

YOUR WINTER IN VALAIS.

PRESS KIT WINTER 2020 / 2021.



ENGRAVED ON MY HEART.

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Valais.

Dear friends of Valais,

In this press pack, we offer you a taste of the best that Valais has to offer during the winter season. You'll find the top 10 experiences of the Valais winter, along with sporting, gastronomic and cultural attractions, a calendar of key events, travel news, and portraits of inspiring people who take their inspiration from their region.

Meet Géraldine Bestenheider-Patterson, for example, director of the Hôtel de l'Étrier in Crans-Montana, who opened the resort's first tourist nursery. Or Yannick Ecoeur, a former professional ski mountaineer, who launched the ski touring park movement in Valais.

We also invite you to experience the colourful Carnival traditions of our region: the Tschägättä of the Lötschental valley, for example, the Peluches and Empaillés of Evolène, and the Gnooggärfüüdini of Erschmatt.

Winter sports enthusiasts can enjoy their favourite activity here in dream conditions. Thanks to the high altitude of the ski areas, Valais is the Swiss region that offers the best snow guarantee on its 2,000 kilometres of piste.

Foodies, too, are in for a treat, with a wide variety of delicious gastronomic specialities to discover.

All in all, Valais promises countless treasures in terms of culture, traditions, sports, gastronomy, wellbeing – and innovation, too. We invite you to come and see for yourself!




See you soon in Valais!



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-  twitter.com/valaiswallis

How to use this press pack.

This document was designed so that you can find out more about subjects covered via hyperlinks.

These can be followed in different ways.



Direct link

Direct link

Valais in 10 figures.



65
Swiss Alpine Club
(SAC) huts



1 UNESCO
World Heritage Site



2,000 kilometres
of ski pistes



45 summits
above 4,000 metres



8 resorts with the “Family
Destination” label



5 thermal spa resorts



1/3 of Switzerland’s
vineyards flourish in Valais



3,800 metres above
sea level – Switzerland’s
highest ski areas



10 restaurants with
Michelin stars



8 AOP/IGP products

10 top winter experiences.



1 Try one of the longest ski runs in the world. [↗](#)



4 Tackle a toboggan run and race against friends. [↗](#)



8 Put on a pair of skates and spend an afternoon at an ice rink perfecting your pirouettes. [↗](#)



2 Relax in the soothing warm water of a thermal spa. [↗](#)



5 Discover the joys of ski touring. [↗](#)



9 Eat a Raclette, the dish everyone looks forward to as soon as temperatures start to drop. [↗](#)



3 Skip the snow for a while to visit a special exhibition at a museum. [↗](#)



6 Ski or snowboard down a secured freeride itinerary. [↗](#)



10 Enjoy the fresh mountain air along a winter walk. [↗](#)



7 Soak up the sun on the terrace of a restaurant or bar. [↗](#)

A man with short brown hair and a light beard, wearing large, wrap-around ski goggles with reflective lenses. He is dressed in a bright yellow-green ski jacket over a white and colorful striped neck gaiter. He has a red mesh backpack on his back and is holding a pair of orange and black skis vertically. The background shows a snowy mountain landscape under a clear blue sky.

WINTER SPORTS.

First name	Yannick
Surname	Ecœur
Date of birth	23.08.1981
From	Morgins
Occupation	Border guard; he was a professional ski mountaineer for 15 years.
Key info	He won the Patrouille des Glaciers in 2010: his happiest memory.
Favourite location	The region of the Val d'Illeiez for ski touring, mountain biking and trail running.
Further info	www.valais.ch

Special experiences for visitors.

Skisafari



With the Skisafari deal, you set off every day to explore a new ski area in Valais from the accommodation of your choice. You may be attracted by the large, internationally renowned ski areas or you may prefer the smaller, lesser-known resorts: whatever your taste, you can easily reach whichever destination you opt for each day. Thanks to the Skisafari, you have access to all the ski pistes of Valais for a choice of three or four days. All you have to do is take your pick and enjoy the sensational skiing!



Special lift passes



The resorts of Valais have set up a variety of different ski pass deals to suit your personal needs, each with attractive special rates. You may opt to take advantage 100% of your chosen resort, for example; or change ski area every day, or ski with children, or benefit from cheaper lift pass prices in case of poor weather, or have access to other leisure attractions in addition to ski lifts. Thanks to the choice of lift passes on offer, you'll be able to ski just as you wish in Valais at the best possible price.



First Tracks

With the “First Tracks” deals offered by various ski areas, you can trace the very first tracks on freshly groomed pistes before they open officially for the day. Enjoy sunrise up on the slopes and dream conditions all to yourself before the arrival of other skiers. The deal is on offer in [Zermatt](#), the [Aletsch Arena](#), [Verbier](#), [Crans-Montana](#) and [Morgins](#); it is well worth setting your alarm clock a little earlier to make the most of it!

Alaïa winter camps



Improve your technique thanks to the winter freeski and freestyle snowboard camps run by Alaïa Chalet. This is a unique experience for young people, especially: the chance to enjoy an unforgettable break with expert training by professionals. The programme consists of a week of tuition at the snowpark in Crans-Montana with indoor technique workshops at the top-class facilities at Alaïa Chalet. Everyone – from pro rider to novice – has the chance to improve in ideal conditions for an enjoyable and rewarding stay!

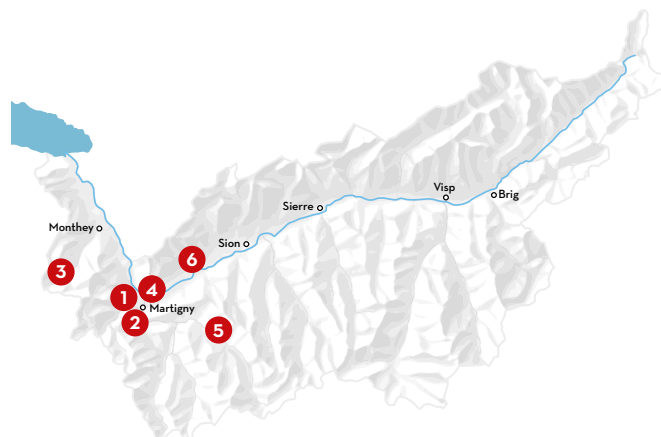


Ski lessons for the young at heart

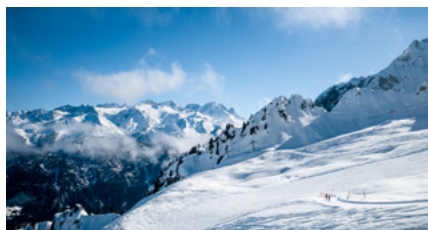
Were you once a keen skier and you dream of getting back on the slopes? Or perhaps you have never skied before, and would like to try the sport? In Valais, the resorts of [Bettmeralp](#) and [Nendaz](#) offer special private lessons for adults, and especially older visitors, who wish to (re-)discover the joys of skiing in complete safety. Book in advance for a ski instructor to accompany you on the slopes and awaken the passionate skier inside you!

A perfect weekend for winter sports enthusiasts.

Valais is winter sports heaven. Thanks to the altitude of its ski areas, the region promises optimal snow cover on its 2,000 kilometres of piste: an unrivalled playground for skiers and snowboarders. To make the most of the possibilities offered by the Valais mountains, try our programme for a perfect weekend in Valais: guaranteed to get the pulse racing of every snow sports enthusiast.



Day 1 – Friday

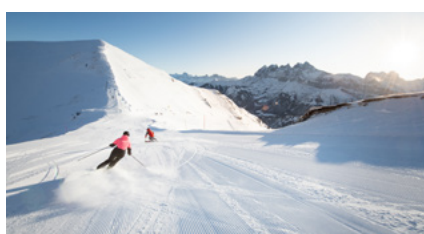


Set off from your hotel in the Martigny region to tackle one of the ski areas scattered around the Rhône valley, thanks to the Skisafari deal. Start gently by exploring Les Marécottes **(1)**, whose scenic pistes and freeride runs promise abundant snow.



Afterwards visit Barryland **(2)**, with its museum and kennels. The exhibitions on the St Bernard region (including the famous pass and historical hospice) are fascinating, and the St Bernard dogs and puppies at the kennels are sure to melt your heart. In the evening, treat your taste buds to a delicious Raclette at one of the Martigny restaurants that belong to the association “Saveurs du Valais” (Flavours of Valais).

Day 2 – Saturday

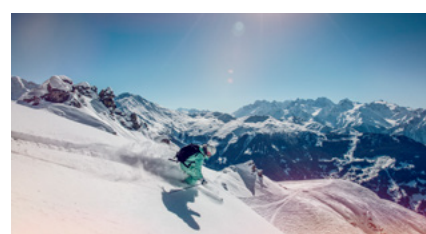


Explore the Portes du Soleil **(3)**, one of the region’s largest ski areas. Test your skills on one of the world’s toughest pistes, the Pas de Chavanette, or enjoy the long run from Ripaille to Grand-Paradis. Freestyle enthusiasts can perfect their tricks on the many features of the Superpark in Les Crosets.

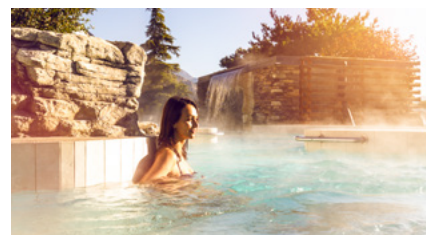


Spend a little time exploring the highlights of the Valais gastronomic scene. Start with some tastings of spirits, liqueurs and fruit syrups at the Morand distillery **(4)**; then head to La Fromathèque to taste a selection of cheeses and other Valais products. Take advantage of the sales areas to buy some local specialities to bring home for yourself and for family and friends.

Day 3 – Sunday



Round off your break in style taking advantage of the many winter sports options throughout the “4 Vallées” ski area. You will find tremendous variety – from the famous Mont Fort mogul run for expert skiers **(5)** to thrilling freeride itineraries, along with seven secured routes for ski tourers that offer a choice of scenic ascents within the ski area.



Soothe your leg muscles at “Les Bains de Saillon” **(6)**, a thermal spa with a variety of blissfully relaxing indoor and outdoor pools. The centre also includes a wellness area with saunas, hammams and massage centre, and also a gym.

Find the full programme of our perfect weekend for snow sports enthusiasts at:

valais.ch

Did you know?



In the “4 Vallées” ski area, visitors aged over 77 can ski free of charge throughout the winter season.



Valais is home to 40 official ski schools.



The most successful Swiss alpine skier of all time on the FIS World Cup circuit is Pirmin Zurbriggen from Valais. A native of Saas-Almagell, he clocked up 40 wins during his career.



Saas-Fee boasts the world’s highest funicular as well as the world’s highest revolving restaurant, perched at an altitude of 3,500 metres. Close by is also the world’s largest glacier cavern, the famous Ice Pavilion, with a volume of 5,500 cubic metres!



With two button lifts, two pistes and 8 kilometres of runs, Télégiettes is Switzerland’s only ski area that is 100% free for skiers to use. Located at an altitude of 1,300 metres, high above Monthey, it is open every Saturday and Sunday during the winter season.



Europe’s longest ski run is located in Valais. The Matterhorn Glacier Paradise piste in Zermatt measures 25 kilometres and starts at an altitude of 3,883 metres.

Events not to be missed.

Belalp Hexe

The idiosyncratic “Witches’ Race” attracts large numbers of skiers dressed as witches wearing scary masks and pointed hats. The course starts from the Hohstock and follows the “Häx oben” and “Häx unten” pistes down to the alpine village of Blatten.

9 – 16 January 2021 – Belalp
valais.ch

The 300-gate challenge

Like to test your skills and stamina on the longest open slalom race in the world? At the end of the season, Vercorin welcomes you to its legendary “Défi des 300” – the “300-gate challenge”, with more than 300 gates over a vertical drop of 1,000 metres.

March 2021 – Vercorin
defi300.ch

Allalin Downhill races

Take part in these thrilling races over a distance of 8.5 kilometres: among the highest glacier races in the world. The start is at the foot of the Allalinhorn, at an altitude of 3,500 metres, and the finish in the village of Saas-Fee: a total descent of 1,700 vertical metres.

19 – 20 March 2021 – Saas-Fee
valais.ch

Alpine Ski World Cup – women’s race

The world’s top female skiers gather in Crans-Montana to compete in a Downhill race and an Alpine Combined contest on the Mont Lachaux piste.

23 – 24 January 2021 – Crans-Montana
skicm-cransmontana.ch

Skicolor

Fun event at which skiers and snowboarders don a white suit, set off down the Funslope piste in La Tzoumaz, and get doused in 100% natural, biodegradable colours.

March 2021 – La Tzoumaz
latzoumaz.ch

Special experiences for visitors.

Secured freeride itineraries



Valais enjoys an outstanding reputation among freeride enthusiasts for its legendary off-piste itineraries. Several ski resorts have established these marked routes, secured against avalanches but not groomed, for freeride enthusiasts to enjoy in total freedom. For maximum safety, obey all markings and signage, study weather and avalanche risk reports before setting off, and carry the necessary safety equipment. Experienced guides are also at your disposal to accompany you.



Avalanche rescue training parks

Every freeride enthusiast should carry an avalanche transceiver, probe and shovel whenever heading off-piste. To encourage skiers and snowboarders to learn correct use of the equipment and practise regularly, various ski areas have set up avalanche rescue training parks. These demarcated zones contain transmitters, buried in the snow, that you can search for: the perfect way to practise using your kit and hone techniques that could one day save a life! Start training this winter: at [Champéry](#), [Verbier](#), [Crans-Montana](#), [Zinal](#), [Aletsch Arena](#), [Evolène](#) or [Zermatt](#).

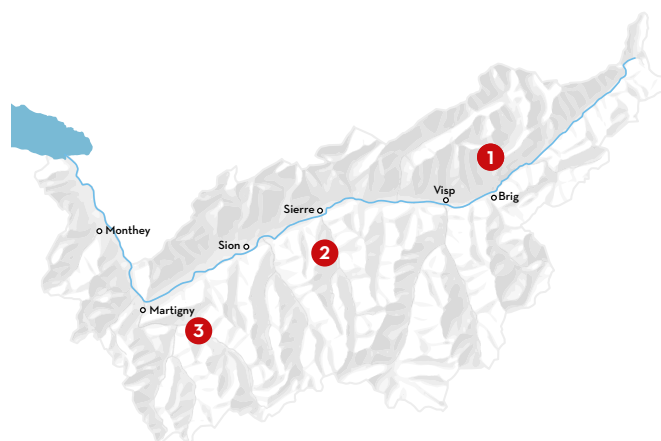
Freeride with a pro

You adore powder snow but would like to improve your technique with tuition from a pro? Many ski areas in Valais offer dedicated training that combines expert instruction with a real blast of adrenalin. Various ski schools run dedicated freeride courses, including in [Verbier](#), the [Portes du Soleil](#), [Torgon](#), the [Val d'Hérens](#), [Veysonnaz](#), [Zermatt](#) and the [Aletsch Arena](#). Whether you're a devoted freeride enthusiast or a complete novice off-piste, you will be able to explore the best powder slopes of Valais and trace your lines on virgin snow with the help of top insider tips from your guides.



The finest freeride itineraries.

Valais is the ultimate playground for freeride enthusiasts, with many secured itineraries specially designed for all who enjoy powder snow and high thrills. Would you like to discover the top spots in our region for this uniquely exhilarating activity? See our selection for riding in total freedom down the most spectacular slopes of Valais.



1. Hohstock, Belalp

Enjoy a thrilling descent of 800 vertical metres starting at an altitude of 3,100 metres. After a fresh snowfall, especially, this itinerary offers perfect conditions and is guaranteed to get your pulse racing, with gradients of up to 60%. At the end of the freeride descent, enjoy a leisurely run down the gentle, winding piste that leads for 12 kilometres all the way to Blatten.



2. Roc d'Orzival, Grimontz

At the starting point for this itinerary, not far from the top of the Orzival drag lift, stop to enjoy the spectacular panoramic views stretching out before you. Begin by heading down the fast red piste before turning off to the left, following signs marking the entrance to the freeride itinerary. The first section is fairly steep, but then the terrain opens out and invites you to express all your creativity – right down to the end of the run at the bottom of the Tsarva chairlift.



3. Mont-Gelé, Verbier

After riding up in the cable car from Les Atteles but before setting off down the ungroomed snow, pause to enjoy the spectacular views from the Mont Gelé summit station of the surrounding peaks – and especially of the Grand Combin massif. Located at an altitude of more than 3,000 metres, the Mont Gelé is the starting point for two of the region's key freeride itineraries: the descent to Tortin and the run down to La Chauv.

See all our top freeride itineraries
at valais.ch

Did you know?

UNESCO added Switzerland's expertise in avalanche risk management to its list of humanity's Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2018.

Many Valais resorts offer courses in avalanche awareness and the use of avalanche transceiver equipment; many also have "avalanche training parks" with transmitters buried in the snow, where winter sports enthusiasts can practise using their avalanche rescue equipment.

The Mont Gelé is the only mountain in Valais that is accessible by lift (in this case a cable car) but which does not have any groomed pistes.

Events not to be missed.

Nendaz Freeride

Considered the leading contest of the Freeride World Qualifier circuit, the Nendaz Freeride sees amateurs, juniors and elite athletes compete on the slopes of the Mont Gond.

26 February - 10 March 2021 - Nendaz
valais.ch

Xtreme Verbier

The world's top freeride skiers and snowboarders compete in Verbier on the iconic Bec des Rosses for the final stage of the Freeride World Tour.

March - April 2021 - Verbier
valais.ch



Special experiences for visitors.

Introduction to ski touring



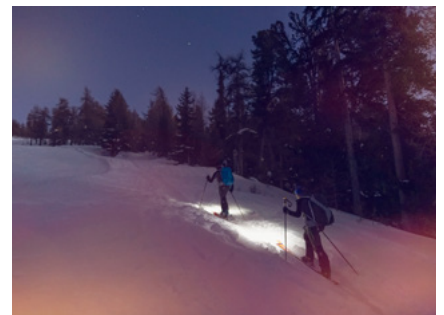
This course, supervised by a guide, is for anyone who has ever wanted to try ski touring but does not have the necessary winter mountain know-how or equipment. The latter can be rented on-site. The courses are offered every winter by several resorts, and can be booked direct with local tourist offices.



Ski touring at night



Several ski resorts open one of their pistes on a weekday evening for ski touring enthusiasts. Equipped with head torches, the skiers can climb the piste in safety, knowing there will not be any snow grooming machines at work. On these dates, the summit restaurants stay open specially after normal closing hours to reward ski tourers for their efforts.



Ski touring parks

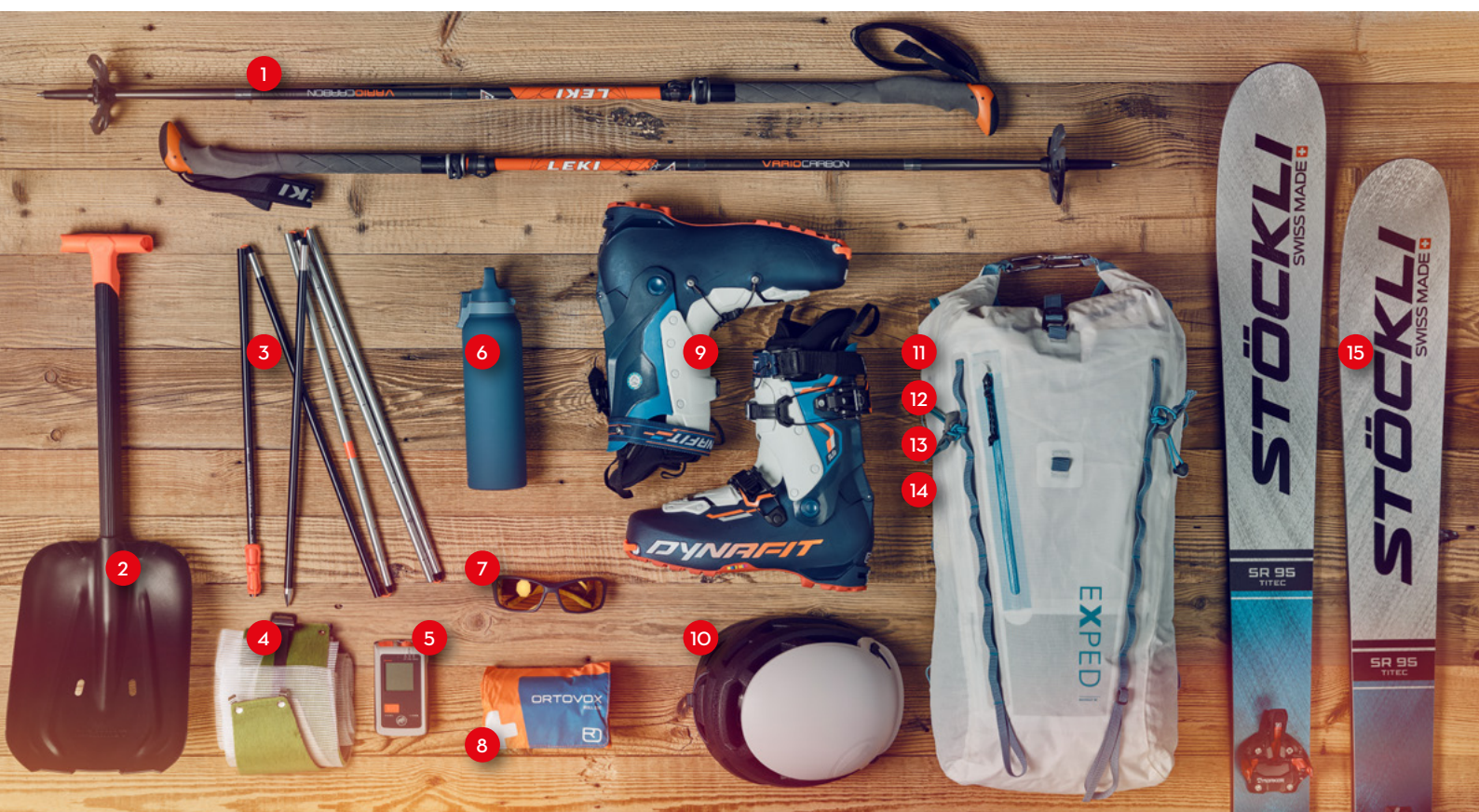


Ever dreamed of taking part in the spectacular Patrouille des Glaciers, the world's toughest ski mountaineering race? Start your training at one of the specially designed ski touring parks in the heart of the Valais mountains. These contain marked routes for all levels of ability through pristine, snow-blanketed landscapes. With sufficient practice, you'll be in shape for tackling one of the many 4,000-metre peaks of Valais!



Essential equipment for ski touring.

The ski touring itineraries of Valais lead you to the heart of nature, through landscapes in which tranquillity and powder snow reign supreme. To ensure that all goes well and that you stay safe, check that you have all the necessary equipment: your key to enjoying your outdoor adventure to the full.



EQUIPMENT

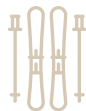
- | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| 1 Poles | <input type="checkbox"/> | 10 Helmet | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 Climbing skins | <input type="checkbox"/> | 11 Backpack | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 Flask | <input type="checkbox"/> | 12 Lightweight ski clothing and gloves | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 Sunglasses | <input type="checkbox"/> | 13 Suncream | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8 First aid kit | <input type="checkbox"/> | 15 Touring skis | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9 Ski touring boots | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

SAFETY EQUIPMENT

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 2 Shovel | <input type="checkbox"/> | ● Mountain guide | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 Probe | <input type="checkbox"/> | ● Weather forecast and avalanche bulletin | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 Avalanche transceiver (beacon) | <input type="checkbox"/> | ● Rescue app | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14 Topographic map | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

Further information: valais.ch

Did you know?



The first edition of the “Patrouille des Glaciers” ski mountaineering race took place during the night of 23/24 April 1943 along the Haute Route linking Zermatt and Verbier. The winning trio completed the course in 12 hours and 7 minutes.



In ski touring, the term “skin” dates from the 1930s. At the time, skiers attached a strip of real seal skin to the underside of their skis to enable them to climb. Today, the “skins” are made of mohair (hair of the Angora goat) or synthetic material.

Events not to be missed.

Ski Mountaineering World Cup

The resort of Verbier, which hosted World Cup contests in 2014 and the World Championships in 2015, is once again staging World Cup races in this discipline in 2021.

29 – 31 January 2021 – Verbier
verbier.ch

La Patrouille des Aiguilles Rouges

Held every other year, this race “at the heart of the glaciers” is for ski mountaineers in teams of two. The route from Arolla to Evolène leads competitors through high-altitude mountain landscapes and beyond 3,000 metres above sea level.

21 March 2021 – Arolla / Evolène
valais.ch

La Matinale des Dames

This popular race offers ski mountaineers the opportunity to test their courage and stamina as they climb the original Alpine Ski World Cup women’s Downhill course: a distance of 2.6 kilometres, with a climb of 722 vertical metres.

March 2021 – Crans-Montana
matinaledesdames.ch

Special experiences for visitors.

New winter walking trails



Winter walking enthusiasts are in for a treat! Four holiday destinations – Saas-Fee, Zermatt, Visperterminen and the Lötschental valley – are offering around 10 new marked winter walking trails from winter 2020/2021.

Winter walks and gastronomy

Nature, tranquillity, fresh air and gastronomic treats: discover our top 3 winter walks that offer a particularly mouth-watering break for refreshments. We suggest the [Aletschbord trail](#) with a stop at the [Hotel Belalp](#); the [Cry d'Er-Crans-Montana trail](#) with a break at [Chetzeron](#); and the [Zermatt-Sunnegga](#) which leads past three restaurants listed by Gault&Millau : [Chez Vrony](#), [Findlerhof](#) and [Paradies](#).



Hotels perfect for “cocooning”



Imagine a cocoon of wellbeing in which the main activity is living for the moment: the sweet art of doing nothing. Relax, let yourself be pampered, forget everyday stresses and find new energy in a tranquil setting. Certain hotels have all the ingredients that make them perfect for “cocooning”. Let yourself be inspired by our selection: in Crans-Montana, Zermatt, Champéry, Bettmeralp and Chandolin.



Après-ski to suit every taste



Some like the convivial atmosphere of a sunny terrace, others opt for good music or a cosy restaurant to round off a perfect day's skiing. Those who prefer total relaxation, meanwhile, can choose from spas, massages, pools, hammams, saunas, hot tubs or wellness centres: all guaranteed to revive tired legs. Let yourself be pampered in order to be in top shape for more winter sports action the following day!

Fun on fat tyres

Fatbiking is becoming ever more popular: enthusiasts ride across the snowy landscape on a mountain bike fitted with wide-rimmed wheels and extra-large tyres. Information on permitted routes is available from local tourist information offices. Have a go at this trendy new sport at the following destinations: [Zermatt](#), the [Aletsch Arena](#), [Obergoms](#), [Crans-Montana](#) and [Verbier](#).



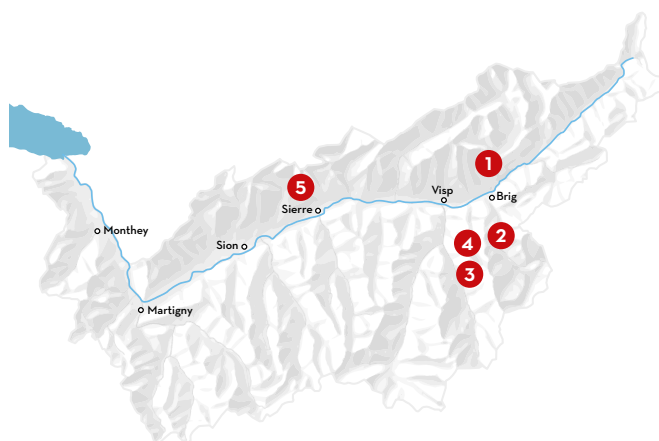
Curling and Bavarian curling

The traditional pastimes of curling and Bavarian curling (also known as “ice stock sport” or “pétanque on ice”) promise a fun and convivial game, and are gaining more and more devotees. Several resorts and curling halls offer a chance to enjoy these sports on their rinks - including the [Ischi Arena](#), [Saas-Fee](#), [Zermatt](#), [Obergoms](#), [Aletsch Arena](#), [Verbier](#), [Champéry](#), [Crans-Montana](#) and [Hérémece](#).



Top 5 snowshoe trails.

Snowshoeing is probably the most enjoyable alternative for anyone who does not ski or snowboard but wishes to try a winter sport. It requires no previous experience and is suitable for all, thanks to trails of different levels of difficulty. Valais, with its magnificent natural landscapes, thick forests, dramatic mountains and guaranteed snow, is a paradise for snowshoeing. Discover our top 5 trails for this increasingly popular pursuit.



1. Rischinerwald Trail – Blatten-Belalp

This trail of about 4.4 kilometres is graded easy and is suitable for families and beginners. Starting in Blatten at the base station of the Belalp cable car, walk through the Rischinerwald (Rischinen forest) to Stalden, with a detour via the Gibidum dam. Along the way, you can stop at the Restaurant Belstar “Zum Franz” for refreshments.



2. Simplon Pass trail

This 4.6-kilometre itinerary showcases the high plateau around the Simplon Pass, making a loop to the north. Follow the route markings to climb to an altitude of about 2,100 metres, where you enjoy a 360-degree view of the surrounding mountains. Thanks to the sunny location, this trail of medium difficulty is accessible from the beginning of winter.



3. Gspon-Trail – Staldenried-Gspon

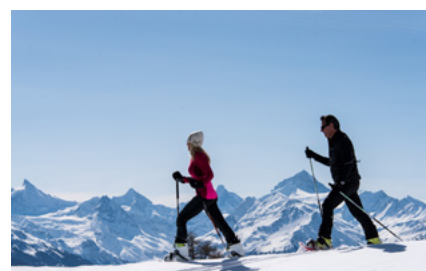
This magnificent walk is accessible to all on the high plateau of Gspon-Staldenried. Set off from the upper station of the cable car and walk as far as the Ottmar Hitzfeld Arena football pitch. Pass through the hamlets of Summerhüs and Ze Hiischinu and on to Wierli. Continue to Scheidbodo and Waldegga before returning to the Ottmar Hitzfeld Arena for an exhilarating finish to this scenic loop.



4. Panoramic trail – Visperterminen

The sky seems close enough to touch on an itinerary that fully deserves its name: from its panoramic vantage point, you can see no fewer than 14 peaks higher than 4,000 metres, including the Matterhorn. Starting from Giw, at an altitude of 2,000

metres, follow the “Panoramaweg” signs as far as the Gebidum col and lake before reaching the famous vantage point – where you can enjoy the magnificent tranquillity as well as the glorious views.



5. Aminona-Aprili route – Crans-Montana

Starting point for this 5.6-kilometre walk of medium difficulty is Aminona. Follow the trail towards Aprili passing via the Mayen de la Cure, a restaurant at which you can enjoy typical local dishes on its sunny terrace. Afterwards, continue climbing to Cave du Scex and the Colombire ecomuseum before beginning your descent back to Aminona.

See a wider selection of snowshoe trails at: valais.ch

Other sports – Events not to be missed.

Horu Trophy

One of Europe's largest open-air curling tournaments celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2021. A large number of teams will gather once again to compete for the coveted Horu Trophy at the foot of the Matterhorn.

14 – 17 January 2021 – Zermatt
valais.ch

UIAA Ice Climbing Worldcup

Every year in January, Saas-Fee's multi-storey car park becomes the venue for the UIAA Ice Climbing World Cup.

28 – 30 January 2021 – Saas-Fee
valais.ch

49th Internationaler Gommerlauf

This traditional cross-country ski race held at the far end of the Goms valley attracts competitors from many different countries.

27 – 28 February 2021 – Obergoms
valais.ch

Saas-Free Heel Telemark

Following the success of previous events, the fourth edition of this festival promises a unique blend of sports, fun and a convivial atmosphere.

March 2021 – Saas-Grund
saas-fee.ch

Glacier Bike Downhill

Race on a mountain bike from Mittelallalin, at an altitude of 3,500 metres, down the 9-kilometre piste all the way to Saas-Fee. The course, designed by the Downhill pro Rafael Rhyner, is not for the faint-hearted.

6 March 2021 – Saas-Fee
valais.ch

49th Special Olympics Gommerlauf

A week after the 49th Internationaler Gommerlauf, athletes from the Special Olympics compete on the cross-country ski trails of the upper Goms valley.

7 March 2021 – Obergoms
obergoms.ch

Wellness – Events not to be missed.

Salon Santé et Bien-être

This event held in the CERM trade fair venue in Martigny features conferences, workshops and a large number of stands offering products and services relating to health and wellbeing.

27 – 28 February 2021 – Martigny
salonsantebienetre.ch

Did you know?

Skijoring is a winter sport in which a skier is pulled along by a horse, with or without rider, with the help of a rope. Shörekjöring, the Scandinavian ancestor of this activity, was used by farmers as a form of transport.



No woman has won more FIS World Cup races than Amélie Wenger-Reymond. By the end of the 2019/2020 winter season, this Telemark skier from Valais had clocked up 147 wins: a sporting achievement that earned her an entry in Guinness World Records in 2020.

Do you enjoy water sports? In winter, you can swap kitesurfing for snowkiting: kit yourself up with a kite and skis or snowboard, and let the wind pull you across the undulating snowfields around the Simplon Pass.



Curling is a precision sport in which two teams of four players compete on the ice. The object is to place as many stones as possible within the circular target, known as the house, at the far end of the curling sheet.



A middle-aged man with short grey hair and a goatee, wearing a green button-down chef's shirt and blue jeans, stands in a bar. He is holding a snifter glass filled with amber liquid. The background shows a bar counter with various bottles and stacks of white mugs.

FOOD & DRINK.

First name	Klaus
Surname	Leuenberger
Date of birth	28.12.1963
From	Huttwil, Emmental
Occupation	Chef
Key info	Originally from the canton of Bern, Klaus Leuenberger has made his home in the Upper Valais. He has cooked for Richard Nixon, 37th President of the USA, and worked for the former Emir of Qatar, among others. He gained his 16th Gault&Millau point in 2019.
Favourite Location	The Binntal valley. "It radiates a power and tranquillity that I have never found anywhere else," Klaus Leuenberger says.
Further info	www.valais.ch

Special experiences for visitors.

Original meals in unusual settings



Would you like to explore Valais cuisine in an unusual setting? In a gondola, an igloo or a tepee, perhaps, or even in the kitchen of one of the region's top chefs? Enjoy a tasty fondue or a variety of dishes prepared with local ingredients: we have plenty of tips for original and unusual dining locations.



Top venues for a delicious brunch



A good brunch is the perfect start to a leisurely Sunday – whether among friends, with family or simply on your own. See our selection of venues where you can taste the finest local and seasonal products and dishes: brunch locations that are ideal for relaxed get-togethers, perfect for enjoying the best of Valais in a convivial atmosphere.

Innovative Valais products

In addition to Raclette, dried meat and other well-known delicacies, Valais offers plenty of other innovative gastronomic products. You can enjoy **delicious sausages made with perch fillets from Upper Valais**, for example, or order a delivery of an Assiette Valaisanne (Valais platter of cured meat and cheese) by post. For a snack or at tea-time, try an **energy bar made with Valais cereals**, an **Îris fruit compote made with apples, apricots or Williams pears** or **chocolate-coated “rye pearls”**. At the end of a meal, add a special light touch to your desserts with the **apricot or Williamine mousses from Morand**.



Wine visits in winter



Between the grape harvest and the beginning of spring, the vineyards observe a winter break. The leaves change colour and fall, the sap descends to the roots, and the vines go into dormancy until the next growing season. But it is still possible to explore the winemaking world of Valais through a range of activities: vineyard walks, cellar visits, wine tastings, gastronomic tours and other wine experiences are possible year-round.

Local products to take home



Valais boasts a wealth of local gastronomic products and specialities: why not buy some to bring back with you, so you can continue to enjoy the fine flavours of Valais at home? See our list of sales outlets for local produce: delicate cured meat from Valais, for example; Raclette du Valais AOP cheese for a convivial dinner; rye bread for your breakfasts; wine for all kinds of gatherings; Abricotine AOP or Valais pear brandy AOP for festive occasions. Many local producers offer a wide range of other products that carry the Valais brand label.



Valais brand label for wines



The Valais brand now also includes a range of wines. The Valais brand label guarantees an ambitious and forward-thinking approach to winemaking based on organic methods with a focus on social responsibility and respect for local heritage. The branding also guarantees that the entire “vine-to-bottle” process has taken place in Valais.

Raclette and cheese experiences



A Raclette meal is one of the key experiences of the Valais winter, and promises a wonderfully convivial gathering for family or friends. As soon as temperatures begin to fall, people in Valais start to long once again for this delicious dish of melted local Raclette cheese, served with boiled potatoes, cornichons and silverskin onions. Visitors can join cheese-making workshops, learn the art of scraping the melted cheese (the word Raclette comes from “racler”, which means “to scrape”), and of course savour this delicious dish at a wide variety of restaurants: our list of top venues offers you the chance to become a real expert!

Gault&Millau restaurants 2020 to try



Valais boasts no fewer than 72 restaurants listed by Gault&Millau in 2020. From Sierre, where Didier de Courten heads the listing with 19 points, to Zermatt, Verbier and Val-d’Illiez, you will find venues endorsed by the famous restaurant guide – all of which promise sublime cuisine and a unique gastronomic experience.



Valais specialities to enjoy in winter



If there is one season that lends itself to cooking delicious hot meals at home, it's winter. From fondue with dried-meat crumble to Valais cordon bleu and the traditional savoury Tarte savièssanne, try our tasty recipes that showcase Valais produce.

Wine tastings



In Valais, just about every social event involves a glass (or more) of wine. Meet some of the women and men who share a passion for the art of winemaking along with intimate knowledge of the diversity of Valais winegrowing terrain. Explore and enjoy the wines with all your senses: a magical experience to be treasured like a timeless gift.



Other Valais brand products



In addition to wines, other new products have now been certified with the Valais brand. The Valais burgers from Le Rodeur, for example, are made with flour, mincemeat, eggs and cheese from Valais. Malternative, meanwhile, offers crispy crackers made with cracked barley, as well as a beer brewed with barley, wild hops and spring water from Valais.

Our top tips for après-ski

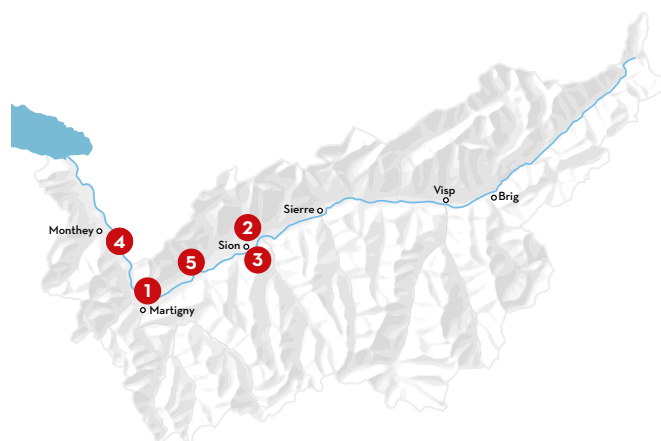


A day of skiing the finest pistes in Valais would not be complete if you did not pause afterwards to take a seat in the sunshine on the terrace of a restaurant or bar to relax. Mulled wine, burgers, fine local wines, Raclette, music, cocktails, local delicacies and a festive atmosphere: here are some of the hottest spots for après-ski action, whatever the time of day or night.



A perfect weekend for foodies.

The gastronomy of Valais is as generous as the rays of sunshine that caress the region's vineyards, allowing it to produce sublime wines. So that you don't miss any of the highlights or the specialities of which Valais is so proud, check out our programme for a perfect weekend for foodies – guaranteed to delight the most discerning palate!



Day 1 – Friday

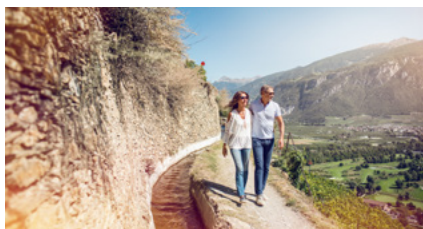


1. Start your journey of discovery with a walk along the “Chemin du Vignoble” (“Vineyard Trail”). This leads in four day-stages from Martigny to Leuk, but is also ideal to explore in sections. Taste different wines along the way with the help of the Valais Wine Pass, a tasting pass valid at partner establishments: ideal for enjoying a Valais-style aperitif.



In the afternoon, discover the secrets of making rye bread, a Valais speciality. Only those who make their own rye bread, following the instructions of someone already initiated in the art, can know its true secrets. Round off your day enjoying a Valais speciality at one of the member restaurants of “Saveurs du Valais” (“Flavours of Valais”).

Day 2 – Saturday



2. Begin your day with a walk along the Bisse de Clavau, one of the historical irrigation channels of Valais. Along the way, you can admire the dry-stone walls that hold up the terraced vineyards: masterpieces of traditional construction technique. If you wish, you can take part in a gourmet walk that includes tastings of local delicacies.

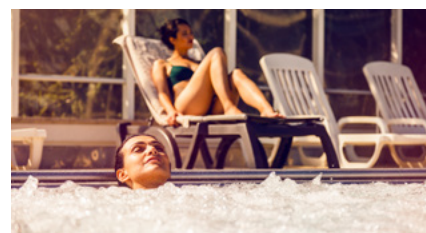


3. In the afternoon, meet Valais winemakers. There are many different wine experiences on offer, from tastings and a vineyard escape game to an accompanied “apéro walk” among the vines complete with guided tasting. Finish your day in style with a top-flight gourmet experience at one of the 72 restaurants listed by Gault&Millau in Valais.

Day 3 – Sunday



4. Valais may be known for its wines, but its beers remain an insider secret. Visit one of the many Valais breweries and discover the skill and passion that go into brewing beers full of flavour. At lunchtime, what could be better than a brunch of delicious local specialities?



5. After all these gastronomic discoveries, it's time to relax: treat yourself to a visit to a thermal spa. Enjoy saunas, hammams and thermal pools, perhaps a massage or some aromatherapy: all will do a power of good for mind and body. Afterwards, pick up a few tasty local delicacies to bring home to your loved ones so they, too, can discover the flavours you enjoyed on your long weekend.

See the full programme of our weekend for foodies at: valais.ch

Events not to be missed.

“Caves ouvertes”, Advent

Advent is the perfect time for enjoying the pleasures of the table – including fine wines. The “Open cellars” of Advent offer a chance to meet Valais winemakers and taste their different wines. And why not take advantage of the occasion to stock up on gifts for the festive season?

November–December 2020 – various locations
valais.ch

Christmas markets

When the first snowflakes begin to fall and the valleys don their white winter coat, the festive season is not far off. Why not visit one of the many Advent and Christmas markets, full of seasonal charm? Enjoy some mulled wine or a glass of a fine local wine around an open fire, savour a Raclette, soak up the convivial atmosphere and of course browse the many stands selling a mouth-watering variety of local products.

November–December 2020 – various locations
valais.ch

Epicuria

Epicuria brings together all who love the pleasures of the table, professionals and amateurs alike. Over the course of three days, visitors can explore regional cuisine, the finest local products and the best of Valais gastronomy at a series of themed zones. A unique opportunity to enjoy a wealth of sensory experiences in a convivial setting.

27 November to 1 December 2020 – various locations
valais.ch

Journée du plat de chez nous

During “Local Speciality Day”, GastroValais – the region’s hotel and restaurant association – invites guests to rediscover a typical Valais dish. The event takes place annually, and this year the honour falls to the traditional “soupe au plat”, made with bouillon, bread, onions and cheese. Enjoy it at one of the participating restaurants, accompanied by a glass of wine from the region.

January 2021 – various locations
valais.ch

Rallye du Goût

This gastronomic snowshoe walk by torchlight takes you along the charming “path of the bridges” in the idyllic They valley. At stops along the way, you can taste specialities of the region.

23 January 2021 – Morgins
valais.ch

Raquettissima

This convivial snowshoe walk of seven kilometres traces a loop through the landscape around St-Jean. The event is not timed; there are neither rankings nor winners. Instead, participants enjoy various mouth-watering stops along the route: each stage promises a gastronomic surprise!

March 2021 – Val d’Anniviers
valdanniviers.ch

Rallye du Gô

Savour a variety of dishes and produce from the region at this gastronomic walk lit by flaming torches. A dozen stands along the way serve food and drink in a uniquely magical atmosphere.

March 2021 – Anzère
anzere.ch

Ski Food Safari

The Ski Food Safari takes place every year. Participants can enjoy a dish accompanied by a glass of wine for CHF 10 at different partner restaurants around the ski area and within the resort of Crans-Montana.

March 2021 – Crans-Montana
crans-montana.ch

Fête de la taille

To celebrate the arrival of spring, Chamoson holds its traditional Fête de la taille (“Pruning festival”). This special day devoted to the vineyards and the work that enables them to flourish offers amateur winemakers a chance to discover this important stage in the vines’ annual cycle.

March 2021 – Chamoson
chamoson.com

Did you know?



Of 36 Swiss products that have been awarded the label AOP (Appellation d'Origine Protégée = protected designation of origin) or IGP (Indication Géographique Protégée = protected geographical indication), 8 are from Valais.



Made with Valais barley and milk chocolate, the Rye pearls of the Valais brand won a gold medal at the Swiss Bakery Trophy in 2012 and bronze at the Swiss Local Food Competition in 2019.



The wine made from Humagne blanc, a typical grape variety of Valais, was once known as “new mothers’ wine”. Women were served a glass just after giving birth, as it was believed that the high iron content would help them replace lost blood. The custom of giving a bottle to new parents is another Valais tradition.



Until the 1950s, Valais wine was used in a number of traditional remedies – for chills, coughs, colds, rheumatism and other conditions causing weakness.



Two wheels of cheese dating from 1875 are carefully preserved in a cellar in the village of Grimetz in the Val d'Anniviers. No one knows why these gastronomic treasures, made on one of the village's alpine pastures more than 145 years ago, have never been eaten.





FAMILIES.

First name	Géraldine
Surname	Bestenheider-Patterson
Date of birth	14.06.1976
From	Crans-Montana
Occupation	Director of the Hôtel de l'Étrier in Crans-Montana
Key info	She opened a tourist nursery in her hotel in 2018. The resort of Crans-Montana has been awarded the "Family Destination" label.
Favourite location	The Col de la Roue for ski touring enthusiasts, and the Valais in autumn for foodies.
Further info	www.valais.ch

Special experiences for visitors.

Children's ski areas – learning to ski is fun!



The 26 children's ski areas in Valais offer the perfect terrain for kids to enjoy their first experiences on skis. Attractions include snowtubing runs, snowtube carousels, gently sloping pistes, beginner lifts and magic carpets. These are used by qualified instructors to introduce youngsters to the joys of skiing, slowly but safely – and with lots of fun!



Family treasure hunts



Pick up a treasure map and search for clues and solve puzzles as you follow a trail through the sparkling winter world of one of the family destinations of Valais. Four treasure hunts are accessible year-round in Valais, along which visitors of all ages can explore the many different facets of water in the mountains: our “blue gold”.



The best free activities



As part of a wide variety of attractive facilities and deals for children and families, certain destinations also offer free activities – ensuring family breaks suited to all budgets. At some resorts, for example, children can ski or take part in outdoor activities free of charge under certain conditions. See our selection of free activities to keep youngsters happy on holiday.

Indoor activities – for when the sun won't shine



Valais enjoys more than 2,000 hours of sunshine a year. But occasionally the sun is shy and the weather unsettled. Swimming pools, escape rooms, museums, skydiving or golf simulators, trampolines, indoor spaces for skateboarding or BMX, climbing walls: we have a vast selection of indoor activities that you can have fun with whatever the conditions outside.



Magic of the Christmas markets



As the first snowflakes dance in the air and nature takes on its white coat for the winter, the Christmas markets of Valais enchant children and adults alike. Mulled wine, local delicacies, crafts and illuminations create a magical atmosphere for all the family. Some markets also offer entertainment or activities for children, as well as cribs with live animals.

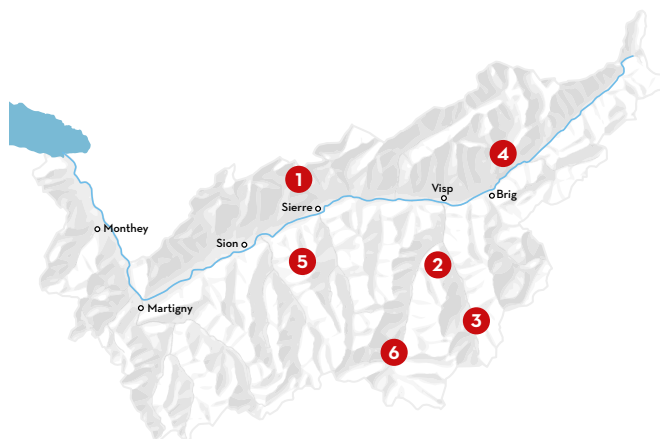


Happy Easter!

Hunts for Easter eggs and chocolate bunnies, painting, crafts, competitions, Easter festivities... The following resorts and destinations offer a colourful Easter activity programme: Zermatt, Grächen, the Aletsch Arena, Hérémence, Verbier, the Région Dents du Midi, Crans-Montana, Martigny, St-Maurice, La Tzoumaz, Torgon, Sierre/Val d'Anniviers, St-Martin, the Pays du St-Bernard, Anzère, Veysonnaz and Ovronnaz.

Family-friendly hotels and restaurants.

Family holidays in Valais are all about relaxation and fun. With eight resorts awarded the “Family Destination” label, the region has everything to ensure parents and children alike have a wonderful time. As a result, you will find many family-friendly hotels and restaurants in Valais that offer little extras devised specially for your children. Here’s a selection.



1. Hôtel de l'Étrier – Crans-Montana [↗](#)

Families feel completely at home at the Hôtel de l'Étrier. While parents enjoy a few hours of relaxation, children can take part in a wide range of activities at the holiday nursery. The list of treatments at L'Alpage, the hotel's spa, even includes a section exclusively for youngsters, who can happily spend hours in the wellness area and the swimming pool.



2. Hannigalp mountain restaurant – Grächen [↗](#)

Enjoy a family dining experience with panoramic views of the surrounding 4,000-metre peaks. This family restaurant also contains the largest indoor play area of its kind in Switzerland, “SiSu Wolkenland” (“SiSu's cloud land”). This welcomes children to a fairy-tale world in which they play with the sun and clouds: features include a solar trail, cloud climbing wall, solar cinema and thunder chamber.



3. Hotel Pirmin Zurbriggen – Saas-Almagell [↗](#)

Children are treated like royalty at the Pirmin Zurbriggen. While you make the most of your free time, a qualified childminder looks after your youngsters – either at the kids' club (children aged 4 to 11) or at the Kyan nursery (under-4s, from 18 months).

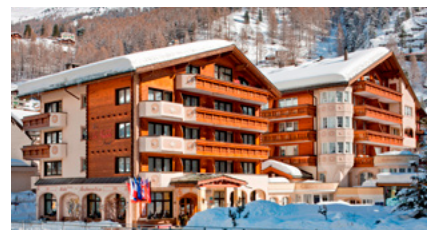


4. Panorama Hôtel & Restaurant – Bettmeralp [↗](#)

Specialities at the Panorama include the popular flambéed skewers, while on the children's menu, Donald Duck, Snoopy, Dumbo and friends help youngsters choose their meal. “Gletschi” mascots to colour in, a games box and special chairs for children ensure a pleasant visit for all the family.

5. Hôtel & Restaurant Les Etagnes – Haute Nendaz [↗](#)

This hotel with an informal, family-friendly atmosphere is located right beside the base station of the Tracouet gondola in the centre of Haute-Nendaz, part of the “4 Vallées” ski area. As a result, accessing the gondola or the village centre is no problem for families with children. A family room of 35 square metres, formed of two separate rooms, is available for reservation.



6. Resort La Ginabelle – Zermatt [↗](#)

The Murmeli club at La Ginabelle is designed throughout with children and teenagers in mind, and offers a wide range of activities – including group games, walks and toboggan rides in Zermatt, a mini playback show, make-up evenings, chocolate fondues, film evenings and meals together in a special dining area. Plenty, in other words, to delight parents and children alike during the holidays!

Events not to be missed.

Christmas markets

What could be more enchanting than strolling among the stands of a Christmas market during Advent? The magical atmosphere invariably delights visitors of all ages.

November-December 2020 - various locations

valais.ch

Famigros Ski Day

During the New Year weekend, Grächen will host the Famigros Ski Day: Switzerland's popular celebration of family winter sports, with a big race..

2 January 2021 - Grächen-St. Niklaus
valais.ch

Did you know?



With a length of 10 kilometres and a vertical drop of 834 metres, the toboggan run from Savoleyres to La Tzoumaz is the longest in western Switzerland.

Two to three litters of puppies of the iconic St Bernard breed are born every year at the Fondation Barry in Martigny. Take advantage of the opportunity to see these adorable little bundles of fur close up - or watch them in action via live webcam.



About 3,800 snow sports instructors in all are employed at the 40-odd sites of the Swiss Ski Schools in Valais.





CULTURE.

First Name	Hugo
Surname	Beytrison
Date of birth	29.04.1974
From	Evolène
Occupation	Wood carver
Key info	He makes traditional masks for the Evolène Carnival.
Favourite location	He likes spending time in his hunting cabin at Bréonnaz, in the middle of the forest.
Further info	www.valais.ch

Special experiences for visitors.

Free cultural attractions

Many resorts and destinations offer free cultural activities. Some organise themed tours, such as Hérémece with its [village tour between past and present](#). Certain museums also offer free access to the public – including the [Musée de Bagnes](#), the [Champéry open-air museum](#), the [Espace Ella Maillart in Chandolin](#) and the [Vieux Greniers of Val d'Illeiez](#). Visits to the fascinating “[World of the Great Aletsch Glacier](#)” multimedia exhibition on the [Bettmerhorn in the Aletsch Arena](#) are also free of charge. [Museums Night](#) in November, meanwhile, offers free admission to the exhibitions in about 30 Valais cultural venues.



Valais dialects in the spotlight

Valais dialects – of which there are several, each with its own local peculiarities – continue to shape everyday speech, particularly through certain words and expressions. In the French-speaking part of Valais, various associations work to preserve and showcase this aspect of oral heritage, including through theatre performances in dialect (known locally as “patois”). Examples include “Y Fayerou”, the association of patois-speakers in the Val de Bagnes; the patois-speakers of Chamoson; the Saint-Nicolas patois-speakers’ association in Orsières; and the patois-speakers of Fully. Visitors can also encounter the [patois of the Val d'Illeiez](#) every other Monday at the Vieux Greniers in Val d'Illeiez.

The website [patois.ch](#) lists events for all who are interested in these fascinating old dialects, which were once widely spoken.

In German-speaking Upper Valais, the Goms valley offers [some key phrases in Gommer Dialekt for beginners](#) on its website. The [La Poste Theatre](#) in Visp regularly stages plays in Walliser-Deutsch (“Valais German”). On Instagram, [Walliserditsch.ch](#) presents a word or expression in dialect every day.

The finest winter vantage points



Valais boasts countless landscapes of fairy-tale beauty. From the Rhône valley up to the majestic 4,000-metre peaks, the scenery will enchant you at every turn. No single vantage point in Valais takes in everything – but we have picked some of the finest for you. Some are on the pistes, some are observation platforms, and others you’ll pass as you travel around: all promise views to melt your heart.

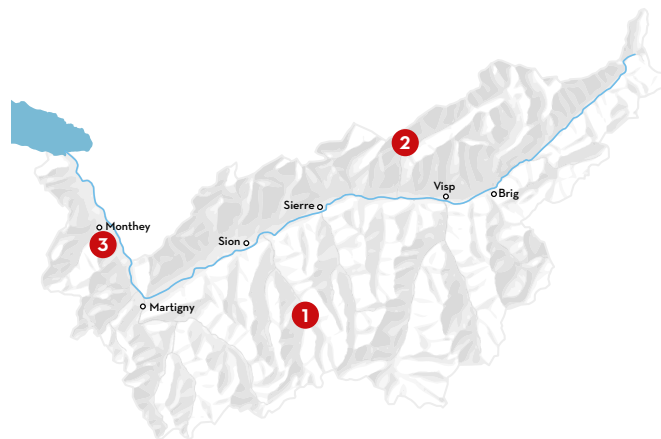


Meet the locals

For a complete travel experience, nothing beats a leisurely encounter with genuine locals. Various “tables d’hôtes” offer a chance to enjoy the convivial nature of Valais cuisine and hospitality, such as [22 by le Crock no Name](#) in Verbier or [La Table est Mise](#) in Siere. In [La Tzoumaz](#), local enthusiasts organise chess evenings during the winter, open to all. In [Vercorin](#), knitting afternoons offer the chance to chat with residents between stitches.

Experience Carnival in Valais.

In Valais, the end of winter is synonymous with Carnival. This secular tradition is still strongly rooted in the canton; the people of Valais, known for their festive and convivial character, enjoy the extra opportunity to meet up and celebrate.



What does Carnival involve?

Carnival is celebrated primarily over the six days from Jeudi Gras (“Fat Thursday”) to Mardi Gras (“Fat Tuesday”, i.e. Shrove Tuesday). During this period, people gather to party in marquees or other venues with bars run by local societies (football clubs, brass bands, etc.) or at cafes, bars and restaurants of the town or village. Custom dictates that everyone dresses up, more or less following a theme that is set by the local Carnival association and which changes every evening.



A little history

Historians have shown that certain Carnival customs date to prehistoric times. Rituals carried out to banish evil

spirits during winter already took place during the Bronze Age in Valais; such practices aimed to protect villages from avalanches and allow spring to come. The Peluches and Empaillés of Evolène **(1)**, for example, certainly originate from this period.



Living traditions

Certain Carnival traditions are very well-known: the Tschäggtä of the Lötschental valley **(2)**, for example, with their carved masks that have scared many a small child, or the Peluches and Empaillés of Evolène. Many celebrations feature processions and guggen music groups; “Old man winter” is another familiar character. Other colourful traditions are less famous, however: such as the Gnooggärfüüdini of Erschmatt.



Special Carnival traditions to see

Each local Carnival celebration has its traditions and peculiarities that unite revellers. From Pimponicaille in Monthey **(3)** to the procession of the Tschäggtä in the Lötschental valley, and from the awakening of the sorcerer in Sion to the “Turkish League” in Brig, each has its own charm – and all are well worth experiencing.



Gastronomic specialities

Carnival is a convivial occasion that would not be complete without a few gastronomic delicacies. Try Ponscheggla from Saas, for example, or Chräpflini and Chruchtele from the Goms valley: all easier to savour than they are to pronounce!

Find out more about the variety of traditions at different Valais Carnival celebrations at: valais.ch

Events not to be missed.

Polaris Festival

The 5th edition of Verbier's electronic music festival marks the start of the winter season. With more than 25 artists appearing over four days, expect a sensational party atmosphere in the resort of the Val de Bagnes.

November - December 2020 - Verbier
valais.ch

Museums Night

Museums Night is always an outstanding opportunity to enjoy these cultural gems in a special atmosphere. More than 32 museums in Valais take part in this event, offering a varied programme and themed tours to ensure visitors miss none of their treasures.

7 November 2020 - various locations
valais.ch

Étoile Bella Lui

This festival encompasses different spaces - from the enchanting Lantern Path to the Chef's Market and the Big Wheel, with a festive atmosphere throughout. The event also features a wide range of entertainment, from gospel concerts to a pyrotechnics display and storytelling evenings.

4 December 2020 to 3 January 2021
 - Crans-Montana
valais.ch

Rock the pistes Festival

Pick up your skis or snowboard and head up to the pistes of the Portes du Soleil for a festival in an unrivalled setting! Gigs take place during the day at temporary stages scattered around the ski area and accessible only on skis or snowboard. After lifts close, the action continues at après-ski concerts down in the resorts.

March 2021 - Champéry
valais.ch

Cow fights in the snow

No winter break for the Valais cows of the Herens breed! These cows naturally lock horns to establish a hierarchy within the herd; one of the first organised fights of the year takes place in the snow arena at Flaschen. Eight cows compete for glory in a sequence of one-on-one duels.

March 2021 - Albinen
valais.ch

Caprices Festival

When electronic beats mix with the pure mountain air in Crans-Montana, you know the Caprices festival has come to town. Over four days, fans of techno and house descend on the Valais resort to party in style.

April 2021 - Crans-Montana
valais.ch

Zermatt Unplugged

This acoustic music festival welcomes Swiss and international stars every year to an incomparable setting for performances reduced to their essence. Zermatt Unplugged is the only event of its kind, a taste of pure music in sight of the sparkling Matterhorn.

13 - 17 April 2021 - Zermatt
valais.ch

Did you know?



The talented film music composer Sandrine Rudaz is from Sion. Now settled in California, she won a “Hollywood Music in Media Award” in November 2019 for her composition *Aurore boréale*.

In the Moiry valley, as in most of the side valleys to the south of the Rhône, geologists have discovered rocks from African as well as European tectonic plates, along with vestiges of Tethys, the ocean that once separated them.

Valais has its own Robin Hood: Joseph-Samuel Farinet was a real-life counterfeiter whose adventures were related by the Swiss writer Charles-Ferdinand Ramuz. Farinet struck 20-centime coins that he distributed among local people in Valais in return for their protection. There is a museum dedicated to the famous forger in Saillon.



“Wallisertitsch” (“Valais German”) is spoken by more than 80,000 people living between Sierre and Oberwald. It is notable for being the oldest language spoken in Switzerland.



Le Pénitencier served as a prison for more than 80 years before closing its doors in 1997. The building was subsequently converted in order to host temporary exhibitions by the cantonal museums of Valais.

The Valais clothes designer Kévin Germanier, winner of the EcoChic Design Award in 2014/2015, has made a distinctive mark in the fashion world. His ethical brand, created in 2018, uses only recycled materials. His creations have attracted acclaim at numerous Fashion Weeks and have clothed Kristen Stewart, Björk, Taylor Swift, Katy Perry and Rihanna, among others.





INNOVATION.

First name Stéphanie
Surname Ferreira
Age 27
From Evolène
Occupation Co-founder and Business Developer
at Nivitec (Sion).
Key info Nivitec specialises in the use of drones
to search for avalanche victims.
Further info www.valais.ch

The Valais of tomorrow.

Data intelligence at the service of hospital emergency units



Based in Sion, Calyps specialises in data intelligence in the fields of health, industry, finance and services. The company has developed software to predict arrivals at hospital emergency units in order to improve operational management of services.



Knowledge at the click of a mouse



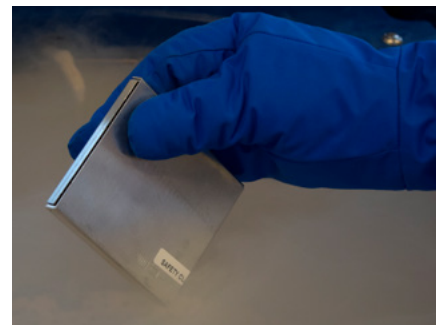
The Martigny-based company Klewel offers innovative webcasting solutions, allowing the recording and streaming – live or on request – of conferences, meetings, workshops, seminars and training sessions, along with online meetings that are 100% “virtual”. A simple search by keyword allows users to locate a key moment that has been referenced automatically.



Stem cells



The company CordSavings, based in Monthey, is home to Europe’s largest laboratory for preserving stem cells. This Swiss biobank is one of the safest and most highly regarded places in Europe for cryopreservation and biological storage. 100% independent, totally dedicated to families and focused on the preservation of cells taken from the umbilical cord at birth, CordSavings enjoys a flawless ethical reputation, and is at the cutting edge of research.



Top-quality coffee



The basic idea of Eversys: reproducing “barista”-style quality with an automatic machine. Since 2009, Eversys has produced more than 15,000 coffee machines, connected and controllable remotely, which have been distributed in more than 50 countries. Thanks to an exceptionally user-friendly electronic interface, café staff and other baristas have access to a multitude of parameters that allow them to coax the finest flavours and aromas from the coffee.



Valais, business incubator



The organisation Venture Kick, launched to boost the number of spin-offs from Swiss universities, is supporting 12 Valais companies. These include Eyeware Tech SA, active in 3D eye tracking, KeyLemon SA, specialised in 3D face recognition, and DePoly, which has developed an innovative method for recycling PET.



Sustainability in Valais



Landscapes and nature are indisputable assets for Valais. Within the canton, many policies have been put in place over the years to protect this precious heritage. From renewable energy to eco-friendly accommodation and initiatives to encourage use of public transport, discover the measures taken to promote sustainability.



Prix Sommet 2020



The Prix Sommet 2020, launched by UBS Valais, presents three Valais companies with the challenge of managing their waste better and reducing their CO₂ emissions with the help of nine months of coaching by an expert. The participants include Bühler Entreprises Monthey, active in the electrical and electrotechnical industries, which would like to use alternatives to fossil fuels in its workshops. Biofruits, in Vétroz, which processes and sells 2,000 tons of organic fruit a year, has already installed 8,000 sq. m of solar panels and would like to increase the share of its energy consumption that comes from renewable sources and also rationalise its distribution network. The third challenger, the Tradition Julien Zermatt group of hotels and restaurants, produces some of its own food (also sold direct to clients) along with biogas.

Recto-verso capsule Solar energy in Valais.

Valais has long been in love with the sun, which shines for no fewer than 300 days a year on our valley, fuelling the creativity of pioneers and dreamers. No wonder the canton is constantly delivering innovations in the field of solar energy. Groundbreaking facilities such as the world's highest solar installation and Switzerland's first floating solar park demonstrate the inventive spirit of companies in Valais. With their capacity to innovate, they contribute to ensuring a sustainable future through clean energy.

Here are some innovations that have contributed to this expertise:

Switzerland's first heliodome was built in Erschmatt in 2013. The house's design reflects the changing trajectory of the sun throughout the year: the large curved windows are angled so that direct sunlight enters the building only when the sun is low in the sky. Sunshine provides heating and lighting, allowing energy savings of 80%.

The Monte Rosa mountain cabin is fitted with a unique solar power installation consisting of 122 sq. m of photovoltaic panels, which cover 70% of its energy requirements.

The cable car station at the Klein Matterhorn above Zermatt was awarded a Swiss Solar Prize in 2018. The photovoltaic installation covers 42% of the energy requirements of the station, located at an altitude of 3,883 m: the highest solar power facility of its kind in the world!

In Lens, the Fondation Opale is notable for its glass façade formed of 84 solar panels.

Researchers at EPFL Valais Wallis are working on new kinds of solar cells. The use of inexpensive perovskite materials is revolutionising the production of solar panels.

The first floating solar park in an alpine setting was inaugurated on the Lac des Toules near the Great St Bernard Pass in autumn 2019. This new structure can produce more than 800,000 kWh of electricity a year, equivalent to the annual consumption of nearly 220 households.

Winsun AG offers energy solutions whereby solar panels can be deployed easily on unoccupied surfaces. Buildings, roads, fields and airport runways could all soon be used for producing solar energy.

A solar motorway is planned for Fully. A 1.6-kilometre section of route will be covered by a gallery fitted with solar panels.



To watch the video :



Living and working in Valais.

Make Valais your home? A seductive idea! With urban hubs easily accessible thanks to an extensive transport network and with nature all around, Valais boasts a combination that allows everyone from urbanites to country-lovers to find welcoming spaces suitable for their needs. In Valais, you're spoilt for choice – and it's all on your doorstep. Welcome to Valais: welcome home!

Good reasons for living and working in Valais.

Valais is well known as a holiday region. Its landscapes, tranquillity, lush nature, countless sporting activities and local gastronomic delicacies make this a pleasant place to spend time. Tourists are not the only people to say this: residents enjoy benefitting from this beautiful setting and quality of life on a daily basis. Here are some good reasons to live and work in Valais:

A dynamic economy, cutting-edge research and innovation.

Valais is the number-one canton in Switzerland for aluminium research and production, thanks to its site in Sierre, and number-two for life sciences (chemistry, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology). EPFL Valais Wallis is a leader in the fields of energy and health; the HES-SO Valais-Wallis comprises nine research institutes; and Idiap is a key global player in the field of artificial intelligence. Many Valais companies flourish in the fields of mechanical industry, microtechnology, precision technology, the automobile industry and aeronautics.

A pleasant climate.

More than 300 days of sunshine a year, hot and sunny weather in summer, guaranteed snow in winter: people in Valais live to the rhythm of the seasons.

Nature and tranquillity.

In Valais, nature is all around and easily accessible, both from home and the workplace. Everywhere, there are views of the Alps, vineyards or forests; the majestic 4,000-metre alpine peaks are never distant. Far from the bustle of big cities, the most notable feature is the tranquillity all around: peace and quiet reign. In addition, locals also enjoy access to wide-open spaces just a few minutes from home.



Outdoor activities.

Work in the morning, ski in the afternoon? In Valais, it's possible. A snowshoe walk at the end of a day's work? Also possible. Some ski touring, cross-country skiing or tobogganing? All possible, thanks to short travel times: in Valais, all these activities are on the doorstep.

A favourable cost of living.

Valais is notable for its favourable cost of living compared with other cantons: property, health insurance premiums, family benefits, childcare... A study has shown that in comparison, a family in Valais has greater financial means at its disposal than households in other regions of Switzerland.

Life on a human scale.

Life in small towns or villages can be attractive even to those used to big cities. Peace and quiet, affordable housing, excellent transport networks and high-speed Internet all contribute to make sought-after living spaces. The style of life in a small community has evolved over generations and on different levels. New arrivals can quickly make personal contacts if they wish. But above all, a home in a small town or village offers tranquillity and an experience of life on a more human scale.

Local products.

Fruit and vegetables packed with vitamins, cheeses full of flavour, delicious sausages and cured meat, outstanding wines: in Valais, it is very easy to obtain superb local produce. Local producers with a passion for their work – from the village baker or cheese-maker to the local butcher with top tips for a successful Sunday lunch – happily share their enthusiasm and know-how, allowing shoppers to buy locally with confidence. The many local markets also bring together a wide variety of producers from the region.

Further information on living and working in Valais:
valais4you.ch

Did you know?

Valais is home to 46 dams that produce 28% of Switzerland's hydroelectricity.

Perfected by researchers from the Ildiap institute, the "Roboclette" is capable of scraping and serving Raclette melted cheese with the same dexterity as the human hand. This intelligent robot is designed for a much wider range of applications, notably in industry, handling, medicine and personal care services.

Valais is the number-two canton in Switzerland for bioscience: a leading centre of expertise with cutting-edge companies and start-ups.

The Energypolis campus, which brings together the skills and expertise of EPFL Valais Wallis, HES-SO Valais-Wallis and The Ark foundation, has a team of 550, with 29 laboratories and a total surface area of 43,000 square metres. The centre specialises in energy, the environment, green chemistry, smart products & processes, and health.

With more than 80 projects a year, the Valais foundation The Ark is the leading start-up incubator in French-speaking Switzerland.

Valais is the second-most important region in Switzerland for the export of pharmaceutical products, after Basel.



NEW FOR WINTER
2020/2021.



Alpine skiing

Speed check – Veysonnaz



A new installation will allow skiers of intermediate to advanced level to measure their top speed over a distance of about 100 metres along the Inalpe piste, and to obtain the photo of their schuss afterwards. The installation will be in operation as soon as the ski area opens for the 2020-2021 season.

Freestyle skiing

Freestyle skiing and surfing all in one day – Crans-Montana, Sion



From April 2021, clients at Alaïa Chalet will be able to combine a day of freestyle skiing with a surfing session at the Alaïa Bay wave pool in Sion, Switzerland's first surfing centre. The perfect opportunity to develop balance and skill on water as well as on snow!

Winter walking and snowshoeing

Contemplative Trail – Val d'Hérens



This new winter trail offers you a chance to experience the Val d'Hérens in an original way, through the traditional villages of La Sage and Villa. Along the route, 15 poems and watercolours by Francine Carrillo, a local artist and poet, add a touch of colour to your walk.

Other winter sports

Winter via ferrata – Saas-Grund



In December 2020, the Saas valley is inaugurating a winter via ferrata at the edge of the village of Saas-Grund. This fixed-cable ascent is graded medium to difficult, and requires climbers to have a good level of fitness, strength in their arms and legs, and a head for heights. The climb finishes with a spectacular abseil descent of about 40 metres.

Families

Foxtrail – Saastal



The Saas valley now also offers a treasure hunt in winter. As participants attempt to solve a sequence of puzzles along the trail, they discover hidden faces of Saas-Fee and Saas-Grund in an original way.

Innovation

New GB Kumme gondola – Zermatt



Zermatt's lift company is building a brand-new cableway with 10-person gondolas for winter 2020-2021. Named "GB Kumme", this installation will carry winter sports enthusiasts from Tufternkehr up to the Unterrothorn. This will be the first gondola in Switzerland to carry passengers without the presence of an attendant at the station.

Hotels and other accommodation

New CERVO 2020 project – Zermatt



To mark its 10th anniversary, the CERVO Mountain Boutique Resort is launching its Project CERVO 2020. The expansion includes new restaurant concepts along with the construction of a new chalet.

Opening of Switzerland's first CBD Spa in Zermatt



For winter 2020/21, the SchlossHotel in Zermatt is opening a spa offering treatments using CBD (cannabidiol) derived from the hemp plant. The first relaxation centre of its kind in Switzerland will allow guests to benefit from the calming, anti-inflammatory and antispasmodic effects of CBD through different treatments as well as in its herbal sauna. The hotel has additionally converted two former hay barns into a cottage with private sauna.

Key events.

November

November–December 2020	Christmas markets – various locations
November–December 2020	“Caves ouvertes” (Wineries open days) , Advent – various locations
November–December 2020	Polaris Festival – Verbier
7 November 2020	Museums Night – various locations
27 November to 1 December 2020	Epicuria – Martigny

December

4 December 2020 to 3 January 2021	Étoile Bella Lui – Crans-Montana
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January

January 2021	Journée du plat de chez nous (“Local Speciality Day”) – various locations
2 January 2021	Famigros Ski Day – Grächen
9 – 16 January 2021	Belalp Hexe (“Witches’ Race”, skiing) – Belalp
14 – 17 January 2021	Horu Trophy (curling tournament) – Zermatt
17 January 2021	FIS World Snow Day – Verbier
23 January 2021	Rallye du Goût – Morgins
23 – 24 January 2021	Alpine Ski World Cup (women) – Crans-Montana
28 – 30 January 2021	UIAA Ice Climbing World Cup – Saas-Fee
29 – 31 January 2021	Ski Mountaineering World Cup – Verbier

February

26 February to 10 March 2021	Nendaz Freeride – Nendaz
27 – 28 February 2021	49th Internationaler Gommerlauf (cross-country ski races) – Obergoms
27 – 28 February 2021	Salon Santé et Bien-être (health and wellbeing fair) – Martigny

March

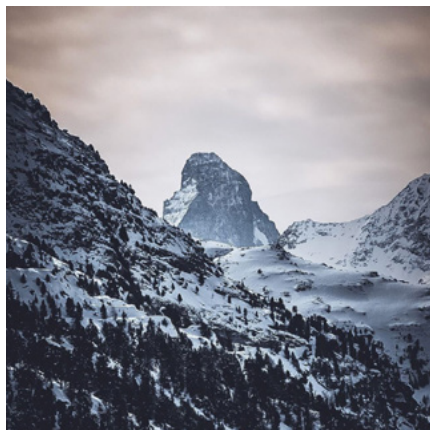
March 2021	Saas-Free Heel Telemark – Saas-Grund
March 2021	La Matinale des Dames (ski mountaineering) – Crans-Montana
March 2021	Défi des 300 (“300-gate challenge” slalom race) – Vercorin
March 2021	Skicolor – La Tzoumaz
March 2021	Raquettissima – Val d’Anniviers
March 2021	Ski Food Safari – Crans-Montana
March 2021	Fête de la taille – Chamoson
March 2021	Rock the Pistes Festival – Champéry
March 2021	Cow fights in the snow – Albinen
6 March 2021	Glacier Bike Downhill – Saas-Fee
7 March 2021	49th Special Olympics Gommerlauf – Obergoms
13 March 2021	Rallye du Gô – Anzère
19 – 20 March 2021	Allalin Downhill races – Saas-Fee
21 March 2021	Patrouille des Aiguilles Rouges (ski mountaineering) – Val d’Hérens
March-April 2021	Xtreme de Verbier – Verbier

April

April 2021	Caprices Festival – Crans-Montana
13 – 17 April 2021	Zermatt Unplugged – Zermatt

Social media.

A selection of Valais accounts to follow on Instagram.



@renzocillini



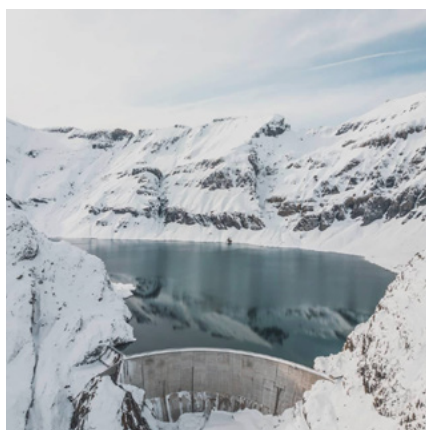
@gullerpat



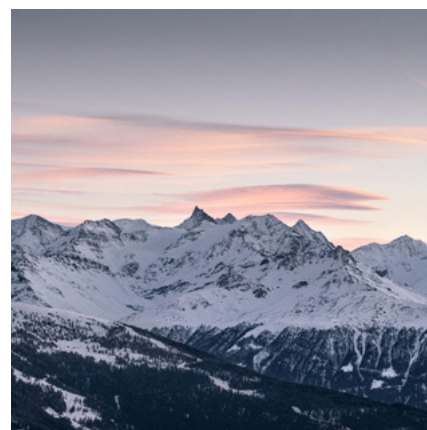
@matterhornview



@jcesimoes



@guiph_



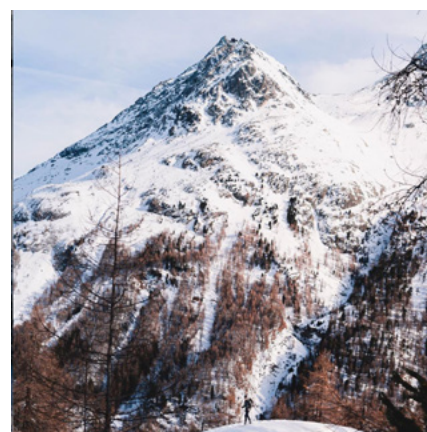
@thnrjn



@lioneljacquier



@gioja



@raphaelsurmont



How to get to Valais.

Travel in comfort



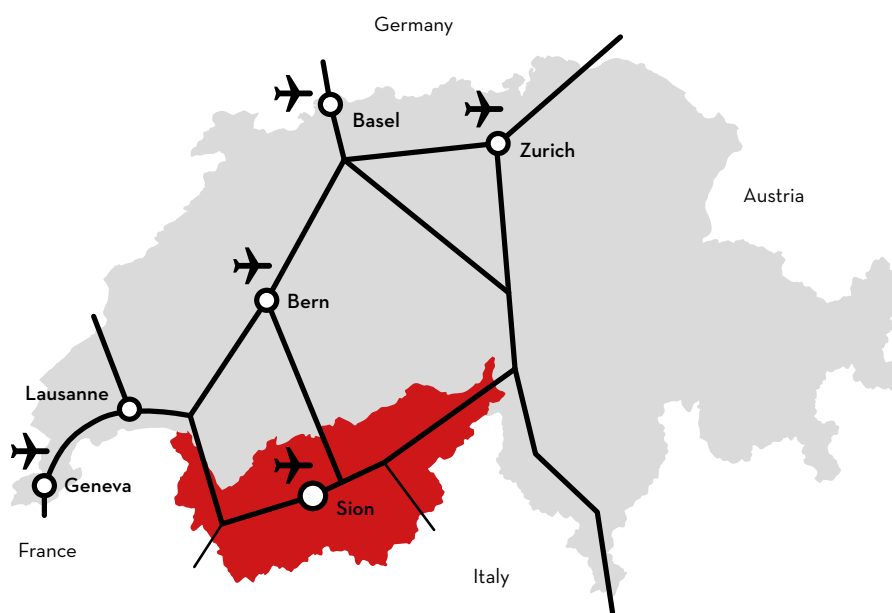
Whether you opt to travel by public transport, car or plane, you will find that Valais benefits from a superb transport network and outstanding connections.

We wish you a good journey to Valais!

Getting around



Travel the easy way around Valais: trains, buses and cable cars will take you to the most beautiful destinations via the most scenic routes. There is no better way of discovering the top spots in Valais!



Picture library.

Intersectoral picture library

Visit our digital photo library, where you will find top-quality pictures relating to tourism, agriculture, industry and culture, which you may use free of charge. The images are accessible to all, but must be used exclusively to illustrate activities linked to the promotion of the image of Valais.

[To the intersectoral picture library](#)

Do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to obtain additional pictures.

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