

## FRANCE MONTAGNES – A BRIGHT AND MULTI-FACETED SUMMER

**A summer season in the French mountains is the end goal for everyone. Following a challenging winter, France Montagnes and its mountain resorts are gearing up to welcome back British and Irish visitors as soon as it is safe to do so. Resorts are continuously adapting and embracing the situation in order to provide safe resorts for holiday visitors and provide Covid-safe and post-Covid activities. Furthermore, this summer looks set to see a wealth of postponed openings at hotels, restaurants and other visitor attractions, all eager to welcome back visitors.**

The French mountains aims to position themselves as an 'ESCAPE' destination, especially as the past year's restrictions have crystallised some of the needs that prospective visitors have developed. The French mountains are the perfect place to cater for:

- the need for a holiday, to get away from it all, to travel, for wide-open areas, to reconnect with nature in a protected environment,
- the need to look after body and mind and to take care of our health, to enjoy new experiences with friends and family
- the need for increasingly accessible and sustainable activities
- the need to buy local and be aware of the local supply chain
- the need for a new type of accommodation that is unique and unusual, as well as good value for money

### The classics and the new classics

The stars of the show are, and have always been, the mountains. This summer, the spotlight will well and truly be on mountain guides, as part of the festivities marking the 200th anniversary of the very first guides company. In 1821, the Chamonix Guides Company made the role of mountain guide into a professional career, and a number of companies across the region went on to follow suit. In the six months from May to September 2021, a number of events, organised by the Syndicate of Mountain Guides, will mark this special occasion.

You cannot think of the French mountains without thinking of classic activities such as:

1. Mountain history and heritage
2. Cycling, one of their summer flagship activities
3. Mini-golf, which is making a comeback
4. Enjoying the forests and trees in all their glory
5. Swincars, a new all-terrain electric vehicle
6. Themed hiking trails – for young and old alike
7. New adrenaline-fueled adventures in the air and in the water

**Mountain history and heritage** will be given a new lease of life with numerous activities enabling visitors to explore the region and its resorts. MCF cycling schools will be running tours where you can experience local mountain heritage by bike or e-bike, accompanied by an instructor.

Whether **cycling** (road bike or e-bike), mountain biking or scootering, this year visitors will be able to venture spread far and wide through our legendary mountain landscapes. The latest biking trend – Gravel with Easy Bike – is widely available. A cross between a road bike, mountain bike and touring bike, this multi-purpose bike is perfect for cycling certain stages of the Tour de France.

**Mini-golf** is making a comeback in the mountains. A number of mini-golf courses offer all-new experiences, such as playing with a hockey stick and puck, and Frisbee Golf, a variation on mini-golf using frisbees.

Majestic and beneficial for your health, **trees and forests** also form the backdrop to a range of mountain activities. Resorts will see the opening of a number of 'accrobranche' treetop adventure trails this summer, suitable for all ages. Kids will start out with the Via Cordata, which leads to Via Ferrata. In some parts of the French mountains, you can even experience the forest come alive after dark, for certain resorts will put on magical light-filled displays set to soundtracks, illuminating the trees using 24,000 interactive LED lights.

**The new Swincar:** A number of our resorts give you the chance to ride over the forest trails for a few hours in a Swincar all-terrain electric vehicle. This fun activity fulfils a demand for greener transportation and is accessible to everyone, including those with reduced mobility.

Families will have a great time **walking and hiking** along new themed trails following the adventures of playful elves along the way. For adults, we have combined hiking with activities such as yoga and foraging sessions. Also on the agenda will be 'high-altitude forest' walks and 'awakening of the senses' walks by moonlight. You can also give bivouac camping (sleeping outside without a tent) a go, with specialists who are well versed in delivering wilderness survival advice in a fun way.

**Thrill seeking:** Dressed in a wetsuit, helmet and life jacket, how do you fancy climbing very high, falling very fast and ending up very definitely in the waters of a mountain lake? This summer, Acroland, the first water park of its kind in a French mountain resort, will boast hot jumping ramps that daredevils can slide down on their backs, fronts or in a rubber ring. Aquaparc will also offer a whole series of unusual and fun water rides with inflatables of all sizes.

## New openings

On a traditional farm in the pastures of Mont d'Or's Alpine, the Gîtes d'Alpage des Granges Raguin boast two high-capacity gites, tastefully kitted out for holiday makers. There is a new stopover gite for hikers, Les Mélèzes, is also opening in Les Contamines Montjoie, and Vaujany sees the addition of a new guest house, La Tanière. Over in the Pyrenees, at the end of the Lesponne valley (near Saint-Lary), Ô Chiroulet is a new gite, guest house, hotel and restaurant that uses all local produce.

Also set to open this summer is the new four-star Ecrin Blanc hotel in Courchevel, which boasts direct access to the Aquamotion aquatic centre via an underground tunnel.

There is also good news for your tastebuds! La Bokka (trattoria) in Les Gets, Lillie Méribel (simple home cooking with an up-to-date twist), O Camp de Base in Saint-Jean d'Arves and Le Lenny's restaurant in Saint-Sorlin d'Arves will finally be able to open. Or if you prefer to dine *al fresco*, the Chez Laurette slopeside restaurant in La Plagne is now serving up gourmet picnics to take away in a wicker basket.

**-ENDS-**

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**About Atout France**

Atout France – France Tourism Development Agency, is responsible for promoting the development of the tourism industry, the country's largest economic sector. Atout France's primary mission is to monitor and analyse the supply and demand in the tourist market. Atout France is also committed to promoting destinations and tourism partners in and from France. This is achieved through marketing campaigns, online promotion, PR and working closely with the travel trade sector. Atout France is represented in the UK and Ireland from its office in London.

**About France Montagnes**

France Montagnes is the federating body for French mountain resorts, regional tourist boards, ski lift companies, French ski schools, etc. France Montagnes' role is to promote travel and tourism all year round to the French mountains.

**France Montagne's partners include**

Courchevel, La Plagne, Les Menuires, Mérible, Val Thorens, Vaujany, Serre Chevalier, Saint-Gervais Mont-Blanc