



Icicle Mountaineering Ltd | 11a Church Street
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Tel +44 (0)1539 44 22 17 | info@icicle.co.uk

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



2020 trip dossier | **Fast Packing full TMB £899**

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

Key features

- **Walk every step of the TMB and stay in mountain hut each night.**
- **7 days guiding. Approximately 168km long and 10,000m of ascent.**
- **You pass through France, Italy and Switzerland enjoying the different local cultures.**
- **Led by top qualified guides (UIMLA), to give advice on the many route options available.**
- **A maximum of 8 clients per guide.**
- **2020 dates; 20 – 28 Jun, 25 Jul – 2 Aug, 1 – 9 Aug, 22 – 30 Aug, 5 – 13 Sep.**



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Course overview

- Walk every step of the TMB, staying in mountain huts each night of the trek. There are 7 days of trekking, so this is the tough original trek, which will appeal to regular hill walkers, who want to complete the tour in a week. It's the connoisseur's choice, and will really appeal to those who believe in the ethics of completing every inch of the tour, and tackling all the high passes and variants, so this is the most challenging option too.
- Don't confuse this trek with 'highlights' or 'express' options offered by other operators. We walk every step in a week, and take in all the high passes. Other companies take buses on some sections, or take easier routes over some sections. Ours is the most challenging commercial TMB trek in the market.
- On the way around, your leader will discuss any variations of the route that you could undertake each day, to make it easier or even more challenging for you. That's one of the delights of the TMB, in that it has so many options and variations for you to trek along each day.
- There is so much history and information about the local area that our leaders have to share with you, as well as showing you the amazing scenery, and you have the added experience of staying in traditional mountain huts for two nights set high in the mountains, away from the valley villages.
- During the week you pass through France, Italy and Switzerland, so can enjoy the different cultures, architecture, and the food of each country over the week. The treks are guaranteed to be led by a qualified International Mountain Leader, to ensure your safety and the highest levels of mountain leadership.
- All our scheduled dates are guaranteed to run with 2 or more people, for your peace of mind. We cap numbers at 8 people in a group, so you have great access to your leader. This is a high standard, as other operators have up to an eye watering 16 clients per leader.
- The full TMB trek involves roughly 168km, and 10,000m of ascent. With 7 days guiding, this equates to an average of 24km trekking with c.1500m altitude gain (and loss) each day. This isn't one of the countless gentle commercial bimbles around the TMB - it's a tough and challenging trek, with long stages each day.

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Sample itinerary

The itinerary below is designed to give you a flavour of exactly where you will trek to each day, but one of the great things about the Tour du Mont Blanc, is that there are many variations on certain sections, so you can select more challenging routes or even some summits. These options could even affect where you stay each night, but do mean that you can tailor the route a little on most days to suit how you are feeling, the weather and conditions. Your guide will have a massive local knowledge and experience, and will discuss the options with you en-route.

Saturday

Travel to Chamonix to arrive for the 17:00 check-in followed by our course safety and itinerary briefings. These are really useful, as you discuss the exact current weather and conditions, kit checks, and get tips on what to carry in your pack. Chamonix hosts accompany the group to pre-dinner drinks. Night in Chamonix on B&B basis.

Sunday

Distance: 24km, Ascent: +1750m, Descent: -1300m

Les Houches – Col de Voza - Col du Tricot

From Les Houches, you trek up the rocky track to the Col du Voza (1652m), or ascend using the Bellevue cable car. A steep zig-zag path up to the Col de Tricot (2119m), and then descend down to Les Contamines village for the night.

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Monday - Distance: 15km, Ascent: +1300m, Descent: -900m

Cross the Col du Bonhomme, Col des Fours. Night in Les Mottets

The route winds slowly upwards through woods and alpages with stunning mountain views, past the Refuge La Balme, and up to the high Col du Bonhomme. A traverse across rocky ground to reach the Col de la Croix du Bonhomme, then upwards to the remote Col des Fours, and summit of Tete Nord des Fours 2756m, the high point of today. Here you get an unforgettable panorama of the massif. A steep descent brings you down the wild upper Tuffs valley to reach the farm buildings at the Ville des Glaciers. Night in Les Mottets.

Tuesday - Distance: 24km, Ascent: +1100m, Descent: -1700m

Cross Col de Seigne, Arete Mont Favre, Col Checroui, Courmayeur

From the mountain hut of Les Mottets, ascend steeply at first, before the trail eases its gradient to lead upwards to the Col de la Seigne (2513m), and into Italy. This is the Val Veni, a beautiful region, with great views of the huge Brenva face of Mont Blanc. There is a short descent to the Elizabetta Soldini hut, which is famous for its cakes. After passing Lac Combal you ascend over the exposed Arete Mont Favre, then across to Col Checroui and down to the old cobbled streets of Dolonne to reach the bustling town of Courmayeur, and its labyrinth streets and shops. Night in Courmayeur.

Wednesday - Distance: 16km, Ascent: +1600m, Descent: -700m

Bertoni, Mont de la Saxe, Pas Entre Deux Sauts, Bonatti / Elena

After ascending steeply to the Bertone hut you gain the ridge crest of the Mont de la Saxe (2346m). Traverse the slopes of Testa Bernarda to reach the top of the Tete de la Tronche (2584m). There are a few steep sections on the ascent, but your guide is there to help, and the views of the Italian side of Mont Blanc and Grands Jorasses are amazing. You then descend to Col Sapin and up again over Pas Entre Deux Sauts (2521m). Descend the Malatra valley to reach the spectacularly located Bonatti hut, for the night.

Thursday - Distance: 33km, Ascent: +1600m, Descent: -2100m

Grand Col Ferret, Ferret, La Fouly, Praz de Fort, Issert, Champex Lac

An easy mountain track takes you on a traverse towards the Refugio Elena, famous for its hot chocolate. You then start the steady but long climb up to reach the Grand Col Ferret (2537m), where you pass into Switzerland. Descend past La Peule, then once on the river track, you pass the villages of Ferret, La Fouly, Praz de Fort, and Issert. Shortly after this, you climb up the last ascent of the day, on the Sentier des

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Champignons to reach Champex-Lac. You stay in a mountain hut / gite on the far side of the village, next to the trail. Night in Champex.

Friday - Distance: 31km, Ascent: +1850m, Descent: -2000m

Trek Fenetre d'Arpette, Trient, Col de Balme, Tre-le-Champ / Argentiere

Today begins with the trek up the wild Arpette valley, which becomes increasingly rocky as you climb towards the famous 'Fenetre d'Arpette' (2670m). Descend to Swiss village of Trient, before hiking up over the Col de Balme to return to France. On the far side of the pass you traverse over the Aiguillette des Posettes to descend to Tre-le-Champ, where you spend the night. Occasionally you stay near Argentiere in high season.

Saturday - Distance: 25km, Ascent: +1500m, Descent: -1800m

Trek the length of the Aiguilles Rouges, Flegere, Brevent , Les Houches

Trek up to Aiguillette d'Argentiere, then via a series of easy short ladders to Tete au Vents. There is a choice of routes across to Flégère, via Lac Blanc or Chalet de Cheserys. Afterwards you traverse to Planpraz, and up over Col du Brevent to reach Le Brevent 2525m. Descend to the Bel Lachat mountain hut, then a long steep descent down to reach Les Houches, where you started the trek. You have now completed the full circuit of the Tour Mont Blanc! The group meets in the evening for celebratory drinks and dinner. Night in Chamonix.

Sunday

Breakfast in Chamonix, then the accommodation check out is by 10:00.

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.

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Course Inclusions

1) UIMLA guide for seven days, 2) Chamonix course hosts for logistics, bag storage, support and briefings, 3) Pre course detailed kit list and information booklet, 4) Equipment discount voucher for UK shop, 5) 2 nights B&B accommodation in Chamonix (inc. bedding, linen & towels), 6) 7 nights mountain hut on a half board basis whilst on the trek (breakfast and dinner each day), 7) Free 36 page technical Course Instruction Booklet, 8) Client VIP discounts for reductions in local shops and restaurants in Chamonix

Course Exclusions

1) Travel to and from Chamonix, 2) Personal laundry, kit hire, telephone calls, lunches, evening meals in Chamonix, & any purchases in lodges / mountain huts / hotels / restaurants, 3) Cable cars (none are included in this itinerary, as the aim is to walk every step of the trek), 4) Saturday pre-dinner drinks & final evening celebratory meal & drinks, 5) Activities insurance, & excess baggage charges.

Notes

It is possible to arrange a mid-week bag transfer (up to 30 litre rucksack in size) for a change of clothes, for the night you are based in Courmayeur. This costs c.£50-£120 in total per drop or collection of bags, split amongst the group members who require this service. This is the only night you have guaranteed road access. Group sizes are a minimum 3, to maximum 8 clients, with 1 leader.

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 2** - We suggest that people on courses of this grade can run 10km without a problem, but we stress that for courses of this level you do not need to be any fitter than this minimum level, though it is there to ensure a good basic level of aerobic fitness and training.

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How to book

- All bookings are made securely online, and deposit of £250 is payable (with secure payments handled via WorldPay). 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, and a separate WorldPay receipt. If you haven't received these two e-mails within half an hour of booking online, 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. Once you have this office confirmation, 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. If an early Course Briefing is required, this is billed at £20 for time involved.

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 3 day pass, from Monday to Wednesday (plus extra days if you arrive earlier). The 3 day pass costs 89.50€ (*2020 prices).
- Website link: <https://www.montblancnaturalresort.com/en/montblanc-multipass>

Breakfasts

- When you are in town and accommodation is included on a B&B basis, a starter pack of continental breakfast supplies is provided; fruit juice, milk, cornflakes, muesli, marg, jam, biscuit toasts. Tea and coffee is also provided. In a mountain hut, you get a similar type of light breakfast.

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

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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/IGNChamonix36300Tmap.html>
- Tour du Mont Blanc: <https://shop.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/302/BooksMaps/Maps/Alpinemaps/TourMontBlanc1:50kmap.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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