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## 2024 trip dossier | Gran Paradiso Ski Tour £1499

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

### Key features

- Climb a 4000m alpine peak and ski from the summit.
- 5 days guiding (Monday - Friday), with two alternative itineraries.
- Based in comfy mountain huts including 3 course evening meals and breakfasts.
- Led by top qualified guides (IFMGA), develop skills such as crevasse crossing and route finding.
- A challenging tour with use of crampons and some alpine skills.
- 2024 dates: 7 - 13 April, 21 - 27 April 2024. Extra dates on demand for 4 or more booking together.



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**24 years**  
established in 2000





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## Course overview

- If you dream of climbing a summit and skiing from it, this ski tour is for you! You summit the highest peak entirely in Italy, the 4061m Gran Paradiso, and have a ski descent with a vertical drop of over 2000m.
- During the week you make undertake a hut to hut ski tour, set within the stunning Gran Paradiso National Park. No previous mountaineering skills are necessary, but any you have will allow you to take in more summits.
- Normally two classic route choices are selected from, either the approach via the Benevolo to Val Savaranches and then the ascent of Gran Paradiso, or the circuit of the mountain starting in Val de Cogne. The exact choice of route is usually left until the last minute to take account of conditions and avalanche risks. Whatever option you go for, you are assured of some great ski touring in breathtaking scenery each day.
- This is a challenging ski tour, with the ability to use some Alpine skills, such as ascents on crampons and the occasional easy abseil. Skiing ability should be good as although there is only a little steep skiing, the slopes can be icy or rutted in places, with breakable crusts. There is often plenty of powder on the descents!
- On the tour you are based in comfy mountain huts, including a three course cooked evening meal and breakfast. This course will also appeal to those wishing to escape the hustle of the Alpine valley towns, and yet not escape the creature comforts too much. Many of the huts in this region have an impressive wine list.
- You will also develop your technical abilities, such as crossing crevasses, route finding, crevasse rescue, and becoming efficient at avalanche prediction and avalanche transceiver searches.

## Sample itinerary

- Sun** 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, including the hire of any ski touring equipment, and the guide who is leading you normally comes to say hello and to talk you through the route on the map. Briefings are over by 19:00 and then you are free to go out for dinner / drinks. Night in Chamonix.

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### **Itinerary 1: Hut-to-Hut**

- Mon** Drive through the Mont Blanc tunnel to the Val di Rhemes, and from there skin up to a summit such as the Punta Pallato 3050m, before skiing down to the Benevolo mountain hut for the night.
- Tue** From the hut you set off very early to ascend another classic ski tour summit such as the Gran Vaudale 3400m, descending by skis to the Benevolo hut for the night.
- Wed** A typical day would be to traverse from the Benevolo to the Chivasso mountain hut, and this ski tour is through complex terrain, which is very challenging in poor visibility.
- Thu** From Chivasso you ski down into the head of the Val Savaranches, and from there skin up to reach the Victor Emmanuel hut, where you stay for the night.
- Fri** A big ascent day to reach the summit of Gran Paradiso 4061m. Ski to within 100m of the summit, then scramble to the top. Then the long ski descent to valley, to Chamonix
- Sat** Breakfast then the accommodation check out is by 10:00. Most arrange their airport transfers to leave around this time, to catch a flight from Geneva about midday. Depart for home.

### **Itinerary 2: Circuit**

- After a short drive from Chamonix to Cogne, you ski up the wooded valley famed for its ice climbing, before ascending above the treeline to the Sella refuge high above the valley. Night in mountain hut.
- From the hut, you ascend towards the watershed col separating the Cogne and Savaranches valleys. The traverse and descent from the col is steep, leading down to the Chabot mountain hut.
- Today is the big ascent day to reach the summit of Gran Paradiso 4061m. You can ski to within about 100m of the summit, then scramble to the top. Long ski descent to Victor Emmanuel hut.
- Here you enter into the most remote section of the route, passing Tresenta to pass to the south of paradiso massif. Today doesn't involve much uphill! Night in mountain hut.
- The final stage of this classic circular route as you descend to Cogne again by a different valley system. After a final Italian coffee, you return to Chamonix for a celebratory meal and drinks.

**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.

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

## Pre-requisite skills

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

Course level:

**Improver**

Skiing :

**Several weeks off piste experience and 2 week touring.**

Ice & Rock:

**Use of ice axe and crampons and rope work.**

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** - 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 any days you are skiing in Chamonix before or after the course, 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 or hotel on room only 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.

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- If based in a self-catering room, 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 guardianed 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 [https://www.meteoblue.com/en/weather/week/gran-paradiso\\_italy\\_3175889](https://www.meteoblue.com/en/weather/week/gran-paradiso_italy_3175889)

## 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/IGNChamonix3630OTmap.html>
- Gran Paradiso map: [https://shop.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/149/BooksMaps/Maps/Alpinemaps/09-Valsavarenche\\_GranParadisomap.html](https://shop.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/149/BooksMaps/Maps/Alpinemaps/09-Valsavarenche_GranParadisomap.html)
- Instructional book: <https://shop.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/165/BooksMaps/Books/Instructional/AlpineClimbing:TechniquesToTakeYouHigher.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%2BSKM.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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