

INSPIRATION

## The secret hack behind a £400 luxury ski holiday in the Alps

It's possible to stay in a premium French resort on a budget — without the hassle of flying. Here's how



Les Arcs in the Alps

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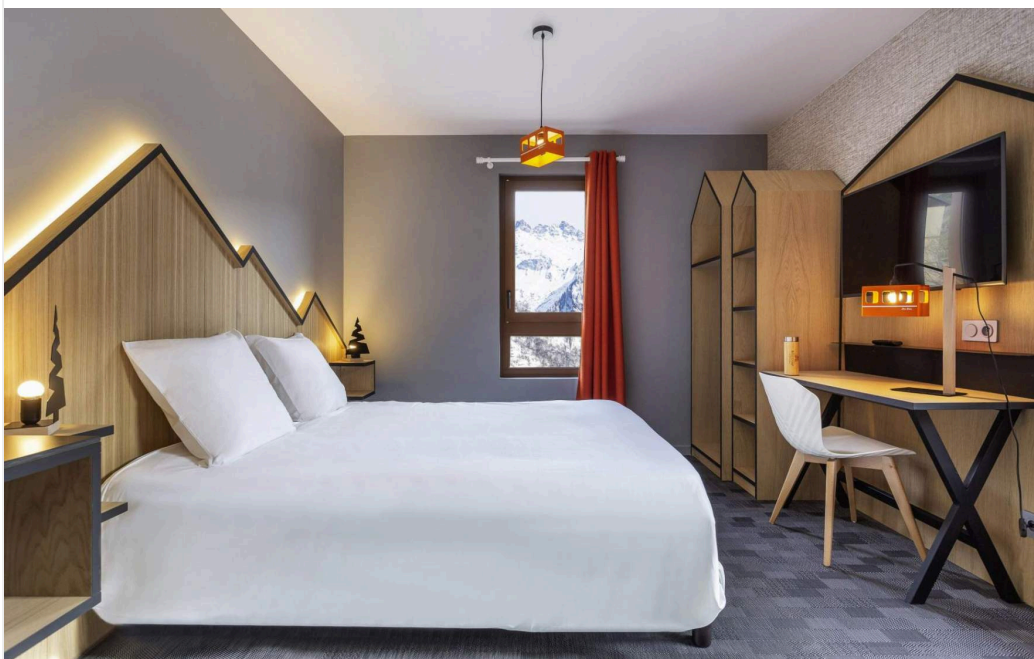
**T**he way to save money on a trip to the Alps is to dodge the airport. Skiers of a certain vintage will no doubt remember coaching it down to the Alps. Regular cigarette breaks, the heady scent of diesel and — technology permitting — maybe a movie on a tiny TV; was there any other way to travel in the 1980s? What all of those journeys had in common, if not unrivalled comfort, was a hefty dose of

fun. And the coach is still the cheapest way to travel, but it is also convenient and more environmentally friendly than flying. The buses have got better too: more legroom, working air conditioning and in-seat USB chargers, so you could munch through an entire box set en route, or just take in the scenery, while someone else drives.

Snow Express serves more than a dozen ski areas in France, travelling overnight from London and Folkestone on Fridays (£199 return; [snowexpress.co.uk](https://snowexpress.co.uk)). Les Arcs is a great choice as it is accessed directly from Bourg St Maurice by a seven-minute funicular railway (£3), so you could be on the slopes by Saturday afternoon.

Topping out at 3,200m, Les Arcs is among the most snow-sure resorts in the Alps, and it also offers one of the largest ski areas. This year is the 20th anniversary of the Paradiski area, created by the double-decker Vanoise Express cable car, which links Les Arcs with neighbouring La Plagne.

Base Camp Lodge in Bourg is part funky hostel, part hotel with double rooms, dorms or family suites, as well as a bar and restaurant. Seven nights in a dorm with kitchenette is from £219 from March 16 ([hotel-basecampplodge.com](https://hotel-basecampplodge.com)).



A room at Base Camp Lodge

Sadly that doesn't include your lift pass and there isn't much money to be saved by just buying local lift passes rather than the combined area one: Les Arcs on its own is £283 for six days (lesarcs-peiseyvallandry.com); upgrading to the full Paradiski ticket is £316 (en.lesarcs.com). But that does give access to a combined 425km of terrain, so there is no chance of getting bored.

#### ADVERTISEMENT

### What you get for your £418pp

- Return coach travel from London or Folkestone to Bourg St Maurice
- Up to 23kg hold luggage, plus ski or board bag
- Seven nights' dorm-room accommodation with kitchenette at Base Camp Lodge
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### Feeling flush?

#### The £800 holiday



Arc 1950 village

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The revival of the Ski Train from London St Pancras has been a boon for those who want to cut their air miles — and there is still something romantic about an overnight train journey. Inghams can book self-catering accommodation at the smart Arc 1950 L Village Apartments, which has a range of room configurations over eight buildings, and your train travel or flights. Arc 1950 was conceived as a traffic-free village to coincide with the creation of the Paradiski area in 2003. Controversially at the time, it was built by the North American developer Intrawest in traditional wood and stone style, in sharp contrast to the 1960s modernism of the original Les Arcs villages, at 1,600m and 1,800m. It has bedded in well over the years and is great for ski-in, ski-out convenience. Design buffs can learn more about the postwar French love of groovy functionalism on a guided architecture walk of the resort (free; [en.lesarcs.com](https://en.lesarcs.com)).

**Details** Seven nights' self-catering for two from £759pp, including train travel from London and transfers, departing on March 16 ([ingham.co.uk](https://ingham.co.uk))

## The £1,200 holiday



Les Cristaux apartment by Peak Retreats

**Peak Retreats** has a choice of self-catering apartments, and prices include return Flexiplus fares on LeShuttle from Folkestone, so you can board the next available train when you arrive at the terminal. The Edenarc aparthotel in Arc 1800 includes access to a spa area with an outdoor heated pool, sauna, steam room and hot tub. If you want to ease your cooking and washing-up burden, order in from Huski, a sort of posh Deliveroo, which tailors menus to your requirements (from £51 for two; hu.ski). So long as you are not too heavy on the right foot, a return drive to the Alps from either the Eurotunnel or ferry port in Calais should not cost much more than about £300 in fuel and motorway tolls. The ViaMichelin app returns an estimate of £146 each way, but it will depend on your car and how carefully you drive (viamichelin.co.uk). **Details** Seven nights' self-catering for two from £898pp, including LeShuttle but excluding petrol and tolls, departing on March 16 (peakretreats.co.uk)

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