



SOARING THROUGH THE FRENCH ALPS

VAL THORENS

Having already experienced skiing in Colorado, Lauren couldn't wait to visit Val Thorens in the French Alps with her dad and brother. Together, they enjoyed all that the popular resort has to offer.



Ten years ago I was left paralysed following a serious health condition. I didn't want my disability to stop me from doing the things I loved, so I went on an accessible skiing holiday to Colorado as part of an escorted tour. Although I only had limited opportunities to ski, I thoroughly enjoyed it and couldn't wait to try it again. This time though, I wanted to go with my family and spend some serious time on the slopes!

Finding the right skiing holiday proved to be a challenge. So many travel agents simply weren't able to come up with a holiday package that was suitable for me – even the specialist skiing holiday companies drew a blank to arrange for the time I wanted.

I'd pretty much given up on the idea of going on a skiing holiday until my mum came across DisabledHolidays.com. My mum spoke to one of their specialist agents who asked lots of questions about what I wanted to do. Before I knew it, I was jetting off to Val Thorens in the French Alps with my dad and brother.

As soon as we arrived at the Hameau du Kashmir Hotel I started to relax. I had a wheelchair-accessible room with a wet-room/shower in an amazing ski-in ski-out hotel, meaning that we didn't have to travel to the slopes. The hotel even had an accessible spa.

As part of my skiing holiday package I had my own dedicated dual ski instructor, Alain. My dad and brother were taught at the same time by their own instructor, too, right next to me on the slopes.



For more information about the Hameau du Kashmir Hotel visit www.disabledholidays.com



Both instructors were brilliant. I worked so well with Alain that my skiing really came on.

While I was there I also had the opportunity to tackle the resort's zip wire, the La Tyrolienne. With a starting altitude of 10,000 feet, it's the highest in the world! It was great fun and I was the first disabled person to take on the challenge. The zip line is advertised as: "A route through the skies mimicking the journey of an eagle in flight." The ride lasts one minute and 45 seconds and it was certainly an experience I won't forget!

I can't wait to go back to Val Thorens next year and would suggest that anyone considering going on a skiing holiday should really think about where they want to go and what they want to do. Be adventurous and dare to try something different!



Hameau du Kashmir Hotel

DID YOU KNOW...

France is the most visited country in the world – **84.7m** visitors in 2013

There are more people speaking French in **Africa** than there are in France

There are more than **1,000** types of cheese produced in France

Europe's highest mountain is in the French Alps – **Mont Blanc**

⇒ TRANSPORT

SNCF, France's national state-owned railway service, provides a wealth of information about accessible rail travel throughout the country. It offers advice about planning your journey, collecting tickets and special assistance services. You can also download the SNCF app to access all of the information and live updates via your mobile phone. Visit www.sncf.com for more details.

⇒ FLYING TO VAL THORENS

The nearest airport to Val Thorens is Geneva, Switzerland. Most UK airports fly direct to Geneva via a range of airlines.

⇒ EATING AND DRINKING IN VAL THORENS

Most ski resorts offer various eateries but if you stay in self-catering accommodation, you often have the option of using the resort supermarket to buy supplies to make your own meals.

Most restaurant meals range from €10 - €30 depending on the venue. On average, soft drinks cost around €2/3, coffee €3, a bottle of beer €4 and a glass of wine €7. It's important to note that not all eateries will provide free water, so make sure you bring your own to keep hydrated.

⇒ KEY COSTS TO CONSIDER

Whether you're considering booking a ski trip through an operator or organising it yourself, the key costs to consider include:

- Travel
- Accommodation
- Food/drink
- Lift pass
- Ski hire
- Lessons

● For more information about Val Thorens visit www.valthorens.com



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