

COOLER SUMMERS IN THE ALPS: PEAK RETREATS REVEALS GREAT-VALUE FAMILY ESCAPES



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With summer temperatures across much of southern Europe climbing year by year, more travellers are starting to rethink the traditional beach holiday. Increasingly, the answer lies in heading for higher ground.

In the French Alps, summer brings cooler air, wide open landscapes and an almost endless choice of outdoor activities – a combination that is quietly turning the region into one of Europe’s most appealing “coolcation” destinations.

Specialist operator **Peak Retreats**, long known for its deep knowledge of the French Alps, believes the mountains offer families a refreshing alternative to crowded coastlines and overheated cities. Its newly refreshed summer programme for 2026 focuses on carefully selected Alpine villages where visitors can enjoy space, fresh air and an easy mix of adventure and relaxation.

Now operating as an **employee-owned company**, Peak Retreats continues to lean on what it does best: combining expert local knowledge with carefully chosen accommodation in destinations that feel authentic rather than overdeveloped.

The result is a summer programme that makes the Alps feel both **accessible and surprisingly good value**, even during the school holidays.

Managing Director **Alison Willis** says that for many families, the appeal of a summer mountain holiday quickly becomes obvious.

“We are converts to summer holidays in the mountains. The contrast to busy beaches and sweaty airport queues couldn’t be more stark.

With our new curated selection of Alpine villages teamed with our themes, helping you match what you want from a holiday to a destination, we want to help more people discover the joys of a holiday to the mountains this summer.

Plus, they are incredible value, with a school holiday week trip to pretty Val Cenis coming in at under £1000 for a family of up to six. We’re also championing travel by train – summer is an ideal time to try slow travel and our team can help navigate train schedules and transfers.”

What often surprises first-time visitors is just how varied summer in the Alps can be. One day might involve cycling quiet forest tracks or hiking high alpine paths, the next paddleboarding on a clear mountain lake or exploring a lively Savoyard village market. Evenings tend to arrive slowly, with long sunsets across the peaks and relaxed meals built around local produce and regional dishes.

Alpine holidays that don’t break the bank



While the Alps are often associated with winter ski prices, summer can offer remarkably good value – particularly for families staying in well-equipped Alpine apartments.

Peak Retreats’ programme includes several resorts where a week’s stay, including travel, comes in well below what many families might expect.

One standout is **Val Cenis**, tucked between the dramatic landscapes of the **Vanoise National Park** and the Italian border. The village makes an excellent base for exploring the striking turquoise waters of **Lac du Mont Cenis**, as well as enjoying hiking, cycling and a wide range of family-friendly activities.

A week at **Les Chalets de Flambeau** costs from **£781 per apartment for up to six people**, including ferry travel (based on a two-bedroom apartment departing 22 August 2026). The residence enjoys a sunny position between the village centres and includes facilities such as a heated indoor pool, children’s pool, sauna and steam room.

Further north, **Le Grand Bornand** offers a different but equally appealing Alpine experience. Set close to **Lake Annecy**, widely regarded as one of Europe’s most beautiful lakes, the village combines outdoor adventure with a distinctly traditional Savoyard character – it is also the historic home of **Reblochon cheese**.

A week at **Les Chalets de Joy**, a four-star residence in the heart of the village, starts from **£1746 per apartment for up to six people**, including travel.



Another favourite among summer visitors is **Samoëns**, a lively village classified as a **national heritage site**, surrounded by limestone cliffs, forest trails and high mountain pastures. Just five minutes’ walk from the main square, **La Reine des Prés** offers apartments with a heated indoor pool, sauna and steam room, with prices starting from **£1741 per apartment for up to six people**.

For families seeking the full Alpine adventure experience, **Chamonix** remains one of the most exciting destinations in the mountains. Sitting beneath **Mont Blanc**, Europe’s highest peak, the town has long been known as the activities capital of the Alps. In summer, visitors can choose from more than 50 different sports and outdoor pursuits.

A week at **Le Cristal de Jade**, located beside the famous **Aiguille du Midi cable car**, starts from **£1679 per apartment for up to six people**, including travel.

Meanwhile, on the Italian border, **La Rosière** enjoys one of the sunniest positions in the French Alps, with sweeping views across the Tarentaise Valley. The resort’s relaxed atmosphere makes it particularly appealing for families.

At **Les Cimes Blanches** in the quieter Les Eurcherts area, apartments for up to six people start from **£1388** for a week’s stay in August, with access to an indoor pool, sauna and steam room.

Choosing the right Alpine experience

To help families navigate the wide choice of destinations and activities, Peak Retreats has introduced a set of **holiday themes** that group resorts according to the experiences they offer.

The **Adrenaline Adventures** category highlights destinations where visitors can try mountain biking, canyoning, via ferrata routes and paragliding.

The **Activities for Everyone** theme focuses on gentler outdoor options including lakeside swimming, pedalos, paddleboarding and family-friendly walking trails.



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For those interested in travelling more slowly, the **Slow Travel** category reflects a growing interest in reaching the Alps by train. Summer is an ideal time to make the journey this way, avoiding airport queues and enjoying a more relaxed route through Europe. Peak Retreats can help arrange rail travel and onward transfers.

Elsewhere, **Cultural Experiences** highlights resorts with strong Alpine heritage – places where traditional markets, festivals, artisan producers and historic sites remain central to village life.

And for those seeking a slower pace, the **Relaxation** theme focuses on destinations offering strong wellness facilities, from spa residences with indoor pools and salt caves to outdoor yoga with panoramic mountain views.

A season more people are discovering

While the Alps remain world famous for winter skiing, summer is increasingly being recognised as one of the region’s most rewarding seasons.

Wildflower meadows replace ski slopes, lift systems carry walkers and cyclists high into the mountains, and crystal-clear lakes provide some of the most refreshing swimming spots in Europe.

Add cooler temperatures, fewer crowds and a slower rhythm of life, and it becomes easy to see why more families are discovering the simple appeal of an Alpine summer.

With strong value, flexible travel options and a huge choice of activities, **Peak Retreats** believes the mountains may be one of the smartest places to spend the summer.

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