



Chamonix Alpine Snowshoeing 2019



- This course is a week of snowshoeing with fantastic views of Mont Blanc. Based in Chamonix, France, you will usually also explore other different and varied different regions, often visiting Switzerland and Italy too.
- Snowshoeing is now officially the fastest growing winter sport, and our team of guides cannot wait to show you why. Many clients get the bug and come back year after year on this holiday, but we ensure they don't repeat any routes they have done before as there is so many to choose from.
- The aim is to show you some of the hidden gems in the Mont Blanc massif, and there is also the option of staying in a mountain refuge for a night if you wish. There is also the opportunity to summit a few peaks in snowshoes.
- You should enjoy a great week of snowshoeing through deep powder with scenic hamlets, forests and summit vistas. We also aim to teach you key safety skills such as avalanche prediction and reaction, and kit selection.
- Don't worry if you have never used snowshoes before, as you should pick up the skills quickly after some initial training from your expert instructors.
- You have the opportunity of learning route planning and navigation and can gain your National Navigation Award Scheme (NNAS, www.nnas.org.uk) Silver level award through learning advanced use of the map and compass.
- You are led by highly qualified mountain professionals. All of our guided snowshoeing holidays are led by UIMLA International Mountain Leaders.



Course summary and the itinerary

- One of the delights of snowshoeing is that, unlike skiing or climbing, you can go out and have a great day no matter what the level of visibility or the amount of snowfall.
- The Chamonix region is blessed with hundreds of snowshoeing areas within a short drive, and so the itinerary can be flexible on any day to take account of the best weather or snow conditions, to ensure that you sample the snowshoe routes on offer and gain the best views.
- 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.
- As Icicle have experienced Chamonix Course hosts based there throughout the year, we have excellent local contacts and a detailed knowledge of route options to optimise your time in the mountains.

Testimonials

*"Meticulously planned, and extraordinarily knowledgeable. A brilliant holiday led by a guide who so obviously loved every minute of his job, and looked after us very well". **Brian A.***

*"I have just arrived back in Dublin, I would like to thank you for a fantastic week, it definitely exceeded my expectations, and my limitations, I did not realise I could walk so much and so high in such remote areas (mainly due to Kingsley's skill and style of motivation in such a positive way). And to trek in three countries in one week was amazing (France, Switzerland, Italy). It was excellent to learn about avalanches and such a vast amount about general mountaineering Kingsley's knowledge is endless. The organisation and communication was excellent, even down to simple things and where to find things, restaurants etc. Once again thank you for a fantastic week". **Niall G.***

*"So so so much more than a walking holiday. Small groups, a really professional leader, and perfect weather to boot". **Suzanne W.***



Course daily itinerary & objectives

The itinerary below is 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, but they need never repeat a route they have done before.

Your qualified guide will have a massive local knowledge and experience to take you to trek through the untracked powder in hidden forests which are inaccessible to skiers and see wildlife and the best mountain views.

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 meeting your guide in the morning, you are driven to one of the snowshoe regions, such as Vallorcine. The snowshoeing is usually above Les Houches on fairly easy terrain to reach the summit of Le Prarion 1969m. Night in Chamonix.

Tuesday

Now that you are happy on snowshoes, you undertake a spectacular trek such as the Col du Berard or Refuges de Loriaz, above Vallorcine. This follows river through a steep sided gorge and through some hidden wooded glades, before heading up to the high col or a peak for fantastic views. Night in Chamonix.

Wednesday

A popular trek for the middle of the week is in the Contamines valley to the West of Mont Blanc. Here the goal of the day would be to ascend to the summit of Mont Truc 1811m, and the spectacular Chalets du Truc. Night in Chamonix.

Thursday

If the group would like to spend a night in a mountain hut, then the next two days are usually the best for this two day mini-expedition. This could be travelling over to Italy and ascending to a high hut. The alternative is another day trek, with a night in Chamonix. Night in mountain hut or Chamonix.

Friday

Either a day trek or a snowshoe day and descent from a mountain hut. An ideal final trek from Chamonix would be the Mont de l'Arpille 2085m above Martigny (Switzerland). Evening social drinks and celebratory meal. Night 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



799

5 full days UIMLA guiding, 1:8 max ratio
7 days holiday in total, Sunday-Saturday

Inclusions

1) UIMLA guide for five days, 2) Chamonix course hosts for logistics & briefings, 3) Pre course information booklet, 4) Equipment discount voucher for UK shops, 5) Six nights B&B accommodation in Chamonix (inc. bedding & towels), 6) Free 36 page technical Course Instruction Booklet, 7) Road / rail transport in Chamonix valley, 8) Support and logistics back up while in resort, 9) Equipment hire of snowshoes, avalanche transceiver, probe & shovel.

Exclusions

1) Travel to and from Chamonix, 2) Personal laundry, telephone calls, lunches, evening meals, & any purchases in mountain huts / hotels / restaurants, 3) Cable cars and mountain uplift, 4) Optional transport costs to travel outside the Chamonix valley, 5) Any optional stays in a mountain hut on a half board basis for you and the guide, 6) Activities insurance, & excess baggage charges.

Notes

The loan of all technical equipment for each client is included* in the course price as required: snowshoes, avalanche transceiver, avalanche probe and shovel.

Dates

- 27 Jan - 2 Feb 2019
- 24 Feb - 2 Mar 2019
- 24 - 30 Mar 2019
- 7 - 13 Apr 2019



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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.





Icycle 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 Icycle 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/icicleshop.htm>. If you have any queries, please e-mail info@icicle.co.uk or telephone 01539 44 22 17.