

CHAMONIX EXPERIENCE

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ALPINIST'S MONT BLANC COURSE

Duration 6 days Physical level 4/5 Technical Level 2/5 Price from 3290€

This course has been designed to be educational, teaching all the basic safety skills and techniques involved in summer mountaineering, including a guided ascent of the Mont Blanc as the grand finale of the week. The course is divided into two parts: 3 days of instruction, climbing and acclimatisation and 3 days to climb Mont Blanc. If you are looking to get your teeth stuck into some real mountaineering, as well as climbing Mont Blanc, then this course is for you.

First 3 days - mountaineering instruction

The preparation days will teach you the skills needed for Mont Blanc ascent and much more. We will cover, glacier travel safety skills, crampon and ice axe techniques, essential mountaineering knots, and basic mixed climbing skills to name just a few. Small guiding ratios from day 2 allow for a personal approach and more technical style climbing. As we will climb at high altitude during the preparation days, you will become both more comfortable and acclimatised in readiness for the final big summit push at the end of the week.

Mont Blanc ascent over 3 days

We will climb the Mont Blanc via the normal route on the last 3 days of the course. Following your alpine climbing training beforehand, you will now have a better understanding and sense of confidence for the ascent. You should feel comfortable on crampons and be more familiar with the safety techniques and reasoning behind the planning and decisions taken by the guides.

Mont Blanc Route

This route, also known as the 'Gouter' or 'Bosses' ridge, starts with a steep climb mostly on rock to the Aiguille du Gouter from where it is a steady ascent on easy-angled broad snow slopes to a final steeper snow arête to the summit. This is the most technically easy of all the routes on Mont Blanc, graded alpine PD. The normal route is accessed from one of two huts, the Tete Rousse at 3167 metres and the newly refurbished Gouter on a high ridge at 3817 metres. There are pros and cons for starting from either hut. Starting from the Gouter means a shorter summit day than from the Tete Rousse (although preceded by a longer first day), but many people prefer to get a better night's sleep at a lower altitude prior to the ascent. The actual choice of hut for any particular climb will be determined by the guide after taking into account conditions on the mountain, the make up of the group and availability of beds.

We run this course from beginning of June until end of September. We strongly recommend that you book as soon as possible, ideally by the preceding autumn, so that we can secure your places in the mountain huts. Please contact us for dates and guide availability.

It's important to book your trip with us before the end of November to secure spots in the Tête Rousse and Gôûter huts. Once online bookings open after November, availability becomes very limited.

Climbing Mont Blanc, like any high-altitude ascent, is very weather and mountain conditions sensitive. Due to climate change, rockfalls on the normal Gôûter route have become more common. By signing up for this trip, you acknowledge that the ascent may not happen if weather or mountain conditions are unfavourable. In such a case, an alternative summit, such as one in the Monte Rosa range, will be attempted instead. No reschedule or cancellation / refund is possible.

ITINERARY

The group will meet at the Chamonix Experience office on the evening before start of the trip. Here, we will have an informal chat about the week ahead, weather, conditions, itinerary etc. Your guide will also want to check all of your equipment. You will then have time to decide if you need to pick up any missing equipment or leave some behind to lighten your pack before setting out in the morning.

Please note that this itinerary is an example of what we can do if the weather and conditions allow. The program will be adapted if the mountain conditions or weather prevent a summit attempt. We will discuss the alternative options and re-organise the itinerary so you can climb a different summit or route that is in condition.

DAY 1 – CRAMPON & ICE AXE TECHNIQUES

We begin the course by learning essential skills for climbing Mont Blanc. The Mer de Glace glacier provides the perfect training ground. You'll scramble over moraine and loose rock, and then practice moving safely on steep ice using crampons, ice screws, and basic rope techniques. We return to Chamonix in the evening.

DAY 2 – GLACIER SAFETY SKILLS

Chamonix offers fast access to high-altitude glaciers via the Skyway or Aiguille du Midi lifts. Today focuses on glacier safety and learning how to travel roped on snow-covered glaciers. You'll gain a solid understanding of glacier hazards and the techniques needed to manage them. The night is spent in either the Torino or Cosmiques hut for better acclimatisation.

DAY 3 – INTRODUCTION TO MIXED CLIMBING

Today, you'll climb a mixed route to practice using crampons and an ice axe on steep, technical terrain. A traverse of the Marbrées or Cosmiques ridge offers varied, exciting climbing with stunning views and exposure. This is your chance to apply all the skills learned so far. We return to Chamonix after the climb.

DAY 4 – MONT BLANC ASCENT BEGINS

The Mont Blanc ascent starts today. You'll hike up to either the Tête Rousse hut (3167m) or the Gouter hut (3815m), where you'll spend the night in preparation for the summit push.

DAY 5 – SUMMIT DAY

Summit day! If conditions allow, you'll ascend to the top of Mont Blanc (4810m). The climb takes about 6–7 hours, followed by a descent back to the Gouter hut for the night.

DAY 6 – RETURN TO CHAMONIX

If the summit wasn't possible the day before, today will be your second chance. After the climb, we descend all the way to Chamonix, arriving by mid-to-late afternoon. We'll meet at the Chamex office to debrief and celebrate your achievement!

PRICE DETAILS

2025: Collective groups: from 3290€ per person for groups of minimum 2 participants

Private groups: contact us for personalised program and pricing

Included in trip package:

- 6 days of guiding
- 3 nights in mountain huts with breakfast and dinner
- Lift passes as per the itinerary
- Transport as per the itinerary
- Group safety equipment
- Office based support

Not Included in the trip package:

- Drinks, lunches and snacks in huts
- Personal equipment
- Accommodation in Chamonix
- Travel to Chamonix
- Mountain rescue and travel insurance (covering course cancellation for any reason)

DATES

See our web page for dates and availability. For private trips, contact us for availability.

EQUIPMENT

30 - 35 litre rucksack (important that it fits you and is comfortable to carry even when heavily loaded)

Harness (with adjustable leg loops to fit over your waterproof trousers and jacket)

Crampons (12 point clip-on crampon recommended; antiballing plates are a must, plus safety traps)

Ice axe (normal mountaineering/walking axe, should be 50-70cm depending on your height)

Climbing helmet (should be big enough to fit over your hat)

Mountaineering boots

Walking poles

Headlamp with fresh batteries

Sunglasses factor 4

Ski goggles

Sleeping bag liner (not a sleeping bag!)

Water bottle (at least 1 litre)

Sun cream (high factor for lips and face)

Warm hat

Sun hat

Neck protection (buff)

Thermal underwear (top preferably with long sleeves and long johns - wearing cotton next to your skin can mean you get cold as it does not disperse moisture in the same way as a thermal, wicking garment)

Fleece layers (better to carry several thin layers than thick bulky ones, to allow you to adjust your clothing according to temperature, weather and activity)

Light down jacket

Wind & waterproof jacket (Gore-Tex or similar breathable material with a hood, a shell jacket is good)

Wind & waterproof trousers (Gore-Tex or similar breathable material, preferably with leg zips to make them easier to take on and off without having to remove your boots)

Thick gloves (insulated warm gloves or mitts, gloves make it easier to fiddle with climbing gear but mitts tend to be warmer)

Thin gloves (a fleece wind stopper glove with reinforced palms gives better grip)

Gaiters (to keep snow out of your boots, best if they are made of a breathable material)

Ear plugs

FURTHER INFORMATION

EARLY / LATE SEASON

Typically, the Tramway du Mont-Blanc remains closed until mid-June and after mid-September. When the lifts are not in operation, the journey on D4 and D6 takes an extra 1 hour and 30 minutes, making the ascent more physically demanding.

HUTS

The high alpine huts are one of the big attractions to mountaineering or trekking in the Alps. They allow us to enjoy the mountains with only light packs and without having to worry about meals or finding somewhere to sleep! Most huts have only very basic facilities.

Sleeping arrangements are in mixed sex dormitory-style rooms with bunks. Washing facilities are limited and generally there is no running water in any of the huts although this may vary in some huts. There are basins in which you can use bottled water to wash the best you can and clean your teeth, but they are NOT generally in private cubicles and are mixed sex. Toilets are generally septic-tank type (non-flushing) and again mixed sex. You need to be prepared for simple living in the huts and appreciate they are located at high altitude and in inhospitable terrain.

Breakfasts and evening meals are served by the guardian and his team and the food is usually nourishing and filling. Beer, wine, soft drinks and snacks are also available to buy. All food and drink in the huts is delivered by helicopter and consequently prices will be high e.g. around 10€ for a 1.5litre bottle of still water.

There are a few basic hut 'rules' that you need to follow so that you (and your fellow climbers) have a pleasant stay:

1. On arriving at the hut you must take off your boots and leave these together with your ice-axe, crampons in the foyer. Be sure to store these carefully as the hut is likely to get very busy and you'll need to find all your kit in the morning rush!
2. House slippers are provided and must be worn in the hut
Your guide will register you with the guardian and will assign you your bunk.
3. Follow the instructions of your guide and keep requests to the guardian and his team to a minimum – they are usually very busy sorting out groups, cooking meals, keeping the hut clean.
4. In the morning your guide will often want to leave early – be sure to have all your kit ready to go the night before. Be organised and everything will be much easier!
5. It is recommended to bring ear-plugs for the nights – but make sure that you get up on time!

It is very important to book your trip before November. You will need places in the Tete Rousse and Gouter huts in order to climb Mont Blanc. It will be extremely difficult to find places for you after that as the huts get fully booked very fast.

PHYSICAL & TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

At 4810m Mont Blanc is the highest mountain in the Alps and western Europe. Climbing Mont Blanc is physically very demanding - you will spend the whole climb traveling over glaciated terrain at high altitude. Please be aware that high altitude has a profound impact on physical performance and overall wellness, therefore we stress the importance of sufficient acclimatisation as well as technical training. However fit you are, you will feel significantly less fit at altitude! It is your responsibility to prepare yourself physically for your Mont Blanc trip. You need to start several months prior the trip and should include regular running, swimming or steep hiking are all very good forms of training. Anything that increases your stamina and your cardiovascular ability will be of benefit as you will certainly feel short of breath once you reach a certain altitude – some people even feel it in Chamonix town, a good 3800m below the summit of Mont Blanc!

Many people find that they make it to the summit without any problems but struggle on the way back down as they have expended all their energy. The descent is just as strenuous, and potentially dangerous, as the ascent so having the stamina to make it safely all the way back down is very important. A good level of fitness will significantly increase your chances of summiting Mont Blanc and make the ascent more fun - rather than just hard work.

If you have previous mountain climbing experience, such as Kilimanjaro or Aconcagua, that's a great foundation—but be prepared for a significantly greater physical and technical challenge on Mont Blanc.

While we accept beginners on this course, we strongly recommend having prior experience walking with crampons. If you're new to this, take a look at our [First Steps to Mountaineering](#) course for a solid introduction.

Our 6 day Mont Blanc course is divided into two parts: the first 3 days are dedicated to acclimatisation and alpine training, specifically tailored for the Mont Blanc climb. You'll learn essential skills such as crampon and ice axe techniques, glacier travel, and key safety practices. As long as you're fit and have good stamina, a lack of prior climbing experience won't hold you back.

The final three days of the course are dedicated to the Mont Blanc ascent. The acclimatisation period also serves as a fitness and skills assessment. You'll need to climb Gran Paradiso at a certain pace to demonstrate that you have the stamina and physical readiness for a safe Mont Blanc attempt.

At the end of the initial three training days, we'll hold a group briefing. This is a key moment where we assess whether you've reached the necessary level of fitness and technical ability to proceed with the Mont Blanc ascent.

Most of our clients complete the 3 training days successfully - but **please note that for safety reasons we can not allow climbers who are too weak or don't have the minimal technical level in mountain skills to go on to attempt the Mont Blanc ascent.** We have to make sure that everyone who is climbing Mont Blanc with our guides is able to reach the summit and get back to Chamonix in safety, without jeopardising themselves or the rest of the group. **Please note that there is no refund possible in this case.**

FOOD

We recommend bringing or purchasing snack food in the resort to take into the mountains each day—items like cereal bars, dried fruit and nuts, chocolate, sugary sweets, or your favourite trail mix. When staying overnight in huts, breakfasts and dinners are included in the package price. However, it's wise to bring extra supplies for the days you'll be away, as huts do sell food but it can be expensive and stock may be limited.

If you have food allergies or specific dietary requirements—especially if you're Coeliac (gluten-free) or have a dairy allergy—we strongly advise bringing additional food to supplement your hut meals. While huts generally cater well to vegetarians, they are less equipped for other dietary needs.

Huts can provide a basic packed lunch (typically bread, salami, cheese, and chocolate), which you can order, but it's important not to rely solely on this option. You'll need to carry your own snacks each day. Expect to take short breaks about once an hour, and it's important to eat something each time to maintain your energy levels throughout the day.

OUR GUIDES

On this trip, we will take a maximum of 4 clients per group. Sometimes the actual maximum group size can be dictated by the availability of beds in the mountain huts. The number of guides employed will depend on the group size. Guiding is at a ratio of 1:4 during the first day of training and on Mer de Glace. The guiding ratio drops to 1:2 for the rest of the course (5 days). All the guides for this trip are IFMGA qualified and English speaking.

DOCUMENTS

Mountain search and rescue and repatriation insurance is mandatory on all our trips. We highly advise you to also have a travel insurance policy covering the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your trip in the event of cancellation or curtailment. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

You will need to bring your ID with you.

SPENDING MONEY

The package price includes valley transport, cable cars and mountain railway tickets, 3 nights in mountain huts with breakfast and dinner, and guiding. You will need to allow an amount for lunches, drinks and snacks. Please note that the huts do not accept credit cards, you will need to have € in cash for your snacks, drinks and packed lunches. Your guide will advise you how much you need; there are numerous cash points in Chamonix.

ACCOMMODATION

Please note that the accommodation is not included in the course. While there are 3 nights in mountain huts in the programme and price, we cannot guarantee that you will have place to stay on these 3 nights. If the weather or conditions are unfavourable and we cannot reach any of these huts, you may have to return to Chamonix for the night.

TRANSPORT DURING THE COURSE

All transport during the course, as outlined in the itinerary, is included in the price. We use public transport whenever possible; when it's not available, your guides will drive the group in cars.

BAD WEATHER AND CONDITIONS

If the weather forecast is poor or the conditions are not favourable, we can drive to Italy or Switzerland and attempt the Grand Paradiso, Monte Rosa or the Weissmies in the Saas valley – please note there will be additional transport costs for options in Italy or Switzerland.

As the weather and conditions are variables which sometimes force climbers to change the objective of the trip – this is normal in the world of mountaineering - we do not offer reschedule or refund in these cases.

BOOKING AND CANCELLATION

Send us an enquiry stating your preferred dates and your previous mountaineering experience. We will require 30% deposit to confirm your booking. Please read carefully our [terms and conditions](#) before booking your trip.