



DISTINGUISHED
RESIDENCES



MEGÈVE, FRANCE

For those who like to dine in Michelin-starred restaurants following a day of skiing or hiking in the shadows of Mount Blanc, Megève is the ultimate ticket. Combine the comforts of an idyllic medieval mountain village with endless groomed snow trails, 116 lifts and cables accessing 219 slopes for some 279 miles of natural playground space.

Created in 1914 as a St. Moritz alternative by Baroness de Rothschild, it became a mecca for French aristocracy and remains a popular choice for Parisiennes and international ski enthusiasts who find convenience in Megève's easy proximity to Geneva.

The Megève village center, with its 13th century church and ambient chalet-style buildings, provides ample atmosphere any time of day for wining and dining. Find a sophisticated après ski scene with bars, cafés and restaurants opening early and bustling into the wee hours. Megève is also a comely resort for non-skiers lured by such activities as ice skating, hot-air ballooning and dog sledding. A thrilling treat in late January: the Megève Polo Masters played on the ice.

LOCATION

Find Megève in the Southeastern corner of the French countryside close to the Italian and Swiss borders, an hour's drive from Geneva. From Courchevel it is around equal distance – 30 miles as the crow flies but 55 miles and 78 minutes' drive by road. Train travel between the two resorts will take more than four hours, so driving is recommended. For those who want to take the

6.5-hour train from Paris, the train station, Sallanches-Combloux-Megève, is located around seven miles from the the village.

SKIING IN COURCHEVEL

Megève's local ski slopes run through three main areas comprising some 279 miles of ski trails. The Evasion Mont Blanc lift pass offers access to all the local Megève skiing options plus lifts at the neighboring resorts of Les Contamines, Saint Gervais and Saint Nicolas de Véroce.

The extensive ski area best suits intermediates seeking miles of easy cruising on unobstructed, well-groomed paths. However, the ski area is somewhat fragmented. While one essential lift leaves from the center of town, others are on the fringes but easily reached by frequent and free ski-buses that run every 10-20 minutes.

The closest ski slopes to the center of Megève Village are found on Rochebrune, linked by a gondola from the heart of the village or by a separate cable car from the outskirts. Another large ski area is on Mont D'Arbois, which is connected to Rochebrune by a mountaintop cable car as well as from the base of the Princess Gondola just outside the village and accessed by ski bus. A third area, Le Jaillet, can be found on the other side of town and reached by an elongated horse-drawn sleigh – a signature feature of Megève.

The ski season in Megève starts in December and usually lasts into March. But because the resort's elevation is in the lower mountain altitudes (3,500-foot base elevation, 7,700 summit), the weather tends to be warmer and the snow less cooperative toward spring.

THINGS TO DO IN MEGÈVE

Non-skiers and skiers alike find plenty of things to do in Megève. The open-air ice skating rink in the village ranks as a favorite activity in winter. There is dog sledding, luge and tobogganing, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing, local farm visits (especially the reindeer farm) for animal time and samplings of milk and cheese. Take a day trip to Chamonix and catch the cable car up to Aiguille du Midi, or head to Courmayeur in Italy to ride the Skyway.

In summer or cooperating weather take a hot-air balloon or fixed-wing flight over Mont Blanc.

All year long a formidable indoor sport center is open with ice-skating, pools, spas, gym and indoor tennis in motion. For a sublime treat, go to one of the

best spas in Europe: Les Fermes de Marie with Japanese furo baths, saunas, a relaxation area, indoor and outdoor Jacuzzis and pools. Beauty treatments employ Pure Altitude elixirs made from some 50 mountain plants possessing rare active ingredients with anti-oxidant and mineralizing properties.

SHOPPING IN MEGÈVE

The preserved medieval enclave of Megève is eminently walkable as a car-free, stone street village with plenty of bling to see on the promenade and in boutiques. Expect to find major French luxury brands like Hermès, Moncler, and Façonnable among a smattering of precious multibrand boutiques like BluBerry, L'Adress or Blue.Ink.

Make time to dip into Scarlett -- technically a bookshop, but also a purveyor of antiques and objets d'art. Similarly CT Gallery, backed by Leica, focuses on photographic exhibitions.

RESTAURANTS IN MEGÈVE

Dining in Megève is a blood sport. There simply is not enough time or room for all the world class, bragworthy dining to be done during a Megève holiday. Before becoming a center for ski glamour Megève was a farming hamlet and those mountain-fresh ingredients now go into Michelin-crowned dining establishments that have been effective in turning the little village of Megève into the ambassador of mountain gastronomy.

A name you will no doubt get to know is Emmanuel Renaut, a guru of gourmet cuisine in Megève and throughout the French Alps. His Flocons de Sel earned three Michelin stars in 2012. Set in a 19th-century farmhouse, Renaut has created an epicenter for raclette and extraordinary six-course meals that could be considered a value for money. His secret is making cooking seem simple. An asparagus tart on a thick nutted base served with egg yolk and a light vinaigrette is both accessible and understandable.

Other restaurants with those famous Michelin stars include Le 1920, a restaurant at Chalet du Mont d'Arbois by Julien Gatillon. Also La Table de l'Alpaga by chef Anthony Bisquerra, and Le Prima restaurant by chef Nicolas Hensinger.

A fun option on a ski day is to ski the remote Cote 2000 area and have lunch in the eponymous restaurant at the base of the Radaz lift. Try the fondue and leave room for the blueberry tart (a known and worthy specialty of the house).

Le Refuge is also a hot ticket in Megève for local Savoyard style cuisine that works mostly with cheese and potatoes. The restaurant has a sunny terrace

and lacks a lot of the pretense to be found in other French establishments. The wine list is modest in length and price and the interiors run small in this precious wooden chalet.

Don't miss the Friday morning markets when both locals and visitors snake their way through the stalls of Megève's market to find the best of the natural local flavor.

AIRPORT AND TRANSPORTATION

The closest major international airport is Geneva (GVA), an easy drive of just over an hour. Because of this, Megève is considered one of the most easily accessed ski resorts in Europe. A train is available and arrives at a convenient local station from other parts of France and Europe. Direct trains may be run seasonally on weekends from Paris.