



Chamonix Off Piste Skiing Course 2017



- A week of the most thrilling ski runs in the Chamonix valley, and Mont Blanc massif. Our aim is for you to enjoy a challenging, thrilling, week.
- We offer two different levels of this course, to suit your experience best:
 - **Level 1 Adventure** for those with a little off piste experience, such as a day on Vallée Blanche or 'between the piste' off piste skiing.
 - **Level 2 Performance** for those who have at least a week's previous off piste experience, such as attending the Level 1 course.
- Your expert IFMGA Mountain & Ski Guide will show you some of the most remote and beautiful wilderness regions, whilst improving your technique and looking after your safety.
- On the Level 2 course you will be offered the opportunity to try using ski touring kit if you all wish for a day during the week. This isn't compulsory, but is offered as an opportunity if all of the group wishes.
- The level of the runs is only limited by your previous off piste experience and the conditions. You do not need to be super fit, but good stamina will make the days easier and allow you more breath to enjoy the scenery.



Course summary and key details

- **Instructors:** this course is led by an IFMGA International Mountain & Ski Guide. This is the only qualification that allows you to be instructed on glaciated off piste runs, such as the Vallee Blanche. It is a key selling point that you are led by guides, as there are many off piste courses offered by others, which are led by ski instructors who are not guides. If you book one of their courses, you are limited to no glacier skiing, and will not ski the classics that Chamonix is famed for, such as the Argentiere glacier from Grands Montets, the Vallee Blanche, or the Toula Glacier from Helbronner. When looking for an off piste course, ensure that it is led by an IFMGA qualified Mountain & Ski Guide, so you can ski on glaciers.
- **Ratios:** The group for each course is limited to six people per Guide to ensure that you get good access, and learn as much as possible, as we have found that a small group on the mountain achieves and learns more.
- **Ski video analysis:** We use video feedback on many of our off piste courses, whenever it is the best tool for helping course clients to improve their style and skills. Whenever we get film footage of you skiing, we ensure that you get a copy of the film, so when you return home you can show your friends what a brilliant skier you are!
- **Evening instruction:** During the week there are optional evening theory instruction sessions, such as crevasse rescue or avalanche awareness, to help add to the daily teaching so you can get the most skiing too.
- **Key skills taught during this course include:**
 - avalanche transceiver use
 - glacier travel techniques
 - recognising avalanche traps
 - choice of kit for glacier skiing
 - group management off piste
 - emergency procedures
 - crevasse rescue for skiers
 - route planning & navigation

Testimonials

*"Amazing week of skiing, with intimate local knowledge of where to find the best powder for us. Great teaching too from our guide, so my skiing went up several gears" **Wayne W***

*"A great mixture of teaching, skiing and socialising with a fun group. Learnt loads, and had a ball of a time" **Josei S***



Course daily itinerary & objectives

The Level 1 - Adventure, and Level 2 - Performance courses run on different weeks, with the itineraries adapted daily to cater for the best snow conditions, and your improving ski level. As you are based in Chamonix, we always ensure that you ski the classic off piste runs for which the area is most famed for. The itineraries are for guidance, but should give an idea of what you can achieve during the week. Level 2 tackles harder, longer, and deeper off piste.

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

After breakfast you and your guide are driven to one of the ski areas, such as le Tour. The focus of the day is to introduce you to some of the best off piste runs. You find untracked powder in the bowls and in the forests. Night in Chamonix.

Tuesday

Typically today involves off piste over glaciers, such as one (or more) descents of the famous Vallee Blanche above Chamonix. If you've done the classic route, ski the steep Glacier de Toule or from Helbronner. Night in Chamonix.

Wednesday

Searching for fresh tracks over glaciers and through crevasses, either the classic Pas de Chevre from Grand Montets to Montenvers, or the Argentiere glacier or Aiguilles Rouges. There are hundreds of options. Night in Chamonix.

Thursday

By now your ski level should have developed well, and you could consider a more challenging off piste descent such as the back of Le Tour to Trient, drive to Courmayeur for a day of Italian off piste & fresh tracks. Night in Chamonix.

Friday

On the final day of skiing, most groups go for a big day of classic off piste runs. The Grands Montets lift above Argentiere is a classic venue for this, as there are so many lines down to the glaciers or on the front face. Evening social drinks and celebratory meal. Final night 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 dates, prices, & inclusions



699

5 full days IFMGA guiding, 1:6 max ratio
7 days holiday in total, Sunday-Saturday

Inclusions

1) IFMGA Mountain Guides for five days, 2) Chamonix course hosts for logistics & briefings, 3) Pre course information booklet, 4) Equipment discount voucher for use in our Windermere mountain store, 5) Six nights B&B accommodation in Chamonix (inc. bedding & towels), 6) Free 36 page technical Course Instruction Booklet, 7) Road or rail transport in Chamonix valley to and from the slopes each day, 8) Optional evening instruction sessions as per detailed itinerary.

Exclusions

1) Travel to and from Chamonix, 2) Cable cars (c.50€/day, with Unlimited Pass including lifts in Chamonix and Courmayeur), 3) Ski hire, 4) Personal laundry, telephone calls, lunches, & any purchases in mountain huts / hotels / restaurants, 5) Transport outside the Chamonix valley e.g. Courmayeur, 6) Sunday pre-dinner drinks & Friday celebratory meal & drinks, 7) Activities insurance, excess baggage charges.

Reductions: If you do not need any accommodation for the course, a £100 discount per person is offered.

Dates

Level 1 Off Piste - Adventure

- 22 - 28 Jan 2017
- 26 Feb - 4 Mar 2017
- 5 - 11 Mar 2017
- 12 - 18 Mar 2017
- 2 - 8 Apr 2017

Level 2 Off Piste - Performance

- 29 Jan - 4 Feb 2017
- 26 Feb - 4 Mar 2017
- 9 - 15 Apr 2017



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Windermere mountain store (UK)

A key part of choosing a company is being able to come and talk about your plans with an experienced course advisor face to face. In an increasingly virtual world, we know our clients value speaking to real people, getting open and honest advice. The vast majority of our clients are British, and our office and outdoor store is based in Windermere in the English Lake District.

Get in contact to arrange a meeting, and come in for a coffee to discuss your course in person with a trip advisor. We are keen to ensure that you are as prepared as possible, and that you select a course that is suitable for you. It makes it easier and more enjoyable for you and us, if you are on the right trip. As well as talking through your course, most clients have queries about the kit they will require, so as to avoid expensive mistakes, and we can show you some examples of kit to consider. Others have training queries, about how to best prepare for your trip, and we will be able to steer you in the right direction. No question is too silly, and we'll have heard them all before, so don't worry!

By now you'll have got the idea that an integral part of booking is the ability to get good, knowledgeable, advice, and a highly personal service. Some people do just book online, but we are there every step of the way to walk you from the initial enquiry, right through to your course. Unlike some companies that only exist virtually in cyberspace, we are staffed by real people, in a real office, who offer real honest advice. Because we are tangible, we are accountable, and we take great pride in that and the high standards of service that we offer you.



Why travel with Icicle in the Alps

- **Our Mission...** To have the best safety and peak summiting records of any mountain and ski guiding company in the whole world.
- **Our Aim...** To exceed the expectations of each client, to realise their ambitions, and to provide the best quality experiences possible.
- **Our Environment...** We aim to minimise our environmental impact, and to preserve, improve & promote the responsible use of the mountains.
- **Our Ethos...** We know every single client has individual needs, strengths, aims, weaknesses, ambitions, and goals. We care about each one.
- **Your Money...** We have taken every step to protect you on the mountain, and in your pocket. Funds paid to us are held in trust until you return home.



How to book a course with Icicle

On the front page of the Icicle website there is a course 'Live Availability' button which links to a page that is updated with each booking to show the number of spaces available on each advertised date of each course. The number shown in brackets on this page is the number of places still available on the date.

To book a trip you complete the secure online booking form on the website, which is protected by SSL encryption, so you can input card details and pay safely over the internet. You can list up to four people on one booking form, but if members of a group live at different addresses, or wish to pay the balance separately, it is worth completing a form separately so that you each receive the confirmation email, and the information and payment reminder emails. When you submit the form you will receive automatic confirmation with a receipt, course specific kit list, and a course information booklet with useful information.





Icicle background and key features

- Established in 2000, Icicle is a UK company, and although our trips are for English speakers, our client base is worldwide. Icicle has firmly established itself as one of the leading mountain guiding operators in the UK.
- We are proud to still be a small specialist company who have a very personal approach. It allows us to really support each of our clients. The attention to detail, local Alpine support team, and work ethic sets us apart.
- All of our Alpine courses are all led by professional guides (IFMGA / UIMLA), as our priority is your safety and quality guiding. We focus on instructional courses, and our local knowledge is second to none. Our contacts and staff always aim to 'make it happen' for you.
- We keep all our overheads low, such as our office being paid for by it also being a retail shop. We also don't spend lots of (your) money shouting about how good we are, and haven't got the flashiest website or glossiest brochure. We offer you great value without sacrificing standards.
- What differentiates us is that we have a highly personalised, flexible and friendly, approach to our courses. This flexibility is essential to maximise your achievements. We aim to offer you great and innovative trips that we would dream of going on ourselves.



Your complete financial protection

We have a moral as well as a legal obligation to protect your money, data and online security when you book onto an Icicle course. We want you to be totally confident that we are a bona fide company whose financial conduct has been assessed, and who follow a strict code of practice to protect your money. Your booking is protected by our bonding with the Travel Trust Association U3307. This bonding fully complies with the 1992 Package Travel Regulations, and guidelines proposed by the Department of Trade and Industry to protect clients on package holidays. All monies that you pay to Icicle are held in trust until after your course has ended. This protects you in the highly unlikely event of our insolvency, and all monies paid by you are insured. We are also registered with the ICO for Data Protection. Our online payments system is with RBS, who have verified the security of our system with their independent tests.



Course mountain activity insurance

It is a condition of booking onto any of our trips, that all clients have sufficient activities insurance. This is to protect you in case of any requirement for medical or hospital treatment, mountain search and rescue, and in case you have to cancel your course due to injury or personal circumstances. Your documentary proof of cover is checked at the start of the week before you start any of the guiding. It must be written in English, and specify that it covers you for all of the activities you plan to undertake (see your detailed itinerary on the website). If you are a UK resident, we recommend arranging insurance through Snowcard or the BMC. If you are not a UK resident we recommend arranging insurance through the Austrian Alpine Club (although this does not cover you for cancellation or curtailment so you should get extra cover for this).



Arranging travel to Alpine courses

All of the Alpine trips are offered on a 'Land Only' basis meaning that you need to arrange separate travel to the start of the trip. Although Icicle does hold an ATOL licence and so can arrange flights on behalf of clients, most people find that it is easier to arrange flights through discount airlines. For a range of flight options (including budget) we recommend: www.skyscanner.net. There is also a Eurostar service from London to Geneva (see: www.eurostar.com). For courses that meet in Chamonix, airport transfers can be booked from Geneva airport to Chamonix to match your flights for c. 30 euros per person each way.





Iccle guides & their qualifications

We are a small company, and our team is everything to us. The guides have responsibility for all decisions taken on the mountain and to ensure your safety. Whilst we are fortunate to have an excellent mountain team, we also have a superb office team who arrange the logistics that make the trips run smoothly.

The IFMGA Mountain Guide qualification is the highest qualification that is recognised for leading groups, and the only people who lead any of our skiing or climbing courses in the Alps. IFMGA stands for the International Federation of Mountain Guide Associations. All of our IFMGA Guides hold the International Mountain Guide carnet, and have been selected for their leadership style, personality, and sense of humour, not to mention the fact that they aren't too bad at climbing and skiing either!

All of the Alpine trekking and snow-shoeing courses are run by UIMLA mid mountain guides. These two qualifications are your guarantee of the highest standards and professionalism, and the holders of these qualifications wear their badges with pride. Rest assured that you are being led in the mountains by the best. Our itineraries are planned with guide to client ratios within the safety guidelines outlined by the IFMGA and UIMLA. Each course itinerary states these daily guiding ratios.

We strongly believe that a badge or qualification does not make a good leader, which is why we carefully hand pick our guiding team. However you have our guarantee that all our courses are led by verified highly qualified professionals, as this is a legal requirement in the Alps. Note that for trips outside the Alps, the IFMGA or UIMLA qualification is not a legal requirement, and local guides are used. This is normal practice on peaks including Kilimanjaro, Elbrus, the Atlas and the Himalayas. In the UK no qualifications are legally required, but we follow best practice and all leaders on our UK trips are suitably qualified.

Accommodation: valley/mountain

When on an Iccle course the details of where you will stay will be included in your detailed itinerary. For Chamonix based Alpine courses you are usually based in the valley in one of three types of accommodation; a self-catering studio flat, a chalet or a hotel. Accommodation is on a bed & continental breakfast basis, and all bedding (linen and towels) and any tourist taxes are included. There is a choice of B&B (always included) or half board (upgrade) in the valley, and the accommodation is usually two or three people sharing. In some trekking courses a packed lunch is also included and this will be a sandwich with two cereal / snack bars per person (see itinerary for inclusions).

In mountain huts you always stay on a half board basis, where there is a hut guardian who cooks the evening meal so you do not need crockery, pans or cutlery, with the exception of some hut winter rooms (see itinerary for details). Blankets are provided in mountain huts so you should take a sleeping bag liner for hygiene (silk or cotton), but you do not normally need a sleeping bag / mat.



Course client equipment discount



Once you have booked, you will be sent a catalogue of all the preferential rate equipment and clothing that you can buy in our Windermere shop. We offer 15% OFF equipment and clothing. There is also a selection of books and maps. Orders over £30 are posted free to any UK address. Our shop also stocks a wide range of rental kit for use in the UK or on any of our Alpine courses.

View full details at; <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/icleshop.htm>. If you have any queries, please e-mail info@icicle.co.uk or telephone 01539 44 22 17.