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The best family ski resorts

Families with young children need to choose their ski resorts with care. Dave Watts and Chris Gill choose the best.



Flaine's excellent beginner slopes makes it a great resort for young skiers

By Dave Watts and Chris Gill

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Where is it? Savoie, France

Why go? Small village, varied slopes

Resort 1550m

Slopes 1550m to 2620m

Lifts 7

Pistes 32km

Six-day lift pass €156.5

Free lift pass six and under

Ste Foy is an attractive, great value and unpretentious resort built in the last 10 years at the foot of what started life as a cult, off-piste mountain. It remains excellent for experts but is now very good for families too.

Ste Foy is like a complete resort in miniature, with a limited choice of bars and restaurants, a newsagent and a small supermarket. These are surrounded by a cluster of chalets and chalet-style apartment blocks, all built in the traditional Savoyard style of wood and stone.

The resort is popular with British and Dutch families, many of whom have bought properties here. There is an excellent fenced-off nursery slope right next to the village, with moving carpet lifts that are free to use. Beginners can progress from here on to a long, easy green run served by a slow quad chair from the village.

There are great childcare facilities in Ste Foy – Les P'tits Trappeurs nursery takes children from age three to 11. UK tour operator Première Neige also runs a nursery, the Cub Club, and lays on party nights, such as kids' discos for four to 12-year-olds from 6pm to 9pm.

As well as the long green, the chair from the village also accesses a red and a blue run. Two further successive slow chairs take you to the top of the mountain, from where you can choose a fairly short black or a longer red. A newer, faster six-man chair to one side of the resort accesses another couple of runs.

The pistes are very limited compared with nearby big resorts, and the main attraction of the slopes for experts is the excellent off piste, including special zones that are avalanche controlled. There is also lots more out of the way off piste to be explored with a guide. This includes runs from the top of the lifts down through deserted villages, either to the main road to nearby Val d'Isère, from where you return by bus, or back to the resort via the deserted hamlet of Le Monal. Other adventures involve short hikes to start, and the ESF runs off-piste group trips with transport back to Ste Foy.

Keen intermediates will cover all 32km of Ste Foy's pistes in a day or less, and one delight of the area is that you will very rarely encounter a lift queue. If you want more variety and have a car, it's easy to visit other nearby resorts such as Val d'Isère-Tignes, Les Arcs, La Rosière (linked to La Thuile in Italy) and La Plagne. The first three of these are all less than a 20-minute drive away, and La Plagne takes about an hour.

All have excellent and varied slopes and make good day trips – and with a six-day Ste Foy lift pass, you can buy day passes at each of them at reduced rates. Some UK tour operators arrange trips to other resorts too.