



Trip Factsheet: Off-Piste and Ski Touring Skills Week, Ste. Foy

Sainte Foy

The ski station of Ste Foy is a small but wonderful ski area with extensive untracked off piste. Its fantastic rolling terrain, open slopes and lower tree-lined skiing really does give the aspiring ski tourer the ideal environment in which to learn. The renowned resorts of Val d'Isere, Tignes, Les Arcs, La Plagne and La Rosiere are all within a 30 min drive of the chalet giving almost unlimited access to world class skiing.

Objectives of the course

- To introduce you to the world of ski touring and to teach the skills required to carry out this activity.
- To undertake day ski tours in the area to practise and consolidate the skills touring skills.
- To provide practical mountain awareness training on the risks and hazards of backcountry skiing and ski touring.
- To continue to develop your off-piste ski technique in the varied conditions you encounter off piste.

Travel to and from Ste Foy

The chalet offer 1 set pick up and drop off time at Geneva airport at the start and end of the week. On your arrival day (Saturday) we ask you to book a flight that arrives no later than 1300 – so that you can collect your luggage and walk through to the arrivals hall by 1400hrs.

On the following Saturday you will leave the chalet around 8 – 8.30am for the return trip to the airport so you should book your return flight to leave Geneva not earlier than 1300hrs as the travel time to/from the chalet is 3hrs and you need 2hrs check-in time.

If you wish to drive to the chalet we'll provide directions for you and there is free guest parking at the Auberge.

Eurostar operate their direct day service from London St. Pancras to Bourg St Maurice on Saturdays throughout the ski season. Timetables, prices and bookings are available at www.eurostar.com. There is also useful information on www.snowcarbon.co.uk about train travel to European ski resorts.

Rendezvous in the Auberge Sur La Montagne

The week begins with a welcome meeting in the chalet at around 7pm on the first evening this will be taken by your guide for the week and your hosts at the chalet. Your guide will brief you on the itinerary, update you on the prevailing weather and snow conditions for the week and carry out an equipment check. It is also an opportunity for you to ask any last minute questions.

Accommodation

You will be staying in the Auberge Sur La Montagne which is a comfortable, privately owned chalet run by Sue and Andy Mac. They provide excellent food and the chalet has a bar, large lounge area, hot tub, television room and computer/Wifi access. The rooms are clean and

comfortable with private facilities, single rooms are limited and subject to availability and a supplement for the week. You are provided with breakfast, tea and a 3-course evening meal each day except on the chef's night off, usually Tuesday, when you will eat out at your own expenses in a local restaurant.

The chalet has private transport which will be used to take you to the slopes each morning and bring you back in the afternoon.

Andy stocks a good selection of skis and boots including skis with ski touring bindings, skins and couteaux; so if you do not have your own equipment you can rent directly at the chalet. To benefit from the early booking discount they offer please contact Andy directly at that chalet to reserve your equipment.

The contact details of the chalet are: Auberge Sur La Montagne, La Thuile, Ste. Foy Tarentaise 73640, France. Tel +33 (0)4 79 06 95 83; clients@auberge-montagne.com

Guides and Group Sizes

Our courses are run by our team of BASI Level 4 ski instructors and IFMGA Mountain Guides led by Olly Allen, Matt Dickinson, Nick Parks and Dave Meyer. Each course has no more than 6 skiers per guide/instructor. Each group can run with up to 12 skiers and 2 guides.

Itinerary

This week is all about learning and consolidating the skills needed for off piste skiing and ski touring. On the first day we will have a warm up ski on and off piste followed by learning the basic skinning technique and how all the kit works as well as a safety session on avalanche transceiver search and rescue.

During the rest of the week you will ski and ski tour in the Ste. Foy area and the surrounding resorts of Tignes, Val d'Isere, La Plagne, Les Arcs and La Rosiere, which all offer some beautiful tours and excellent off piste ideal for gaining confidence and exploring the backcountry.

Typical Day

Each morning you will leave the chalet in one of their minibuses around 8.45am and will ski all day only stopping for lunch and coffee breaks (as required!) You will return to the chalet around 5pm for a well earned cup of tea and slice of cake and a soak in the hot tub!

Preparation for our Skills Trips

It is essential that you prepare yourself well in advance by taking regular aerobic exercise so you arrive on the trip as fit as you can. Ski touring and off piste skiing are physically demanding and with the big ascents, varied snow conditions and the rucksack you need to carry on this trip, you'll soon be found out if you're not in tip-top condition!

Doing sports that increase your aerobic fitness and leg strength are key. So when preparing for this trip nothing beats activities that increase your heart rate and build your aerobic levels e.g. running, cycling and swimming.

Movement skills - agility, balance, flexibility - which allow you to turn your skis and adjust to uneven terrain - are also very relevant. If time permits try to include some yoga or pilates into your training schedule.

Frames of reference:

- If you are a long distance runner, half marathon or more or do similar endurance sports and you're training or competing within 4 -5 months of doing this trip, then you can stop reading now, just keep up the good work!
- If you have run a few 10ks, are a regular mountain or road biker riding 2 or 3 times a week for up to 4-5hrs train for other similar sporting events then you will be fine too but focus on some long slow walking or running to build your endurance levels a little.
- If you have done very little apart from the occasional 30 minute jog, short cycle ride (mountain bike or road) or you occasionally go to the gym after work – then you have some work to do but fear not you can attain the fitness levels you need but you do need to increase the amount of exercise you do each week and do this well in advance of your trip (ideally 3-4 months out).

For any trip involving off piste skiing and ski touring you will be doing exercise that requires you to operate for long periods of time at a relatively low intensity. You will be carrying a rucksack which will mean you may have to adapt your skiing but it's a lot easier if you have strong core muscles (stomach and back).

It's best to get prepared in plenty of time, not by trying to pack in as much training in the last 2-3 weeks as it takes about this length of time for the body to adapt to an increase in exercise. Don't think that you will get fit during the programme you won't and don't think that simply going to the gym to run on the treadmill for 40mins twice a week will be enough – it won't! In the last 2 weeks you can decrease the amount and intensity of the exercise you do; so you arrive fresh and ready for the challenge.

Good fitness will make your trip overall much more enjoyable and you will get more out of it! For more information contact us and we'll send you our 12 week training guide.

Snow Conditions and Climate

We hope you will have plenty of fantastic snow on your trip, our guides and instructors will do their utmost to find you the best snow available during your stay. Sometimes when the weather is poor (heavy snow, high winds and high avalanche risk) the skiing can be limited due to lift closures, you need to accept this as part of being in the mountains and trust your guide/instructor to do the best he or she can with the conditions at the time.

December and January can be cold, to ensure you bring plenty of warm clothes you can layer with. The spring time (March and April) tend to have cold mornings but warming up during the day. The weather in the high mountains can change quickly and we always recommend you have some spare layers in your rucksack. Your guide or instructor will give you a weather forecast at the beginning of the week and update you frequently during the week.

What's included in the price of your holiday?

6 full days guiding

7 nights half board accommodation in the Auberge (6 evening meals) in rooms on a twin share basis

Daily ski transfers in a private vehicle too and from the chalet

Shared group return transfer from Geneva airport (minimum 4 persons) and/or a pick up from Bourg St. Maurice train station (for the Eurostar Snow Train)

Scheduled expenses

International travel

Lift passes

Lunches & drinks
1 evening meal
Equipment hire
Personal Insurance
Single room occupancy charge (£275 for the week)

Equipment and Kit Hire

A copy of our recommended ski kit list can be found on our website or you can call or email us and we will send you a copy.

Essential items you need to have:

- Skis with ski touring bindings (Diamir Fritschi or similar)
- Skins that are cut to fit your skis and couteaux (crampons for your skis)
- NOTE*** *You cannot hire skins or couteaux on their own! If you are bringing your own skis you must purchase skins that are cut to fit and couteaux that work with your bindings.*
- Ski touring boots
- Ski poles
- 25 – 30 litre rucksack with straps on the side for carrying your skis
- Avalanche transceiver, shovel and probe.

Insurance

You need to have personal insurance that covers you for off piste skiing and the cover must include helicopter rescue.

For UK & European residents we recommend the Ski Club's insurance. For more details and to purchase a policy online visit <http://www.skiclubinsurance.co.uk/>. If you need assistance with arranging insurance please let us know.

You should bring a copy of your insurance certificate with you to the Alps.

For EU residents we recommend that you also obtain the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) prior to travel and take this with you in addition to your personal insurance.

See <https://www.gov.uk/european-health-insurance-card>

What happens next?

We will contact you 8 weeks before your arrival date to request the final balance payment. Around 2-3 weeks before your arrival date we will email you final joining instructions with relevant contact details for your guide(s), hotels, etc.

More information

If you have any questions or need further details don't hesitate to contact us:

Email: info@mountaintracks.co.uk

Phone: +44 20 8123 2978

Skype: mountaintracks