



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



2023 trip dossier | **Grand Saint Bernard £449**

Website link | <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/grand+saint+bernard+snowshoeing.html>

Key features

- Snowshoe in this historic and beautiful part of the Alps.
- 2 days guiding and a night in the Grand Saint Bernard Hospice.
- No previous experience necessary. Group size 2 – 6 clients.
- Led by top qualified guides (UIMLA & IFMGA). To look after your safety and give technical instruction.
- Loan of all technical equipment, snowshoes, transceiver shovel & probe is included from Icicle.
- Private trips for 4 people booking together, is just £299 per person.



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UK registered company 413 6635. VAT 770 137 933

'inspirational mountain adventure holidays'

22 years
established in 2000





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Course overview

- Spend two amazing days snowshoeing in this area steeped in history. Famed for the Saint Bernard dogs, Napoleon crossing the Alps, and of course the Grand Saint Bernard Hospice which was founded in 1049, where you stay for the night in the monastery.
- This is a two day course that can either be done in its own right, or before a course to enhance acclimatisation. It is perfect for those booked on the one week winter climbing or skiing courses.
- The course is scheduled to operate over a weekend, but extra dates can be scheduled on any days for groups of two or more people who are booking together. The monastery is busiest over a weekend, so it may be preferable to consider offset dates, if that could fit with your travel plans.
- A key feature of this course, is spending a night in the infamous Grand Saint Bernard hospice. The monastery is still run by the monks, and it was Pope Pius XI who confirmed Saint Bernard as the patron saint of Alpine mountaineers. The region is also famed for Roman and Napoleons crossings of the Alps.
- You are led by a very experienced and qualified IFMGA / UIMLA Guide, who will instruct you in the use of snowshoes, and is there to guide you and look after your safety in terms of the weather and avalanche awareness.

Key Details

- You certainly don't need to be religious to enjoy this trip, and there's no need to attend any of the services at the monastery if you don't wish too, though everyone is welcome to.
- We find that this trip appeals to those who are interested in the rich history of the region, who want to stay in an amazing location. The trip to the Grand Saint Bernard monastery is one you never forget.
- A key feature of this trip is that you don't require any previous snowshoeing experience, and to keep costs right down for you, our prices include the loan of snowshoes, and avalanche beacon, shovel and probe.
- You are shown how to use the snowshoes and safety equipment, and are guided by an expert in the region, so are in a very knowledgeable and safe pair of hands, who knows the area very well.
- The closest airport is Geneva, so for those flying in on the day, you can even arrange to meet the guide in Martigny, which is a straight forward train ride from Geneva airport. You can get dropped off here on the return too, so avoiding the airport transfer costs for going to Chamonix. Either option is fine for us, so just let us know which option you prefer once you've booked.

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Sample itinerary

Day 1 - Arrive for the 09:00 check-in and course / itinerary briefings. There is time for kit checks or fitting. Then you set off from Chamonix for the eighty minute transfer to Martigny and then south to the upper Dranse river valley and the Grand Saint Bernard tunnel, above which the snowshoe trek starts. For those who have never used snowshoes, don't worry as after only about 10 minutes instruction you will be confident. You set off towards the monastery. On the way up the route steepens as you pass through slightly steeper ground and the ominous sounding, but beautiful looking, Combe des Morts, before the hospice suddenly comes into view ahead of you. The guide will check you in; show you where the facilities, and most importantly your bed is. There is also a museum in the attic of the hospice, which details the amazing history of the area and the monastery itself. Before the evening meal some groups head outside to take some more photos, and perhaps to learn how to use the avalanche safety transceivers. Then it's time for dinner, which is prepared by the monks. The food is simple but hearty. During the evening there is the opportunity for anyone who is interested to attend the evening service in the crypt with the monks, which is an amazing and moving experience whatever your faith. Even if you don't understand a word of the language, the simple sincerity of the service will move you.

Day 2 - In the early morning you emerge for breakfast, and in the first light of the crisp Alpine morning, you put on your snowshoes, and crunch your way over the well frozen snow. There is a wide choice of routes behind the monastery including the Col Ouest de Barasson. Whatever route is selected by the guide, they will be choosing the best objective in terms of the weather, snow, and avalanche conditions, as well as the group aims and performance. Many of the possible objectives will arrive at the Swiss - Italy border, and on a clear day you are rewarded with the most amazing views of the sunrise on the south face of Mont Blanc and Gran Paradiso. After savouring the views from the top, you loop down and around back to near the Grand Saint Bernard monastery. Once down through the Combe des Morts, you snowshoe down to the start point again at the Super Saint Bernard where you started the trek yesterday. Then it's time for the return drive to Chamonix. If there's time, or you aren't snoozing on the drive back, some groups opt to visit Barryland in Martigny, which is the breeding and visitor centre for the Saint Bernard dogs during the winter months. You reach Chamonix by late afternoon you are free to depart for home.

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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) 2 days snowshoe guiding by IFMGA / UIMLA guide, 2) Chamonix hosts for logistics and briefings, 3) Pre course information booklet, 4) Equipment discount voucher for UK shops, 5) Free 36 page technical Course Instruction Booklet, 6) Logistics support and in-resort hosts, 7) Transport from Chamonix to Grand Saint Bernard and back, 8) One night half board stay in a mountain hut for you and guide.

Course Exclusions

1) Travel to and from Chamonix, 2) Equipment hire, 3) Activities insurance, & excess baggage charges.

Group sizes: 2 - 6 people per UIMLA mountain guide. For group sizes of over 6 people, there are multiple guides, and the teams travel independently.

Notes: The loan of all technical equipment for each client is included in the course price as required: snowshoes, avalanche transceiver and avalanche probe.

Pre-requisite skills

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

Course level: **Beginner**
Mountaineering: **No previous experience necessary.**
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 1** - 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 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.

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- 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.
- 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

- Thursday night is spent in the Grand Saint Bernard Monastery in dormitory rooms. The evening meal is prepared and served by the monks as is breakfast.

Course briefing

- The course briefing for this trip is at 9:00 on the first morning. 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

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- 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

- There is no provision for late arrival on this course. Please be on time so as not to cause inconvenience for other clients.

Cable cars

- For any extra days you may choose to stay the most cost effective cable car pass is called the Mont Blanc multi-pass. The 3 day pass costs 89.50€ (*2020 prices).
- Website link: <https://www.montblancnaturalresort.com/en/montblanc-multipass>

Evening Meal & Breakfasts

- Evening meal and breakfast is provided in the monastery by the monks.

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.

Weather & conditions

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- 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 https://www.meteoblue.com/en/weather/week/great-st-bernard-pass_switzerland_2660518

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/IGNChamonix3630Tmap.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%2BSNO.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
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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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