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



2020 trip dossier | **Mont Blanc Achievements**

£2299

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

Key features

- Climb your first Alpine 4000m peak, Gran Paradiso 4061m, then progress to climb Mont Blanc.
- 10 days guiding (Monday - Friday), and Chamonix B&B accommodation (Sunday - Saturday)
- No previous experience is required, as you are taught everything during the course
- Led by top qualified guides (UIMLA & IFMGA), to really launch your Alpine climbing career
- All technical equipment (e.g. B3 boots, crampons, ice axe etc.) can be hired from Icicle
- 2020 dates; 21 - 4 Ju1, 5 - 18 Jul, 19 - 1 Aug, 2 - 15 Aug, 16 - 29 Aug, 30 Aug -12 Sep 2020



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Course overview

- The Mont Blanc Achievements course is the Intro 4000m 'Summits & Skills' Course with the Mont Blanc Summits course bolted on the end. It gives a total climbing novice the skills for a realistic chance of summiting Mont Blanc. As the course is over two weeks, it is ideal for those wishing to climb Mont Blanc, but who believe that they would benefit from a longer period over which to develop their skills, fitness and acclimatisation.
- You need no previous experience of climbing or mountaineering. This course is suitable for keen hill walkers, indoor wall climbers, or ramblers, to introduce you to the key technical aspects necessary for mountaineering.
- As with the Mont Blanc Summits course, for the ascent of Mont Blanc itself you should be capable of running a half marathon or cycling for five hours continuously. The fitter you are the more you will enjoy the views.
- On the second week of this course, we are as flexible as possible with the itinerary so that, if you feel ready, fit and acclimatised, you make your summit attempt on the first available weather window, Tuesday onwards
- This course is focused on you preparing and summiting Mont Blanc, with other summits and nights spent at altitude to increase acclimatisation. There is a dedicated information page for Mont Blanc: [summit focus](#).

Sample itinerary

- **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. Briefings are over by 19:00 and the team accompany the group to pre-dinner drinks. Many clients opt to travel out a day or two early to do an acclimatisation weekend course to provide
- **Monday** - Alpine skills, navigation, route planning and snow techniques day. There are a huge range of options and skills that can be covered today including climbing to an Alpine summit via a steep ground, practice of hazard awareness, use of GPS & altimeters, moving on snow and emergency procedures . Guiding ratio 1:6 (max). Evening theory session / meeting with course hosts: [click for info](#). Night in Chamonix.
- **Tuesday** - Day to learn and practice using crampons and ice axes on the Mer de Glace glacier (2000m). You also climb vertical ice, create ice anchors, and learn glacier travel skills. This is one of

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your most important days of the course in terms of skills development as it is essential to have good footwork on Mont Blanc. Guiding ratio 1:6 (max). Evening theory session / meeting with course hosts: [click for info](#). Night in Chamonix.

- **Wednesday** - Glacier travel skills, practicing building snow anchors, crevasse rescue, and probing for crevasses, spent on a journey across either the Vallée Blanche, Pointe Lachenal and the Col du Midi, or the massive Argentiere glacier basin. The day is essential for your acclimatisation before Gran Paradiso. Guiding ratio 1:6 (max). Evening theory session / meeting with course hosts: [click for info](#). Night in Chamonix.
- **Thursday** - A morning of rock climbing skills, to learn / practice belaying safely and how to lead / set up safe anchors on rock climbs. You climb either in the Chamonix or Aosta valleys, depending on where the weather is better. The drive to Pont below Gran Paradiso takes just over an hour, and after lunch you trek up to either the Chabod or Victor Emmanuel hut on Gran Paradiso itself. Guiding ratio 1:3 (max). Night in mountain hut.
- **Friday** - Summit Gran Paradiso 4061m after an Alpine start from the high hut, then after you have reached the summit, you descend to the refuge for lunchtime. After this you trek back down to the valley in Pont, and make the return drive to Chamonix. Celebrations in Chamonix in the evening. Guiding ratio 1:3 (max). In the evening there are optional drinks and then a celebratory meal. Final night is spent in Chamonix.
- **Saturday and Sunday** - Breakfast, then you have two days off to really concentrate on resting and relaxation. Some people opt to book a tandem paraglider flight in the morning to celebrate the first weeks efforts, and prices for this are from c.100€ for a c.30 minute flight. These flights can be booked in resort up to the day before you wish to fly. On the Sunday evening you meet at 17:00 for a briefing on the plans for the second week.
- **Monday** - Day for further practice using crampons and ice axes on the Mer de Glace glacier (2000m). You also climb vertical ice, create ice anchors, and learn glacier travel skills. This is one of your most important days of the course in terms of skills development as it is essential to have good footwork on Mont Blanc. Guiding ratio 1:6 (max). Evening theory session on the key safety knots and ropework. Night in Chamonix.
- **Tuesday** - Acclimatisation route to a summit. Continue to a mountain hut for the night or return to Chamonix. The aim is to develop your skills at altitude. The choice of the 1 or 2 day routes is made in reaction to which day you attempt Mont Blanc, as we can alter the itinerary to maximise your

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chances. Guiding ratio 1:2 (max). Evening theory session / meeting with course hosts: [click for info](#).
Night in Chamonix or hut.

- **Wednesday** - Acclimatisation route to a summit. Either an Alpine start from the mountain hut or a second acclimatisation route. Typical routes for the last two days include Cosmiques Arete, Gran Paradiso, Petite Verte, Pointe Lachenal or Aiguille du Tour. Return to Chamonix to prepare for Mont Blanc. Guiding ratio 1:2 (max). Evening theory session / meeting with course hosts: [click for info](#). Night in Chamonix.
- **Thursday** - Equipment and bag checks before you set off to climb up to one of the high huts, either the Cosmiques / Gonella / Gouter / Tête Rousse hut for the night. Guiding ratio 1:2 (max). The choice of route that you take on Mont Blanc, and which hut(s) you stay in is a function of the weather, conditions, and your skills and fitness. Often different teams suit different plans to maximise their summit chances. Night in hut on Mont Blanc.
- **Friday** - Summit Mont Blanc 4810m from an Alpine start from the high hut, and descend to Chamonix. It is usual to reach the summit just after sunrise, to take advantage of the best snow conditions, and to minimise the risks of stonefall or late afternoon storms. Reach valley afternoon, celebrations in the evening. Guiding ratio 1:2 (max). In the evening there are optional drinks and a celebratory meal. Final night in Chamonix.
- **Saturday** - Breakfast then the accommodation check out is by 10:00. Most arrange their transfers for around this time for a flight from Geneva about midday. Some people opt to book a tandem paraglider flight in the morning to celebrate the weeks efforts, and prices for this are from 100€ for a c.30 minute flight. These flights can be booked in resort up to the day before you wish to fly. 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 itinerary as a guide to the types of route / activity that you will attempt.

Course Inclusions

1) IFMGA Mountain Guide for nine days, UIMLA guide for one day, 2) Chamonix course hosts for logistics & briefings, 3) B&B accommodation in Chamonix (inc. beddings & towels), 4) Up to three nights half board in mountain hut (inc. costs for guides), two nights of which are paid for by Icicle, 5) Pre course information booklet, 6) Equipment discount voucher for UK shops, 7) Free 36 page technical Course Instruction Booklet, 8) Road transport in Chamonix valley including tunnel ticket and road transport to / from Gran Paradiso, 9) Evening technical instruction..

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Course Exclusions

1) Travel to and from Chamonix, 2) Equipment hire, 3) Cable cars & uplift (c. 120 euros depending on itinerary), 4) Optional third night in a mountain hut on a half board basis for you and guide, 5) Personal laundry, telephone calls, lunches, evening meals in valley, & any purchases in mountain huts / hotels / restaurants, 6) Certificate for NNAS navigation award, 7) Sunday pre-dinner drinks & Friday celebratory meal & drinks, 8) Activities insurance, & excess baggage charges.

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 experience necessary**
Ice & Rock: **No previous experience is needed**
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 4** - As an absolute minimum you should be capable of running a half marathon in a good time (under 1hr 45mins), but realistically you should be looking at marathon fitness for all courses of this fitness and stamina level to ensure your endurance is up to standard.

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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

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/LGNChamonix36300Tmap.html>
- Gran Paradiso map; 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: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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