and the lake is one of the most beautiful in the Alps, often so calm it looks like a mirror of the mountains above.
Road Biking

Châtel boasts some of the best road biking in Europe. Whether you are a serious club rider, training for a big event, or just looking for an adventurous and fun weekend with friends, there is something for all ages and abilities. The road biking around Châtel is very versatile with some famous cols such as the Col de Joux Vert and Pas du Morgins on our doorstep, however there are also some exceptional flatter rides around Lake Geneva and the Rhone valley. The roads are quiet and the scenery is breathtaking, in short it’s a biking paradise.

Châtel plays host to a number of pro cycling events throughout the season, including the famous Critérium du Dauphiné. In fact Châtel is such a good road cycling base that Team Sky run their training camps from here each year.

There are also several sportives in the area; these events are a great opportunity to test your cycling skills on the challenging climbs and technical descents in the area. Our favorites are the Cyclotour du Leman in May, the Morzine Vallee D’Aulps cyclosportive in June and the Montée de Bassachaux at the end of July.

Insider’s Tip

From Châtel head down the valley to Evian, then turn right along Lake Geneva (this is a beautiful lakeside road) all the way to Monthey. Climb to Morgins (15km, 1000 vertical meters) and then descend back to Châtel. This is a beautiful and varied 100km route with a tough Cat 1. climb to finish. Good luck!
Over the past ten years Châtel has invested heavily in its mountain biking infrastructure, creating one of the best bike parks in Europe. In fact because Châtel is linked to Morzine, Les Gets and Champery who also have exceptional bike parks, the Portes du Soleil is arguably one of the best and largest mountain biking areas in the World.

The biking in Châtel is very varied offering something for everyone from fast free flowing single track, to technical and steep freeride zones with huge drops. There are some seriously big gap jumps, plenty of northshore, pump tracks and jump parks.

The main Châtel bike park is located at Pre La Joux. From the top of the Pierre Longue chairlift there are many blue, red and black trails through the trees. Also in Pre La Joux / Plaine Dranse is a bike wash, several restaurants, bike repair huts and a free bus service back to town.

One of the best events on the biking calendar is the PassPorte du Soleil. This is an 80km fun race around the Portes du Soleil with lots of downhill, some lifts, some pedaling, two countries and nine different resorts. There are plenty of refreshment points, live music and the atmosphere is always great.

**INSIDER’S TIP**

*As with all adventure sports local knowledge is essential, so if you want to get off the beaten track and find the best single track that only the locals know about we recommend hiring a guide for a day.*

[www.ecolevttchatel.com](http://www.ecolevttchatel.com)
Other Activities

Châtel is a real playground for active outdoor people. Here are a few suggestions to get you started:

**Fantasticable**
The Fantasticable is an exhilarating and spine tingling experience. Positioned in a horizontal harness you fly through the air on two separate zip wires reaching speeds of 100km/h and 240m above the ground!

**Golf**
If you like a golf course with a view then you won't be disappointed with the local choice. Choose from a number of courses in France & Switzerland, including the famous Evian Championship course on the shores of Lake Geneva.

www.golf-villars.com
www.evianresort.com

**Water skiing & wake boarding**
Lake Geneva, just 40 minutes drive from Châtel offers a range of sports such as water skiing and wake boarding.

www.wakeski.fr

**Rock climbing**
Châtel and the Abondance valley have a number of rock climbing sites, plus artificial wall and Via Ferrata to offer a full range of activities for climbers of all abilities.

www.7aventures.com

**Paragliding**
Riding the dynamic air currents and thermals in the valley, tandem flights over Châtel provide an unforgettable experience.

http://www.esiproflying.com/

**White water rafting**
Canoeing, rafting and kayaking are all possible on the challenging river Dranse which weaves through the valley from Châtel all the way down to meet Lake Geneva.

www.an-rafting.com
Day Trips

Unlike some alpine resorts Châtel is not that remote; it has easy access to some fantastic places of interest along the Rhone valley and Lake Geneva - perfect for family days out.

Chateau de Chillon

Sitting literally in Lake Geneva just outside Montreux this is one of Switzerland's most iconic castles. It's very interesting and great for boys who love knights and castles.

www.chillon.ch/en

The Labrynth

This great theme park based around a large maze is only 30 minutes away on the motorway towards Martigny. As well as the maze it offers lots of bouncy castles, climbing frames, super slides, and traditional games. It's a great family day out.

www.labyrinthe.ch

Evain & Thonon

Both 40 minutes from Châtel, Evian and Thonon Les Bains are the nearest towns to Châtel on the French side. If you fancy a potter around the shops, lunch in a classic French bistro, or a swim in the lake then they are both worth a visit.

Annecy

A bit further afield (90 minutes) is the picture postcard medieval town of Annecy. Although a bit touristy Annecy is one of the most beautiful towns in Europe with lots of cobbled streets, cozy restaurants and boutique shops hidden amongst little rivers and canals.

Insider's Tip

There are no toll booths on the Swiss motorways but you are required to display a ‘vignette’ on your windscreen. These can be purchased at Swiss post offices or larger petrol stations.
Mountain Restaurants

There are lots of quirky and interesting mountain restaurants open in the summer months, some only accessible by foot.

Chalet Mouet
This working farm offers a rustic restaurant experience with truly breath-taking views. It’s located on the Col Mouet between Châtel and La Chapelle d’Abondance and is only accessible by foot. The menu is simple with omelettes, salads and an amazing local croute.
Tel. +33 603 185 600

La Cremalliaire
Located in the goat village below Lindarets this is a lovely restaurant with a diverse and delicious menu. The goat village, as it’s name suggests, is home to several dozen tame goats that literally inhabit the village high street. It’s possible to buy goat food and feed them from your hand. You can drive here from the Morzine valley or walk / chairlift from Châtel – it takes about one hour each way.
Tel. +33 450 741 168

Clos Savoyard
Slightly more accessible is the Clos Savoyard, which sits near the river in La Chapelle d’Abondance. The Clos offers a great menu with gastro cuisine and local specialities to enjoy on it’s sunny terrace. If you fancy combining a walk with lunch, park at the Panthiaz car park and follow the river path downstream; it’s a gentle 1km to the restaurant and takes about 30 minutes.
Tel. +33 450 735 032

Insider’s Tip
To keep young children entertained during lunch opt for one of the restaurants with kids play areas or trampoline such as the Haute Bise at the top of the Col de Bassachaux, or Chez Denis at Plaine Dranse. Some mountain restaurants don’t have the facilities to accept card payments so it’s wise to carry cash.
Happy Holidays!

We hope you find this guide useful when planning your trip to Châtel, and once you are here in resort. But more importantly we hope you have a fantastic holiday and enjoy Châtel for all it has to offer.

We intend this guide to grow and evolve, so if you discover any hidden secrets or holiday tips that you would like to share then please send them to jo@nine-tenne.com and we will include them in the next edition.