



Icicle Mountaineering Ltd | Church Street
Windermere | Lake District | LA23 1AQ

Tel +44 (0)1539 44 22 17 | info@icicle.co.uk

Website: www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk
Online: shop.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk



2023 trip dossier | **Chamonix Tech Ice £1399**

Website link | <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/waterfalliceimprovers.html>

Key features

- **Climb some of the best ice and alpine routes in winter.**
- **5 days guiding (Monday - Friday), and Chamonix B&B accommodation (Sunday - Saturday)**
- **Develop technical ice climbing skills grade II to IV or alpine climbing up to AD.**
- **Led by top qualified guides (IFMGA), 1:2 guiding ratio throughout.**
- **All technical equipment (e.g. B3 boots, crampons, ice axe etc.) can be hired from Icicle**



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UK registered company 413 6635. VAT 770 137 933

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22 years
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Course overview

- This course gives you the chance to climb some of the best ice or Alpine routes in winter. If you want to devote every daylight hour to climbing some of the best ice that Europe has on offer, this course is the one for you.
- To join this course you should have some previous experience of ice climbing such as a summer or winter introduction level course, so you are competent with basic ropework and the use of ice axe and crampons.
- The course is aimed at those looking to develop their technical ice climbing skills or learn / develop on waterfall ice climbing routes, graded between Grade II to IV ice. Sometimes you may even be able to climb Grade V ice (e.g. single pitch top roped) on this course.
- During the week you have many route options, from long multi-pitch waterfall ice or gully routes, to shorter more technical routes. You can also have the opportunity to learn how to lead on ice.
- Chamonix valley has over 300 icefalls, and within an hour drive you can reach an additional 1000 icefalls in Italy or Switzerland. There is always good ice in the Alps, and our guides will know just where to find it!

Skills, tips & techniques

- Ensure that your fitness is good for this course, as the approaches to icefalls or ice gully climbs can be tiring in deeper untracked or fresh snow. In terms of training, good aerobic fitness is the key element.
- On icefalls twin axes with curved shafts are ideal, to give your hands clearance on bulges in the ice. For gully routes, more straight shafted axes are ideal, as they can be plunged into hard snow for traction.
- The guide supplies all the safety protection equipment, so there's no need for you to bring any ropes, ice screws, or protection kit, though if you have some of your own take it along on the course with you.
- For icefall routes then technical crampons are ideal, though sharp 12 point crampons are fine too. For gully routes, 12 point crampons are generally best, as they shed any snow that balls beneath.
- During the course, there are a series of evening instruction sessions (optional), where you are taught some of the more theoretical aspects that are easier to learn inside, rather than on the hill.
- When ice climbing there is a vast amount that you can be taught. Below is a selection of skills to cover;
 - How to place ice screws
 - Assessing safety of icefalls
 - Abseiling systems & backup
 - Building ice anchors
 - Avalanche awareness
 - Using crampons & axes
 - Ropework for multi-pitch
 - Selecting kit for ice climbs
 - Ice climbing techniques

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Sample itinerary

The itinerary below has been designed to provide a flavour of what you can realistically achieve during a typical week. It is very much up to you to decide if you would like to focus more on waterfall ice routes, or ice gullies. Each day the guiding is 1:2 ratio max, to allow you to climb multi-pitch and technical routes.

- **Sunday** - Travel to Chamonix to arrive for your accommodation check in from 16:00 on the Sunday afternoon, for those staying in with Icicle. In the early evening there is a course safety and itinerary briefing. There is time for kit checks or rental of equipment, including the hire of any boots or personal climbing equipment. Briefings and sorting equipment is over by 19:00 and then you are free to go out for dinner / drinks. Night in Chamonix.
- **Monday** - A key feature of this course is that you have 5 days of 1:2 guiding, so can climb multi-pitch ice routes every day. Normally people use the first day to refresh ice climbing skills on valley waterfall ice, such as on Cremerie icefalls. There is also a chance to practice placing ice screws, building anchors and even some leading if the guide considers it safe on the day. Guiding ratio 1:2 (max). Night in Chamonix.
- **Tuesday** - Popular climbs include Deferlande, EMHM and Cascade du Tour. These are all good multi-pitch ice routes. Deferlande is positioned impressively above the Argentiere glacier icefall, and you hear seracs far below you. The EMHM icefall is named after the military mountain school in Chamonix, who first climbed it. Cascade du Tour is spectacularly located below Glacier du Tour. Guiding ratio 1:2 (max). Night in Chamonix.
- **Wednesday** - You could tackle another of the options outlined yesterday, or other ideas that are the most popular include the Trient icefalls which are accessed from the Col du Forclaz, and are just over the border into Switzerland. These have a walk in that is less than an hour, and there is a choice of longer multi-pitch routes, or shorter more technical routes in the gorge sector. Guiding ratio 1:2 (max). Night in Chamonix.
- **Thursday** - Options to consider for today include Mini Couloir above the Argentiere glacier, Frigor at Chatelard, or Micro Couloir on the Col des Montets. These routes all really vary in terms of their style, from mixed corners to freestanding columns, and a gully route. As you will have discovered by now, there is such an amazing choice of routes, you are spoilt for choice each day. Guiding ratio 1:2 (max). Night in Chamonix.

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- **Friday** - oday is your last day of guiding, and some options include the ice climbs at Reposoir near the Col de la Colombiere, or the Trient or Arveyron gorges icefalls. Again your guide will outline the options with you, and you can decide together which style and grade of routes appeal to you most. In the evening there are optional drinks and then a celebratory meal. Your final night is spent in Chamonix.
- **Saturday** – Breakfast then the accommodation check out is by 10:00. Most arrange their airport transfers to leave around this time, to catch a flight from Geneva about midday. Depart for home. Some people opt to book a tandem paraglider flight in the morning to celebrate the weeks efforts, and prices for this are from 90€ for a c.30 minute flight. These flights can be booked in resort up to the day before you wish to fly. 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 Inclusions

1) IFMGA Mountain Guide for five days, 2) Chamonix course hosts for logistics & briefings, 3) Pre course information booklet, 4) Equipment discount voucher for UK shops, 5) Six nights B&B accommodation in Chamonix (inc. bedding & towels), 6) Free 36 page technical Course Instruction Booklet, 7) Road transport in Chamonix valley, 8) Logistics support and evening instruction.

Course Exclusions

1) Travel to and from Chamonix, 2) Cable Cars (approx £30), 3) Transport / tunnel ticket outside Chamonix valley 4) Equipment hire, 4) Personal laundry, telephone calls, lunches, evening meals, & any purchases in mountain huts / hotels / restaurants, 6) Sunday pre-dinner drinks & Friday celebratory meal & drinks, 7) Activities insurance, & excess baggage charges.

Notes

This course assumes 1:2 guiding throughout. Note that is there is just one person on a course, less 1:1 guiding days can be offered, however accommodation will be provided for the whole week, and guiding options and locations will be discussed with you within the budget paid.

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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: **Alpine Intro course, or at least some experience.**
Ice & Rock: **Ice grade II to III and rope work.**
Fitness: **Good general fitness and stamina**

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 3** - At this level your fitness should be somewhere between running a fast paced 10km run, and half marathon fitness. Typically you'll enjoy more hill training, and so would be able to run for about an hour and a half of cross country, and enjoy big hill days out too.

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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 to Chamonix, is Geneva (airport code GVA). There are many direct flights from the UK every day, and it's well served by the budget airlines e.g. EasyJet.
- Geneva is a small but busy airport, and it's only a very short walk from baggage reclaim into the arrivals area, where all the airport transfer companies meet. In the Course Information Booklet is a code for preferential rates from our reliable transfer partner Mountain Dropoffs.
- Chamonix 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 Saint Gervais by high speed TGV, then the local train up the valley to the Chamonix Aiguille du Midi (or Chamonix central) stop.

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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>

Meeting point

- Once you've booked, you'll receive the Course Information Booklet, which details the meeting point for Chamonix course clients.
- If you want an address for your airport transfer, provide the Aiguille du Midi cable car, on Rue Lyret, 74400 Chamonix. The accommodation is situated in a pedestrianized area, so you cannot be dropped off at the door, and the cable car station, or Chamonix Sud bus station are the closest access points. If arriving on EasyBus, Ouibus, or Flixbus, these all arrive at the bus station.

Course accommodation

- Most course clients stay in Chamonix in en-suite rooms, in a purpose built ski village in Chamonix Sud. These have a small kitchenette, for those wishing to self-cater.
- Check in time is from 16:00 (4pm) on the Sunday, and the meeting point to be shown into your accommodation is detailed in your Course Information Booklet, that is sent upon booking.
- The flats are normally twin rooms for two people sharing. If you are travelling as a couple (or named friends), you will share. If travelling on your own, you will be matched with another course client of the same sex.
- This accommodation is small and basic, to provide you low cost accommodation in Chamonix, but it is functional and really well located. If you wish to upgrade to higher quality accommodation, there is a £100 discount available for sourcing your own accommodation, which is applied to your invoice.
- Website link: <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/chamflat.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.

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- 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.

Cable cars

- For the days you are climbing in Chamonix, the most cost effective cable car pass is called the Mont Blanc multi-pass. For this course you require a 5 day pass, from Monday to Friday (plus extra days if you arrive earlier). The 5 day pass costs 99.20€ (*2021 prices).
- Website link: <https://www.montblancnaturalresort.com/en/montblanc-multipass>

Breakfasts

- When you are in town and accommodation is included on a self-catering basis. There are a great range of cafes, bakeries, and coffee shops in town, where you can get breakfast, and there are a few offering cooked breakfasts too. Alternatively you can self-cater in your accommodation.

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- As the room is self-catering, it's yours for the week, so no need to check out when you are away in mountain huts. Should you use up any items from your breakfast or room supplies, there's a supermarket located just across the pedestrian square from the course accommodation.
- Website link: <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/chamflat.html>

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.
- Website link: <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/chamflat.html>

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 guarded huts, the cooked evening meal is normally three courses.
- Website link: <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/chamonix.html>

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: <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/webcams.html> and http://chamonix-meteo.com/chamonix-mont-blanc/weather/forecast/morning/5_days_weather_forecast.php

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;
- Chamonix map; <https://shop.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/79/BooksMaps/Maps/Alpinemaps/IGNChamonix3630OTmap.html>
- St Gervais; <https://shop.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/80/BooksMaps/Maps/Alpinemaps/IGNStGervais3531ETmap.html>
- Instructional book; <https://shop.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/165/BooksMaps/Books/Instructional/AlpineClimbing:TechniquetoTakeYouHigher.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.

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- 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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