



Isère, nowhere more natural

With an impressive natural mountain environment and a variety of exceptional landscapes from valleys, forests, lakes, plateaus, high peaks and glaciers which range from the banks of the Rhône to the imposing 4,000 m Pic Lory in the Écrins, Isère is a destination that values sustainability. The ideal back-to-nature getaway, Isère allows you to slow down, reduce your impact, help the local economy and reconnect with the environment.

What sustainable tourism currently means for Isère

Isère encourages sustainable tourism by promoting ecotourism and slow tourism which contribute to the protection of its natural, architectural and historical heritage, and by developing a vast number of soft routes throughout the department for gentle roaming - or travel using non-motorised transport such as bikes or walking.

Isère's vast natural environment is safeguarded by several parks that help preserve its heritage and protect its biodiversity.

This includes one National Park - Les Écrins National Park; two regional parks - Vercors Regional Park and Chartreuse Regional Park; and the Vercors Hauts Plateaus Natural Reserve - the largest nature reserve in France; as well as more than 140 sensitive natural areas (*espace naturel sensible (ENS)*).

The **Vercors Regional Park** for example, created in 1970, is an exceptional environment and home to unique fauna and flora, which it is the park's mission to conserve. To preserve its heritage, the park shares traditions such as transhumance and the recipe for Vercouline, a raclette dish made with Bleu du Vercors-Sassenage cheese, and helps visitors understand the unique ecosystems of the Vercors, such as the 80 plant species that have been listed as protected, 135 species of birds, including the black grouse, emblem of the park, and 65 species of mammal.

For more than 10 years, the park has been involved in sustainable development initiatives to maintain air and water quality, as well as waste management and short food supply chains. In order to guarantee visitors a quality experience based on these values, providers display the [Inspiration Vercors Partner](#) logo - made up of accommodation providers, restaurant owners, activity providers and tourist sites. The Vercors also encourages soft mobility with concepts such as the new 55-km ViaVercors cycling and walking route, as well as promoting healthy living with activities such as yoga, spending time detoxifying in the forests, practicing forest bathing (sylvotherapy), and appreciating unpolluted night skies. <https://www.inspiration-vercors.com/en/>

Isère: an ongoing commitment to sustainability

Isère's current sustainable tourism initiatives focus on developing and diversifying mountain activities and promoting four-season, or year-round, tourism.

Since 2017, the department of Isère has been involved in a number of new initiatives that support Isère's resorts in their sustainable tourism transition. To maintain the natural world for future generations, the department leads the way by creating the first valley lift up to the mountains that reduces our carbon



footprint and developing the first “Smart Ski Resort” in France. At the same time, our leading city, Grenoble, has been elected European Green Capital 2022.

Grenoble, Capital of the Alps, elected European Green Capital 2022.

Each year, the title European Green Capital is awarded to cities that demonstrate a strong commitment to the environment and sustainable development. The city of Grenoble demonstrated its vision, enthusiasm, and ability to inspire other cities by highlighting its eco-responsible actions from the last ten years:

- 320 km of additional cycle paths and facilities were created in 2017 and plans to replace 100% of diesel buses with clean energy in 2022; ranked 2nd city in France for commuting by bike.
- 23% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions between 2005 and 2018. 2030 target: 40-50%.
- Pure untreated water thanks to a protected catchment station, one of the largest in Europe.
- 5,000 trees planted since 2014 (15,000 by 2030), 1 organic urban farm, 23 community gardens, 8 educational gardens, 6 community orchards.
- Zero pesticides used in the city's green spaces for 10 years.
- Ranked 1st or 2nd position in 11 of the 12 indicators by the European Commission.

www.grenoble-tourisme.com/en/

Alpe d'Huez: environmental initiatives

Alpe d'Huez strives daily to reduce its impact on the environment, to protect its privileged natural setting and to raise awareness among both holidaymakers and residents alike.

- Since 2005, the resort has removed 150 pylons and 50 km of cable to reduce visual pollution and the impact on the landscape.
- Following each new development, the area is returfed, landscaped and trees planted.
- To limit light pollution, public lighting is switched off from midnight to 6 am in the off-season and from 2 am to 7 am in high season.
- The summer pasture is home to a herd of 2,000 sheep and 280 cattle supervised by two shepherds. Summer grazing prevents soil damage by removing the need for mechanical maintenance and thereby limits the risk of avalanches in winter. At the same time, it decreases the volume of grass on the ground and so prevents large snowfalls from sliding.
- The first hybrid bus in the French Alps, Resalp shuttle bus runs in the resort in summer and winter reducing fuel consumption and therefore helps limit greenhouse gas emissions.
- Alpe d'Huez has the highest greenhouses in France with 2,000 perennials and 1,200 annuals growing here allowing the resort to bloom all year round.

www.alpedhuez.com



Chamrousse: awarded Flocon Vert green label

Chamrousse is the only Isérois ski resort to be awarded the Flocon Vert label by Mountain Riders, a non-profit aiming to improve sustainability in the mountains. In doing so, the resort promises to adhere to 31 essential criteria that help preserve the environment within this Sensitive Natural Area - or espace naturel sensible (ENS).

By choosing a Flocon Vert resort for your holiday, you are supporting a region committed to putting in place concrete actions in terms of responsible tourism. Activities include installing solar panels, encouraging recycling, and maintaining the tradition of mountain pastoralism. The town has also appointed a green warden whose job it is to educate and inform visitors about the rules of the mountains.

Alpe d'Huez has also been working with the Mountain Riders Association communicating green messages about picking up waste and not littering the slopes with cigarette ends by placing them in bins.

www.flocon-vert.org

Chamrousse: the first "Smart Ski Resort" in France.

The ambitious project will create France's first smart ski resort, a model sustainable town that reduces its carbon footprint. The plan is to restructure the village centre at Le Recoïn into a 'hyperlieu', or hyperzone, combining renewable energy, smart control and green mobility. Solar power will supply renewable energy for the resort through the installation of nearly 9,500 m² of solar panels whose energy production will be around 900 MWh per year. A vast 2 km heating network will connect 1,125 housing units supplying domestic hot water and 87% of heating needs. To help green mobility, the municipality is building a hydrogen station that will supply hydrogen fuel for the resort's vehicles, bikes and shuttles, and 11 electric vehicle charging points will be available by 2025.

www.mairiechamrousse.com

Eau d'Olle Express: a new generation valley lift

Eau d'Olle Express valley lift is the very first new generation valley lift in the French Alps and cuts the area's carbon footprint. By connecting the village of Allemond in the Olle Valley to Oz-en-Oisans, and on to the Alpe d'Huez Grand Domaine area, in just 8 minutes instead of 20 minutes by road, it shaves off 10 km and reduces road traffic by up to 1,000 vehicles/day in high season. This helps reduce carbon dioxide emissions by more than 230 tons a year. With advanced technology, no noise pollution, and little environmental impact, this 3-km valley lift is a new mode of transport that links the valleys to the mountains. Travelling at 6 metres per second, the 33 10-person gondolas whisk 2,000 skiers and holidaymakers per hour up to pedestrianised Oz-en-Oisans, awarded 'green resort' (station verte) ecotourism status. Access to Eau d'Olle Express is free for pedestrians (without sports equipment).

www.oz-en-oisans.com

Station Verte: green resorts in Isère

Stations vertes - or Green - resorts and villages are ones that commit to sustainable tourism and work closely with locals to protect their heritage, for example running guided hikes to get up close to natural flora and fauna, exploring the historical heritage and understanding local traditions such as transhumance (the annual migration of animals), installing interpretation panels describing the landscape, creating



pedestrianised village centres, and giving free access to museums. Ski resorts in Isère that have the French 'station verte' label include Allevard, Auris-en-Oisans, Bourg-en-Oisans, Lans-en-Vercors, Oz-en-Oisans, Vaujany, and Vénosc in Les 2 Alpes.

www.stationverte.com

Climate change, snow & carbon neutrality

Climate change and rising temperatures lead to the disappearance of snow in mountain resorts. The lack of snow has a wider impact than just in ski resorts. Snow ultimately helps cool the planet by reflecting solar energy back into space. It also acts as insulation for the soil and organisms below protecting it from changes in the air temperature, and enabling winter-grazing animals to reach the vegetation below. In spring and summer, melting snow fills rivers, lakes and reservoirs affecting our water supplies.

In association with the Domaines Skiabiles de France, the mayors of nine ski resorts in Isère signed a French national charter for sustainable development to preserve biodiversity and natural resources by identifying areas that produce the most greenhouse gases and to then put in place best practices with an ambitious goal of reaching carbon neutrality in ski areas by 2037 with zero CO2 emissions.

The resorts in Isère are: Alpe d'Huez, Les Deux Alpes, Alpe du Grand Serre, Autrans, Vaujany, Oz en Oisans, St-Pierre-de-Chartreuse, Chamrousse and Les Sept Laux.

Nationwide initiatives include introducing hydrogen-powered piste bashers as 95% of ski area GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions are linked to the use of diesel-run snow groomers.

Other actions that Isère's mountain resorts are implementing include channeling rainwater from the rooftops into reservoirs to supply the snow cannons, using green energy for chair lifts and closing some lifts in quiet periods, removing dozens of pylons and kilometres of cables and reseeded areas with endemic seeds where work has been undertaken, protecting local flora and fauna and their breeding areas, increasing the size of wastewater treatment centres, and installing composting toilets on the slopes, and rolling out initiatives to raise skier and hiker awareness to reduce waste.

www.domaines-skiabiles.fr/

Green Travel

Getting to Isère

Almost 70% of greenhouse gas emissions from tourism are linked to transport (source: UNWTO) so consider how you get to Isère.

By car: While Isère encourages use of public transport, if you do travel by car, check your carbon footprint by using an online calculator, such as [Greentripper](https://www.greentripper.com/), where you can also choose to offset any greenhouse gas emissions by contributing to global projects.

By train: To travel to Isère by train, take the TGV to Grenoble. Grenoble TGV station is 7.5 hours from London, 3 hours from Paris. Using operators such as [Snowcarbon](http://www.snowcarbon.co.uk) (www.snowcarbon.co.uk) helps



contribute to reducing carbon emissions. For example, a journey by plane from London and then a shared taxi from a ski resort can create 103.43 kg of CO₂ per person; but travelling by Eurostar Ski Train from London, and then a taxi only creates 18.47 kg of CO₂ per person.

By bus: From Grenoble bus station, bus connections are timed to coincide with train arrivals in winter. You can take the bus to 16 resorts with [Transaltitude](http://www.transaltitude.fr/en/) (www.transaltitude.fr/en/). The fleet of Transaltitude vehicles meets the latest EURO6 environmental standards, with an average emission of 76.1 g of CO₂/Voy.km. Each bus replaces an average of 40 cars and saves 60 litres of fuel. Transaltitude also uses top-of-the-range fuels and trains drivers in eco-driving to help optimise the consumption/performance ratio and reduce emissions.

Travelling to ski resorts

Improving access to the mountains is key to reducing their carbon footprint. Designed to reduce car journeys up the mountain by enabling drivers to leave their vehicles in the valley, the advanced technology **Eau d'Olle Express valley lift** (the first valley lift in France) shaves 10km off the journey from Allevard up to Alpe d'Huez Grand Domaine via pedestrianised Oz-en-Oisans. The 8-minute journey helps reduce CO₂ emissions by more than 230 tons a year.

Several areas run free shuttle buses between resorts such as from Bourg d'Oisans to Vaujany, and free buses run on Saturdays and Sundays between Grenoble and resorts such as Vaujany to encourage weekend visitors to leave their cars at home.

Walk, cycle or use public transport

You can easily travel around Isère by bike, on foot, by bus, tourist train (such as The Little Train of La Mure) or even on horseback. As well as being more eco-friendly, these alternative forms of transport provide the perfect way to experience Isère's mesmerising landscapes. Once you're in Isère, we ask you to limit your impact and avoid using your car.

On foot: In some areas such as the Haute Belledonne Natural Park, the only way you can visit is on foot. Follow the paths marked and try to avoid going off the beaten track in case of wildlife habitats. Areas such as the Vercors in winter harbour the rare black grouse - or tetras lyre. Stick to the snowshoe routes and avoid the sections marked where black grouse burrow and hibernate.

By bike: To explore Isère, cyclists have access to a 1,000-km road network that criss-crosses the entire area with 21 signposted cycle-touring itineraries such as the V63 Veloroute, the ViaVercors and the Oisans Greenway.

Anyone can now tackle the high mountain passes with more e-biking routes and facilities such as charging stations dotted throughout the land and see places that may have once been inaccessible. Isère also provides extensive facilities for cyclists from cycle paths to hire shops and bike-friendly accommodation that display either the Oisans or Accueil Vélo labels.



For hassle-free travel from one itinerary to the next, some of the **Transisère** buses allow cyclists to take their bikes on board for example between Villard-de-Lans - Méaudre-Autrans - Lans-en-Vercors, Alpe-d'Huez - Bourg-d'Oisans, Chamrousse to Grenoble.

By bus: [Transisère](https://www.transisere.fr/en) (<https://www.transisere.fr/en>) is a network of buses with more than 3,000 stops throughout Isère. They also run a number of natural gas buses from Grenoble to Gresivaudan.

Travel out of season & avoid overtourism

To give the ecosystems a break, where possible, travel outside of peak seasons (July-August, Christmas, February half term and Easter). By doing so, you'll also help fund a year-round economy and contribute to local employment in the long-term. You'll meet fewer crowds, allowing you to soak up the beautiful mountain environments in more solitude, and ultimately save on your pocket too as rates tend to be lower.

In summer especially, Isère is the perfect spot to visit out of season. For example, in late May/early June, alpine meadows come into bloom with wildflowers, with the snow-sprinkled mountains making a picturesque backdrop.

What you can do: choose a destination that values sustainability

Discover local food & wine

Trying out food is one of the most enjoyable parts of holidaying in France. Food that has travelled fewer miles is good for the environment but also tastes better and is fresher.

Discover **Isère's local products**, such as [walnuts](#), [Saint-Marcellin and Bleu du Vercors-Sassenage cheeses](#), dishes such as vercouline, ravioles, [Chartreuse](#) and [Salette](#) herbal liqueurs, and [Rhône valley and Portes de la Savoie wines](#) while learning about the region's rich food culture and traditions.

Today, these products are complemented by 1,000 products bearing the **ISHERE label**, the agricultural brand of the Isère Department. It's the first brand in France to guarantee both the territorial origin of local quality products and the fair remuneration of producers. The beneficiaries of the ISHERE brand - farmers, craftsmen and food companies - commit to using ingredients such as fruit, vegetables, meat, eggs, milk or honey from Isère farms for their farmhouse or craft products.

Today, nearly 1,000 products are ISHERE approved, reflecting the variety of agriculture and artisanal know-how in the region: fruit and vegetables, meat and charcuterie, honey, fish, cheese, dairy products, bread. The products are for sale in Isère supermarkets that promote local products directly from the producers as well as a new boutique in The Village outlet at Villefontaine. <http://produits-locaux.ishere.fr/>
<https://www.thevillageoutlet.com/en/>

When visiting restaurants and cafes, try out dishes made with these ingredients. Also, look out for restaurants that display the "**Fait maison**" logo. This guarantees fresh ingredients and seasonal produce in their cookery.



For 100% food self-sufficiency, visit the farmstay and restaurant **Le Chant de l'Eau** in the heart of the Chartreuse Region. Almost all dishes are made from their own produce (meat, eggs, bread) and homegrown fruit and veg including old heirloom varieties. www.gitechantdeleau.com

Shop at Isère's markets

Help the local community by shopping locally. Markets are the perfect place to explore and try out in-season fruit, veg, saucissons, cheeses, jams, bread and patisseries from regional producers. Isère's artisans and craftmakers also set out stalls with handmade wares, linens, woven shopping baskets and soap bars, making a good French market the ideal spot for buying environmentally friendly gifts. Perhaps think ahead and get your Christmas list sorted early.

Some of the best markets in the department are at **Crémieu** (Weds), **Fontanil-Cornillon** (Sun), **Morestel** (Sun), **Voiron** (Weds & Sun), and also in **Grenoble** and **Vienne** (Tues-Sun).

Stay with the local community

By choosing locally owned hotels, you will be contributing to the local economy. One simple way to make sure 100% of your tourist pounds go to the accommodation provider is to avoid using booking engines and reserve direct.

To focus even more on sustainability, select places to stay that have recognised labels. For example, choose establishments with the Green Key (Clef Verte), Ecogîte®, Inspiration Vercors Partner or EU Ecolabel.

One such Ecogîte® is **Les Petites Roches Insolites**. This hobbit-like chalet is half-buried into its surroundings with a grassy roof acting as a thermal and acoustic insulator. Inspired by nordic houses integrated into nature, this exceptional chalet of 65 m² lies at an altitude of 1,000 m on the Plateau des Petites Roches, the hangout for paragliders. www.petitesrochesinsolites.com

The 4-star **Val Lachard** in Villard-de-Lans is an energy-efficient converted farmhouse with the Inspiration Vercors Partner label. Accommodating up to 20 people, the building mixes innovative systems with a traditional, passive energy-efficient house supplying a continuous stream of fresh air, so you can breathe healthily in total harmony with the environment. The property is also part of the Accueil Velo (bike) label, and has an electric charging point for vehicles. www.vallachard.com

Connect with nature and feel grounded at **Ferme Rony** in St-Nizier-du-Moucherotte staying in a comfortable chalet-tipi or tent at 1,100 m in the Vercors Regional Nature Park. The camp is rustic - no running water or wi-fi - but each dwelling has solar electricity. Organic produce and local, sustainable foods are served in the communal chalet. www.fermerony.fr

With 15 bedrooms and a view of the second highest peak in the Vercors, the eco-responsible **Auberge de la Croix Perrin** lies at an altitude of 1,218 m. As an Inspiration Vercors Partner, the hotel adheres to the Vercors Natural Park's eco-responsible principles, providing locally sourced, organic meals, and respecting the environment including using a henhouse for organic waste. www.vercors-hotel.com



Stay at altitude in one of Isère's **mountain huts**, escape the crowds and breathe in fresh air surrounded by alpine pastures. For a selection of our staffed refuges, check out our website www.isere-tourism.com/8-unique-staffed-mountain-huts

Slow down & be at one with nature

Slowing down and spending quality time in places helps cut down your carbon footprint. During your stay, opt for sustainable activities and use gentle forms of non-mechanised transport. Take time to get to know where you're staying and build a deeper connection with the local culture and people. Don't rush and just check off sights on your list simply to post the latest images on social media.

In winter: Instead of hurtling down ski slopes, take a guide and head off into the wilderness on a **snowshoeing** trip, or sit back and mush on a **dog sledding** excursion. To truly experience the stillness of the snow-covered mountains, try out **ski touring** (ski de randonnée) and ski off-the-beaten paths in the backcountry. See www.isere-tourism.com/top-9-winter-activities

In summer: Isère's extraordinary outdoor playground has an exceptional range of leisure activities accessible on foot or by bike: 9,000 km of trails, more than 330 km of cycle routes and greenways, 7 large lakes, not to mention outdoor activities such as trail running (with 5 trail-running resorts: Belledonne, Chartreuse, Oisans, Taillefer, Vercors), climbing, caving, wild water swimming, canyoning, whitewater rafting, fishing, sailing, SUP, bungee jumping, via-ferrata, mountaineering, paragliding and much more. For ideas, see www.isere-tourism.com/top-10-adrenalin-activities-summer

Hike the Great Crossings - The Grande Traversée de Vercors, Traversée de Chartreuse, Grand Tour des Écrins, Haute Traversée de Belledonne (The Shepherd's Trail) and the Huguenot trail are multi-day long-distance hiking trails crossing Isère's major mountain ranges. Either guided or self-guided, these incredible trails take you through dramatic landscapes in breathtaking mountainous environments. www.isere-tourism.com/5-long-distance-hiking-trails

Cycle across Isère: The **V63 ViaRhôna** takes cyclists along the right bank of the Isère where you can gaze at walnut orchards as far as the eye can see. With 122 km in Isère, the V63 has e-bike charging stations and secure "points vélo" parking so you can stop for a picnic and visit nearby restaurants and attractions. Connecting the villages of the Plateau des Quatre Montagnes, the signposted **ViaVercors** cycle path takes visitor around six sections of a gentle 55-km itinerary where you can meet artisans and craftmakers, and taste produce directly from the farms. <http://via.vercors.fr/en>

For a spot of **eco swimming**, head to Rivier'Alp. Made from reeds, the vast outdoor pool has an organic natural filtration system that cleans, treats and purifies the water to allow safe swimming without chemical treatment or chlorine surrounded by alpine peaks. www.rivieralp.com

Book with local guides

Seek out local experiences and book with guides who can help you discover Isère's vast natural heritage, learn about the mountain flora and fauna, try out local traditions and cook with foraged foods, or simply be at one with nature.



Discover local food producers, on a **gourmet e-mountain bike tour of Allevard farms**. The short 15-km round trip ride on an electric bike takes you to local farms and producers for tastings of cheese, sausages and even Italian ice cream. www.ecox.fr/nos-magasins/allevard

Hire e-mountain bikes and book an English-speaking guide with **Velectrip - La Glisse** above Villard-de-Lans in the Vercors. Following sections of the 55-km ViaVercors cycle path, you'll pedal alongside rivers, through hamlets, up hills and across vast plateaux, stopping at farms and artisans along the way. <https://velectrip.fr/>

Book a **guided cycle tour along the ViaRhôna bike path** and discover unexpected places such as an unusual jousting pool, vineyards and local products. Book the trip and hire bikes at the Tourist Pavilion in Vienne or with ViaRhôna. www.vienne-condrieu.com

Spend time in the forests by discovering sylvotherapy or **forest bathing in the Vercors**. Phoenix Experience in Villard-de-Lans offers four different forest bathing sessions that help with stress levels, positive emotions, and strengthen the immune system. Learn to relax, develop imagination and self-confidence through mindfulness and hypnosis. www.phoenix38.fr

With hikes in nature and pottery classes, experience an invigorating **yoga break at Aiguillette Lodge** in Grasse en Vercors. Meals are prepared on site with organic, local products and served in home-made dishes. A shuttle service is provided from Monestier de Clermont station. www.aiguillette lodge.com

Respect our natural environment

Isère is beautiful, but fragile. As a responsible visitor, we ask you to help look after our landscape and wildlife by following some of the guidelines and sticking to rules in natural environments. The following eco-gestures will help reduce your personal impact on the environment. Here are a few of our top tips for travelling greener.

- **Reduce** - conserve energy by reducing the use of electrical items and switching off lights and electrics when you leave. Where possible use the stairs, as even lifts and escalators use energy. Go easy with water by not leaving the taps running. Leave your car at home and whenever possible walk, cycle, or travel by public transport or any other environmentally friendly form of soft transport.
- **Reuse** - for a zero-waste holiday, pack reusable items including a water bottle, shopping bag, and maybe even coffee cup, cutlery and straws. In accommodation, pick up towels and encourage the use of bedding for more than one night. Think about using solid shampoos and soaps. If flying, packing light also helps reduce fuel use on the plane. If possible, use mobile passes and avoid printing out paper documents,
- **Recycle** – when buying goods in the EU, avoid single-use plastics and look for the mark showing their environmental impact. Recycle as much as possible, and pick up your rubbish as you go, sorting it into the relevant recycling bins.
- **Respect** - respect the rules, and avoid wandering off the beaten path. Whether summer or winter, keeping to the marked routes maintains the natural environment for wildlife and protects their



natural habitats. Check the local bylaws and avoid using motorised transport in areas on land and in the water where it is not permitted.

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Isère Attractivité

Nov 2021