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Website: [www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk](http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk)  
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# 2020 trip dossier | **Chamonix Off Piste £799**

Website link | <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/chamonix%2Boff%2Bpiste.htm>

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## Key features

- **Ski the most thrilling runs in the Chamonix and Mont Blanc area.**
- **5 days guiding (Monday - Friday), and Chamonix B&B accommodation (Sunday - Saturday)**
- **2 levels of course to suit your ability.**
- **Led by top qualified guides (IFMGA), group size 3 – 6 clients per guide.**
- **All ski hire can be arranged with Icicle**
- **2020 dates; Level 1. 19 - 25 Jan, 1 - 7 Mar, 29 Mar – 4 Apr.**
- **2020 dates; Level 2. 26 Jan – 1 Feb, 8 – 14 Mar, 5 – 11 Apr.**



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**20 years**  
established in 2000





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## Course overview

- 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.
- **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 Toul 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 too!
- **Evening instruction:** During the week there are optional evening theory instruction sessions, such as crevasse rescue or avalanche safety, to help add to the daily teaching so you can get the most skiing.

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▪ **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

## Sample itinerary

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. Night in Chamonix.

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## 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 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.

## Course 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.

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

## Skiing skill

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

Course level: **Beginner/Intermediate**

Experience:

**Off Piste Level 1 courses:** If you are very new to off piste skiing, or perhaps have just skied a little between pistes or on their edges. You should be confident and competent on all pisted runs, but the key prerequisite is that you are very keen to move into the off piste world.

**Off Piste Level 2 courses:** For this level you have skied a little bit off piste in soft snow. Typically you will have managed to get down this terrain, but will probably have struggled a bit if there was a crust. Your key ambition is to improve and get some really good instruction.

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 2** - 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.
- 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>
- 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>
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## 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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