

LARGES HORIZONS 103

General information

The information and Sports Centre is down the hill, a bit below the tele-cabine. It has all the brochures for local attractions, maps, information on local events, museums and exhibitions, cinema showings etc.

There is a free bus service that circles the entire village about once an hour through the day. Timetable is in the apartment or at the Information Centre.

Banking

The Banque Cantonale Vaudoise, BCV, is in the Place du Marche. It has an ATM in the foyer. You can also change money there. Another ATM is situated outside the PAM supermarket (currently closed) opposite the swimming pool.

Post Office

In the centre of town, almost opposite but slightly higher up the hill than the BCV.

Internet

Leysin is a wireless internet hotspot. You should be able to connect for free from the terrace of the apartment or close to the window! No need for a password. If you haven't got a device, there are a couple of elderly PCs for public use at the Farandole coffee shop in the Place du Marche.

Swimming/sports

There is a large indoor pool, good for swimming lengths, at the Sports Centre. Steam room in the changing room area. There's also a shallow pool for small children and an outside play area with paddling pool for summer. Current cost is 9CHF for adults, children under 9 are free.

A smaller pool at the Central Residence hotel is often but not always open to non-residents. (Weekends tend to be difficult to gain access). It has a sauna, Jacuzzi and steam room too and makes for a relaxing couple of hours if you can get in. You need to take your own towel.

The Sports Centre has a gym and squash courts, plus outdoor tennis in the summer.

Skating rink/toboggan slide:

At the very bottom of the village (can be seen from the apartment terrace and the free bus runs there – a good idea for the return journey!). Skates can be hired. Check opening times at Information Centre. Beside the ice rink is a toboggan slide – bobsleigh-type rides in large inner tubes. Runs are of varying difficulty – fun for all ages and even scary enough to amuse adults for a while. You can pay per descent (3CHF) or for two hours (22CHF).

Cinema:

Located beneath the Classic hotel (further down from the sports centre). Pretty up-to-date films, posters up around town but often in French.

Shops:

Closest for basic groceries, good bread and croissants in the morning from 7.30am is the small grocery store (Epicerie) beside Feydey train station. Also sells wine and spirits. Usually open till 7pm but closed between 12.30pm and 2pm.

The two larger supermarkets in town are the Coop (close to the Place du Marche with pretty much everything in the food and drink line, plus a limited range of underwear, towels, kitchen equipment and so

on) and the Denner (behind the Farandole café). This is newer and often a little cheaper and has a very good stock of wines.

Specialty shops around the Place du Marche include a good butcher's and fish shop and a dairy (Laiterie) for cheeses. There are plenty of small shops selling postcards, souvenirs, newspapers and so on.

Skiing/Snowboarding

Leysin the surrounding area should provide enough skiing excitement for all but the most advanced skiers for 6-7 days. There is a good mix of gentle, tree-lined swooshes as well as some more challenging red and black runs. Locals love to go off piste...and you can hire a guide at the Ecole Suisse de Ski by the tele-cabine. Group or individual lessons can also be booked here.

You can connect up with the slopes at Les Mosses (shuttle bus from the bottom of Solepraz) or get a bus up to the Glacier 3000 at Les Diablerets. (The glacier enjoys a much longer season and is worth trying if snow is running out in Leysin!) Villars and Chamonix are not far away although no Bowens have ventured that far.

There's also plenty of opportunity for snow-shoeing and cross country skiing. Ask for more information at the Sports Centre. In summer, you can hire mountain – and electric – bikes.

Ski hire and passes:

Most convenient for boot and ski/board hire is Hefti Sports, opposite the tele-cabine (chairlift). Friendly and helpful staff who speak English. All equipment less than three years old and a good range. Current price list in the flat – you may get a better deal booking online in advance. Also Endless Ride on the middle road between tele-cabine and Feydey.

Hefti has a locker service if you want to leave skis close to tele-cabine.

Ski passes are by the day or half-day, for a number of days or a week. You need a passport-sized photo for a week pass. There is a 5CHF charge for the initial pass – or borrow one from the bowl in the flat. But please leave behind when you go for re-use. You can pay at the desk by credit/debit card.

Ski food:

It is very easy to get back to the flat for lunch if you are looking to save some money, have a midday rest or both! Get the "tunnel" lift up the nursery slope and walk the few yards back to the flat.

There are several options on the mountains, however. The Kuklos restaurant at the top of the Berneuse does self-service food, frites and sandwiches (decent but basic) and has a great terrace with stunning views. There's also a dedicated picnic room behind the cable car frequented mainly by families with small children and those prepared to ski with a knapsack.

Recommended are the Buvette de Mayen (at the top of the Mayen chair-lift) and the restaurant at Les Fers. The Buvette is a charming little wooden chalet offering great hearty soups, sandwiches, sausages and bread and hot cheesy dishes plus drinks. Space inside is limited but great in good weather.

The restaurant at Les Fers has amazing views. Sit outside to enjoy them – and sausages, frites and/or sandwiches or go inside for the full menu of salads, lasagne, croutes, fondue and specials. Not cheap but not the ridiculous prices of many ski resorts. Good stop for a vin chaud before the last run of the day!

Rubbish:

Please recycle glass and paper/cardboard in the bins at the end of the small road, or up the hill towards the station or in the bins behind the Central Residence. Non-recyclable waste must be binned in yellow bags that can be bought at the Epicerie or other supermarkets. Cost 1CHF each. Cans and milk bottles can only be recycled by the Sports Centre or outside the Coop.