

Chamonix Alpinist Week

Our Chamonix Alpine Climbing week is ideal for mountaineers who have attended an alpine intro course, or done some UK winter climbing before and now want to cut their teeth on longer, more technical routes and high quality alpine summits.

The Climbing

A week of varied, high quality alpine climbing in the Mont Blanc range. Chamonix is an alpinists dream, with a huge concentration of excellent routes of all standards on snow, ice and rock. We'll sample some of the great granite climbing in the range, as well as classic ridge and face routes. Individual routes are selected according to your ability and ambitions for the trip - climbing at 2:1 all week gives good flexibility to tailor the itinerary to your particular goals, with typical climbing grades in the range PD+ to AD+.

Sample Itinerary

Subject to weather and climbing conditions, a typical week looks something like this:

Saturday

Travel to Chamonix, to arrive in time for the **Evening Briefing**. Your guide will run through **kit checks** and **safety routines**, as well as hand out any rental equipment, before going on to discuss everyone's goals and aspirations for the week, together with the **current weather** and **mountain conditions** and how these affect our planning. We'll have maps and guidebooks of the area to show you, so if you've any further questions or last minute requests, then this is the ideal time to bring them up.

PM Overnight in the valley.

Sunday

Acclimatisation Climb. Ascent of a high quality mountain route in order to acclimatise and brush up on alpine skills. Day 1 is normally a warm up day in order to find your feet on alpine terrain again and get used to the altitude. Typical outings might include a mid altitude rock route in the Aiguilles Rouges or Chamonix Aiguilles, an alpine ridge climb like the Aig D'Entreves, or a shorter face climb like the Aig du Toule NW Face.

Overnight in valley.

Monday and Tuesday

2-day Trip into the mountains, staying in an alpine hut overnight. Our plan is to climb **2 good quality routes** - with an early alpine start on the second day in order to attempt a longer, more involved objective. See the sample climbs list on our website for some typical objectives:

- **Multi pitch Climbs:** Tacul North Face Routes, Pyramide du Tacul, Chapelle de la Gliere etc
- **Ridge Traverses:** Table de Roc Ridge, Aiguille D'Entreves etc.
- **Technical Summits:** Tour Ronde, Aiguille du Peigne etc

Tue PM return to Chamonix. Overnight in valley.

Wednesday to Friday

3-day trip staying in huts Wed and Thur nights. This gives us time to access some of the more remote huts in the Mont Blanc massif. Possible objectives include:

- **Couvercle Hut:** Aiguille du Moine, La Nonne-Eveque Traverse
- **Dalmazzi Hut:** Aiguille du Savoie, Mont Rouges du Triolet
- **Monzino Hut:** Aiguille Croux, Punta Innominata
- **Argentiere Hut:** Aiguille du Genepi, Aiguille d'Argentiere

If you have any particular ambitions or specific objectives in mind for the week, then please let us know when you book – so that we can tailor the itinerary accordingly, in order to give you the greatest chance of success.

Fri PM - return to the valley for a debrief, exchange of photos etc and farewells.

Saturday

Depart AM

Fitness and Experience

To get the most out of this course you need to either have prior alpine experience, or have climbed at least Scottish Grade II in winter and Severe on rock in the UK (or equivalent). Alpine mountaineering requires good levels of fitness and stamina, as mountain days can involve 6-10 hours climbing at altitude with a rucksack on. We advise you to prepare well in advance with regular exercise and training. **Please see our website Fitness Levels and Tech Levels as a further reference point (detailed on this trips course page > Fitness and Experience section)** - you should be at **Fitness Level 2-3 and Tech Level 3** to enjoy this trip. If you need to top up your fitness before the trip and need some help, then please contact us, or check out the training advice page on our Knowledge Base: <https://www.alpine-guides.com/climb/insider-knowlege-climb/>

Guiding Team

All our Alpine programmes are staffed by IFMGA Mountain Guides working at a maximum ratio of 1:2 on the Chamonix Alpinist Week. We work with a small team of regular guides who's profiles can be found on our website, but we occasionally employ other guides during peak season.

Course Briefing

The course briefing is in the bar of your hotel at 6pm, the day before your first day of climbing. Your guide will make sure everyone has settled in to their rooms, do a quick equipment check and go through the weather forecast and general plan for the week. Hotel details will be sent to you with your final joining instructions.

Included in the Price

- Guides fees and all guides expenses
- 4 nights accommodation in the Chamonix valley, including breakfast and evening meals**
- 3 nights accommodation in mountain huts, including breakfast and evening meals
- Local travel in the guides vehicle to complete the course itinerary

Not included in the Price (see below for further info)

- Cable cars
- Lunches and drinks
- Travel to resort
- Insurance
- Equipment hire

(NB 'Course Only' Options are also available. If you'd like to book a place on the course only and arrange your own accommodation, then please get in touch and we'll quote you a price).

Cable Cars

For maximum productivity during the week, we will be using use cable cars on most days to either access climbs, alpine huts, or return to the valley. Budget **130 Euros* for these lifts.**

Lunches and Drinks

Food that is typically carried in the mountains includes high energy and convenient to eat snacks, such as cereal/energy bars, nuts, trail mix etc. plus a sandwich for your main lunch stop. There is usually time to buy a sandwich in the morning on the way to the days climbing venue, but it's best to stock up on the other hill snacks/ energy bars that you may need at the start of the week. If you do run short of food during your time in the mountains, then you can buy a late lunch of rosti or pasta etc. at the huts (but it's quite expensive). Depending on the available water supply at each hut, drinks and sometimes drinking water must be purchased from the hut guardian (bottled water in particular can be very expensive, as everything has to be helicoptered up from the valley). Budget approx. **15 Euros* per day for lunches and drinks.**

***Based on this, the extra spending money you will need during the trip is approx. 220 Euros** (plus some contingency, depending on how much beer/wine you plan to drink). Please note that the majority of huts don't accept credit cards, so you need to carry cash.

Valley Hotels

Our meeting point and Chamonix valley base is Chalet Tissieres in Les Bossons, just 5 mins by car/bus from Chamonix centre. The chalet stands in its own 2000m² alpine garden with stunning panoramic views of Mont Blanc and the entire Chamonix valley. It offers simple but comfortable shared rooms, a large lounge/dining area, honesty bar, and a huge balcony for al fresco dining on warm summer evenings: a great place to relax after a big day in the mountains. The chalet serves a buffet breakfast and varied 3 course evening meal**, with special diets catered for upon request. Rooms are provided on a twin (or occasionally 4-6 person) sharing basis, but if you prefer a single room please let us know and we will confirm availability. ** The chef has one night off each week – this day will include bed and breakfast only if it coincides with one of your valley nights, but the chalet will recommend an alternative local restaurant.

In peak season we also work with several other similar standard hotels/chalets including La Chaumiere Mountain lodge. Your hotel details will be sent with your final joining instructions. Details of our partner hotels can be found on our Accommodation page: <https://www.alpine-guides.com/climb/planning-your-climbing-trip/accomodation/>

Mountain Huts

During your time in the high mountains you will be staying in mountain huts. These are operated as basic hotels, serving breakfast and an evening meal, which tends to be simple and wholesome with a fixed daily menu. For breakfast there is usually tea, coffee or hot chocolate, then cereal and bread with jam or cheese etc. Evening meals usually start with soup accompanied by bread and/or cheese, followed by pasta or rice with a meat/vegetable/sauce dish and finish with a small desert. Vegetarians are often served the same food as everyone else, with an egg/cheese dish instead of meat, but some huts are more creative and will serve excellent vegetarian food. Other types of diet can also be accommodated, but we must know about these and any requests for vegetarian food at the time you book.

Huts typically have shared dormitory style rooms with bunk beds, blankets/duvets and pillows, so there's no need to carry a sleeping bag. Italian huts insist on a sheet sleeping bag liner, so it's a good idea to carry one of those (the lightweight silk ones are best – packing up to the size of a tennis ball). Earplugs are also a good idea if you are a light sleeper! Washroom facilities are usually quite basic due to the limited supply of running water (often just a sink and cold water), so a simple wash kit will be fine - and every hut provides slippers for use inside the building, so you don't need to take any extra footwear besides your climbing boots. Finally - if you are a member of the BMC or an Alpine Club, then please bring along your card as there is usually a small members discount. For more info on using mountain huts:

<https://www.alpine-guides.com/climb/insider-knowledge-climb/using-alpine-huts/>

Travel to Resort

Your course starts and finishes in the Chamonix valley. Several low cost airlines fly to Geneva, which is the nearest airport to Chamonix – for a quick search of the best options, check out the excellent Sky Scanner website <http://www.skyscanner.net>. From Geneva, an airport transfer (usually a shared minibus taxi) to Chamonix is the easiest option, with several different companies to choose from who will drop off directly at your accommodation. Other airport transfer options include hiring a car and driving to Chamonix (approx. 1.2 hrs), or taking a bus or train. Other non-flight travel options include driving, coach or the excellent Eurostar train service. Further travel information including flights, airport transfers, railways and channel crossings etc. can be found on the Travel Planning page of our website:

<https://www.alpine-guides.com/climb/planning-your-climbing-trip/travel-planning/>

Insurance

For this trip you must have specialist travel insurance providing medical, emergency search/rescue and repatriation cover for the following activities: rock climbing and mountaineering in glaciated areas requiring the use of ropes, up to 5000m altitude. We also strongly recommend that you purchase cancellation cover, in case you're unable to attend your trip due to personal circumstances or injury. You should also obtain a European Health Insurance Card, either online or from your local post office.

****Once we have confirmed that your trip is running, we strongly advise that you arrange your insurance immediately, so that you're covered for loss of course fees and other travel related costs if you need to cancel your holiday due to personal circumstances. Once you are insured, please email us the policy details, and carry a hard copy with you during the trip****

More information, including advice for non-UK residents, can be found on the Insurance page of our website here

<https://www.alpine-guides.com/climb/planning-your-climbing-trip/insurance/>

Equipment

A full kit list is enclosed. If you need to purchase an ice axe, boots, or crampons - then please check out the advice articles on our Knowledge Base: <https://www.alpine-guides.com/climb/insider-knowlege-climb/>

If you need to hire any of the following items of specialist climbing equipment: ice axe, crampons, helmet or harness - this can be done through us or via equipment shops in resort. If you'd like to hire any of the above items please visit our Equipment Hire page for more info: <https://www.alpine-guides.com/climb/planning-your-climbing-trip/equipment-hire/>

Boots should be suitable for the planned activity and should ideally be well broken in beforehand, in order to prevent sore feet and blisters from spoiling your holiday. Mountaineering boots can also be hired in Chamonix if necessary - if you need to hire boots, then let us know and we'll point you in the right direction.

Mountain clothing needs to be versatile, so a typical layering system for summer alpine climbing consists of a pair of windproof midweight or lightweight softshell trousers on the bottom half, paired with a long sleeved base layer top, a thin fleece or powerstretch top and a softshell jacket on the top half (plus a light insulated duvet, or fleece carried as a spare warm layer). Outer wet weather gear should be as lightweight as possible, as it's usually carried more often than worn during a typical summer alpine trip, but it should be both fully waterproof and breathable. Key features are a helmet compatible hood, and side zips allowing trousers to be pulled on over your mountain boots. See our alpine climbing clothing advice page for more info: <https://www.alpine-guides.com/alpine-climbing-clothing-advice/>

Weather and Conditions

On a typical fair weather day, the temperature can range from -5 to +25 degrees or more - ie from sub zero early in the morning when leaving a mountain hut, to uncomfortably hot in the afternoon - so it's essential to have a good versatile clothing system that can deal with this, plus any poor weather you may encounter. It's not normal to climb in the Alps during really bad weather, due to the potential difficulty of rescue in the event of an accident and the overall seriousness of being in the high mountains. This is especially true when thunderstorms or lightning are forecast; in which case a change of plan is usually necessary. However, you should be prepared for occasional 'Scottish' style days when approaching mountain huts, so an umbrella isn't a bad idea!

Itinerary Changes

Poor weather can sometimes alter our plans; this is unavoidable, but we will do our best within safe margins, to stick to our original objectives. As this is a flexible week of guiding, we can usually find an appropriate climbing objective in all but the most severe weather conditions (eg strong winds, snow, poor visibility) where going into the high mountains may not be a safe option. If this is the case, we will discuss the possible alternatives with the group and agree on a new plan, which may involve relocating to find better weather and conditions.

Maps and Guidebooks

If you want to buy a map or guidebook, then the best ones to get are:

- Map: IGN 1:25000 series, 3630 OT 'Chamonix – Massif du Mont Blanc'
- Guide: Snow Ice and Mixed Climbs of the Mont Blanc Massif Vols 1+2, JM Editions
- Guide: The Mont Blanc Range: Classic Snow, Ice and Mixed Climbs, Cordee
- Guide: Chamonix – Rockfax.com. Up to date selective guidebook for British Alpinists visiting Chamonix

Checklist

- Please make sure you have all of the following before leaving home!
- Passport
- All Climbing Gear (Check kit list)
- Flight + Travel Tickets
- Personal Medications
- European Health Insurance Card
- Camera + Spare Batteries
- Insurance Certificate
- Compeed &/or tape to stop blisters
- Credit Card + Foreign Currency
- Full Driving Licence if hiring a car

What Next?

- Bookings can be made online via our website. A deposit of £300 per person is required to secure your place, with the balance due 8 weeks before the course start date - we will email you a balance reminder including your invoice and possible payment methods.
- Once we have the minimum required number of bookings we will email you to confirm the course is running (confirmed trips will also be visible on our website). Once confirmed, you should arrange your travel insurance and travel to resort.
- We will email you 2 weeks before the course start date with any final info including your guides contact details, hotel details/directions and any other final info.

More Info

Please contact us for more info regarding any aspect of the trip – info@alpine-guides or 0113 8151904 (we might be out skiing or climbing – if so please leave a message and we'll get back to you asap, thanks!).

Equipment list – on next page...

Summer Alpine Equipment List

Above all, alpine climbing kit needs to do the job, but be as light as possible. We work with various manufacturers including Arc'teryx, whose products we can thoroughly recommend.

Technical Clothing

- **Wicking thermal top** - long sleeved and light colour is ideal!
- **Softshell Jacket** – mid weight, wind resistant, light insulating layer (or a mid weight fleece jacket)
- **Spare warm layer**– lightweight synthetic/down jacket or other warm layer
- **Waterproof jacket** - lightweight breathable model
- **Mountain trousers** - light/mid-weight windproof softshell model
- **Overtrowsers** - with long side zips
- **Socks** - warm 'Smartwool' type, plus thin liner socks and spares
- **Gaiters** - made from breathable material (or trim fitting trousers with ankle volume adjuster)
- **Thin gloves** - windproof 'hardfleece' model is good
- **Warm insulated gloves** - wind and waterproof
- **Warm hat** - must fit under a helmet

Personal Items

- **Water Container** - at least 1 litre
- **Headtorch** - and batteries
- **Map, compass and whistle** (optional, but a good idea)
- **Personal medications and blister kit** - zinc oxide tape, compeed, painkillers etc
- **Sun Glasses** - CE rated 3 or 4 with side protection
- **Sun and lip cream** - factor 30+
- **Sun hat**
- **Shorts**
- **Wallet and passport**
- **Alpine Club/BMC card** (if you are a member) and **insurance docs**

Hut Overnight Items

- **Small wash kit**
- **Spare lightweight t-shirt/socks/pants**
- **Silk sheet sleeping bag liner**
- **Ear plugs**

Technical Equipment

- **Rucsac** - 35/45l is perfect for general use
- (**Lightweight Rucsac** - superlight 15/20l model, for taking on long multi-pitch rock routes: for technical climbing trips only)
- ***Rigid mountaineering boots** – Visit Insider Knowledge > Axe, Boot and Crampon Advice article
- **Rock boots** - must be comfortable enough to wear for several hours (can be hired in resort if necc)
- **Approach shoes** - or trainers
- **Trekking poles** – useful but not essential
- **Harness, locking karabiner and belay device**
- **2 prussik loops + karabiner** - if in doubt, bring 3m of 6mm climbing cord!
- **120cm sling + locking karabiner**
- **Climbing helmet**
- **Crampons** - with antiball plates
- **Ice Axe** - classic type for intro and general mountaineering courses
- **Technical Ice Axe and Hammer** - required for parts of the Tech Alpine/Cham Alpinist/Ice and Mixed/North

Faces courses

Your guide will have ropes, climbing safety equipment, first aid and survival equipment.

***Boots:** These are VERY important to the success of your trip! It's best to have your own boots and break them in well before the start of the trip - visit <https://www.alpine-guides.com/climb/insider-knowledge-climb/axe-boots-and-crampons/> for advice. On the **Cham Alpinist Week**, you need **semi, or fully rigid mountaineering boots** - ie B2 or B3 boots.

Alpine Guides Ltd – Booking Conditions

1. All bookings are made with Alpine Guides Ltd, company number 4901552, whose registered office is at 14 Wrenbeck Close, Otley, West Yorkshire, LS21 2BU and whose directors are Alun Powell and Richard Cross.
2. We only accept bookings from persons over the age of 18 at the time of booking. Bookings by or on behalf of persons under the age of 18 may be accepted on certain courses, when accompanied on the course by another person over the age of 18 and subject to written parental consent.
3. Unless stated otherwise, your booking must be accompanied with a deposit of £300 per person per course booked, or if booked within 56 days (8 weeks) of the course start date by the full payment. When we receive your booking application, you will be sent a confirmation email. Once we have received payment and checked all information contained within your booking application, we will accept your booking. You will then be sent further information about the current status of your trip
4. We will store and process your personal information securely and in line with our Privacy Policy which can be viewed on our website.
5. Email and PDF attachments are our primary contact method, so you must provide us with a valid email address. You must also ensure that our email address: info@alpine-guides.com is added to your safe senders list, as we cannot be held liable for communication problems caused by personal firewalls, spam filtering systems, or your inability to open attached email documents.
6. Balance of payment is due 56 days (8 weeks) prior to the course start date. We prefer you to pay full balance by a direct bank transfer. If full payment is not received by this date we reserve the right to cancel your booking without refund.
7. For courses taking place outside the United Kingdom you must purchase specialist mountaineering insurance covering helicopter rescue, medical treatment and repatriation (plus on and off piste skiing for ski courses). You must bring all insurance documentation with you on the course. We reserve the right to cancel your booking at any time if we are not satisfied you have adequate insurance in place.
8. If you wish to cancel you must notify us in writing, where upon the following charges will be applied from the date we receive your notice of cancellation:-
 - More than 8 weeks (56 days) before start date – loss of deposit.
 - Between 4 and 8 weeks (28-56 days) before start date – 50% of course fee or loss of deposit, whichever amount is greater.
 - Less than 4 weeks (28 days) before start date – full course fee.
9. Requests for course transfers must be made more than 56 days prior to original start date and are subject to availability. You also have the right to transfer your booking to another person who satisfies all conditions for the course (including health, fitness and experience requirements), subject to the same conditions above.
10. We reserve the right to cancel any course due to insufficient numbers, or transfer bookings between courses to make numbers viable. In either event clients will be informed of our decision as soon as possible and not less than 21 days before start date. You will be offered either a free transfer, a full refund, or a mutually agreed alternative program. You must inform us as soon as possible which you choose to accept.
11. In the event of guide injury or illness, we will endeavour to find replacement guide(s) as soon as possible. If replacement guide(s) cannot be found part way through a trip, we will refund guiding fees for any days of guiding not provided and you may still use remaining accommodation nights unguided. In the event that we cannot find replacement guide(s) for the whole of your trip, you may choose to use the accommodation portion of your trip and receive a refund of guiding fees, cancel your trip with a full refund, or accept a mutually agreed alternative program.
12. We do not accept any responsibility for changes to travel arrangements that you make in order to join your trip or course. We accept no financial liability that may arise from any enforced change to your travel plans due to any alteration of the trip or course dates, the itinerary or its cancellation, howsoever caused. You are advised to book transferable, refundable travel tickets with no penalties should a cancellation be necessary.
13. At the discretion of the course director, guiding ratios may be varied from the stated course ratio to cover eventualities such as staff absence or change of itinerary, so long as this does not breach accepted local guiding ratios or other professional guidelines laid out by the British Association of Mountain Guides.
14. We do not accept bookings from groups or individuals participating in sponsored climbs or 'challenge events' of any kind. If we discover that you are seeking sponsorship or participating in such an event in connection with one of our courses, we reserve the right to cancel your booking without refund, or exclude you from further mountain activities whilst on the course with immediate effect.
15. Whilst we maintain high professional standards of client care and safety, you must realise and accept that climbing, mountaineering and skiing are activities which carry a danger of personal injury or even death, as they take place in remote and hazardous mountain terrain. All clients must be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement in such activities.
16. All information contained within our website, social media channels and other publicity is for guidance only. Whilst making every effort to ensure accuracy, we cannot be responsible for any inaccuracies or alterations beyond our control. Should any changes occur, clients will be notified before a booking is accepted.

17. Although we adhere to planned itineraries wherever possible, changes may occur to both travel and guiding itineraries due to external factors beyond our control. In particular, the guide has total discretion to alter programs at any time in the interests of client safety and current mountain, or weather conditions.

18. By booking you agree to abide by instructions and decisions made by the guide regarding individuals and the group as a whole. Our guides reserve the right to exclude individuals from a planned activity on the grounds of health, safety or the success and enjoyment of the rest of the party. Any individuals so excluded are not entitled to a refund. Any individual contravening the decisions or advice of their guide, or undertaking independent mountain activities during the course shall forfeit all protection and duty of care from the guide.

19. We accept no liability for the consequences of strikes, riots, acts of war or terrorism, disease outbreaks, government intervention, natural disasters or adverse weather conditions. If such occurrences cause us to have to cancel a course or trip we will offer an alternative holiday if possible, but accept no liability for return of fees paid prior to cancellation or curtailment.

20. If you have a complaint about the guiding or other services you receive during your holiday, you must notify ourselves or the guide involved as soon as possible, in order to give us the opportunity to put things right. Non of our guides have authority to promise refunds or compensation on behalf of Alpine Guides Ltd. Only the company directors are authorised to make such decisions.

If, despite our best efforts and having followed the above procedure for reporting and resolving your complaint, you feel that it has not been satisfactorily settled, we recommend that it is referred for arbitration under the ABTOT Travel Industry Arbitration Service. An Independent Arbitrator will review the documents relating to any complaint and deliver a binding decision to bring the matter to a close. Details of this scheme are available from The Travel Industry Arbitration Service, administered by Dispute Settlement Services Limited, 9 Savill Road, Lindfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 2NY. This scheme cannot however decide in cases where the sums claimed exceed £5,000 per person or £10,000 per booking form, or for claims which are solely or mainly in respect of physical injury or illness or the consequence thereof.

21. On courses that include accommodation in the course fee:

The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT) provides financial protection under The Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements Regulations 2018 for Alpine Guides Ltd, membership number 5394 and in the event of their insolvency, protection is provided for the following:

1. non-flight packages and
2. flight inclusive packages that commence outside of the EEA, which are sold to customers outside of the EEA.

ABTOT cover provides for a refund in the event you have not yet travelled or repatriation if you are abroad. Please note that bookings made outside the EEA are only protected by ABTOT when purchased directly with Alpine Guides Ltd. In the unlikely event that you require assistance whilst abroad due to our financial failure, please call our 24/7 helpline on 01702 811397 and advise you are a customer of an ABTOT protected travel company. You can access The Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements Regulations 2018 here: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2018/634/contents/made>

22. All terms and conditions between clients and Alpine Guides Ltd are to be governed by and held under the exclusive jurisdiction of English Law.

23. Making your booking implies that you understand and accept the booking conditions and agree to abide by them.