



# Mont Blanc 4810m 'Summits' 2019



- Mont Blanc 4810m is the highest summit in Western Europe. To get to the 'roof of Europe', we ascend by either the 'Royal' route of the Trois Mont Blanc from the Aiguille du Midi, the Gonella route from the Italian Val Veny, or via the classic Gouter route. The choice of route is made on the week.
- For the Mont Blanc ascent you need excellent fitness, stamina and determination. You do not necessarily need any previous crampon or altitude experience, just good movement over rocky mountain terrain.
- Throughout the week you are climbing roped to an experienced IFMGA Guide and are taught all the necessary ropework skills for a safe ascent.
- Due to the altitude and the length of the climb, we never declare the ascent to be easy. It is an unforgettable experience to reach the summit, and you will test the skills you have learnt along the way.
- This course is focused on you summiting Mont Blanc, with other summits and time spent at altitude to increase skills and acclimatisation.



## Course summary and key details

- A principal feature of this course are the evening theory sessions, where you are taught everything from knots and ropework, to crevasse rescue hoist systems, to avalanche prediction. This means that your climbing time during the daylight hours with the IFMGA qualified guides is optimised.
- As Icicle have experienced Course hosts based in Chamonix throughout the year, we have excellent local contacts and detailed knowledge of conditions to optimise your route options and summiting chances.
- It is through these local connections that we can be very flexible with our itinerary to enable you to attempt Mont Blanc on any day (Tuesday onwards) during your course, as we can arrange spaces in mountain huts or on cable cars at very short notice, even in the key summer season.
- After the first training day at a 1:6 guiding ratio, you have four days guiding at a 1:2 ratio. These four days at a low ratio are more than any other operator provides, and are essential to give you flexibility for making a summit attempt on the first available weather window.
- Is Mont Blanc suitable for novices? No other course provider will ask this question, but we do as we want you to be sure that this is the right course. It costs a lot of money and time, and we want you to have a good chance of success. Mont Blanc isn't an ideal first Alpine 4000m peak, but on the other hand it is not technically difficult. An ability to learn quickly is useful, as you will be taught a lot during the week. You require excellent fitness and stamina, as well as great balance combined with the ability to move quickly and efficiently over broken mountain terrain.

### Testimonials

*"100% summit, 100% happy! A once in a lifetime holiday. I can't explain how much your support and knowledge meant to me. It gave me a total sense of confidence and trust, which was essential during the final steps", **Steve R***

*"Very well organised set up, with a great guide team. This really made the difference, as I had previously failed with another company. I found Icicle professional, motivated and friendly", **Simon N***

*"Thank you all so much for my recent trip. Mont Blanc was a dream come true, but was far harder than I had expected. I found your website really informative and truthful, which is the reason I booked in the first place, but your honesty was really appreciated as it made me train lots beforehand. Without this I would never have reached the top" **Sharon R***



# Course daily itinerary & objectives

Please note that whilst the itinerary below is an ideal, the weather and conditions, as well as your skills, fitness, experience and acclimatisation all play a part too. In our decade of experience, we have found that hardly two weeks ever run the same, and even on a particular week sometimes different summit groups go on different days from different huts. Whilst the itinerary notes outline this, it is imperative that you understand how flexible this course must be.

## Sunday

Travel to Chamonix to arrive for the 17:00 check-in followed by our course safety and itinerary briefings. There is time for kit checks or rental of equipment. Chamonix hosts accompany the group to pre-dinner drinks. Night in Chamonix.

## Monday

Day to learn and practice using crampons and ice axes on the Mer de Glace glacier (c.2000m). You climb vertical ice, create ice anchors, and learn glacier travel skills. Guiding ratio 1:6 (max). Evening instruction and night in Chamonix.

## Tuesday

Acclimatisation route to a summit. Continue to a mountain hut for the night or return to Chamonix. The aim is to develop your skills at altitude. The choice of the 1 or 2 day routes is made in reaction to which day you attempt Mont Blanc.

## Wednesday

Acclimatisation route to a summit. Either an Alpine start from the mountain hut or a second acclimatisation route. Typical routes for the last two days include Cosmiques Arete, Petite Aiguille Verte, Pointe Lachenal or the Aiguille du Tour.

## Thursday

Set off to climb up to one of the high huts, either the Cosmiques / Gonella / Gouter / Tête Rousse hut for the night. Guiding ratio 1:2 (max). The choice of route is a function of the weather, conditions, and skills and fitness. Night in hut.

## Friday

Summit Mont Blanc 4810m from an Alpine start from the high hut, and descend to Chamonix. It is usual to reach the summit just after sunrise. Evening social drinks, then usually a celebratory meal, with the final night spent in Chamonix.

## Saturday

Breakfast, then accommodation check out at 10:00, then depart for home.

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 as a guide to the types of activity that you will attempt.



# Course dates, prices, & inclusions



£1499

**Standard course:** 5 full days IFMGA guiding  
7 days holiday in total, Sunday-Saturday

## Inclusions

1) IFMGA Mountain Guide for five days, 2) Chamonix course hosts for logistics & briefings, 3) Evening technical instruction / briefing sessions, 4) Twin / double room B&B accommodation in Chamonix (inc. linen, bedding & towels) for the whole week, so you don't move out when in huts, 5) One night half board in mountain hut / base camp on Mont Blanc for you and guide, 6) Pre course information booklet, 7) Equipment discount voucher for our UK shop, 8) Free 36 page technical Course Instruction Booklet, 9) Road transport in Chamonix valley, 10) Icicle discounts privilege QR code list for reductions in local shops and restaurants in Chamonix.

## Exclusions

1) Travel to and from Chamonix, 2) Equipment hire, 3) Cable cars & uplift (c. 80 euros depending on itinerary), 4) Optional second or more nights (not normally required) in a mountain hut / base camp on a half board basis for you and guide, 5) Personal laundry, telephone calls, lunches, evening meals in valley, & any purchases in mountain huts / hotels / restaurants, 6) Road transport outside Chamonix valley (not usually required), 7) Sunday pre-dinner drinks & Friday celebratory meal & drinks, 8) Activities insurance, & excess baggage charges.

## Dates

- 16 - 22 Jun 2019
- 14 - 20 Jul 2019
- 11 - 17 Aug 2019
- 23 - 29 Jun 2019
- 21 - 27 Jul 2019
- 18 - 24 Aug 2019
- 30 Jun - 6 Jul 2019
- 28 Jul - 3 Aug 2019
- 25 - 31 Aug 2019
- 7 - 13 Jul 2019
- 4 - 10 Aug 2019
- 1 - 7 Sep 2019



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## Windermere mountain store (UK)

A key part of choosing a company is being able to come and talk about your plans with an experienced course advisor face to face. In an increasingly virtual world, we know our clients value speaking to real people, getting open and honest advice. The vast majority of our clients are British, and our office and outdoor store is based in Windermere in the English Lake District.

Get in contact to arrange a meeting, and come in for a coffee to discuss your course in person with a trip advisor. We are keen to ensure that you are as prepared as possible, and that you select a course that is suitable for you. It makes it easier and more enjoyable for you and us, if you are on the right trip. As well as talking through your course, most clients have queries about the kit they will require, so as to avoid expensive mistakes, and we can show you some examples of kit to consider. Others have training queries, about how to best prepare for your trip, and we will be able to steer you in the right direction. No question is too silly, and we'll have heard them all before, so don't worry!

By now you'll have got the idea that an integral part of booking is the ability to get good, knowledgeable, advice, and a highly personal service. Some people do just book online, but we are there every step of the way to walk you from the initial enquiry, right through to your course. Unlike some companies that only exist virtually in cyberspace, we are staffed by real people, in a real office, who offer real honest advice. Because we are tangible, we are accountable, and we take great pride in that and the high standards of service that we offer you.



## Why travel with Icicle in the Alps

- **Our Mission...** To have the best safety and peak summiting records of any mountain and ski guiding company in the whole world.
- **Our Aim...** To exceed the expectations of each client, to realise their ambitions, and to provide the best quality experiences possible.
- **Our Environment...** We aim to minimise our environmental impact, and to preserve, improve & promote the responsible use of the mountains.
- **Our Ethos...** We know every single client has individual needs, strengths, aims, weaknesses, ambitions, and goals. We care about each one.
- **Your Money...** We have taken every step to protect you on the mountain, and in your pocket. Funds paid to us are held in trust until you return home.



## How to book a course with Icicle

On the front page of the Icicle website there is a course 'Live Availability' button which links to a page that is updated with each booking to show the number of spaces available on each advertised date of each course. The number shown in brackets on this page is the number of places still available on the date.

To book a trip you complete the secure online booking form on the website, which is protected by SSL encryption, so you can input card details and pay safely over the internet. You can list up to four people on one booking form, but if members of a group live at different addresses, or wish to pay the balance separately, it is worth completing a form separately so that you each receive the confirmation email, and the information and payment reminder emails. When you submit the form you will receive automatic confirmation with a receipt, course specific kit list, and a course information booklet with useful information.



## Icicle background and key features

- Established in 2000, Icicle is a UK company, and although our trips are for English speakers, our client base is worldwide. Icicle has firmly established itself as one of the leading mountain guiding operators in the UK.
- We are proud to still be a small specialist company who have a very personal approach. It allows us to really support each of our clients. The attention to detail, local Alpine support team, and work ethic sets us apart.
- All of our Alpine courses are all led by professional guides (IFMGA / UIMLA), as our priority is your safety and quality guiding. We focus on instructional courses, and our local knowledge is second to none. Our contacts and staff always aim to 'make it happen' for you.
- We keep all our overheads low, such as our office being paid for by it also being a retail shop. We also don't spend lots of (your) money shouting about how good we are, and haven't got the flashiest website or glossiest brochure. We offer you great value without sacrificing standards.
- What differentiates us is that we have a highly personalised, flexible and friendly, approach to our courses. This flexibility is essential to maximise your achievements. We aim to offer you great and innovative trips that we would dream of going on ourselves.



## Your complete financial protection

We have a moral as well as a legal obligation to protect your money, data and online security when you book onto an Icicle course. We want you to be totally confident that we are a bona fide company whose financial conduct has been assessed, and who follow a strict code of practice to protect your money. Your booking is protected by our bonding with the Travel Trust Association U3307. This bonding fully complies with the 1992 Package Travel Regulations, and guidelines proposed by the Department of Trade and Industry to protect clients on package holidays. All monies that you pay to Icicle are held in trust until after your course has ended. This protects you in the highly unlikely event of our insolvency, and all monies paid by you are insured. We are also registered with the ICO for Data Protection. Our online payments system is with RBS, who have verified the security of our system with their independent tests.



## Course mountain activity insurance

It is a condition of booking onto any of our trips, that all clients have sufficient activities insurance. This is to protect you in case of any requirement for medical or hospital treatment, mountain search and rescue, and in case you have to cancel your course due to injury or personal circumstances. Your documentary proof of cover is checked at the start of the week before you start any of the guiding. It must be written in English, and specify that it covers you for all of the activities you plan to undertake (see your detailed itinerary on the website). If you are a UK resident, we recommend arranging insurance through Snowcard or the BMC. If you are not a UK resident we recommend arranging insurance through the Austrian Alpine Club (although this does not cover you for cancellation or curtailment so you should get extra cover for this).



## Arranging travel to Alpine courses

All of the Alpine trips are offered on a 'Land Only' basis meaning that you need to arrange separate travel to the start of the trip. Although Icicle does hold an ATOL licence and so can arrange flights on behalf of clients, most people find that it is easier to arrange flights through discount airlines. For a range of flight options (including budget) we recommend: [www.skyscanner.net](http://www.skyscanner.net). There is also a Eurostar service from London to Geneva (see: [www.eurostar.com](http://www.eurostar.com)). For courses that meet in Chamonix, airport transfers can be booked from Geneva airport to Chamonix to match your flights for c. 30 euros per person each way.





## Icycle guides & their qualifications

We are a small company, and our team is everything to us. The guides have responsibility for all decisions taken on the mountain and to ensure your safety. Whilst we are fortunate to have an excellent mountain team, we also have a superb office team who arrange the logistics that make the trips run smoothly.

The IFMGA Mountain Guide qualification is the highest qualification that is recognised for leading groups, and the only people who lead any of our skiing or climbing courses in the Alps. IFMGA stands for the International Federation of Mountain Guide Associations. All of our IFMGA Guides hold the International Mountain Guide carnet, and have been selected for their leadership style, personality, and sense of humour, not to mention the fact that they aren't too bad at climbing and skiing either!

All of the Alpine trekking and snow-shoeing courses are run by UIMLA mid mountain guides. These two qualifications are your guarantee of the highest standards and professionalism, and the holders of these qualifications wear their badges with pride. Rest assured that you are being led in the mountains by the best. Our itineraries are planned with guide to client ratios within the safety guidelines outlined by the IFMGA and UIMLA. Each course itinerary states these daily guiding ratios.

We strongly believe that a badge or qualification does not make a good leader, which is why we carefully hand pick our guiding team. However you have our guarantee that all our courses are led by verified highly qualified professionals, as this is a legal requirement in the Alps. Note that for trips outside the Alps, the IFMGA or UIMLA qualification is not a legal requirement, and local guides are used. This is normal practice on peaks including Kilimanjaro, Elbrus, the Atlas and the Himalayas. In the UK no qualifications are legally required, but we follow best practice and all leaders on our UK trips are suitably qualified.



## Accommodation: valley/mountain

When on an Icycle course the details of where you will stay will be included in your detailed itinerary. For Chamonix based Alpine courses you are usually based in the valley in one of three types of accommodation; a self-catering studio flat, a chalet or a hotel. Accommodation is on a bed & continental breakfast basis, and all bedding (linen and towels) and any tourist taxes are included. There is a choice of B&B (always included) or half board (upgrade) in the valley, and the accommodation is usually two or three people sharing. In some trekking courses a packed lunch is also included and this will be a sandwich with two cereal / snack bars per person (see itinerary for inclusions).

In mountain huts you always stay on a half board basis, where there is a hut guardian who cooks the evening meal so you do not need crockery, pans or cutlery, with the exception of some hut winter rooms (see itinerary for details). Blankets are provided in mountain huts so you should take a sleeping bag liner for hygiene (silk or cotton), but you do not normally need a sleeping bag / mat.



## Course client equipment discount



Once you have booked, you will be sent a catalogue of all the preferential rate equipment and clothing that you can buy in our Windermere shop. We offer 15% OFF equipment and clothing. There is also a selection of books and maps. Orders over £30 are posted free to any UK address. Our shop also stocks a wide range of rental kit for use in the UK or on any of our Alpine courses.

View full details at; <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/icicleshop.htm>. If you have any queries, please e-mail [info@icicle.co.uk](mailto:info@icicle.co.uk) or telephone 01539 44 22 17.