



Samoens
TO FALL IN LOVE WITH

Press kit

**THE LUXURY OF AN
AUTHENTIC ALPINE VILLAGE**

Voted the most beautiful village in Haute-Savoie in 2021 by readers of Le Dauphiné Libéré newspaper

DISCOVER SAMOËNS:

♥ *A true mountain village*

Imagine a mountain village nestled in a wide valley, surrounded by alpine pastures in summer and snow-capped peaks reaching 2,500 meters in winter, with access to the 5th largest ski area in France! Located just a few kilometers from the Swiss border, Samoëns is above all a charming village, steeped in history, that thrives year-round. Here, you'll receive a warm welcome in a family atmosphere, from the friendly locals who share their passion for the mountains, passed down from generation to generation, blending tradition and modernity.

♥ *Once upon a time*

Nothing beats a stroll through the highlights of this old Haute-Savoie village to truly appreciate the richness of its heritage: the former town center, the current village center, the church square, the Grenette (market hall), and the large linden tree. Wandering through the narrow streets, one can easily imagine what the village looked like in the time of the Frahans, the stonemasons called upon to work on major construction sites in European cities to hone their skills and support their families. This legacy is evident in the village walls, fountains, basins, wash houses, and old farmhouses, all enduring witnesses to Samoëns' past.

♥ *Pastoral traditions*

The inhabitants of Samoëns are called "Septimontains" in reference to 7 of the many alpine pastures that surround Samoëns. These verdant pastures are dedicated to high-quality dairy farming thanks to some twenty farms still in operation and the dairy cooperative which transforms the milk from the herds (Abondance, Montbéliarde and Tarine) into Reblochon cheese with protected designation of origin (PDO, or AOP in French).

♥ *And in the middle flows a river*

Nestled in a wide, flat-bottomed, and very open valley, Samoëns takes shape at the foot of the famous Criou mountain, along the Giffre, a mountain stream fed by countless waterfalls at the valley's end. On its banks, pebble beaches offer ample opportunities for water games, temporary dams, and invigorating swims all summer long. Rafting, kayaking, and hydrospeeding enthusiasts can indulge to their heart's content.

Access

Airport: 30 minutes from Cluses or 1 hour from Annemasse trains stations

Stations: 25 minutes from Cluses TER train station, 1 hour 15 minutes from Bellegarde TGV station

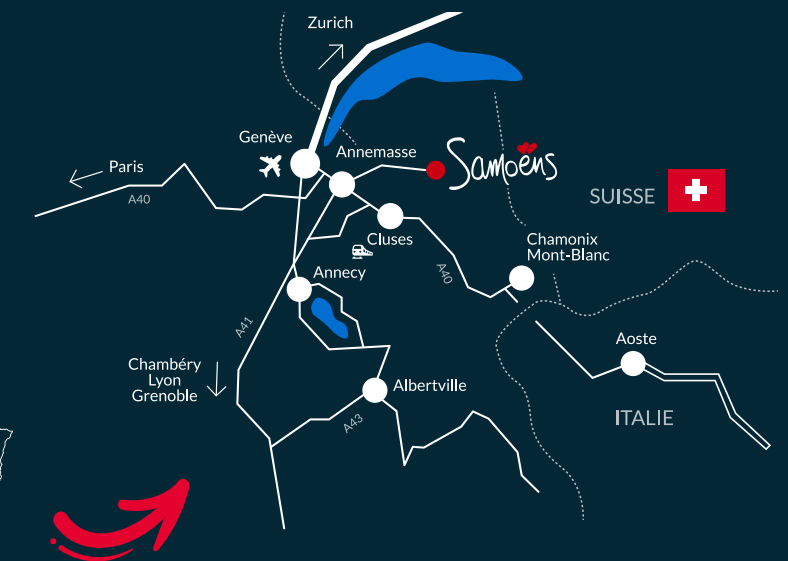
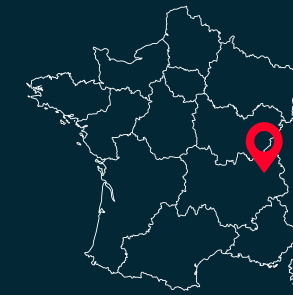
Highway: A40: 20 km (Cluses)

Lyon: 200 km

Paris : 600 km

Geneva: 57 km

Brussels: 847 km



Dates

1355: first weekly market

From the 15th to the 19th century: Samoëns' stonemasons travel across Europe

1435: supposed plantation of the Great Linden

1438: the Duke of Savoy brought an end to a long-standing dispute between Morzine and Samoëns, awarding the seven alpine pastures at the centre of the conflict to the people of Samoëns. The name 'Septimontain' dates from this grant.

1659: creation of the Samoëns masons' guild

1906: inauguration of La Jaÿsinia, the garden botany created by Marie-Louise Cognacq-Jaÿ

1912: international ski competitions

1951: installation of the first ski lifts in Samoëns

1978: the Joux Plane pass is climbed for the 1st times by the cyclists of the Tour de France

1982: opening of the Grand Massif (Samoëns, Flaine, Les Carroz d'Arâche, Sixt, Morillon)

2017: opening of Club Med, the most beautiful and the world's largest mountain resort

2026: Romane Miradoli, the skier from Samoëns, wins silver in the Super-G at the Milano-Cortina Olympics

Figures

THE VILLAGE

2,400 residents

24,000 tourist beds

9,729 hectares

720 m to 2,500 m altitude

34 sculptures of the Frahans stonemasons

9 chapels

ACCOMMODATION

16 hotels and tourist residences

3 holiday villages including a Club Med

2 bed and breakfasts

2 stopover guesthouses

5 shelters including **3** open in winter

1 holiday center

1 3-star rated campsite

SUMMER SPORTS

170 km mountain biking in the Haut-Giffre

1 pass classified as hors catégorie (Joux-Plane)

600 km marked hiking trails in the Haut-Giffre

2 lakes, **1** river

1 leisure center (football pitch, rugby pitch, tennis courts, playgrounds, picnic areas...)

1 skatepark

1 outdoor pool

9 chapels

1 botanical garden

SAMOËNS

CAPITAL OF ALPINE CYCLING

Baroudeurs des Alpes



JUNE 5 TO 7, 2026

Samoëns invites cycling enthusiasts to write a new chapter in its sporting history. In the heart of the Giffre massif, between legendary mountain passes and trails sculpted by the mountains, an event worthy of its playground is born: Baroudeurs des Alpes (Alpine Adventurers). For three days, the village resort transforms into the Alpine capital of two-wheeled sports, from mountain biking to road cycling. On the road and on the trails, seasoned champions, ambitious amateurs, families, and visitors share the same energy: the drive for challenge, pushing their limits, and the sheer joy of riding in a spectacular setting. Two major races, a vibrant partner village like a cycling hub, activities for everyone... here, performance meets camaraderie.

⇒ baroudeursdesalpes.com

Road Bike Village

Baroudeurs des Alpes is also a celebration of cycling and the launch of summer with a multitude of activities and entertainment for everyone!

DRIVE & EXPLORE

- guided bike tour focusing on heritage
- gourmet cycling route
- steep 1600m timed climb on a road bike
- Handisport course

PLAY, TEST & GET EQUIPPED

- obstacle course / slalom / slow course
- fun bike
- balance bike course and race
- repair workshops / advice
- partner & brand Village
- bicycle exchange

BIKE FESTIVAL

- concerts
- speaker & interactive animations
- games, quizzes, fun challenges, photo booth, exhibition
- restoration

Gran Fondo

Cyclosportive event on legendary roads

JUNE 6 AND 7, 2026

On the road side, the **Gran Fondo Samoëns** invites Cyclists can test themselves against the giants who have shaped the legend of the peloton. Tour de France, Critérium du Dauphiné: these names resonate on the slopes of the Col de Joux Plane, the Col de Joux Verte, and the Col de la Ramaz. Two demanding stages, a general classification, breathtaking panoramas: everyone chooses their format, their pace, their objective. Time trial or pleasure, one or two days, but always the same intensity.

SATURDAY, JUNE 6

Distance: 130 km

Positive elevation gain: 3980 m

Departure: Samoëns

Arrival: Col de la Ramaz - Le-Praz-De-Lys

Passes: Joux plane, Joux verte (Avoriaz), Col de la Ramaz

SUNDAY, JUNE 7

Distance: 140 km

Positive elevation gain: 4300 m

Departure: Samoëns

Arrival: Samoëns 1600

Passes: Les Esserts, Samoëns 1600

Overall ranking based on the combined times of the 2 stages. Podiums & rankings by category.

INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION:

⇒ granfondo-samoens.com/en



Ultra Raid Series

The ultimate XXL adventurer's experience!

JUNE 5, 6 AND 7, 2026

On the mountain biking front, the **Ultra Raid Series** makes its debut in Samoëns. An endurance and adventure challenge designed for explorers: steep mountains, alpine forests, panoramic ridgelines and 100% singletrack descents—sometimes in bike park mode, sometimes along the accessible XC sections of the iconic 2025 Enduro World Cup trails.

From the Ultra 4000 to the Ultra-Ultimate (125 km / 6700 m elevation gain), the event promises a unique blend of physical challenge, technical difficulty, and the sheer joy of riding, on courses inspired by international standards. It's worth noting that some sections also follow the trails that will host the 2027 Mountain Bike Marathon World Championships. As Samoëns was chosen to organize this event, the UCI has exceptionally authorized the inclusion of these routes within the Ultra Raid.

Starting from the village, this new stage promises the spirit of ultra-raid, in the heart of a legendary playground. As an added bonus: a premium organization that focuses on authenticity, conviviality, and athletic performance.

On the agenda:

- Ultra 4000: 90 km over 3 days
- Ultra 5000: 135 km over 3 days
- Ultra 7000: 175 km over 3 days
- Ultra EMTB (E-MTB): 90 km over 3 days, 3,500 D+
- Ultra-Ultimate: 125 km, 6700 m elevation gain over 1 day

Choose between time trial or hiking mode, solo or in pairs!

INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION:

⇒ ultra-raid-samoens.com



SAMOËNS

AIMING TO HOST A TOUR DE FRANCE STAGE FINISH!

The town of Samoëns has officially submitted its bid to host a stage finish of the 2027 Tour de France on the Plateau des Saix, at an altitude of 1,600 meters. This ambitious project, spearheaded by the municipality and supported by local stakeholders, aims to place the village at the heart of cycling's rich history.

A SPECTACULAR FINALE FOR CLIMBERS

The planned finish would follow the climb linking the Giffre bridge to Samoëns 1600: a 10km ascent with 924 meters of elevation gain, an average gradient of 9.24%, and sections exceeding 11%. A demanding finale that would rival the legendary Col de Joux Plane, a regular feature of the Tour de France and classified as hors catégorie (beyond categorization).

With this profile, the Plateau des Saix could become a new arena for the best climbers in the peloton.

A TERRITORY ALREADY MARKED BY THE TOUR

Over the decades, the Tour de France peloton has passed through Samoëns and climbed the Joux Plane pass 13 times before reaching Morzine. The town's bid now proposes a unique scenario: transforming this historic climb into a true stage finish.

A COLLECTIVE LOCAL EFFORT TO BACK THE BID

To supplement its application submitted to Amaury Sport Organisation, the municipality produced a promotional video highlighting the commitment and enthusiasm of the residents. Local associations and sports clubs were invited to participate in the filming to recreate the atmosphere of a stage finish and to demonstrate the popular fervor that such an event would generate.

A SPORTS AND REGIONAL PROJECT

This bid is part of a strong sporting dynamic for Haute-Savoie, which will also host the 2026 UCI Road World Championships in August 2026. For Samoëns, the objective is twofold: to enhance a spectacular natural site and to strengthen the attractiveness of the territory through a global event.



TEASER VIDEO

Full-size cycling destination

Beyond the major events, Samoëns welcomes road cyclists, mountain bikers and enduro enthusiasts throughout the summer season thanks to an exceptional playground.

The destination now boasts over 400 km of mountain bike trails, 51 km of country routes, and 120 km of enduro tracks, in addition to several mountain passes and scenic roads popular with cyclists. This comprehensive offering allows everyone, from recreational riders to seasoned athletes, to find their perfect route amidst the stunning landscapes of the Haut-Giffre region.

A WELCOME DESIGNED FOR CYCLISTS

For over six years, Samoëns has held the national Accueil Vélo (Cyclists Welcome) label, which guarantees visitors suitable services: accommodation located near cycling routes, secure bike shelters, repair kits, route advice, and equipment washing and drying services. Several businesses are committed to this initiative.



Accueil Vélo guarantees cyclists to:

- Be within 5 km of a cycle path.
- Have suitable equipment: secure bike shelter, repair kit.
- Enjoy a warm welcome (useful advice: routes, weather, etc.).
- Have suitable services available: luggage transfer, laundry washing and drying, bicycle rental, bicycle washing....

LEARN MORE

➔ samoens.com/en/accueil-velo

A PIANO UNDER THE STARS



JULY 10-25, 2026

Bostan Alpine Pasture, on the heights of Samoëns

At an altitude of 1,763 meters, at the foot of the Bostan refuge, Classical music comes to the heart of the mountains. Born five years ago from the initiative of Marjorie Vagner, who hikes the trails with a **small blue acoustic piano mounted on wheels**, that **Bostan Piano Festival** has become a unique musical gathering for hikers and nature lovers. The idea was born from her encounter with Bastien, the warden of the Bostan refuge, who suggested she perform below the refuge, in a natural amphitheater formed by the mountain. The first recital, facing the peaks and the stars, made a lasting impression. Year after year, the audience grew and the event gained momentum. Since last year, the festival has reached a new milestone: **A concert grand piano is airlifted to the site** allowing pianists from all over France to perform in this unique mineral setting. The Bostan Piano Festival thus offers an extraordinary experience: **Walk to reach the concert, then listen to the music resonate in the heart of the mountain**, in a natural amphitheater where each note blends with the wind, the rock and the sky.

Program

This year in Bostan we will be hosting a program of neo-classical, jazz, and electro pianists, with renowned pianists such as the famous Vivian Roost (From Home) and Grégoire Jokic.

Friday, July 10th: Mathis Akengin - *Neo-classical & electro*
⇒ radiofrance.fr/fip/coup-de-coeur-pour-mathis-akengin-3156346

Saturday, July 11th: Grégoire Jokic - *Neoclassical*
⇒ gregoirejokic.com

Friday, July 17th: Vivian Roost - *Neoclassical*
⇒ vivianroost.com

Saturday, July 18th: Agua Fresca Quartet - *Contemporary Jazz*
⇒ aguafrescajazzband.wixsite.com/agua

Friday, July 24th: Lake - *Film music*
⇒ olakemusic.com

Saturday, July 25th: MYO x Marjorie Vagner - *Piano and electro duo*

TEASER VIDEO

Free concerts every evening at 8pm.

Meals and overnight stays are by reservation; please plan to be at the refuge before 6pm.

The schedule must not be announced before April 10th.



Bostan Refuge

Recently renovated, it allows families to discover the alpine landscapes while enjoying warm and welcoming accommodations. It's also a favorite stop for hikers heading to Tête de Bostan, the western Dent Blanche, the Dents du Midi (3258 m), or the GR5 long-distance hiking trail. The menu features a regularly updated selection of homemade dishes and desserts prepared by Bastien, the caretaker, using local, organic, and seasonal products, including bread and ice cream from his father, Thierry Froissard, a Meilleur Ouvrier de France (MOF) ice cream maker in the village. Bastien is also committed to minimizing his environmental impact: all waste is sorted and then brought back down to the valley, and biodegradable waste is composted. Electricity is provided by photovoltaic panels. Supplies are transported once a year by helicopter; the rest of the time, they're carried on foot! As for activities, workshops on local flora and fauna, as well as guided hikes, punctuate the summer months.

72 beds spread across 7 dormitories of 7 to 12 beds. 1 hour 45 minutes from the Allamands car park. 650 meters of elevation gain. Open from June 2nd to September 28th. Half-board from €49 per adult, €37 per child under 12, €27 per child under 6.

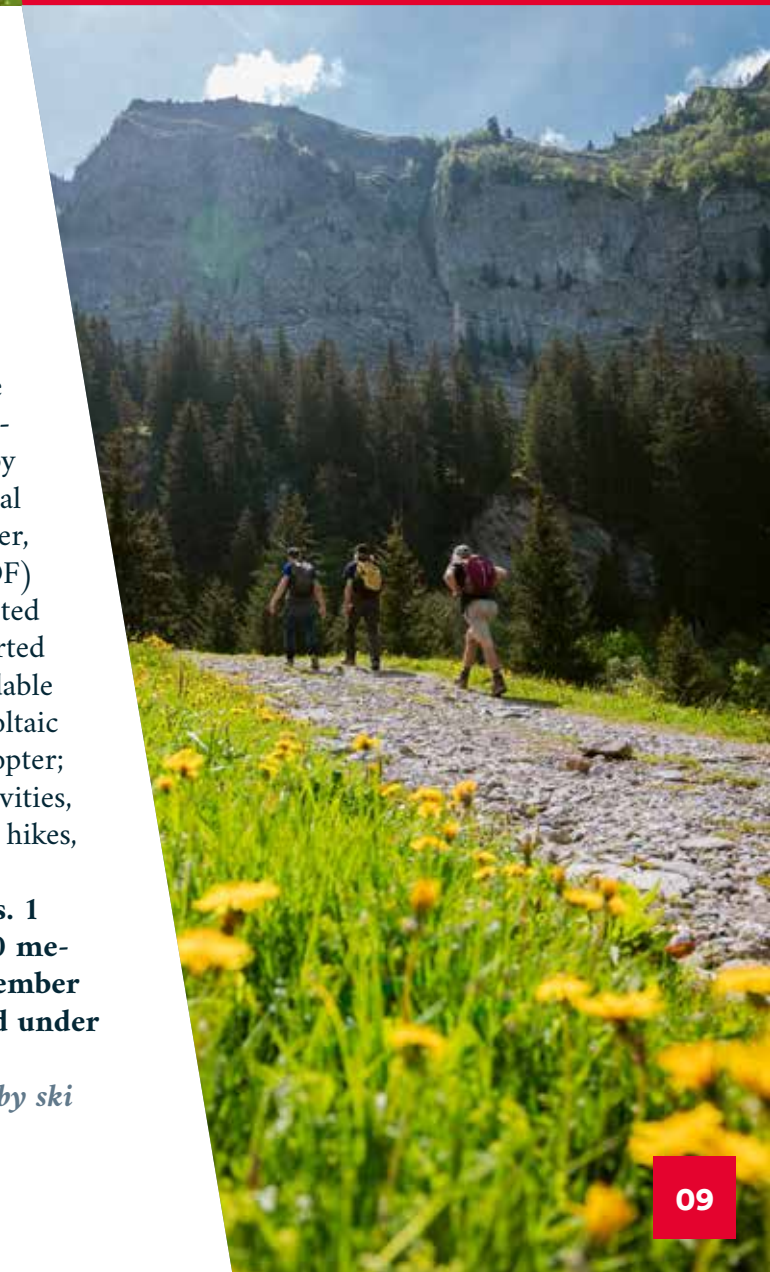
Accessible on foot or by mountain bike in the summer, by ski touring or snowshoeing in the winter.

Hiking idea

The Tête de Bostan circuit

The "Tour de la Tête de Bostan" hike offers a spectacular immersion into the heart of the alpine pastures and rocky landscapes of the Haut-Giffre. This high-altitude loop takes hikers around the Tête de Bostan, between alpine meadows, rocky sections, and panoramic views of the surrounding peaks. Starting from the Bostan refuge (1,763 m), the route takes approximately 3.5 to 4 hours with nearly 600 m of elevation gain. Classified as a hike for experienced hikers, the loop offers superb views of the Dents Blanches, the Haute-Cime des Dents du Midi, and the Samoëns valley, in a wild and unspoiled environment where hiking becomes a true mountain experience.

⇒ refugedebostan.fr/idees-de-randonnees



THE REMARKABLE GARDEN CELEBRATES ITS 120TH ANNIVERSARY



JULY 4 AND 5, 2026



A sensory walk in the heart of the Alps

Remarkable Garden of France since 2004 and a member of the Association of Friends of Remarkable European Gardens since 2025, this 3.7-hectare space offers a sensory experience blending landscape beauty and flora preservation. Along 3 km of shaded paths, visitors admire diverse plant collections with surprising colors and fragrances, and enjoy the tranquility of the place, far from the urban bustle, amidst fountains, waterfalls, ponds, and marshes.

♥ 2,200 different species, 4,500 listed, including the Alpine blue thistle, the Balkan crocus, the cedar of Lebanon, the giant sequoia of America, the Japanese caramel tree...

A garden in constant evolution

Member of the Botanical Gardens Association from France and French-speaking countries, in connection with the Geneva Botanical Garden and Botanic Garden Conservation International, the global institution that catalogs plants from the 5 continents, Jaÿsinia exchanges seeds for others in order to ensure the sustainability of plant diversity.

♥ 851 seed samples were sent; 400 received. Sowing and nursery breeding are carried out in spring and autumn.

♥ Experimental rock garden with 700 different species.

A botanical treasure

The garden laboratory houses a hidden treasure: a regional herbarium and a national historical herbarium.

♥ Collection of 40,000 plants catalogued since 1890

A true alpine treasure designed by the landscape-Jules Allemand's estate, Jaÿsinia is a botanical gem that celebrates 120 years of history in 2026. An internationally renowned establishment that celebrates the mountains of the world, a botanical conservatory and a valuable landscaped park, this natural monument has a long history behind it. To highlight its uniqueness, the town hall of Samoëns has requested its registration as a historical monument.



Behind the scenes

A team of gardeners and botanists are on footwork under the responsibility of Frédéric You to maintain and develop this natural monument.

Did you know?

The garden takes its name from its founder, Marie-Louise Cognacq-Jaÿ, a modest native of Samoëns who made her fortune in Paris by founding La Samaritaine. Keen to promote tourism in her hometown, she created this botanical garden in 1906. Now managed by the local council, in partnership with the Association of Botanical Gardens, La Jaÿsinia has remained true to its heritage. Also worth discovering are the Jaÿsinia chapel, dating from the 17th century, and the Tornalta castle, which has stood atop the hill since the 12th century and whose ruins offer breathtaking views over the village and the Giffre valley.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Free entry and accessible to all.

Open year-round, every day except in case of adverse weather conditions.

➔ samoens.com/en/alpine-botanical-garden-jaysinia

A profusion of activities

'RENDEZ-VOUS AUX JARDINS' June 6 and 7, 2026

The 'Rendez-vous aux jardins' will focus on the theme of 'Sight'. This national event organised by the Ministry of Culture invites the public each year to discover the richness of parks and gardens. At La Jaÿsinia, the programme includes an exhibition of flower photographs by Gérard Gachignard, as well as guided botanical tours with the gardeners, offering a 'macro' perspective on plants—with a botanist's magnifying glass in hand!

LA JAÿSINIA: 120 YEARS! July 4 and 5, 2026

A true alpine treasure conceived by landscape architect Jules Allemand, the La Jaÿsinia Alpine Botanical Garden will celebrate its 120th anniversary in 2026. This exceptional site, a botanical conservatory and internationally renowned landscaped park, showcases mountain flora from around the world in the heart of the village of Samoëns. To celebrate this anniversary, a grand festive weekend will be organized in the village on July 4th and 5th: workshops, activities, shows, lectures, and exhibitions will fill these two days dedicated to discovery and celebration at La Jaÿsinia. To highlight the heritage value of this natural gem, the municipality has also initiated the process of having it listed as a historical monument.



AND ALSO

Ultra Trail of Haut-Giffre
(since 2010)

Run & Fun - Marathon Races
(since 2023)

Festival + Hike&Fly - Paragliding
(since 2022)

UNUSUAL ACTIVITIES IN SAMOËNS

WELL-BEING *Sensory walk*

As the walk unfolds, Claire, a mountain guide and yoga teacher, encourages wellbeing-minded hikers to sharpen their senses and discover the unique characteristics of the natural world. It is an invitation to tune in to the elements around us: rhythm, pace, path, shape, texture, colours, sounds and flavour—all gentle ways of reconnecting with nature and with oneself.

Prices: €28 (for groups of 5 or more)

⇒ samoens.com/en/the-mountain-and-your-five-sens-quintessence-mountain-guide

CREATIVE *Jewelry workshops*

In Laura's micro-macramé jewellery workshop, participants are gently guided through a creative and calming experience. Through these sessions, Laura encourages budding artists to pause, set their intentions and explore their creative desires. The goal: to craft a bracelet that reflects who they are, using a rich selection of natural stone beads and vibrant threads.

Jewelry making workshop starting at €40. 9:30am-12:00pm or 2:00pm-4:30pm. Adults, children aged 8 and up, or parent-child pairs.

Accessible to all. Booking required.

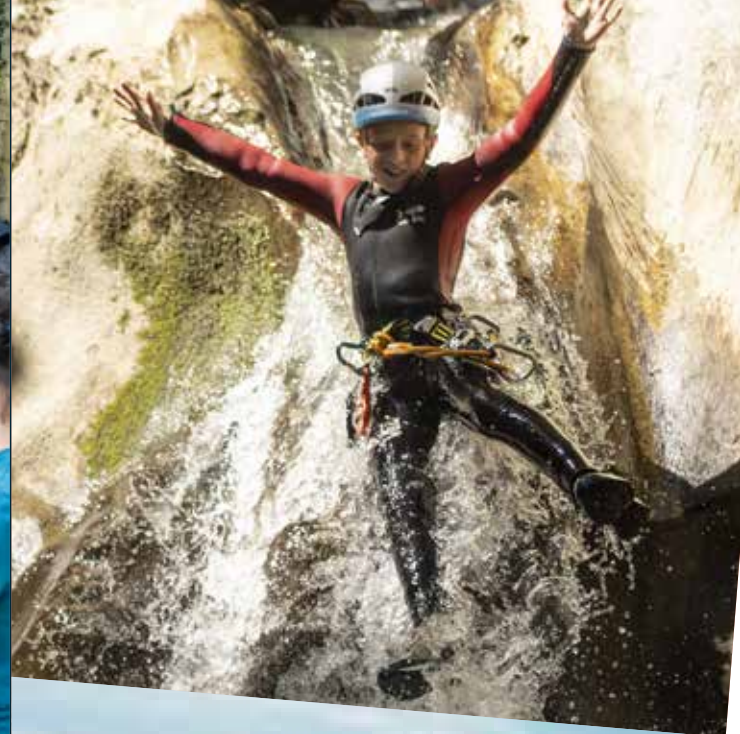
⇒ samoens.com/en/workshop-making-jewelry-in-micro-macrame-saijana

ADVENTURE *Caving*

Caving offers adventurers the chance to explore what lies beneath the mountains, navigating underground passages of natural slides, galleries, handlines, shafts and subterranean rivers... One of Samoëns' standout features is the Jean-Bernard pothole - the second deepest in the world - reserved for experienced cavers. Beginners can take part in introductory sessions in the Balme cave and along the underground river of the Diau.

Ages 6 and up. Single price: €50

⇒ samoens.com/en/activities-in-samoens/summer-activities-2/mountain-activities/caving



KIDS FRIENDLY *360 Fun Week*

An adventure for children... Discover the Giffre Valley and the mountains through fun and sporting activities for children aged 7 to 12. The program includes: fishing at Lac aux Dames, canyoning, a trapper's day, archery lessons, slacklining, and hunting to the treasure...
ESI Samoëns - +33 (0)4 50 53 38 92

AQUATIC

The Giffre river feeds the two lakes of the leisure centre, which are ideal for swimming, both summer and winter.

Hike on ride & raft the Giffre river

At the foot of the peaks of Samoëns, on a plateau, flows the Giffre, a mountain river fed by countless waterfalls at the far end of the valley. Thanks to packrafting - using a lightweight inflatable boat (inflated in under ten minutes and weighing just 3 kg) - fans of rafting, kayaking and hydrospeed can combine the thrill of riding the Giffre's rapids with hiking, on foot

or by bike. A sporting adventure suited to all levels and supervised by a professional, with no need for shuttle transfers—leaving you free to enjoy what matters most: the river and the pleasure of travelling independently. The highlight: accessing secret routes on foot, opening up a multitude of starting points.

Beginners from age 14 or seasoned athletes looking for new adventure grounds.

Half day (3 hours): €95.

Full day (6 hours incl. lunch break): €180.

All year round, every day.

⇒ samoens.com/en/parckraft-2-zen-river-camp

Swim in a mountain lake

Set around two lakes, the Lac aux Dames leisure area spans around 10 hectares in the heart of a peaceful setting. Visitors can enjoy swimming in waters of around 19°C, relaxing or fishing, as well as children's play areas and sports facilities (football, basketball). There is also a wide range of additional activities, including a swimming pool with slides and three pools. The perfect place for a picnic!

Free swimming. Activities at an additional cost.

⇒ samoens.com/en/base-de-loisirs-du-lac-aux-dames-en-ete

BEAUTIFUL HIKES AND UNUSUAL NIGHTS

HOT OFF
THE PRESS

Chalet Montplaisir

Simplicity is a luxury!

Perched at an altitude of 1400 meters, far from the hustle and bustle, Chalet Montplaisir invites nature lovers to experience a unique, timeless moment. Accessible on foot, it transports its guests far from the hustle and bustle, offering a peaceful retreat in a picture-perfect setting. Completely renovated, eco-friendly, and cozy, this former alpine chalet is the ideal place to recharge with family or friends. Here, there's no cell service; instead, the magic of the mountains and outdoor activities take center stage during the day. In the evening, gatherings take place in the large, south-facing living room with its views of the mountains and forest, then by the fireplace in a cozy atmosphere, for authentic moments of sharing. Simple, wood-paneled, and warm, the chalet offers all modern comforts while respecting its environment (photovoltaic panels, spring water for washing dishes and showers, and a wood-burning stove for heating). To further enhance the relaxation experience, as an option, a professional can come to the chalet to introduce guests to Afghan walking and yoga.

120 m² on three levels, 10 comfortable beds distributed in 3 bedrooms with double beds, including one connecting bedroom, and a dormitory upstairs. 2 bathrooms.

Maximum 8 people, from €600 for 2 nights.

Afghan walking: €30/person; Yoga: €30/person

⇒ mont-plaisir.com



Hiking idea

Heading towards the mountain pastures!

Departure from the chalet

Starting from the Montplaisir chalet, this hike takes walkers up to the Golèse refuge, nestled in the heart of a vast alpine pasture amphitheatre. The trail first winds through a larch forest before opening out onto high-altitude meadows offering beautiful views over the Chablais peaks and the surrounding valleys. At the top, the refuge is an ideal stopping point to enjoy the scenery or continue on towards the Col de la Golèse and the Lac des Mines d'Or. A varied and accessible hike, perfect for discovering the alpine pasture landscapes above Samoëns.

Practical information: approximately 4 hours round trip (approx. 7.8 km), D+ 550 m.



Golèse Refuge

An alpine break in the heart of the mountain pastures, at **1671 meters altitude**, located at the Col de la Golèse, between Samoëns and Morzine, this refuge offers a spectacular panorama of the Giffre valley and the surrounding peaks. After a gentle climb through the pastures, you'll discover a welcoming place where you can savor a timeless moment.

At the table, Savoyard specialties take center stage: fondue, Savoyard gratin, or seasonal dishes shared in a convivial atmosphere, either indoors or on the terrace overlooking the mountains. A popular stop on the GR5 and the Tour des Dents Blanches, the refuge is also an ideal starting point for numerous hikes in the heart of unspoiled nature.

Accessible to everyone from age 5, the refuge can be reached in 2 to 3 hours on foot from the Plan aux Arches car park, with approximately 600m of positive elevation gain, on a track that winds through the alpine pastures.

Half board from €53 per person.

Cozy rooms and dormitories allow you to extend the experience at altitude: a gentle and comfortable night in the heart of the mountain, to fall asleep in the calm of the peaks and wake up facing the first lights on the ridges.

⇒ refuge-golese.com

UNUSUAL

Sleeping on a portaledge on a sheer cliff face!

Paired with a climbing session and an abseil descent, this high-adrenaline overnight experience creates lasting memories: a double bed suspended above the void on a portaledge. A thrilling yet safe adventure, guided by a professional, offering a unique connection with nature. **Bring warm clothes and a sleeping bag. Bring a picnic lunch or a fondue to share.**

From €275 per person.

⇒ samoens.com/en/hanging-bivouac-samoens-guides-company



BEAUTIFUL HIKES AND UNUSUAL NIGHTS

Folly's Refuge

A warm mountain stopover

Set at 1,558 metres in the heart of the Sixt-Passy Nature Reserve, the Folly refuge is a favourite stop for hikers, nestled at the foot of Le Criou. Reached on foot in just over two hours from the Plan aux Arches car park, this mountain refuge boasts spectacular views over limestone cliffs and surrounding peaks. In summer, Marie, the refuge warden, welcomes walkers and families in a warm and friendly atmosphere. With its sunny terrace, home-cooked cuisine and overnight accommodation, it's the perfect place to extend your stay in a wild, unspoilt setting. The refuge also serves as an ideal base for exploring the high-altitude lakes and peaks of the Haut-Giffre.

Access: approximately 2 hours walk from the Plan aux Arches car park.

⇒ refuge-du-folly.fr/en-gb



PORTRAIT



Marie Duboung

The joy of living

Marie and her husband Jacques chose a new way of life, settling in Samoëns to take over the Folly refuge at the foot of Le Criou. Driven by their love of the mountains, they left their former careers to live in harmony with nature and welcome hikers and families in a warm, inviting atmosphere. Together with their three children, they have turned the refuge into a vibrant and friendly place, offering home-cooked meals and a variety of activities, from children's games to botany workshops and live music events. Their project reflects a desire for authenticity, connection and family life in the mountains.

LEARN MORE

⇒ samoens.com/rencontre-avec-marie-refuge-du-folly

Find all our portraits here:

samoens.com/category/les-septimontains

TOP ADDRESSES IN SAMOËNS

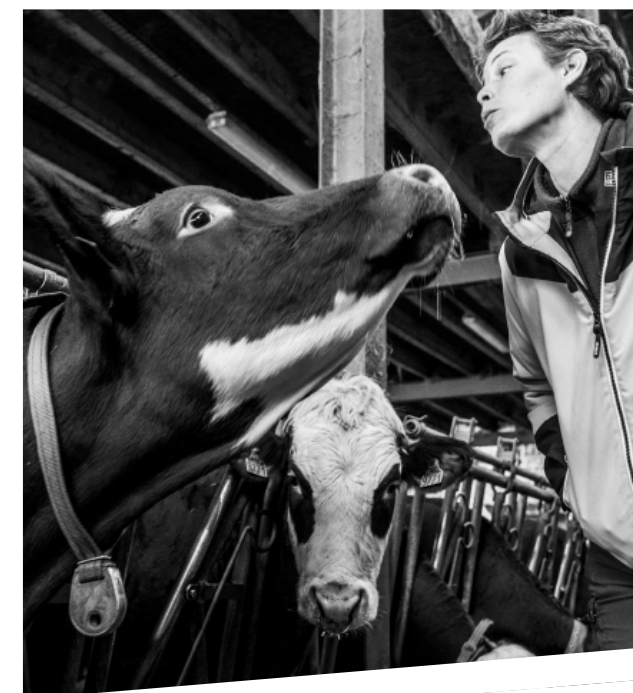


Hiking idea

Lac des Chambres

From the Folly refuge, a hike of around an hour and a half takes you to Lac des Chambres, one of the finest high-altitude lakes in the Haut-Giffre, at 2,100 metres. Set within a dramatic mineral cirque beneath the Dents Blanches, this glacial lake reveals a striking landscape, where turquoise waters mirror the surrounding limestone cliffs and peaks. Wild and beautifully preserved, it is an iconic destination for hikers and alpine scenery enthusiasts.

⇒ refuge-du-folly.fr/randonnées



Breeding and manufacturing of cheeses: the Criou farm

SAMOËNS IS CHARACTERIZED BY VAST ALPINE PASTURES AND A HIGH-QUALITY DAIRY FARM

Local farms prepare delicious afternoon snacks and offer educational tours. The dairy cooperative plays a central role, transforming the milk from the herds (Abondance, Montbéliarde, and Tarine breeds) into Reblochon cheese with Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) status. Around twenty farms maintain the tradition, keeping some of their milk to make their own cheeses. Among them are Bernard, Aurore, and their 35 dairy cows. Since 2007, in addition to their milk production, they have run the cheese-making workshop. Specialties include Le Crioutin, a small, round cheese made from cow's milk, which has become the shop's flagship product, as well as "La Bourgeoise" and "La Neige du Criou," a type of fresh cheese whose PDO milk gives it a distinctive flavor. An agricultural engineer, Aurore also manages marketing, administration and public visits: she gladly welcomes curious walkers to discover the farm in order to convey a positive image of agriculture.

⇒ samoens.com/rencontre-avec-aurore-des-millieres-de-la-ferme-gaec-le-criou-a-samoens

TOP ADDRESSES IN SAMOËNS

Chocolatier, pastry chef & ice cream maker: *La Jaijsinia*

**SAMOËNS' GOURMET INSTITUTION
SINCE 1880**

The Froissard family has been at the helm since 1998!

Thierry, the father, was World Pastry Champion in 1989 and Meilleur Ouvrier de France (MOF) in Ice Cream Making in 1994. His two children are now taking over the business: his daughter manages the shop and his son is in the kitchen. Beyond the recipes, Thierry passes on values inherited from his parents, who were grocers in a small village in the Jura region. Must-tries include the galette septimontaine, a buttery brioche with blueberries, and his famous sorbets (lime and basil, nettle and beetroot, etc.) and ice creams made with cow's milk from Samoëns (GAEC des Jay). During the season, no fewer than 18 people surround the Froissard family to serve more than 600 scoops of ice cream.

Seven-month galette from €5.

⇒ a-la-jaijsinia.com



Samoëns local producers' market

**ONE OF THE OLDEST AND MOST
IMPORTANT OF HAUTE-SAVOIE**

Here you'll be spoiled for choice: stalls selling fresh fruit and vegetables, butchers, delicatessens, cheese shops, fishmongers, bakers, and beekeepers. You'll also find textiles, fabrics for dressmaking, linens, shoes, and many other souvenirs.

A selection of our favorite local products:

- Le Crioutin, a cow's milk cheese, or "les neige du Criou", AOP milk cheeses, from La Ferme du Criou.
- Charcuterie made from Herens cows from GAEC Croës Canailles.
- Fruits and vegetables committed to organic since 2025, from Ferme du Bois aux dames.
- Mountain honey from the 7 Monts apiaries. Producer of mountain honey, chestnut honey (transhumance in Ardèche) and swarms in the Giffre valley.
- Craftsmanship with L'atelier de Puce: potter Cé-cile designs and handcrafts delicate stoneware pottery with clean lines. Unique pieces, both utilitarian and decorative, that showcase a sensitive and authentic local craft.

Every Wednesday morning, all year round.

Charming Bed & Breakfast: La Femme d'en Bas

AFFORDABLE LUXURY

In the heart of a hamlet just a stone's throw from the center, Véronique and André welcome guests to their renovated farmhouse, crafted from reclaimed wood in a traditional Savoyard style. Four cozy guest rooms, each with a shower and toilet, offer comfortable nights. Breakfast includes organic bread, yogurt, homemade compote and jams, pastries from the local baker, and freshly baked brioche. For dinner, enjoy homemade dishes three times a week in the living room by the fireplace. As an added bonus, there's an outdoor Jacuzzi® on the terrace.

From €98 per night in a double room with breakfast (2 people). Evening meal: €28/adult.

⇒ vallonsdenbas.com



*Hotel: Le Gai Soleil****

TOP VALUE FOR MONEY

In the heart of Samoëns, the Gai Soleil hotel charms guests with its Savoyard architecture, wooden balconies, and warm, family-friendly, and intimate atmosphere – just like home. Beyond the comfortable rooms, guests can enjoy an on-site restaurant showcasing delicious local cuisine, as well as a welcoming bar to relax in after a day outdoors, while children enjoy the games room with foosball, ping-pong, a TV area, and board games. For wellness, the hotel has a space with a sauna, jacuzzi and salt cave, as well as a large green park of 2000 m2 with an indoor pool heated to 27 degrees and games of boules, slides, swing, badminton, football cage, trampoline...

Prices: from €96 per night.

⇒ hotel-samoens.com/en

L'estanco

**BISTRONOMY IN THE HEART OF THE
VILLAGE**

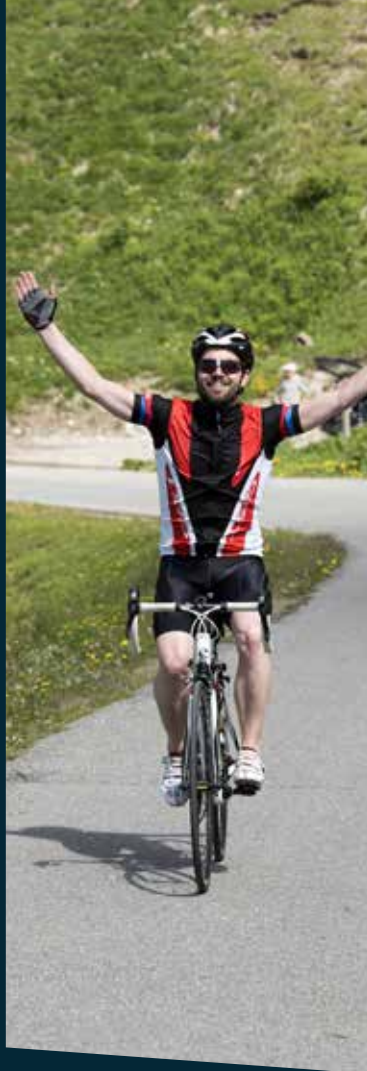
Located in the heart of Samoëns, L'Estandco is a welcoming restaurant that appeals to food lovers seeking delicious, contemporary cuisine. In a modern and refined setting, this restaurant offers homemade bistronomic dishes prepared with fresh, seasonal ingredients.

The menu features creative reinventions of classic French cuisine, blending local inspiration with contemporary touches. Meats, fish, seasonal vegetables, and indulgent desserts come together in generous and refined dishes that showcase the chef's expertise.

When the weather warms up, the large outdoor terrace becomes the perfect place to enjoy lunch or dinner in the sunshine, amidst the lively atmosphere of the village. It's an ideal spot to share a delicious meal with family or friends after a day in the mountains.

⇒ samoens.com/en/lestanco





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