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Website: www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk
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2020 trip dossier | **Best of Chamonix Treks £699**

Website link | <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/chamtrek.htm>

Key features

- The Chamonix valley is among the world's best locations for walking holidays.
- 5 days guiding (Monday - Friday), and Chamonix B&B accommodation (Sunday - Saturday)
- Access some of the Mont Blanc regions more remote areas and avoid the crowds.
- Led by top qualified guides (UIMLA), group sizes 1-8 clients per guide.
- Flexible Itinerary so you can achieve the most from your holiday.
- 2020 dates; 14 – 20 Jun, 28 Jun – 4 Jul, 19 – 25 Jul, 26 Jul – 1 Aug, 23 – 29 Aug.



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20 years
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Course overview

- The Chamonix valley must surely rank as one of the world's best bases for a walking holiday. The valley is surrounded by sharp granite spires, tumbling glaciers, and snowy peaks. Glimmering above them all is the dome of Mont Blanc, the highest peak.
- This week aims to show you some of the most remote treks in the Mont Blanc massif, and to avoid the more crowded and easily accessed classic tourist hot spots, such as Lac Blanc and around Montanvers. This is a week of challenging and remote trekking, in wild and beautiful scenery.
- The Best of Mont Blanc Treks week has been designed to show you the most spectacular viewpoints above the valley floors, such as exploring the hidden valleys of the Aiguilles Rouges such as Tre-les-Eaux, Diosaz, and Berard. You will be led by a qualified trekking guide (UIMLA qualified), who has a vast local knowledge to show you the flora and fauna of the region.
- During the week you usually will also trek in Switzerland and / or Italy. The itinerary is deliberately highly flexible to account for the weather and conditions, so that you achieve the most during the week. With this challenging and adventurous itinerary, it is easy to alter any of the objectives, to suit your aspirations or how you are feeling each day.
- No previous experience of trekking, climbing or mountaineering is necessary as you have a guide with you to help on any tricky sections.
- The trekking in the Mont Blanc massif is unforgiving and steep in many places, even compared to other Alpine regions. This is a key reason why you are led by an IML. At either side of the key summer season, there is a high chance of crossing some snow patches. Don't worry if you have no previous trekking experience as the guide is there to help.
- During the week, you may well trek for a day in Switzerland or Italy. With this challenging and adventurous itinerary, it is easy to alter any of the objectives, to suit how you are feeling each day.
- The itinerary is designed to provide you with a taster of what you could achieve, and isn't fixed in stone. We get many clients who come back year after year to repeat this course as they love it so much, but they need never repeat a route they have done before.
- We ensure that we avoid sections of the hut-to-hut treks in the region, such as the Tour du Mont Blanc, to tread the path less trodden, and to enjoy the remote and rugged beauty of the Mont Blanc massif. You explore the non-commercialised areas, to get a real feel for what the region has to offer, and how it used to be.

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- Accommodation for the week is based in self catering flats of two people sharing (maximum three for groups) with breakfast supplies. There are basic cooking facilities so you can avoid eating out to help your budget. The flats are same sex sharing so if you are booking as a single and have no one to share with on one of our courses then you are upgraded for free to a private room. Couples are always upgraded to private room for free.
- There is the option of two days of remote trekking and a night in a mountain hut (not included but budget c. £40 per person to stay on a half board basis for you / guide). This can be decided at the start of the week when discussed with the aspirations of the group and the weather and conditions.
- Your English guide will have a massive local knowledge and experience, so will be able to teach you all about the local flora and fauna and explain the mountains and local cultures of the different regions. You may also get the opportunity to sample local wine, cake and cheeses.

Sample itinerary

One of the delights of trekking is that, unlike skiing or climbing, you can go out in all weathers and levels of visibility, so the itinerary can be flexed to ensure that you sample the best on offer.

Sunday

Travel to Chamonix to arrive for the 17:00 check-in followed by our 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

After a short meeting, you travel to a beautiful trekking region, such as Servoz or Vallorcine. This is a day to get your hill legs back, as you ascend through the forests to amazing views across the mountains. In these remote regions you should also see native species, such as Chamois & Ibex. Night in Chamonix.

Tuesday

Today is a spectacular trek such as the high passes of the Aiguilles Rouges. The path starts by following a torrent gorge up through woods, before emerging above the treeline, to the Col d'Anterne. The views are spectacular, looking across the whole of the Mont Blanc massif and glaciers. Night in Chamonix.

Wednesday

A popular trek choice for today is the Contamines valley to the west of Mont Blanc. Here you can ascend to one of the mountain huts above the valley, and follow a quiet contouring balcony track. There is the option

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to cross a high pass, such as Col du Fenetre, or trek into the Beaufortain area beyond. After you descend through the forests you return to Chamonix. Night in Chamonix.

Thursday

If you would like to spend a night in a mountain hut, then it is usually today and tomorrow for this two day mini-expedition (price of the hut is not included, so the group decides whether or not they would like this at the start of the week). An alternative is another great day of remote trekking. Night in Chamonix / hut.

Friday

Either a trek and descent from a mountain hut (such as the Victor Emmanuel or Bonatti refuge), or a day trek from Chamonix. An ideal final day trek from Chamonix could be Mont Buet 3099m, the highest trekking peak in the region. Evening social drinks, then a celebratory meal. Night in Chamonix.

Saturday

Breakfast then the accommodation check out is by 10:00. 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 itinerary as a guide to the types of route / activity that you will attempt.

Course Inclusions

1) UIMLA English speaking guide for five days, 2) Chamonix course hosts for daily logistics and briefings, 3) Chamonix Valley road transport as it is required, 4) B&B accommodation in Chamonix (inc. bedding and towels), 5) Pre course information booklet & kit list, 6) Free 36 page technical Course Instruction Booklet, 7) Equipment discount voucher for UK shops, 8) Evening technical instruction when in Chamonix (see website for details), 9) Icicle reductions in local shops and restaurants in Chamonix.

Course Exclusions

1) Travel to and from Chamonix, 2) Personal laundry, telephone calls, kit hire, lunches, evening meals in valley, & any purchases in mountain huts / hotels / restaurants, 4) Cable cars and mountain uplift (not normally required, but budget c. £30 for the week), 5) Option of one night half board stay in a mountain hut for you and your guide (budget on c. £40 per person), 6) Activities insurance, & excess baggage charges.

Notes

Group sizes are 2 to 8 clients, with 1 leader.

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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>
- St Gervais; <https://shop.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/80/BooksMaps/Maps/Alpinemaps/IGNStGervais3531ETmap.htm>
- 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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