Icicle Mountaineering Ltd | Church Street
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Website: www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk
Online: shop.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk

2027 trip dossier | **Barre des Ecrins £2995**

Website link | http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/ecrins.html

Key features

- **Climb the highest summit of the Ecrins national park, the Barre des Ecrins 4102m**
- **5 days guiding (Monday - Friday), 2 night accommodation in Ailefroide in the national park**
- **Ideal for those seeking a quieter alternative to the Western Alps & Chamonix Mont Blanc region**
- **Led by top qualified guides (IFMGA), ratio 1:2 throughout to keep the itinerary flexible**
- **All technical equipment (e.g. B3 boots, crampons, ice axe etc.) can be hired locally**
- **Dates are on website, with extra dates run on demand for 2 people booking together**
- **Also option if climbing this as a stand alone 2 day extension for £1795 in total for 1:2 or 1:1**

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Course overview

- Climb the highest summit of the national park, the Barre des Ecrins 4102m. It's the highest mountain in the Ecrins National Park, and it is a quiet gem of a region, far quieter than the Western Alps regions such as Monte Rosa and Chamonix. We offer a week long programme to attempt this peak, as your acclimatisation and flexibility for selecting a weather window are crucial.
- To keep the itinerary flexibilty, the guiding ratio is 1:2 throughout, so you can take advantage of the best days for the summit weather window. The climb itself takes three days, so there are two spare days for training and acclimatisation routes before the ascent.
- This week would appeal to those who have previously done Mont Blanc or Dufourspitze, or who seek a quieter alternative to it. It is grades as PD+ / AD-, so is a step up on the Alpine grading system. It is a tough physical effort and the summit ridge is very exposed and merits the grade.
- To reiterate the skills level inferred above, you'll require at least a full week of crampon experience, to safely consider this ascent. The Barre des Ecrins is one of the Alpine routes that has been most impacted by climate change, and so very competent footwork in crampons is a pre-requisite skill.
- Another attraction to the Ecrins is that there are so many summits and routes to choose from, that the itinerary can be adapted to suit your aspirations and the conditions. Aside of the Barre des Ecrins, other objectives include; Pic Coolidge, Roche Faurio, Râteau de la Meije Pic Es, and Aiguille Dibona.
- This trip was designed and is often guided by Mat, who lives in the region, and is a familiar face on many of our Alpine courses. He's popular IFMGA mountain guide, who is instantly likeable, and has a great work ethic of getting things done, so you achieve the most.

Sample itinerary

- **Sunday** - Travel to Ailefroide via Lyon / Grenoble, to arrive for the 17:00 check-in followed by and course safety and itinerary briefings. There is time for kit checks or rental of equipment. Briefings are over by 19:00 and you then have free time to head out for dinner and drinks in a local cafe or restaurant. Night in Ailefroide.
- **Monday** - Meet your guide in the morning, and drive into the Ecrins national park. Set off for a training route, with a hut approach, which is designed to help you acclimatise and develop technical skills. The programme for the week is intentionally very flexible, to allow you to ascend the Barre des Ecrins on the best weather day(s), but a good objective for the first two days is either the Râteau de la Meije Pic Est from the Chatelleret hut, or the Dibona Needle from the Soreiller hut. The

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day is used to ascend to the hut, and for a training climb above it. Guiding ratio 1:2 (max). Night in hut.

- **Tuesday** - The two objectives are both to the NW of the Barre des Ecrins, and are accessed via the Oisans valleys. The Râteau de la Meije Pic Est 3809m is a satellite peak of La Meije, and is grade of F+ via the SW Face, so it is an ideal training and warm up route. The climb is made via Col du Replat from the Chatelleret Hut, from where you can see the three peaks of the Râteau above. The highest is the Pic Est, which is reached by climbing the mixed couloir to the Brèche du Râteau, from which you can follow the easier angled ridge to the summit. The alternative climb to consider is the Dibona Needle 3100m, via the North ridge, which is grades PD. It's a rock route, accessed from the Soreiller Hut, a valley to the East of the Chatelleret Hut, and was a favourite route of the famous French guide Gaston Rebuffat. After climbing either of these routes, you return to the Ailefroide valley, and stay the night in a hut / gite. Guiding ratio 1:2 (max).
- **Wednesday** - Today you start your ascent of the Barre des Ecrins, heading up to the Ecrins hut for the next two nights. On the way up, you can divert to the Col de Temple, and from there ascend the Pic Coolidge 3775m via the South ridge. This route is graded PD, and is excellent final training before the Barre des Ecrins. The summit provides stunning views across to your route the next day, and there's plenty of time for photos. Once the climb is over, you trek to the Ecrins hut, which is your base for the main ascent. You usually arrive in the early to mid afternoon, so there's time to rest and dry out any kit for the next day. Guiding ratio 1:2 (max). Night spent in mountain hut.
- **Thursday** - A very early Alpine start to head upwards on your main summit objective of the Barre des Ecrins. As you set out from the hut, you skirt around the Glacier Blanc, to ascend towards the Col des Ecrins 3300m. Here onwards the route becomes progressively steeper, as initially you climb snow slopes up the NE face, being wary of the glacial crevasses and seracs, to reach the first summit of the Dôme de Neige des Ecrins 4015m. This is a great summit in its own right, as the next section is usually climbed in two pitches to cross the rimaye / bergschrund and to ascend to the summit ridge, where you turn towards the main summit of the Barre des Ecrins 4102m. For the descent, you can either retrace your ascent route, or if the conditions are looking very good, you can descend to La Berarde. Guiding ratio 1:2 (max). Night spent in mountain hut (Refuge des Ecrins or Refuge de la Berarde).
- **Friday** - From the Ecrins hut you ascend the Roche Faurio. You climb the relavively easy angled slopes of the SW face, which top out on the ricky ridge to the summit. The ascent takes

approximately four hours from the hut, and after descending, you trek down to the valley. For very fit groups, this day can allow another contingency weather window, for an ascent and complete descent of the mountain, if the summit was not possible on the previous day. If you start from the Berarde hut, you would spend the day descending to Ailefroide, possibly with a few hours rock climbing in the afternoon. Guiding ratio 1:2 (max). In the evening there are optional drinks and then a celebratory meal. Final night is spent in Ailefroide.

- **Saturday** – Breakfast then the accommodation check out is by 10:00. Most guests arrange their transport links to the airport for flights leaving in the early afternoon. 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 itinerary as a guide to the types of route / activity that you will attempt.

Course Inclusions

1) Hand picked IFMGA Mountain Guide(s), for 5 days of 1:2 ratio climbing, 2) Alpine course hosts for briefings, logistics, expert advice, and support, 3) Pre course information dossier, with training plans and specific kit lists, 4) Safety briefing on the first evening, with latest updates and weather reports, 5) Equipment discount voucher for our Windermere mountain shop / online, 6) 2 nights room only accommodation in Ailefroide, on Sunday & Friday night, 7) Up to 4 nights half board in mountain hut / gite (including costs for guide), 8) Free 36 page technical Course Instruction Booklet of Alpine safety skills

Course Exclusions

1) Travel to and from Ailefroide, 2) Kit hire, 3) Personal laundry, phone calls, lunches, meals in valley, & any purchases in mountain huts / hotels / restaurants, 4) Activities insurance, & excess baggage charges.

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Pre-requisite skills

These are outlined on this page; http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/courses.html, and this course is;

Course level:	**Intermediate**
Mountaineering:	**Some experience as itinerary.**
Ice & Rock:	**Grades I/II gullies and / or rock 3 / V.Diff**
Fitness:	**High level of fitness and stamina**

To reiterate the skills level inferred above, you'll require at least a full week of crampon experience, to safely consider this ascent. The Barre des Ecrins is one of the Alpine routes that has been most impacted by climate change, and so very competent footwork in crampons is a pre-requisite skill.

Fitness & stamina

The ideal fitness levels are detailed at; http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/trainingpreparation.html, and there are links to general training advice and planners that you can adapt to suit and follow.

This trip is graded: **Level 4** - As an absolute minimum you should be capable of running a half marathon in a good time (under 1hr 45mins), but realistically you should be looking at marathon fitness for all courses of this fitness and stamina level to ensure your endurance is up to standard.

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How to book

- All bookings are made securely online, and deposit of £250 is payable (with secure payments handled via our travel bonding by SinGS / Felloh). Ensure that when completing the form, you fill in all the required fields, in order for the 'SUBMIT' button to appear.
- All payments are protected by our Tour Operator travel bonding with ATOL and TTA, and your monies are held in trust until after you have travelled home. You are fully financially protected, in accordance with UK and EU laws.
- Website link: http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/booking.html

Before your trip

- As soon as you book online, you are sent confirmation of this, and attachments including joining instructions, course specific kit lists. If you haven't received this e-mail within half an hour of booking online, please check your junk / spam folder.
- At the office, we manually check all bookings, and you'll also receive a personalised e-mail from us formally confirming your course space, and sending you a deposit payment link. Once you have this office confirmation and paid the deposit, it's fine to go ahead and book your travel arrangements, and to arrange your activities insurance.
- Activities insurance is a requirement for all trip participants. Organise it as soon as you are booked, and ensure that it covers you for cancellation or curtailment, in case you injure yourself or get ill before your trip. This ensures you'd be fully reimbursed for the trip, and all travel costs.
- Website link: http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/insurance.html

Travel to the Alps

- The closest international airport is Grenoble, although you can also consider Lyon or oven Turin airports. There are many direct flights from the UK every day, and the airports are well served by the budget airlines e.g. EasyJet.
- From the airport, there are eay public transport links to Ailefroide, generally via Briancon. The tourist office has interactive maps to book transport online, so getting there is straightforward.
- Briancon is also very easy to travel to by rail, from the UK to Paris via Eurostar, then from Paris Gare du Lyon (or Austerlitz) to Briancon via Lyon by high speed TGV, then the local train up the valley to Briancon itself. From here there is a decent bus service to reach Ailefroide.

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- Driving can work out cheaper, if you're with others, and there's free parking close to the accommodation, on a first come first served basis. Generally a couple of laps, and a space will be freed up for you. See the Course Information Booklet map for the locations of this free parking.
- Website link: http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/travel.html

Course briefing

- The course briefing for this trip is at 17:00 on the Sunday evening. The Course Information Booklet will confirm the exact location for this briefing. When you attend the briefing, take your passport and activities insurance details, for these to be noted.
- The briefing takes about 45 minutes, and it aims to answer all your queries about the course.
- Attendance at the course briefing is obligatory, and you are asked to sign a copy of the Terms & Conditions. These are the same as those you accepted online when you booked, but it's for us to have a signed paper copy on record.

Equipment checks

- Take any equipment to the briefing that you would like one of our guiding team to advise you about. For some people that may be very little, whilst others want to double-check a few bits of kit. It's always a good idea to take your boots and crampons, so we can check the fit for you.
- If you've your own safety equipment, it's worth having one of the team check this over for you.
- Note that if you require any hire equipment, or any kit that is loaned on a course, you need to attend the course briefing, as it's straight after this that is when it is allocated.
- Website link; http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/hire.html

Late arrivals

- If they are pre-booked days ahead, we can accommodate late arrivals. We will organise for you to be able to check into your course accommodation at any time that you arrive. We do however ask you to assess how necessary a late arrival is, and for you to consider the disruption to your flatmate.
- You will require a separate Course Briefing, which involves an early start for our team, to fit this in before your guiding. It's not an ideal start to schedule a late arrival, followed by an early start, and sets you on the back foot. Please select suitable flight times to fit the advertised course timings.

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Lunches & drinks

- Everyone has their own idea of what they would like for lunch whilst in the mountains, varying from a stack of Mars bars to a large ham sandwich. For this reason we let you choose your own lunches, which may be easily purchased locally from shops and supermarkets.
- You will be advised in the briefings as to how many days lunches you should plan ahead and purchase. There is never time to cook hot lunches while on a course, but you could take a thermos.

Evening meals

- In town clients normally take advantage of the excellent variety of local restaurants, and also the town's bars to celebrate week's achievements. We are also happy to book places in restaurants for you, should you wish an evening on your own.
- Some clients want an early night or to budget, so opt to cook for themselves in the self-catering flats. In guardianned huts, the cooked evening meal is normally three courses.

Mountain huts

- Mountain Huts are run by a 'Guardian' who cooks, cleans and is on hand for your assistance. On most courses, the itineraries detail a specific number of nights in mountain huts.
- Clients share rooms, which often are on tiered bunks. Each person is allocated a mattress with its own pillow and blankets, but you should take a sleeping bag liner for comfort.
- There are normally storage / drying rooms. Meals are on a half board basis, with a basic continental breakfast and a three course cooked evening meal. Any extras you order, such as bottled water, beer or wine, packed lunch, or chocolate, must be paid for by you.

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Weather & conditions

- It's natural for you to be avidly checking the weather on the weeks and days preceding your course, and we try and keep our social media channels updated daily, so you can see what's going on, and how the conditions are evolving. The website links below give you trustworthy weather forecasts.
- Website link: https://www.meteoblue.com/en/weather/week/parc-national-des-%C3%89crins_france_3020414

Maps & guidebooks

- You don't need to take any maps and guidebooks for your trip, as you are being guided, but it's always a good idea from a safety perspective to have a map with you. Here are the key links;
- Meije Pelvoux map; https://shop.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/191/BooksMaps/Maps/Alpinemaps/IGNMeijePelvoux3436ET.html
- Instructional book; https://shop.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/165/BooksMaps/Books/Instructional/AlpineClimbing;TechniquestoTakeYouHigher.html

Equipment lists

- You will be sent a precise course specific kit list upon booking, but we have a huge amount of kit advice on our website; http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/boots.html
- Website link: http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/icicleshop%2BKIT%2BMTR.html

Any questions?

Even if you've read all the detail here and in your Course Information Booklet, and on the website, you may still have some queries about your trip, so don't hesitate to get in touch.

- Telephone +44 (0)1539 44 22 17
- E-mail info@icicle.co.uk
- Facebook message http://m.me/iciclemountaineering
- Here's our office hours, and online chat http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/contact.html
- When you're on a trip, you'll also be provided an in resort WhatsApp number for our team, so if you haven't already, please ensure that you download this free app to your phone.

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