

Cogne Ice Climbing Week

The well-known ice climbing centre of Cogne lies in Italy's beautiful Gran Paradiso National Park. With a friendly welcome guaranteed, there is climbing suitable for all levels of ability and experience. For experienced climbers, we can deliver a demanding week tackling some of the areas big classics such as Repentance (6) and Trip in the Night (5+).

The Climbing

Cogne has an excellent variety of ice climbing across the grade range, with extremely reliable conditions due to the high altitude of the valley floor. Our itinerary for each week is planned around current ice conditions and the interests and ability level of the team, but most routes start at around Scottish grade 3/4 and are from one to eight pitches long. Leisurely approaches take from 10 minutes to 1 hour and most routes can be descended by abseil, therefore decreasing the commitment level and increasing the overall friendliness and enjoyment factor.

Sample Itinerary

Subject to weather and snow conditions, the plan for the week is as follows:

Day 0 Sun	Meet in Chamonix 6pm latest. Drive to Cogne in Guides' car (approx 1hr 45). Evening Briefing - your guide will run through kit checks and safety routines , before going on to discuss the current weather and mountain conditions and how these affect our plans. Overnight in Cogne.
Day 1 Mon	Warm up Day - teaching axe/crampon skills and basic movement, or refresher for those who have climbed before. A good route choice for day 1 is Cascade du Lillaz (3), an excellent 6 pitch climb with easy pitches separated by big snowy platforms – perfect for finding some space and learning the ropes.
Days 2-4 Tue-Thu	Classic icefall climbs of the Cogne Valley , with ascents and skills training tailored to your requirements. Lots of route choice at all grades, with many routes within 30 mins walk of the hotel. Good examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lillaz Gully (4) – a superb mountaineering route up a deep couloir with many interesting and varied pitches. • Candelabro del Coyote (4+) – a steep cascade style route. • Sentiero del Troll (3) – a long gully with many easy pitches. • Tuborg (4+) – steep columns!
Day 5 Fri	Final Day - we may visit a neighbouring valley en route to Chamonix, eg Val Savaranche , for one of the excellent routes here, such as Rovenaud (4). Mid-afternoon depart for Chamonix, arriving approx 5pm. Fri PM Transfer to Geneva for evening flight, or overnight in Cham.

Fitness and Experience

For **intro level** courses you need no previous ice experience, but should have climbed on rock previously - ie be able to tie on and belay safely. At **intermediate level** you need some previous snow or ice experience (in Scotland or the Alps) to get the most out of the week and at **advanced level** you should have previously climbed Scottish grade IV before starting the course. We advise you to prepare well in advance with regular cardiovascular exercise and some specific climbing related 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 2-5** 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: <http://www.alpine-guides.com/climb/insider-knowlege-climb/>

Guiding Team

All our European ice climbing programmes are staffed by IFMGA Mountain Guides working at a maximum ratio of 1:2 on the Cogne Ice Climbing Week. We work with a small team of regular guides who's profiles can be found on our website.

Course Briefing

The briefing will be in Cogne on your evening of arrival. Upon arrival we will get an up to date conditions report, then make plans for the following day and check equipment.

Included in the Price

- Guides fees and all guides expenses
- 5 nights accommodation including breakfast and evening meals
- Travel during the trip in guides vehicle

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

- Lunches and drinks
- Flights and transfers to resort
- Insurance
- Equipment hire

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. Budget approx. **50 Euros* during the week for this**. A hot flask is also a good idea, for warm drinks on chilly belays.

***Based on this, the extra spending money you will need during the trip is approx. 50 Euros** (plus some contingency, depending on how much beer/wine you plan to drink).

Valley Hotels

We work with a number of 2/3* hotels and chalets in Cogne, for example the friendly and comfortable Hotel La Barme and the bed and breakfast apartments Les Nigritelles (with evening meals taken in a nearby restaurant). These make excellent bases - with good food, heated underground parking, drying rooms, wifi, sauna etc. Rooms are provided on a twin (or occasionally triple) sharing basis, but if you wish to book a single room please let us know at the time of booking and we will provide a quote.

NB If you wish to stay in Chamonix for an extra night (ie Friday night) at the end of your trip, then please get in touch and we'll help you book a room.

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 or mobile phone app <https://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. Use 'Chamonix Train Station' as the destination – guide meeting will be here, to make the onward journey to Cogne in guides car. 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: ice climbing and mountaineering requiring the use of ropes. 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 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-knowledge-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 need to be warm, fully rigid 4 season models and should ideally be well broken in beforehand to prevent sore feet and blisters from spoiling your holiday. Mountain clothing needs to be both warm and versatile, so a typical layering system for European ice climbing consists of:

Bottom half - thermal long johns, a pair of windproof midweight or heavyweight softshell trousers and (depending on the weather), a pair of durable waterproof overtrousers (ideally with full length side zips).

Top half - a warm long sleeved base layer top, a thin fleece or powerstretch top and either a softshell, or lightly insulated jacket, finished off with a waterproof shell jacket with a helmet compatible hood. In addition to this, you also need to carry a warm, insulated down/synthetic belay jacket.

Weather and Conditions

Settled periods of high pressure are frequent in the Alps during winter and often persist for several days. During such weather, the daytime temperatures are generally between -10°C and 0°C, although it can sometimes be much colder, so you need to be prepared with warm gloves and a good belay jacket. It is also common though, to find areas of running water on many routes, so waterproofs and spare gloves are also a must. Conversely, when it snows, ice climbing becomes more challenging - with fresh trail breaking and avalanche hazards to contend with. As a result, certain routes may become off limits for a while, but there are sufficient alternatives and safe options in the valley to make climbing possible almost all of the time during the main season. After periods of particularly heavy snowfall, snowshoes can sometimes be handy for accessing routes - these can be hired in town if required.

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, 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:** Escursionista editore 1:25000 series, Sheet 10 'Valle Di Cogne Gran Paradiso'
- **Guides:** Effimeri Barbagli - Matteo Giglio, Tipografia Valdostana (newest guidebook)
Cascades Autour du Mont-Blanc, Tome II - Francois Damilano, Editions Ice Connection

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...

Icefall Climbing Kit List

You will need standard Scottish winter kit, plus a few extra items. In particular, pay attention to comments regarding ice tools, boots, extra gloves and belay jackets.

Technical Clothing

- **Waterproof Jacket** - full weight breathable model preferred.
- **Overtrousers/bibs** - with 3/4 or full length side zips.
- **Rucsac** - 40-50l capacity, a plastic liner is a must.
- ***Rigid Mountaineering Boots** - must be warm, thinsulate lined models. Eg Scarpa Phantom Guides.
- **Socks** - 2 pairs of warm loop lined ones.
- **Gaiters** - made from breathable material.
- **Wicking thermal top** - not cotton please!
- **2 Warm fleeces** - or equivalent.
- **Softshell Jacket** - or lightly insulated synthetic jacket.
- **Down Duvet or Belay Jacket** - with large hood.
- **Thermal leggings**
- **Warm softshell trousers.**
- **Thin Inner Gloves**
- **Warm Insulated Gloves**
- **Second Pair of Goretex Gloves** - or equivalent, one pair will often get wet.
- **Hat or Balaclava** - must fit under a helmet.
- **Spare Mittens** - especially if you suffer from cold hands.
- **Spare Fleece** - or lightweight synthetic duvet.

Personal Items

- **Water Container** - approx 1l, or .75l flask.
- **Headtorch + batteries**
- **Map, Compass + Whistle** - (optional, but a good idea).
- **Personal medications + blister kit**
- **Ski Goggles**
- **Sun glasses**
- **Sun block** - and lip cream.

Technical Equipment

- **Harness, locking karabiner and belay device**
- **120cm sling + locking karabiner**
- **Climbing Helmet**
- **Pair of Technical Ice Tools** - eg Petzl Quarks, Nomics etc
- **Crampons** - monopoints or vertically orientated front points can help a lot!

Your guide will have all other climbing safety kit, first aid and survival equipment plus the ropes (though you may be asked to carry one!) If you need to hire ice tools, crampons, a harness, or a helmet from us, then please email us your requirements.

Possible Extras: Thermos Flask, Trekking Poles (useful for approaches).

***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. Boots must be warm, 4 season models.

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.