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Website: [www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk](http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk)  
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# 2020 trip dossier | **Gourmet Ski Tour £1099**

Website link | <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/gourmet%2Bski%2Btour.html>

## Key features

- **Stay in some of the best mountain huts for Italian cooking.**
- **5 days guiding (Monday - Friday), with flexible itinerary to take advantage of the best conditions.**
- **Suitable for ski tourers and also split boarders..**
- **Led by top qualified guides (IFMGA), learn avalanche awareness and route planning.**
- **Escape the crowds of the Silvretta or Haute Route tours.**
- **2020 dates; 8 - 14 Mar, 5 – 11 Apr.**



## Course overview

- A ski tour for the cognoscenti, staying in some of the best mountain huts for great Italian cooking, wine lists and hospitality. Enjoy great ski tours during the days, with comfort and good food and drink in the evenings. The huts have all been specially selected for their level of comfort and / or hospitality.
- This is still ski touring, but it's for those who enjoy the social aspect of tours, and to chat about the days adventures over a good meal and drinks.

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**20 years**  
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- You are led by some of our popular local Italian guide team, who select the best huts and itineraries, and also teach you key skills (such as avalanche awareness and route planning) along the way.
- We accept bookings from either ski tourers or split boarders on this trip. This is because the terrain is more suitable for split boarders as there is more rolling Nordic terrain, with fewer steep icy traverses, than other ski tours (such as the Haute Route).



- This tour is ideal for those wanting an intermediate level ski tour, and is suitable even if you have only had a few days ski touring experience. Skiing / boarding ability should be fairly good as there is some steep off piste, and the powder in these Italian regions is legendary.
- This tour is ideal as an alternative to ski tours such as the busy Haute Route (Chamonix to Zermatt) or in Silvretta (Austria).
- The itinerary is very flexible to take account of the Italian region with the best weather and conditions, so you ski in the areas with the best snow to get some great skiing as well as great accommodation.
- As the course is based in mountain huts throughout, this course will appeal to those wishing to escape the hustle of the valleys. There are five days guiding and four nights on a half board basis staying in mountain huts, and a night B&B in Chamonix at each end.
- The Guide will also try to develop your technical abilities, allowing you to probe for crevasses, attempt route finding or choose descent lines, practice crevasse rescue and the use of GPS, and become efficient at avalanche transceiver searches and use of safety equipment.

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- The meeting point for the trip is in Chamonix, as it is easy to get to from Geneva airport and this is where the safety briefings are held and kit hire arranged. Accommodation at each end of the guiding is included in Chamonix so you can store anything that you do not need with you in the mountains and collect it when you get back to Chamonix

### **Suitable for both ski tourers and split-boarders**

The majority of our ski tours are only suitable for those on skis, due to the nature of the terrain. However, this region is also suitable for those touring on split boards, as it is more rolling Nordic style, without many steeper icy traverses, where it is easier on skis. We accept mixed groups on this tour, so the scheduled dates are open to either ski tourers or split board tourers.

### **Sample itinerary**

For this trip the skiing is based in the mountains above the Italian Aosta valley, such as the Gran Paradiso National Park, Monte Rosa or Val Ferret. The focus is on great food, good skiing and amazing scenery.

#### **Sunday**

Travel to Chamonix to arrive for the 17:00 check-in followed by course safety and itinerary briefings, and kit checks. Briefings are over by 19:00 and the team accompany the group to pre-dinner drinks. Night in Chamonix.

#### **Monday**

You are driven through the Mont Blanc tunnel into Italy, and to Planpincieux. Here you ski up the Val Ferret, ascending the beautiful Armina valley, and over the high Pas Entre Deux Sauts. The night is spent at the stunningly located Rifugio Bonatti, where Mara and her team are famed for providing great food in a refuge in the mountains that even has duvets on the beds. Night in hut.

#### **Tuesday**

A fairly early start, where you head up towards the Malatra pass. This is through amazing scenery towards the Grand Saint Bernard monastery. The ski tour can also include a loop to near the famous Grand Col Ferret, with great views. You return to the comfortable Rifugio Bonatti for the night. Night in hut.

#### **Wednesday**

Ski descent to the valley, and a short drive down the Aosta valley, to access one of the side valleys such as the Val de Rhemes / Grisanches / Savaranches. These all offer great ski touring with friendly huts to skin up to such as the Bezzi or Benevelo Rifugios, both of which are traditional and welcoming. Night in hut.

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## Thursday

An early start to take in a summit at around 3500m with the best snow conditions at the head of the valley. By skinning up a high Alpine peak, you gain the vertical drop for the best ski descent. The huts in this region are famed for having wine cellars and stores that rival valley restaurants! Night in hut.

## Friday

Today is usually a big day of touring, involving a final high pass to cross, and then skiing a different route to return to the valley. For those with a ski mountaineering focus, there is always the possibility of another summit, if you feel the need to burn some of the Italian food off! Drive back to Chamonix. Evening social drinks, then a celebratory meal with the final 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 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 logistics & briefings, 3) Pre course information booklet, 4) Equipment discount voucher for UK shops, 5) Two nights B&B accommodation in Chamonix (inc. bedding & towels), 6) Up to four nights half board accommodation in mountain huts including three course cooked evening meals. 8) Free 36 page technical Course Instruction Booklet, 9) Road transport in Chamonix valley and to and from Italy.

## Course Exclusions

1) Travel to and from Chamonix, 2) Cable Cars (not usually required), 3) Ski hire, 4) Personal laundry, telephone calls, lunches, & any purchases in mountain huts / hotels / restaurants, 5) Activities insurance, & excess baggage charges, 6) Sunday pre-dinner drinks & Friday celebratory meal & drinks.

## Notes

The course requires a minimum number of 3 people. If there are less than minimum numbers, the course can go ahead if you request it, but the price will rise (for 2 people the price is £1349pp). In this situation, should you choose not to continue your booking, you can opt for a full refund or a transfer onto another,

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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: **Intermediate**

Experience : **Some touring experience and good skiing skill.**

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 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](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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- E-mail [info@icicle.co.uk](mailto: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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