



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



2024 trip dossier | **Winter Alpine Intro £1099**

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

Key features

- Launch your winter climbing career and develop your ice climbing and alpinism.
- 5 days guiding (Monday - Friday), & Chamonix self-catered accommodation (Sunday - Saturday)
- NO previous experience is required, as you are taught everything during the course
- Led by top qualified mountain guides (IFMGA & UIMLA), with guiding ratio 1:3 every day.
- 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

'inspirational mountain adventure holidays'

24 years
established in 2000





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Course overview

- This is our most popular winter course, and it's easy to see why. It is designed to launch your winter mountaineering career, and you'll develop skills for ice climbing and alpinism too.
- Even with no previous climbing experience, by the end of the week you should have climbed grade 3 or 4 waterfall ice, and a famous Alpine PD / AD route in full winter conditions.
- This course is suitable both for Alpine novices and for those who want to learn winter mountaineering and waterfall ice climbing (such as those who have attended a Scottish introductory or a summer Alpine introductory course). The itinerary is flexible at the end of the week.
- Technical skills taught on the course include glacier travel, ice climbing, crevasse rescue, ice axe belays and anchors, ropework, crampon and ice axe use, avalanche prediction and using ARVA's (avalanche transceivers), and equipment selection.
- You learn key skills of waterfall ice climbing and mountaineering, and there is the option of a night in a mountain hut, if you select a route where an Alpine start is required. If you'd prefer not to stay in a hut, don't worry as valley accommodation is provided anyway.
- There is a focus through the week on selecting routes in reaction to the avalanche forecasts each day, and each day you will need to be equipped with avalanche transceiver, probe and shovel.
- We have designed the course to provide a good balance between you learning skills and getting the opportunity to climb Alpine and ice routes, so that you get the best of both worlds.
- The last two days of the course are deliberately flexible, to allow you to select the types of routes that you would like to climb. There is also the option of two days climbing with a night in a mountain hut with your Guide (you pay for the hut for you / guide). Obviously weather and conditions will play their part, but the choice is yours.
- Many people cite booking on this course, as they prefer to come to the Alps to learn these skills, rather than battle against unpredictable conditions in Scotland. Also you have glaciers in the Alps!
- Another focus of the course is on the selection of equipment, so you build up an understanding of what equipment to select for different types of routes, and also what you should take as your core kit.
- As Icicle has been operating these courses for 20 years, we have excellent local contacts and a detailed knowledge of route options and local conditions to optimise your climbing time.

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Sample itinerary

Please note that whilst the itinerary is flexible to allow for the weather and conditions, as well as your skills, fitness, experience and acclimatisation.

- **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** – The focus of the day is on learning key winter skills including route choice, with a focus on avalanche awareness and prediction. Generally you access the area by cable car, to maximise your time on the mountain. You will examine snow profiles, perform stability tests, and learn how to use avalanche transceivers. You also develop winter navigation skills including safe route choice. Guiding ratio 1:3 (max). Night in Chamonix.
- **Tuesday** - Day to develop and practice using crampons and ice axes on a glacier such as the Mer de Glace. You also climb vertical ice, create ice anchors, and learn glacier travel skills. Another option is to have a group mountaineering day, to focus on route choice, snowskills, snow anchors and belays. Either option provides you with key Alpine skills, and the choice is based on conditions. Guiding ratio 1:3 (max). Night in Chamonix.
- **Wednesday** - Day of waterfall ice climbing, to develop your technical skills. You'll be climbing with a pair of technical ice axes (loaned for free) on steeper ice, and will learn skills including placing ice screws, building anchors, and ropework. Typically you go to a venue such as La Cremerie or Les Contamines, where there are options for setting up several top ropes on a range of ice climbs. Guiding ratio 1:3 (max). Night in Chamonix.
- **Thursday** - Today and on Friday, you have two days that are very flexible for your choice of either mountaineering or waterfall ice climbing. You can choose the objective, dependant on conditions. There is also the option of spending a night in a mountain hut (not included), if an Alpine start is required for a route. An example night be using the Torino hut for climbing Aiguilles Marbrees. Night in Chamonix / hut.

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- **Friday** - Your second day of flexible itinerary, for you to select another route. Popular objectives for technical ice climbs such as Defertante and Mini Couloir. Mountaineering route favourites include the Aiguille du Toule from Helbronner, or a summit in the Aiguille ROuges such as La Floria, to put your skills in practice. In the evening there are optional drinks and then a celebratory meal. Your final night is spent in Chamonix.
- **Saturday** – Breakfast, then accommodation check out at 10:00, 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 Guide / UIMLA Leader, for five days, 2) Chamonix course hosts for logistics & briefings, 3) Six nights self-catered accommodation in Chamonix (inc. beddings & towels), 4) Pre course information booklet, 5) Equipment discount voucher for UK shops, 6) Free 36 page technical Course Instruction Booklet, 7) Road transport in Chamonix valley, 8) Evening technical instruction sessions.

Course Exclusions

1) Travel to and from Chamonix, 2) Cable Cars (approx £100), 3) Extra equipment hire, 4) Personal laundry, telephone calls, lunches, evening meals, & any purchases in mountain huts / hotels / restaurants, 5) Road transport outside Chamonix valley, 6) Sunday pre-dinner drinks & Friday celebratory meal & drinks, 7) Activities insurance, & excess baggage charges.

Notes: Included in the course price are the loan of the following hire equipment (as required) during the week; avalanche transceiver, snow shovel, probe. Group sizes 3 people (max / min).

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Climbing skill

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

Course level: **Beginner**
Mountaineering: **No experience necessary**
Ice & Rock: **No previous experience is needed**
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 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 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). A 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.
- 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/IGNChamonix3630Omap.html>
- St Gervais map; <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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