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Website: [www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk](http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk)  
Online: [shop.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk](http://shop.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk)



# 2020 trip dossier | **Intro Ski Tour & Backcountry £799**

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

## Key features

- Ideal for those transitioning from piste to touring and backcountry skiing.
- 5 days guiding (Monday - Friday), and Chamonix B&B accommodation (Sunday - Saturday)
- Ideal preparation for some of the famous ski tours such as the Haute Route.
- Led by top qualified guides (IFMGA), group size 3 – 6 clients maximum per guide.
- Icicle can help arrange the hire of all technical equipment.
- 2020 dates; 19 - 25 Jan, 1 - 7 Mar, 29 Mar – 4 Apr.



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UK registered company 413 6635. VAT 770 137 933

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**20 years**  
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## Course overview

- If you have spent most of your time on skis on piste or on popular off piste runs, and want to escape the crowds, this course will give you the skills to access the mountains with ski touring and advanced backcountry skills.
  - This course is also ideal as an introduction or preparation for famous ski tours such as the Haute Route (Chamonix to Zermatt) later in the season.
  - The itinerary is flexible to take account of the previous skills, experience, and aspirations of the group, but typically includes a 50:50 split of ski touring uphill and off piste backcountry skiing.
  - For this level you have skied a minimum of two weeks off piste before. Your key ambition should be to learn ski touring and the equipment and to get some good off piste runs and instruction.
  - Previous touring experience is not required, as this course aims to teach key skills starting with the basics. Sometimes people have done a day or two of touring before, but not received any formal tuition, so use this course as a springboard to future tours.
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- Any mountaineering skills or knowledge of ropes are an advantage, but not essential as all necessary techniques are taught.
  - During the week you are based in Chamonix Mont Blanc, but you often have the opportunity to ski tour in Italy or Switzerland too. This choice of course location provides amazing access to infamous ski tours and backcountry ski descents including the 23km long Vallee Blanche.
  - A key feature of the course is the evening instruction sessions (optional) to help teach some of the theory such as route planning for avalanche conditions, mountain weather prediction, and crevasse rescue. This means that you can learn some of the theory without wasting great skiing time.
  - The course has been designed to assume that you have done no ski touring before, so on the first day you are introduced to all the kit; skis, touring bindings, skins and ski crampons, and shown how to use it, and how to store or carry it.
  - These courses are led by IFMGA mountain and ski guides, rather than an on-piste ski instructor, as guides are the only people qualified to lead groups skiing on glaciated terrain, such as the Vallee Blanche. Don't worry, you'll get plenty of instruction, as many of our guide team are also qualified as ski instructors, so that you get the best out of both worlds.
  - Key skills taught during this course include:

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- Using skins and touring skins
- avalanche transceiver use
- glacier travel techniques
- recognising avalanche traps
- choice of kit for glacier skiing
- kick turns for ascent on skis
- use of couteaux / harscheisen
- using crampons and ice axes
- crevasse rescue for skiers
- route planning & navigation

## Sample itinerary

Each week this course runs slightly differently to cater for your preferences, the conditions, and where the best weather and snow is to be found. There is even the option of using two of the days to ski up to stay in a mountain hut (half board lodging not included, but c.50€pp) to then ski to reach a summit or high pass beyond the hut the next day, before returning to Chamonix.

### Sunday

Travel to Chamonix 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. Chamonix hosts accompany the group to pre-dinner drinks. Night in Chamonix.

### Monday

Day of introductory level ski touring, practise how to use the equipment, kick turns, as well as off piste skiing to refresh your techniques. At Flegere, groups often skin up to Lac Blanc and even to the Col des Dards. Night in Chamonix.

### Tuesday

Typically today involves glacier off piste and perhaps a slightly longer ski tour, such as skiing onto the Argentiere glacier and ascending to the Col du Tour Noir, or even across the Col de Passon to ski to le Tour. Night in Chamonix.

### Wednesday

A classic day tour is the famous Crochues-Berard. You take the ski lift from Flegere to Index, and then skin up for just over an hour to Col du Crochues, and Berard, before the sweeping descent to Le Buet. Night in Chamonix.

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## Thursday

By now your skiing and touring level should have developed to consider a more challenging tour such as across the Vallee Blanche to Helbronner point to ski the Toule glacier, before descending the Italian bowl of the Vallee Blanche. Another option is a two day tour with a night in a hut (not included c. 50 euros ).

## Friday

On the final day of skiing, most groups go for a big day of touring, though if the legs are feeling tired then perhaps a day of great off piste would appeal such as skiing the Pas de Chevre from the Grands Montets. If touring, a popular objective is a ski tour summit such as Aiguillette des Houches and Brevent. Evening social drinks and a celebratory meal, with the night spent in Chamonix.

## Saturday

Breakfast, then accommodation check out at 10:00, and then 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 Guides for five days, 2) Chamonix course hosts for daily logistics & briefings, 3) Pre course information booklet, 4) Equipment discount voucher for UK shop, 5) Six nights B&B accommodation in Chamonix (inc. bedding & towels), 6) Free 36 page technical Course Instruction Booklet, 7) Road, bus or rail transport in Chamonix valley to and from the slopes each day, 8) Chamonix logistics and support, 9) Technical safety kit (see note below), 10) Optional evening instruction sessions as per detailed itinerary, 11) Icicle reductions in local shops and restaurants in Chamonix.

## Course Exclusions

1) Travel to and from Chamonix, 2) Cable cars as required (budget on c. 90 euros for the week but amount is dependent on exact itinerary), 3) Ski hire, 4) Personal laundry, telephone calls, lunches, & any purchases in mountain huts / hotels / restaurants, 5) Any optional stays in a mountain hut on a half board basis for you and the guide, 6) Transport outside the Chamonix valley, 7) Sunday pre-dinner drinks & Friday celebratory meal & drinks, 8) Activities insurance, excess baggage charges.

## Group sizes

3 - 6 people per IFMGA mountain guide. For group sizes of over 6 people, there are multiple guides, and the teams operate independently.

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## Skiing skill

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

Course level: **Beginner**  
Skiing: **2 weeks off piste experience, some touring preferred.**  
Mountaineering: **Some knowledge and rope work preferred but not essential.**  
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 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 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.
- 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](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>
- Pays du Mont Blanc map; <https://shop.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/81/BooksMaps/Maps/Alpinemaps/PaysduMontBlanc1:50000map.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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