



### **Trip Factsheet: Courchevel – Chamonix Ski Touring Safari**

This great journey spanning both the French and Italian Alps passes through over 7 resorts before finishing in Chamonix. Along its route you can experience a variety of great skiing from the open bowls of the Trois Valleys to the steep tree skiing in La Thuile; finishing with a run down the famous Vallee Blanche to Chamonix.

#### **Travel Arrangements**

This safari starts in Brides Les Bains in the Tarentaise region in France and ends in Chamonix. We recommend flying to Geneva airport.

The transfer time by road to Bride Les Bains is about 3 hours.

The transfer time by road from Chamonix back to the airport is about 75 minutes.

Altibus operates a regular daily service throughout the winter and tickets can be purchased in advance on-line at [www.altibus.com](http://www.altibus.com). Bensbus [www.bensbus.co.uk](http://www.bensbus.co.uk) offer shared transfers from the airports to Bride Les Bains.

For the return transfer from Chamonix back to Geneva we recommend Mountain Dropoffs [www.mountaindropoffs.com](http://www.mountaindropoffs.com) who offer seats on shared transfers back to the airport.

Eurostar operate their direct day service between London St. Pancras to Bourg St Maurice on Saturdays throughout the ski season. Timetables and bookings are available at [www.eurostar.com](http://www.eurostar.com). There is also useful information on [www.snowcarbon.co.uk](http://www.snowcarbon.co.uk) about train travel to European ski resorts.

#### **Rendezvous in Brides Les Bains.**

The week begins with a welcome meeting in the hotel in Brides at around 7pm on Saturday evening. 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.

#### **Accommodation**

Nights will be spent in comfortable hotels on a half board basis along the route. Rooms are on a twin share basis, single rooms are subject to availability and a supplement.

#### **Guides and Group Sizes**

All our ski safaris are run by our team of IFMGA Mountain Guides. The team is led by Olly Allen, Matt Dickinson and Nick Parks. The maximum ratio for this tour is 6 skiers with 1 guide and this safari may run with up to 12 skiers and 2 guides.

#### **Itinerary**

You have 6 days guided skiing starting in the 3 Valleys before moving to Champagny en Vanoise for the 2<sup>nd</sup> night. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> day you will travel through the lift system to La Plagne and onto Les Arcs using the Vanoise Express cable car that links these 2 big resorts. We stay in Ste. Foy on the 3<sup>rd</sup> night. The next day is spent exploring the wonderful off piste terrain that Ste. Foy has to offer, possibly taking in a ski tour of the Foglietta.

You will spend a 2<sup>nd</sup> night in Ste. Foy before taking a taxi upto La Rosiere and crossing over into Italy to take in the tree lined slopes of La Thuile; where we spend the night. The following day is a day ski tour to the quiet and remote peak of Punta Croce before transferring by road the short distance to Courmayeur where you spend the night. The last ski day is a morning skiing in Courmayeur before taking the lift to the top of Pointe Hellbronner to ski the Vallee Blanche down to Chamonix.

The exact itinerary will depend on the prevailing weather and snow conditions and the preferences of the group.

### **Typical Day**

Each morning you will head off to ski around 0830 -0845 and will ski all day only stopping for lunch and coffee breaks (as required!) You can normally expect to be at the next hotel around 5 – 5.30pm each afternoon.

### **Luggage Transfers**

We will transport your luggage from Brides Les Bains to Ste. Foy for you. It will then be moved to Chamonix for your arrival there. If you have rented any items in Brides Les Bains (skis and boots) then you must pay for their rental costs before your departure and any additional costs for transporting these items back to the shop in Brides.

### **Preparation for the Courchevel – Chamonix Safari**

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 tour, 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**

Skiing and touring in the high mountains is very dependent on the weather and snow conditions. You are likely to encounter lots of different snow types during the route, everything from fresh powder to crusty, wind-blown snow. If you encounter poor weather (heavy snow, high winds and high avalanche risk) the tour can be delayed or the route changed and you need to accept this as part of being in the mountains and trust your guide to do the best he or she can with the conditions at the time.

During the ski touring season, typically the mornings will be cold and in fine weather the days can be hot. Sometimes the temperature change can be in the region of 20°C through the course of the day, so it's essential that you have a good clothing layering system.

### **What's included in the price of your holiday?**

6 full days guiding

7 nights' half board hotel accommodation (twin room sharing)

Luggage transfers

### **Scheduled expenses**

Travel to/from the Alps

Uplift costs

Local taxi or transfers

Lunches and drinks

Equipment hire

Personal Insurance

Single room occupancy if required in hotels

### **Equipment and Kit Hire**

Essential items you need to have for the ski safaris

- 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

- 30 - 40 litre rucksack with straps on the side for carrying your skis

- Avalanche transceiver, shovel and probe.

- Harness

If you need to rent skis or boots then please let us know so we can make arrangements for you locally.

Other items can usually be hired from our guides – if you need to hire kit please contact our office with the details and we can reserve the necessary equipment for you.

In this information pack is an article written by Olly Allen IFMGA mountain guide on what to pack in your rucksack, hopefully this will unveil the mysterious art of rucksack packing and what is essential to bring and what to leave behind.

### **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:

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