

Summer 2020



# Press pack



*châtel*  
Portes du Soleil

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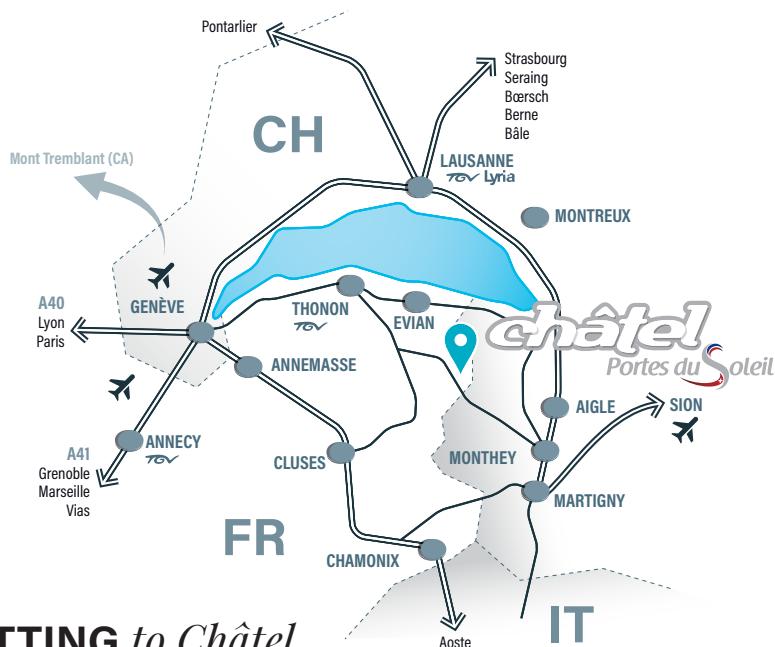
**Châtel tourisme**

## Opening hours

- › **Mid-December to April:** open daily 8.30am to 7pm.
- › **May and June and September to Mid-December:** Monday to Friday 9am-12pm and 2pm-6pm. Saturday 9am-12pm and 2pm-5pm. Closed on Sundays and public holidays.
- › **July and August:** open daily 9am to 7pm.

## Contact

› 14, route de Thonon  
BP 40 - F - 74390 Châtel  
Haute-Savoie - France  
Tel. 33 (0)4 50 73 22 44  
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touristoffice@chatel.com  
**www.chatel.com**



## GETTING to Châtel

Located in the heart of the Portes du Soleil between Lake Geneva and Mont-Blanc, Châtel is just 20 minutes from the Swiss motorways, 30 minutes from Aigle railway station, 1.40 hours from Geneva Cointrin international airport and 45 minutes from Thonon-les-Bains railway station.

### GPS coordinates

Latitude: 46.269966  
Longitude: 06.840753

### By road

From France: follow signs for Geneva, exit the autoroute at Annemasse, continue to Thonon then follow signs for Vallée d'Abondance/Châtel.

From Switzerland: follow signs for Monthey - Grand Saint Bernard, exit the autoroute at Monthey (Portes du Soleil exit) then follow signs for Morgins.

Car sharing: the Haute-Savoie Council has set up a website that enables people travelling to Châtel to find a car-sharing partner just a few clicks!

› [www.covoiturage.cg74.fr](http://www.covoiturage.cg74.fr)

### By rail

From France: Thonon railway station is the closest to the resort, with connecting taxi and bus services.

From Switzerland: there is a daily rail service between Geneva airport and Aigle. Transfers between the station and resort are by taxi.

› [www.oui.sncf](http://www.oui.sncf)  
[www.cff.ch](http://www.cff.ch)

### By air

Geneva Cointrin international airport is only 1.40 hours from Châtel. Travel to Châtel is by train to Aigle or Thonon then by bus or taxi.



# Breathe the mountain air *and enjoy its benefits this summer*

Impressive landscapes,  
unspoiled nature,  
walking, quality family  
time, relaxation and  
wellness facilities, cultural  
activities...



## TASTE FREEDOM *with the Multi Pass!*

**Portes du Soleil Multi Pass... Unlimited access to numerous activities!**

The Portes du Soleil Multi Pass is available in Châtel from 27<sup>th</sup> June to 20<sup>th</sup> September 2020. For 2 euros per person, per day of your stay, make the most of the area; hike - and use the ski lifts, swim, play tennis and mini-golf, take the little train or inter-resort minibus as often as you like. In addition, the Multi Pass offers reductions on the compact golf, cinema, Fantasticable flights, Bobluge, Châtel Aventures and you can learn about colourful local history at the Old Customs House contraband information centre.

This Portes du Soleil passport unlimited access to numerous activities throughout this fabulous Franco-Swiss area! To benefit, you must stay with an accommodation provider participating in this offer.

Welcome the holidays with the Multi Pass!

## FAMILY FUN!

**Parents and children  
on the same wavelength!**

This summer, the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of a week-long festival 'Châtel returns to Childhood' will take place from the 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> August.

Since its beginnings as a holiday destination, families have always been a priority for Châtel. Tourism has developed with a strong family focus, prioritising family infrastructure and facilities. Today Châtel is proud of the hugely diverse range of activities available to family visitors. In addition to the activities included in the Multi Pass, families can also enjoy a wide choice of additional leisure activities, all of which feature in the weekly activity and event programme.

**With around 60 weekly events, Châtel offers, amongst other things:**

- › Farm visits and local food tastings,
- › Age-specific children's workshops,
- › Children's shows,
- › Rivari activity trail and Châtel Aventures (Super-Châtel),
- › Little tourist train,
- › Old Customs House and activities (Escape Game in the library for children aged 6-8 yrs, Guided Dranse river walk...),
- › Belalp Smugglers Escape Game,
- › Children's playground at Vonnes Lake,
- › Mini-golf and compact 6-hole golf (Freinets),
- › Bobluge, Devalkart and Rollerbe (Pré-la-Joux),
- › Forme d'O water park and C l'Aventure indoor play area for 2-12yrs (village centre),
- › Fantasticable (with its two high wires running above Plaine-Dranse)
- › Sled dogs...



## Practical info

### *Family*

In addition, several supervised childcare options are available in the resort, the garderie "Les Lutins des Neiges" for children from 2mths - 4yrs. and "Le Club des Petits Montagnards" providing day care for children from 4-14yrs. during the school holidays





**Keep fit,**  
*keep moving in Châtel!*

## **MOUNTAIN HIKING** *on marked tracks...*

**For many, the mountains in summer are synonymous with hiking. The options are huge: with or without a mountain guide, different levels of difficulty, half days, one or more days including a night in a mountain refuge.**

Originally hikers simply hiked, but in recent years the activity has adapted to appeal to a wider audience! The ski lifts are now open during the summer (and their use when hiking is included in the Multi Pass) giving hikers of all fitness levels easier access to the summits. In this way everyone can appreciate the stunning panoramic views they offer and immerse themselves in the beautiful countryside revealed along the walking tracks.

Hiking around Châtel also offers the opportunity to discover and learn more about the area. Amongst the 90km of marked tracks in the resort and the 800km in the Portes du Soleil, the Dranse river bank path offers the opportunity for fitness fans, walkers, cyclists and families with children and pushchairs to discover this ecologically interesting area, explore riverside habitats and learn about local heritage.

## **AND NOW, *new technology*** *has joined the mix!*

### **Discover Châtel with Chloé!**

**Download this free app, IONO Expression Nomade, to a smartphone or tablet, click on "Découvrez Châtel" to discover fun family walking routes tracing Châtel's history.**

Put on your backpack and walking shoes and Chloé will guide you along one of two routes dotted with interesting games and riddles; the smugglers path from the Old Customs House or the Dranse river trail describe before.

Tablets are available to hire from Châtel Tourism if required.

### **The audio trail "In the steps of smugglers" takes visitors along a frontier track between France and Switzerland in the footsteps of the black marketeers and customs officials of yesteryear.**

There are two routes, both equipped with speakers which explain the history and topography of the area.

The speakers are operated by batteries available from either Châtel Tourism or The Old Customs House. Intermediate level walkers can take an additional loop, suitable for families, and hear some very colourful stories from this exciting time.

More advanced walkers can take yet another more elevated route and enjoy the fresh mountain air of the Franco-Swiss summits.

Battery rental and topoguide: 3 euros.

## **The UNESCO world Geopark label denotes landscapes and countryside with globally important geological sites as in the Chablais.**

A geopark label promotes natural and cultural heritage sites via a global protocol of protection, education and sustainable development.

In Châtel, the Col de Bassachaux is a Geosite as is Plagnes Lake in Abondance.

In addition, the Old Customs House in Châtel, The Maison du Fromage and Abondance Abbey visitor sites are all Geosite partners.



**Geopark**





#CHÂTEL

*... and trail running!*

**In Châtel running and trail running facilities are located by Tenne/Barbossine/Super-Châtel where there are two marked circuits, the VITA circuit and the 10km "Trail" circuit with 700m elevation!**

The Portes du Soleil has 54 running circuits on over 400km of tracks in 3 different areas including the Abondance Valley.

Châtel has 4 circuits of 5 different levels graded from green to black.

The Portes du Soleil Multi Pass gives access to the starting points on any of the 23 'pedestrian' lifts open during the summer.

*Keep fit, keep moving in Châtel!*

## Portrait

### *Aline Ploton*

Aline is a mountain guide and Châtel native, from a local farming family. In addition to guided visits for local food tastings and afternoon tea in mountain chalets, Aline offers half day, full day and longer guided mountain hikes, with the possibility of a night in a mountain refuge. She also organises Nordic walking sessions, Marmot hikes and cartography lessons. The mountains hold no secrets for her... She knows them inside out!



# From pasture *to cheese*

## APPRECIATE *the richness of this terroir*

**There has been farming in the Abondance valley for centuries and it remains fundamental to this mid-mountain landscape.**

Châtel has thirty working farms, ten of which make Abondance cheese, which this year celebrates 30 years since it gained AOP status. Farming is thriving, the average age of today's farmers is between 35 and 45. Farming here passes from generation to generation so agriculture remains anchored in the area as children take on the reins from their parents. The passion remains.

**Abondance is a valley, a village (main village of the canton), a breed of cattle and a cheese. The valley is the cradle of Abondance cattle.**

Having overwintered in the village, the farmers and their herds return to the mountains at the end of May or beginning of June once the snow has melted - the "emmontagnée". The cattle remain in these summer pastures until the first winter snow during October when they return to the village - the "démontagnée". During the summer, the cows are moved from pasture to pasture ensuring they always have the best grass and wildflowers to graze in order to produce the strong fruity taste of Abondance cheese. The difference in taste between a winter and sum-

mer cheese is very marked. This doesn't affect the respected reputation of this cheese, which has been built on these seasonal variants. Abondance cheese is used to prepare the delicious Berthoud, a dish of melted cheese much appreciated by gourmets!

Local delicacies are also to be found along the many mountain paths and trails at farms offering lunch and afternoon tea to walkers.



## WINTER PLANNING *starts in summer*

**Agriculture also plays an important role in the upkeep of the mountain pastures and the resulting quality of the winter ski slopes.**

During the summer, herds of cattle cross the pastures grazing the undergrowth. During the winter, these clearings are much appreciated ski areas.

Then, at the end of the winter, when spring arrives and the snow melts, the slope maintenance department collect the hay seeds that have been stored in the barns of village farms through the winter, and re-seed these areas so that cattle can once again enjoy the familiar, delicious grass.

This symbiosis between agriculture and tourism demonstrates the importance that environmental protection holds for each sector of the community.

## Portraits

### *Emmanuel and Corinne David*

Emmanuel and Corinne are a farming couple who spend their summers at Barbossine with their Abondance cattle and other farm animals. They make Abondance (AOP) cheese every day, whilst taking care of their herd.

They are among the farmers that welcome walkers to their farm for delicious home-made lunches or snacks made from local produce.

These visits are organised by Aline Ploton, a mountain guide. Both adults and children delight in this interesting experience with mountain people, farmers and guide.





# Discover *local heritage*

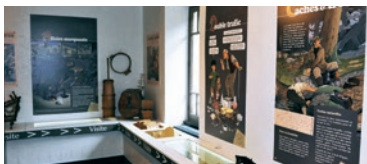


## *Pays d'Art et d'Histoire* CERTIFICATION

In 2003 the Abondance valley was awarded Pays d'Art et d'Histoire certification. The valley, in which agro-pastoralism plays an essential role, comprises 6 villages, 3 of which are holiday resorts.

The accreditation recognises the quality of the region's architecture and heritage and the diversity and high standard of cultural and religious activities and guided visits available.

Châtel is a frontier zone only two kilometres from Switzerland and historically the mountain customs post had a very exciting and colourful past. Following its purchase from the state by the commune in 2009, it was only natural that it be converted into a **mountain contraband information centre**.



It is now the place to visit to relive the time when this secretive trade, possible only due to its specific geographic location, was a thriving business helping improve daily life in this frontier zone. Tobacco, chocolate, matches, cigarette papers, pork... the procurement of black-market produce was extremely risky!

The annual exhibition 'Black gold and grain of salt' will be extended for 12 months.

In addition... heritage lovers can also visit the Crépy sawmill, the Très-les-Pierres Chapel and numerous other religious sites and shrines forming part of Châtel's history. All these sites, along with other buildings of interest, feature in Eric Dresco's book "Châtel, in the footsteps of the Pioneers".

Elsewhere, in the Place de l'Église, the spectacular *l'Ars Sonora "Frontiere"* was inaugurated last summer.

It is a huge sculpture of 26 bells mounted on two enormous steel pedestals installed side by side representing two countries both linked and separated by the frontier. When rung the melodious bells create an atmosphere of harmony and unity. The sculpture further enhances the beautiful village square with its breath-taking views of the surrounding mountain summits. The bells represent different aspects of local life; dynamism, history, agriculture, the Swiss border and the cultural and economic exchanges the proximity offers. Created by the foundry PACCARD (based in Sévrier), which has often undertaken work for Châtel, the sculpture now holds an important place in the heart of the village. The bells play a wide repertoire of tunes both contemporary and traditional. The days are punctuated several times by the joyous ringing of the bells, to the delight of everyone who hears them.



## #CHÂTEL

## *Châtel* VILLAGE

- › 1,282 permanent residents
- › 23,322 visitors beds
- › 23 hotels (1 \*\*\*\* hotel NN, 9 \*\*\* hotels NN, 11 \*\* hotels NN, 1 hotels)
- › 3 \*\*\*\*NN Holiday apartment complexes
- › 2 \*\*\*NN Holiday apartment complex
- › 1 Holiday apartment complex with hotel services
- › 10 Hotels for groups, holiday centres
- › 1 winter/summer camping and caravanning site \*\*\*\*
- › Additional accommodation: 1 Gîte \*\*\*, 1 other accommodation \*\*NN, 5 Bed and Breakfasts, 1 Youth Hostel, 1\*\* holiday village
- › 60 restaurants (including hotel restaurants)
- › A wide variety of shops





**On your bike!**  
*Discover the countryside...*

## ON THE ROADS

**The second Châtel Chablais Léman road cycle race will take place on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August.**

The race will again be sponsored by Greg LEMOND who has been seduced as much by the countryside and the atmosphere of this Franco-Swiss region as by the cycle race itself.

**Once again, the cyclists will race across the border, adding excitement to this thrilling event!**

Everything that road cyclists enjoy about this kind of race is present in this landscape. The countryside and topography are precisely what race organisers are looking for when organising road cycling events. The proximity of Switzerland with its extensive, varied tracks is an additional benefit.

Top cycle teams appreciate the benefits of the area too, coming to the area to train or wind down on the varied technical and rolling roads after official races.

### Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> August - Gravel

› **51.8km and a 1,678m elevation:** Châtel-Pré-la-Joux - Col de Recon - Torgon - Portes de Culet - Châtel-Pré-la-Joux.

### Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August - 2 circuits

› **One long race of 153.5km and a 3,300m elevation:** Pré-la-Joux-Châtel - Col du Corbier - Col du Feu - Plan Fayet - Montée de Gottebaz - Pas de Morgins - Châtel-Pré-la-Joux;

› **One short race of 65km and a 1,800m elevation:** Aigle-UCI - Monthey - Vérossaz - Monthey - Choëx - Montée des Rives - Champéry - Troistorrens - Morgins - Pas de Morgins - Châtel - Pré-la-Joux.

The total prize pot to be distributed among winners is €70,000 and includes a draw for 2 cars. A show village of 25 exhibitors will feature the latest road biking equipment and technology.



**Please note**



For those wishing to try road cycling in our mountains, **road bikes are available to rent from local bike shops.**





#CHÂTEL

## ON THE TRACKS

**During the 80s the resort began providing facilities for mountain bike rides and introductory mountain bike lessons.**

Since then MTB has developed, retaining the emphasis on learning and instruction on both mountain paths and through the creation, at the beginning of the 2000s, of the mountain bike park at Pré-la-Joux. The park is dedicated to downhill MTB, which together with the summer opening of ski lifts, has brought a new dynamic to the sport.

**All this local evolution is in perfect harmony with that of the Portes du Soleil, a gigantic MTB playground during the summer, linked by 23 ski lifts open for mountain bikers and pedestrians.**

Both beginners and experienced riders can either take lessons or hire a guide and head off to explore the village environs and the Portes du Soleil area. MTB and/or Electric MTB rental is also possible through local bike-rental shops. For those wishing to exert a little less effort - Electric MTB is the answer!



**There are 5 circuits of differing levels in the resort:**

- > Châtel/Lac de Vonnes circuit,
  - > Très-les-Pierres/Col de Bassachaux/Rubis circuit,
  - > Châtel/Morgins,
  - > Châtel/Morgins with short cuts,
  - > Linga/Col de Bassachaux/Chapelle Saint Théodule/Plans des Feux circuit.
- Battery charging points are located at Châtel Tourism and the Pierre Longue lift pass kiosks. Châtel Tourism can provide maps of the full Portes du Soleil track network.

## THE MOUNTAIN BIKE PARK at Pré-la-Joux

**accessible on the Pierre Longue and/or Rochassons chair lifts. It is maintained by 9 bike patrols, has 20 downhill tracks for all abilities and various activity areas, 2 slopestyle areas in which 1 for professionals, a kid's shore, a pump track.**

Riders must have the correct equipment for downhill MTB: appropriate MTB, helmet and pads.



## Portraits

### *Fulien, Jacques and Sylvain*

Qualified MTB instructors in summer, 2 of whom are ski instructors and the other a piste first-aidier in winter and all of whom are passionate about the mountains and local countryside. Sylvain is also president of the local MTB association in Châtel: Razorbike.



## Portrait

### *Bike Patrol*

**A day in the life of a bike patrol in the heart of the mountain bike park:**

Opening and closing the area, its upkeep, interaction with mountain bikers...

*On your bike! Discover the countryside...*

# Choose the best *holiday package*



## MULTI PASS BREAK

7 NIGHTS  
ACCOMMODATION  
+ 6-DAY PORTES  
DU SOLEIL MULTI PASS

In an apartment  
from  
**€105\*** /per adult

The Portes du Soleil Multi Pass gives unlimited access to over 60 activities in the Franco-Swiss area (full details page 3).

## MTB BREAK

7 NIGHTS  
ACCOMMODATION  
+ 6-DAY PORTES DU  
SOLEIL LIFT PASS

In an apartment  
from  
**€191\*** /per adult

Buy a Portes du Soleil lift pass and get a free Portes du Soleil Multi pass (of the same duration as the lift pass) when renting through a participating accommodation provider.

\*Prices valid from 4<sup>th</sup> July 2020 -  
1<sup>st</sup> August 2020 based on 4 people sharing  
an apartment rented from a private landlord.

INFORMATION AND RESERVATIONS:  
**Châtel Reservation**  
Tel. +33 (0)4 50 73 30 22  
info@chatelreservation.com  
[www.chatelreservation.com](http://www.chatelreservation.com)

## *Hotel Macchi* ★★★★★ ELECTRIC MTB OFFER

### OFFER INCLUDES:

- › 1 night in a pretty double room\* (inc. 2 breakfasts, 2 complementary aperitifs)
- › 2 fully equipped electric bikes (helmet, repair kit, padlocks)
- › Cycle route information and advice
- › Complementary swimming pool robes and slippers
- › Unlimited access to the hotel spa (indoor swimming pool, jet showers, jacuzzi).

\*based on 2 sharing a room.  
Valid from 30<sup>th</sup> June to 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

INFORMATION AND RESERVATIONS:  
› Tel. +33 (0)4 50 73 24 12  
contact@hotelmacchi.com  
[www.hotelmacchi.com](http://www.hotelmacchi.com)





# Unmissable ...summer dates 2020

#CHÂTEL

*Monday 20<sup>th</sup>  
to Friday 24<sup>th</sup> July 2020*

### Sailing course

Sailing in the mountains, why not?  
Adults and children can learn or improve their sailing skills at the bucolic Vonnes Lake: sailing, paddling, windsurfing...



*Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup>  
to Friday 7<sup>th</sup> August 2020*

### "Châtel returns to Childhood" Festival

A week dedicated to families and children. A wide variety of games, workshops and shows are scheduled each day.

*Saturday 15<sup>th</sup>  
and Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2020*

### Cyclosporive Châtel Chablais Léman

For the second consecutive year this cross-frontier road cycle event will be sponsored by Greg LEMOND. Last year he was smitten as much by the countryside and the atmosphere of this Franco-Swiss region, as by the excitement of the cycle race itself (see page 8).

Choose the best holiday package | Unmissable ...summer dates 2020

# CHÂTEL

*4 Seasons in the Sun*



## Communication Service Châtel Tourisme

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Haute-Savoie - France

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thucfo - 14738 - Crédit photos: J.-F. Vuarnet (Châtel Tourisme) - S. Cochard - V. Thiebaut - M. Vité - Studio Yvon - X  
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et sont susceptibles de pouvoir être modifiés. Châtel Tourisme ne peut être tenu responsable d'un changement quel qu'il soit.

