



Icicle Mountaineering, Ski & Adventure

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Norway Waterfall Ice 2008 courses detailed itinerary



Day 1, Sunday

Today you fly out to Oslo, the capital of Norway. Cheap flights from the UK can be obtained on Ryanair. IN the airport you meet your guide and drive to Oslo to your accommodation for the night. Each day the guides drive you to different locations, to ensure that you achieve the most, and explore the country. Most of the icefalls are in the southern half of the country, within a two to three hour drive from Oslo. When you reach your accommodation the guides will brief you on the week ahead, and check your equipment, they then accompany you to dinner in a local restaurant to answer any queries.

Day 2, Monday

WATERFALL ICE CLIMBING DAY: After an early breakfast, you travel to the Rjukan icefalls region. For the days that you are based there, your accommodation is usually a B&B chalet in Rjukan itself, or close nearby. This is your first of five continuous days of 1:2 Guiding on the icefalls, and there is a massive choice of waterfalls to climb, from short very technical routes, to multi pitch routes up to 800m long. The first few climbs of the day give the Guides a good chance to evaluate your climbing level, and if necessary to change the client pairings, so that everyone is pushed and no one is held back. There really is no maximum grade that you can climb, and we would expect stronger climbers to be ascending grade VI several times during the week. The Rjukan region has numerous grade V icefalls as the orientation of the valley ensures North North facing slopes, and there are a lot of seepage lines and streams running into the main River Mana. When you have finished climbing for the day, you travel back to the B&B for the night which gives you a comfortable base to dry out your kit, and you can either cook in, or to go out for food in a local restaurant.

Day 3, Tuesday

WATERFALL ICE CLIMBING DAY: After checking you have all the necessary equipment you drive back up the Rjukan valley. On the approach to the climbs it is very important to find out what clothes layering system suits you, as it is imperative not to sweat during the approach, as this soon cools and you get cold. Today you will concentrate more on techniques, improving your range of ice climbing skills by practicing down

climbing, traversing across the ice (ice bouldering!) and hooking into natural features rather than having to make new holes. The Guide will also show you key techniques such as placing ice screws, setting up anchor systems on ice, hooking, and Abalakov belay systems. There should also be the opportunity for you to practice or learn to lead on ice. The day is quite intensive, as you are getting used to using muscles not often used back in the UK. At the end of the day you return to the B&B to freshen up and eat.

Day 4, Wednesday

WATERFALL ICE CLIMBING DAY: Today you have a choice as to whether to stay climbing in Rjukan, or to move onto another region, such as Hemsedal. Today the aim is to try to climb longer multi-pitch ice routes more efficiently by focusing on developing your ice technique. It is very hard to teach someone how to be a good ice climber, as you learn so much by just doing it. Examples of this are the noise that your ice tools make as they enter ice indicate the quality and strength of the ice, as does the colour and air content of it. You will also learn a lot during the week just by watching what the Guides are looking for. You will be shown how to look for potential avalanche slopes above the ice climbs, and how the ice condition changes during the day as the temperature rises and if the sun hits it. You will also experience climbing on different formations of ice: sheet, ice curtain, and couloir/ goulotte (see pictures). As well as pure ice, you can also opt to try mixed routes or even dry tooling. After your day of ice climbing, you return to your B&B for the night.

Day 5, Thursday

WATERFALL ICE CLIMBING DAY: Today you have the opportunity to combine ice climbing with learning a little about the historical sights in Norway. There is a Hydro station that is a museum to the famous Telemark story, with a great outflow waterfall that plunges into a gorge below the Hydro station, making a fantastic grade V ice climb. The film called "Heros of Telemark" illustrated the true story that occurred in WW2, where a group of British special forces and Norwegian resistance fighters, made a bold bid to ski over the mountains, to attack a hydro-electicity station held by the German occupation force, and to escape back into the mountains and evade capture. Another famous, but quieter, ice climbing region is called Hemsedal or there are the fjords and their huge icefalls, some of which are over 800m long (for fast climbers only!). At the end of the day, you return to your comfortable B&B. By this stage of the week, you will be getting tired, and an early night is recommended to ensure that you make the most out of your last day of climbing tomorrow.

Day 6, Friday

WATERFALL ICE CLIMBING DAY: After breakfast you drive to the start of the walk in for the climb. As this is your last day, you should really try to push the grade at which you climb, and if you have not done so already, you should take the opportunity to try leading. This can be done in a variety of ways from being on a loose top rope as you learn to place and clip screws, through to an independant lead with the Guide climbing beside you in order to advise you. Whatever your objective, you spend the day ice climbing until either you are worn out, or it gets too hot for the ice. Another option is to try some mixed climbing. On these types of climb, the movements are far more delicate, as the transition from rock to ice is often fragile. The most likely location for this day is in Hemsedal, though if the conditions are better elsewhere, that is where you will be. One important point to note about this whole course, is that the approach times to the climbs are all relatively short, so the daylight hours are maximised for climbing. A few of the icefalls have literally no walk in time at all, as they are reached by means of an abseil from the road bridge into the gorges in which they form. So that the hours of daylight are used efficiently, often the approaches and exits from climbs are made by headtorch light. Once you have finished climbing for the day, you are driven back to Oslo for your B&B for the a celebratory last night. Now that the climbing is over, you have earned yourself a beer!

Day 7, Saturday

SIGHTSEEING IN OSLO: After breakfast you are driven into the capital city, Oslo. This gives you a day of options to choose from, including sightseeing, shopping, or relaxing. This is an opportunity not to miss, as the city has lots to see, and is very different from the continental European cities, in terms of architecture, layout, and the range of things to do. In the afternoon you return to the airport for your return flight home at the end of a memorable week of ice climbing.

ITINERARY NOTES: Where possible we follow itineraries. Mountain adventures are weather and conditions dependant, so occasionally we are forced to alter the plans. If this is the case, suitable alternatives are offered. Please use this outline itinerary as a guide to the types of route / activity that you will attempt.

