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

2027 trip dossier | **Haute Route Ski Tour £1895**

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

Key features

- **Travel through some of the most famous alpine landscapes, surrounded by 4000m peaks.**
- **6 days guiding (Monday - Saturday), 2 alternative routes to take advantage of the best conditions.**
- **A challenging ski tour with the chance to use some mountaineering skills.**
- **Led by top qualified guides (IFMGA), 4 – 6 clients maximum per guide.**
- **5 nights mountain hut accommodation (half board), and 2 nights in Chamonix included.**
- **2027 dates – check out the website course page for live availability and course spaces.**

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Course overview

- The Haute Route route between the two historic mountain centres of Chamonix and Zermatt stretches for 114 miles and there is between 13,000m to 14,000m of ascent and descent taking you through some of the most famous landscapes in the Alps.
- Throughout the week you are surrounded by stunning 4000m peaks, and the ski tour provides a challenge that many people repeat several times during their lives. It will appeal to those wishing to escape the hustle and bustle of the Alpine valley towns and ski slopes.
- This course is ideal for those seeking a challenging ski tour, with the opportunity to use some mountaineering techniques, such as an ascent on crampons or an abseil. All roped techniques will be taught during the week, so don't worry if you are a ropework or climbing virgin!
- Skiing ability should be fairly good as although there is only a little steep skiing, the slopes can be icy or rutted in places, with breakable crusts. There is also often more than a little powder on the descents! You will encounter most types of snow conditions.
- We have updated our itinerary to build in some more flexibility for weather and conditions, to really make every effort to make it happen for you. Another key feature is that the return minibus transfer from Zermatt back to Chamonix is included, as are a night before and after the tour in Chamonix.
- As this tour is continuous, it is quite physically demanding and requires a good level of fitness. Good stamina will make the route easier and more enjoyable as it involves six days of skiing at altitude with a pack, though note the pack should be 35-40 litres maximum.
- Support and assistance from the Chamonix concierge service is included throughout the week for logistics, equipment advice, and briefings. They are there to support you, and available 24/7 via WhatsApp to help with any elements required, and are a key factor in supporting the guide team throughout.
- With the Grands Montets cable car still out of action, you skin up from Plan Joran to the Argentiere hut on the first day. After staying there for the night, the next morning, you ascent the Col du Chardonnet / Col du Passon to ski down to Champex. Until the GM lift is renewed, staying in the Trient hut isn't an option.

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Sample itinerary

Sunday - Arrival day in Chamonix

Travel to Chamonix to arrive for the 17:00 check-in followed by course safety and itinerary briefings at 17:30. There is time for kit checks or rental of equipment, including the hire of any ski touring equipment, and the guide who is leading you normally comes to say hello and to talk you through the route on the map. Briefings are over by 18:30 and then you are free to go out for dinner / drinks. Usually some clients with less touring experience, opt to travel out a couple of days before to attend our Intro Ski Touring weekend course; info, and it's a great opportunity to test your ski kit. Night in Chamonix.

Monday - Day 1 of ski tour, Grands Montets & Argentiere hut

You meet your guide in the morning, and have a final equipment check, before driving up to Argentiere, and taking the Plan Joran lift (the Grands Montets top lift is being rebuilt), then skin up to the edge of the Argentiere glacier, and ascend the edge of the glacier, to where you would have normally skied down from the GM top lift. Here you cross the glacier, heading towards the Aiguille d'Argentiere, with the hut nestled below. By staying in the hut you ensure that you get a very early start the next morning to cross the Col du Chardonnet, hours ahead of skiers starting from Grands Montets.

Tuesday - Day 2 of ski tour, Col du Chardonnet & Champex-Lac

The first of many Alpine starts, to take advantage of the overnight refreeze, for the long ascend up to the Col du Chardonnet, either on skins or crampons, with the potential of a lower or abseil from the top. The route takes you on a traverse past the Trient hut to the short steep ascent over the Col des Ecandies, before the exhilarating ski down the remote Arpette valley. The night is spent in a hut / gite close to Champex-Lac.

Wednesday - Day 3 of ski tour, Le Chable & ski to Prafleuri hut

After an early breakfast, you take a short transfer by road to Le Chable, then ascend the Verbier cable cars. Here you ski past the Montfort hut and cross the Cols de la Chaux and Prafleuri, and possibly ascend the summit of the Rosablanche on the way. The night is spent in the Prafleuri Hut. If there was bad weather on the first day, an alternative is to ski to the Trient hut on the first day, then to reach the Prafleuri on the second day. Flexibility has been built into this itinerary, to make every attempt to help make it happen.

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Flexibility - We select from two options of route for the following days

The itinerary for the next three days of the Haute Route is more flexible to allow for variations caused by the prevailing conditions. Our preferred route is Plan A, and our contingency option is Plan B. Our focus is making the ski tour happen for you, not sticking avidly to a pre-prescribed itinerary. We hope you appreciate our highly flexible approach, as we believe it is essential to improve your chances of success, and it really differentiates us...

Plan A...

Thursday - Day 4 of tour, to Dix hut

Set of very early today, to make the East facing traverse across above the Lac de Dix from the Praflueri Hut, before the heat of the sun increases the avalanche risk too high. At the far end of the lake you skin upwards to reach the stunningly situated Dix hut, high above the lake.

Friday - Day 5 ski, Dix to Vignettes

Ski from the Dix hut to the Vignettes, via the Pigne d'Arolla 3790m, the highest summit on the Haute Route. The ski down to the hut is generally one of the best descents on the ski tour. The summit is obviously weather / conditions dependent. This day is one of the visual highlights! Night in hut.

Saturday - Day 6 ski, Hut - Zermatt

Your final Alpine start of the week, to set off from the Vignettes. This is a 30km day with 3 cols to cross; Eveque, Mont Brule and

Plan B...

Thursday - Day 4 of tour, to Arolla

Follow the same route to the head of Lac de Dix, before traversing left then ascending to the newly installed ladders to cross the Pas de Chevre to descend to Arolla, Switzerland. Night in a hotel in Arolla, a much welcomed element of luxury mid-week to ensure you are well fed and rested.

Friday - Day 5 ski, Arolla to Bertol

Ascend from the Arolla valley up to Bertol Hut on skins. This is a big height gain, but the day is not especially long. Upon arriving beneath the hut, you are faced with a series of ladders and cables to ascend to reach the hut that is perched on the top of the ridge, in an amazing location. Night in hut.

Saturday - Day 6 ski, Hut - Zermatt

An early start for the last section of skiing on the ascent of Tete Blanche from the Bertol Hut, then descend to Zermatt past the

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Valpelline. It takes most groups between 8 to 10 hours to reach Zermatt, and you ski on 7 different glaciers in the day. Quite a fitting finale to the Haute Route!

Matterhorn. This is a big day of skiing, but most of it is downhill, which will be a welcome relief, before you finally pick up the pistes to descend to Zermatt.

Saturday afternoon - The ski routes converge as you approach Zermatt

After your last Alpine start from either the Vignettes or Bertol huts, you ski to the Tete Blanche, the last summit on the tour, from which you get the iconic view of the Matterhorn. From here you ski down the Schonbiel glacier below the immense North Face of the Matterhorn, you finally reach the pistes, and ski into Zermatt. Then it's time for a celebratory beer with your guide, to toast the weeks achievements. Return minibus transfer from Tasch to Chamonix. Return any hire equipment. Night in Chamonix, so you can go out and celebrate the weeks achievements.

Sunday – Check out and departure

In the morning, the accomodation check out is by 10:00. Depending on your flight time, there may be some time to purchase some last minute souvenirs for friends and family, then take a return transfer to Geneva airport, which takes approximately 1hr 30mins.

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) Hand picked IFMGA Mountain & Ski Guide for six days
- 2) Chamonix concierge service for logistics, advice and support
- 3) Pre course information dossier, with training plans and kit lists
- 4) Briefing the first evening, with latest updates and weather reports
- 5) Equipment discount voucher for our Windermere shop / online
- 6) Two nights Chamonix hotel on B&B basis, one at each end of tour
- 7) Five nights half board (breakfast, bed, evening meal) in mountain huts

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- 8) Return transfer of guide, group, and hire kit from Zermatt valley to Chamonix
- 9) Preferential rates on ski touring kit and equipment hire in Chamonix
- 10) Free 36 page technical Course Instruction Booklet
- 11) Pre-course online course open evening one month before trip

Course Exclusions

1) Travel to and from Chamonix, 2) Cable cars for you and guide (c.60€pp), 3) Ski hire, 4) Personal laundry, telephone calls, lunches, & any purchases in mountain huts / hotels / restaurants, 5) Meals and drinks in Chamonix & Zermatt, 6) Extra transfers or uplift (for you and guide) required not detailed above, 7) Activities insurance, & excess baggage charges.

Group sizes

Guaranteed dates for 3 - 6 people per IFMGA mountain guide.

Pre-requisite skills

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

Course level:	**Improver**
Skiing:	**2 weeks off piste experience and 1 week ski touring.**
Ice & Rock:	**Use of ice axe and crampons 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 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 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 17:30 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 in Chamonix and any extra days you may choose to stay the most cost effective cable car pass is called the Mont Blanc multi-pass.
- Website link: https://www.montblancnaturalresort.com/en/montblanc-multipass

Breakfasts

- When you are in town and accommodation is included on a B&B 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 upgrade to have breakfast in the hotel.

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Lunches & drinks

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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

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.
- Arolla: https://www.meteoblue.com/en/weather/week/arolla_switzerland_2661713 and
- Zermatt: https://www.meteoblue.com/en/weather/week/zermatt_switzerland_2657928

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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
- Mischabel Matterhorn; https://shop.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/152/BooksMaps/Maps/Alpinemaps/MatterhornMischabel1:50000,Swiss5006.html
- Haute Route book; https://shop.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/201/BooksMaps/Books/Alpinebooks/HauteRouteChamonix-ZermattSkiTouring.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%2BSKM.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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- 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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