

Grossvenediger Ski Tour

A week long ski tour through the Hohe Tauern National Park, enjoying excellent huts, quality skiing and making an ascent of Grossvenediger (3660m) - the highest peak in the area and the 4th highest mountain in Austria.

The Skiing

This is a part linear, part star hut to hut tour, with a number of great ski summits and high quality glacier descents. The huts in the area are very friendly and welcoming, with hot showers, bar and restaurant service being the norm. The tour is planned with flexibility in mind and ski touring is possible in the area in most conditions - however as always, stable snow and weather conditions are needed to complete the full itinerary. Two nights are spent at a couple of the huts, allowing lighter packs on some days.

We meet in Innsbruck because it's easy to get to and if you turn up early there's good warm up skiing using the city centre funicular just 400m from our hotel. Onward travel to the Hohe Tauern is also much easier and quicker, as we are able to hire a private transfer minibus, rather than relying on public transport to resort.

Sample Itinerary

Subject to weather and snow conditions, the tour will run like this:

Saturday

PM, meet in Innsbruck 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 the current weather and mountain conditions and how these affect our plans. 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. Overnight in the valley.

Sunday

To the Essener Rostocker Hut

AM Travel to the Hohe Tauern via private transfer minibus – 2.5hr journey time. Skin up to the Essener Rostocker Hut. This is a steady climb up a scenic valley, with 800m of ascent and takes about 3 hours. From the hut, we'll then head out to do an avalanche safety/transceiver session before dinner.

Monday

Day tour - returning to the Essener Rostocker Hut.

There are numerous good day tours from the hut, including a varied circular tour around the Malhamspitz - this route climbs up the South Malhamkees Glacier to a small col and descent, before climbing back up to the Reggentorl col. From here, a great descent then leads directly back to the hut. 1200m ascent and descent ~5-6hrs. Alternatively we could climb the Maurerkees Kopf instead, which would make the day a bit shorter.

Tuesday

Ascent of the Grosser Geiger (3360m).

Before taking a steep drop off the summit leading on to the Maurer Torl col and a long north facing glacier descent. Finally, a short skin takes us up and across the valley to the Kursinger Hut. 1250m of ascent, 950m descent ~5-6hrs

Wednesday

The magnificent Grossvenediger (3674m).

A long climb up the 4th highest summit in Austria. The route follows the Obersulzbach Glacier to the Venedigerscharte, before turning west to climb the final summit slopes. At the ridge crest, it's usual to leave skis and climb the final 100m on foot to the summit cross. Back at the ski depot, an excellent 1500m descent down to the Johannes Hut rounds off the day. 1100m ascent, 1500m descent ~6hrs.

Thursday

Day Tour from the Johaniss Hut.

Several different objectives are available; the final choice will make best use of current snow and weather conditions. ~800-900m of ascent and descent ~5hrs.

Friday

The big final day!

A long but steady ascent to the Hohe Zaun, in order to make the huge 1800m descent down to Innerschloss and the Matreier Tauernhaus - this is renowned as one of the best ski descents in Austria. 1300m ascent, 1950m descent ~8hrs.

PM Return transfer to Innsbruck

Saturday

Depart Innsbruck AM

Fitness and Experience

This is a multiday hut to hut tour with typically 900-1200m of climb per day, so you can expect to be skinning for 3-4+ hours a day. **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 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/ski/insider-knowledge-ski/>

Guiding Team

All our Alpine programmes are staffed by IFMGA Mountain Guides working at a maximum ratio of 1:6 on the Grossvenediger Ski Tour. 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 lobby of your hotel at 7pm, the day before your first day of skiing. 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
- 2 nights accommodation in Innsbruck hotel, including breakfast
- 5 nights accommodation in mountain huts, including breakfast and evening meals

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

- Uplift and local travel
- Lunches and drinks
- Evening meals in Innsbruck
- Travel to resort
- Insurance
- Equipment hire

Uplift and Local travel

The group will take a private minibus taxi from Innsbruck to the tour starting point and then back to Innsbruck again on Friday after the tour, collecting/dropping off at the hotel. Budget **70 Euros*** for this. There are no cable cars on this itinerary.

Evening Meals in the Valley

For the nights spent in Innsbruck, you are free to eat in any of the nearby restaurants – just pay for your evening meals and drinks directly. Budget around **25 Euros* per night** for the 2 nights in Innsbruck. Ideally we will go out to eat as a group after the briefing.

Lunches and Drinks

Personal snacks and lunches can be purchased in local supermarkets in resort before departure, and in mountain huts en-route. The standard approach is to take enough hill snacks - e.g. cereal bars, nuts, energy bars, sandwich making materials etc - to last for the first few days, so you're not too weighed down. Ski days usually finish by early/mid afternoon and if you're running short of food you can buy a late lunch of rosti or pasta etc. in the huts towards the end of the week. In the ski season it's rare to find a natural water source in mountain huts so all drinking water must either be melted from snow or brought up by helicopter. Consequently drinks can be quite expensive, and there isn't a huge difference between the price of beer and water in many huts! Most huts provide a litre of fruit tea for your drinks bottle for use on the hill, but apart from that all drinks need to be purchased from the hut guardian. Budget approx. **20 Euros* on lunches/drinks.**

***Based on this, the extra spending money you will need during the trip is approx. 240 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 base in Innsbruck is the excellent Hotel Weisses-Kreuz, centrally located in the historic old town near a good range of restaurants, an excellent ski hire shop, and with the airport service bus stop very close by. The staff are super friendly and helpful, and everyone really enjoys their stay in Innsbruck: it's a great way to end the trip, seeing the sights and having a nice meal out in the town. Rooms are provided on a twin (or occasionally triple) sharing basis, but if you wish to book a single room please let us know and we will confirm availability. Any extra luggage not required on the tour can be left until the end of the week.

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/ski/planning-your-skiing-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 good in Austrian Huts, with showers often available – so a lightweight travel towel can be a good idea – and in Austrian huts you need to bring something to wear on your feet inside the building: either your ski inner boots, a pair of clogs, or hotel slippers – as they don't supply hut slippers like in other countries. 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/ski/insider-knowledge-ski/using-alpine-huts/>

Warm up Skiing and Sightseeing

If you want to arrive early and do some warm up skiing/sightseeing etc in Innsbruck, then the city centre funicular leading up to the Nordkette ski area is just 400m from our hotel – a free daily bus service is also available to several surrounding resorts. The hotel is situated in the pedestrianised Old Town, which offers numerous sightseeing opportunities, as does the rest of Innsbruck – see the Innsbruck website for more details: <https://www.innsbruck.info/en/innsbruck-city.html>

Travel to Resort

Several low cost airlines fly to Innsbruck from the UK, which is the most convenient airport for touring in this part of Austria. Check out the excellent Sky Scanner website or mobile phone app for the best options: <https://www.skyscanner.net> From the airport there is a regular bus to the centre of Innsbruck, to a bus stop by the hotel, which takes about 20 mins, details here: <https://www.innsbruck-airport.com/en/public-transport> Alternatively, you can fly to Salzburg or Zurich then catch the train on to Innsbruck - for all Austrian rail timetables and prices use the excellent OEBB timetable: <http://www.oebb.at/en/> 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/ski/planning-your-skiing-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: off piste skiing and ski touring in glaciated areas requiring the use of ropes, up to 4000m 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, from your local post office (this is the replacement for the old E111).

****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/ski/planning-your-skiing-trip/insurance/>

Equipment

A full kit list is enclosed. If you need to purchase skis, boots, or any other items of touring equipment, then please check out the advice articles on our Ski Knowledge Base: <https://www.alpine-guides.com/ski/insider-knowledge-ski/>

If you need to hire any of the following items of specialist climbing equipment: ice axe, crampons, harness, avalanche safety equipment, skis and boots - 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/ski/planning-your-skiing-trip/equipment-hire/>

We recommend you do this well in advance, especially in peak season – some shops have online reservation systems and most speak good English for telephone bookings.

When hiring in resort - ski mountaineering skis usually come supplied with climbing skins and harscheisen as a package (skins and harscheisen cannot be hired separately from skis). Ski Mountaineering boots are essential for skinning and walking in, and should be well bedded in before the tour as blisters can be a serious problem. When contacting the hire shop for skis/boots/bindings, be aware that most shops carry a limited range of touring equipment, so it's easier to specify type of ski rather than exact makes/models etc. Telling the shop what type of skier you are and the intended trip will give them a good idea what to recommend. A good all round setup would be a lightweight all mountain ski with 85-95mm width underfoot, and a modern pin binding like the Fritschi, Marker and Dynafit models.

To purchase any items of specialist backcountry ski kit, we recommend you speak to Backcountry UK - they are a leading UK retailer of specialist touring gear and always give friendly and expert advice – <http://www.backcountryuk.com>

Weather and Conditions

On a typical fair weather day the temperature can range from -10 to +20 degrees or more - ie from sub zero early in the morning to uncomfortably hot in the afternoon - so its essential to have a good versatile clothing system that can deal with this plus any bad weather you might encounter. Snow conditions in the high mountains can be equally varied – in an ideal world you will be skiing spring hero snow or fresh powder, but you also need to be prepared for the possibility of ice, crust, windblown snow and poor visibility!

Itinerary Changes

Bad weather and high avalanche risk can sometimes alter the itinerary. This is unavoidable but we will do our best, within safe margins, to stick to the itinerary. Potential changes and variations on the standard tour are numerous but will avoid unsafe avalanche terrain/bad weather days, sometimes using public transport/taxis to connect sections of the tour together as required, to ski it as continuously as possible. This may incur extra transport costs, but your guide will discuss the options with the group if this were to happen.

Maps and Guidebooks

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

- Alpenvereinskarte 1:25 000 series: 36 Venedigergruppe

Ideally, try and get hold of the blue ski map version instead of the red hiking map version – the blue ski maps aren't as readily available though!

Checklist

- Please make sure you have all of the following before leaving home!
- Passport
- All Skiing 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!).

Multiday Ski Touring Kit List

Just remember, every extra kilo on your back knocks 10% off your enjoyment on the descents – so try and keep the weight down!

TECHNICAL CLOTHING

- **Waterproof jacket** – preferably lightweight and breathable
- **Softshell jacket** – mid weight wind/snow resistant jacket
- **Softshell trousers/Mountain Pants** – ideally designed for ski touring.
- **Waterproof overtrousers** – preferably with 3/4 or full length side zips
- **Spare lightweight insulated jacket** – lightweight synthetic/down jacket or other warm layer
- **Wicking thermal top** – ie a 'base layer' not cotton please...
- **Thermal leggings** – base layer 'long johns', light or mid weight (ie not exped weight!)
- **Socks** – specialist ski socks, or a warm loop lined pair of mountain socks
- **Thin inner gloves**
- **Warm ski gloves** – or mittens, if you suffer from cold hands
- **Warm hat**

PERSONAL ITEMS

- **Water container** – at least 1 litre, or a vacuum flask
- **Personal medications and blister kit** – any regular medications, zinc oxide tape, compeed, painkillers etc
- **Ski goggles**
- **Sun glasses** – CE rated 3 or 4, with side protection
- **Sun and lip cream** – factor 30+
- **Headtorch and batteries**
- **Wallet, passport and insurance docs**

HUT OVERNIGHT ITEMS

- **Small wash kit** – wet wipes are a good idea
- **Spare lightweight t-shirt/socks/underwear**
- **Silk sheet liner**
- **Ear plugs**
- **Hut footwear** – crocs or hotel slippers
- **Alpine Club/BMC card** – for hut discount

TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT

- **Rucksack** – 35-40L - NB rucksack MUST have straps on to carry your skis and an ice axe
- **Ski mountaineering boots** – must have good, dedicated walk mode
- **Skis with Touring Bindings** – freeride bindings are heavy for longer tours
- **Velcro ski strap** – to hold skis together on your rucksack if we need to carry them
- **Ski Poles** – with good size 5cm+ baskets (telescopic poles are not needed)
- **Climbing skins** – they come with the skis if you hire your kit
- **Harscheisen (ski crampons)** – they come with the skis if you hire your kit
- **Metal snow shovel** – must be a full metal shovel (plastic blades don't work in real avalanche debris!)
- **Avalanche probe**
- **Avalanche transceiver** – must be a modern digital model (older analogue models are now obsolete)
- **Climbing harness** – with 120cm sling and locking karabiner
- **Crampons** – lightweight alloy crampons preferable on most tours, steel crampons for ski mountaineering
- **Ice axe** – lightweight model preferable (NB must have a steel head – see our advice article)

Your guide will have all other ski safety kit, first aid and survival equipment.

For more advice on ski mountaineering equipment please get in touch, or visit:

<https://www.alpine-guides.com/ski/insider-knowledge-ski/ski-touring-equipment-advice/>

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.