



Icicle Mountaineering Ltd | 11a Church Street
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Tel +44 (0)1539 44 22 17 | info@icicle.co.uk

Website: www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk
Online: shop.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk



2020 trip dossier | **Hut to Hut Snowshoeing £1299**

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

Key features

- **A full week snowshoeing staying in huts each night..**
- **Link 3 iconic snowshoeing regions in France, Switzerland and Italy.**
- **Develop key skills inc route planning and avalanche awareness.**
- **Led by top qualified guides (UIMLA & IFMGA), group size 2 – 8 clients maximum per guide.**
- **Free hire of show shoes, avalanche transceiver, shovel and probe.**
- **2020 dates; 26 Jan - 1 Feb, 1 - 7 Mar.**



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UK registered company 413 6635. VAT 770 137 933

'inspirational mountain adventure holidays'

20 years
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Course overview

- Spend a full week snowshoeing in the western Alps, staying in huts each night, and snowshoe in three countries; Switzerland, France and Italy. There are five days guiding and four nights on a half board basis in mountain huts, and a night B&B at each end.
- The itinerary has been built to link three iconic snowshoeing regions; with trek nights spent in the Grand Saint Bernard monastery / Champex-Lac in Switzerland, the Refuge du Loriaz above Vallorcine in France, and the Rifugio Bonatti in the Val Ferret of Italy.
- Snowshoeing is now officially the fastest growing winter sport, and our team of guides cannot wait to show you why. If you only have a week to spare, then this visit to the Alps will blow your mind, and you can take in several snowshoe summits too.
- As well as enjoying a great week of snowshoeing, we aim to teach you the key safety skills for route planning and winter Alpine journeys, with a lot of weight put on avalanche prediction and reaction, as well as the selection of appropriate Alpine equipment.
- This course really appeals to those who want to explore different regions of the western Alps, and to stay on a half board basis in the huts after each day of snowshoeing. It enables you to really immerse yourself in the area, and to enjoy the best routes!
- Don't worry if you have never snowshoed before, as you will pick up the skills quickly. All you need is to be fit for hill walking, to have a sense of humour if you fall into a soft snowdrift, and to love the outdoors. We can teach you the rest, and you are guaranteed a great holiday that you won't forget for a very long time.
- One of the delights of snowshoeing is that, unlike skiing or climbing, you can go out in all levels of visibility and snowfall, and have a great day. This region of the Western Alps is blessed with hundreds of great snowshoeing areas, and so the itinerary can be flexed on any day to take account of better weather or snow conditions, to ensure that you sample the best on offer.

Sample itinerary

Monday

After meeting your guide in the morning, you are driven into Switzerland via Martigny. The objective is dependent on the snow and avalanche conditions, and popular choices include the Grand Saint Bernard monastery via Col Ouest du Barasson, or Mont de l'Arpille from La Ravoire. Before you start your snowshoe

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trek, you are trained on snowshoes and the use of avalanche beacons. The night spent half board in Grand Saint Bernard Monastery / Champex-Lac.

Tuesday

You are woken, and after breakfast, you head out to tackle one of the classic snowshoe summits or high passes nearby. Objectives from Saint Bernard include Mont Fourchon, or the Three Cols route. From Champex-Lac there is a great choice of trails above the Entremont valley towards the Tour de Bavon. You return to the monastery / gite for a second night, again on a half board basis, as you are for the next two nights too.

Wednesday

After waking again in Switzerland, you set off to snowshoe down to the valley floor, where you transfer back into France and the Vallorcine valley. The snowshoes are put back on, and you ascend through the forests to reach the high alpage of Loriaz, surrounded by a crown of mountain peaks. The refuge is an old farm, and offers us cosy and traditional lodgings for the night, as well as great local food. Half board and night in Refuge du Loriaz.

Thursday

In the morning you ascend to a summit such as Tete du Chevette or Le Charmoz, to watch the sun rising over the glaciers of Le Tour, Argentiere and Geant. You then plunge steeply down in deep snow, back a different trail through the woods to the village. From here you drive through the Mont Blanc road tunnel into Italy, and snowshoe up the Val Ferret. At the head of the valley you ascend to the luxurious hut. Half board and night in Rifugio Walter Bonatti.

Friday

Today is the final snowshoe trek, and you leave the hut far below to reach the Pas Entre Deux Sauts for an amazing view of Mont Blanc in the early morning. You descend back to the hut, and then onwards down to the valley floor. It's always recommended to get a steaming Italian hot chocolate in the Cafe Lavachey! You then return to Chamonix after the snowshoeing for a celebratory meal, with the final night spent in Chamonix.

Saturday

Breakfast then the accommodation check out is by 10:00. Depart for home.

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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) UIMLA / IFMGA guide for five days, 2) Alpine 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 (including bedding & towels) and four nights half board accommodation in mountain huts in Switzerland / France / Italy, 6) Free 36 page technical Course Instruction Booklet, 7) Road transport to and from start and end of snowshoe treks, 8) Logistics support and briefings, 9) Equipment hire of snowshoes, avalanche transceiver, probe & shovel.

Course Exclusions

1) Travel to and from Chamonix, 2) Personal laundry, telephone calls, lunches, evening meals at each end of the trek, & any purchases in mountain huts / hotels / restaurants, 3) Cable cars and mountain uplift, though not normally required, 4) Activities insurance, & excess baggage charges.

Group sizes

2 - 8 people per UIMLA mountain guide. For group sizes of over 8 people, there are multiple guides, and teams travel independently.

Notes

The loan of all technical equipment for each client is included as required: snowshoes, avalanche transceiver, and avalanche probe.

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 previous experience necessary**
Ice & Rock: **No previous experience necessary**
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 1** - 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.
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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>
- 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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