



Trip Factsheet: Ski Touring Skills 3-Day

Chamonix

Chamonix has some of the best off piste skiing in the world. The bustling town sits below the mighty Mont Blanc (4810m) in a spectacular valley surrounded by high glaciated peaks. The Chamonix Valley runs for 20kms and has 5 main separate ski areas along its length, offering a variety of pisted and acres of off piste terrain. The legendary Aiguille du Midi cable car which accesses the Vallee Blanche leaves from Chamonix town centre. From its high glaciated peaks to the lower tree lined skiing it really does give the aspiring off piste skier the ideal environment in which to learn. The town of Chamonix itself is a busy, cosmopolitan town with lots of shops, cafés, bars and restaurants to sample during your stay.

Objectives of the course

- To equip you with the essential basic ski touring skills as preparation for a multi-day ski touring trip.
- At the end of the course our guide will be able to advise you on the most suitable multi-day tour based on your skill level and personal aspirations and ambitions.

Travel to and from Chamonix

Our ski touring skills courses run for 3 days with 3 nights' accommodation e.g. Thursday - Sunday and you want to arrange to arrive in Chamonix by late afternoon on the first day. The course finishes at about 4pm on the last day – in time for you to change and transfer back to the airport for a late evening departure. Please book the latest possible flight out of Geneva so you do not need to leave the course before it finishes.

The most convenient airport is Geneva. The transfer time from the airport is about 1 hour 15 minutes. We recommend you take a road transfer by minibus to and from the airport; Mountain Tracks can book this for you. Usual prices are from £35 per person one-way. Please supply your full flight details to us so we can make the reservation.

Rendezvous in Chamonix

The course begins with a welcome meeting in the hotel at about 7pm on the first evening. Your guide will brief you on the itinerary, update you on the prevailing weather and snow conditions for the weekend and sort out any kit requirements.

Accommodation

Our preferred hotels in Chamonix are the Hotel Les Lanchers in Chamonix Les Praz; a comfortable 3* hotel with spacious rooms, bar and restaurant and the Hotel Couronne in Argentiere another comfortable 3* hotel. Both hotels have comfortable accommodation in ensuite rooms. Accommodation is on a twin share basis, unless you wish to have a single room (supplement).

Itinerary

Our trips are 3 guided days. Typically your first day will be spent running over some off piste skiing skills and brushing up on your avalanche transceiver search techniques before putting on the skins and going for a short ski tour. The second day will be spent on a day tour in the area and the last day maybe a ski descent of the Vallee Blanche with a short tour.

Typical Day

Each morning you will leave the hotel at about 08.30-8.45am and will ski all day only stopping for lunch and coffee breaks (as required!) You will return to the hotel around 5pm.

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 and certainly our guides 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, so 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.

Ski Passes

For the trips its best to buy day passes in the ski areas that you visit rather than a consecutive day pass for Chamonix. Please wait until you have spoken to your guide who will advise you of what to buy.

What's included in the price of your holiday?

3 full days guiding

3 night's accommodation in rooms on a twin share basis on B&B only

Daily ski transfers to and from the slopes.

Scheduled expenses

International travel and airport transfers too and from Geneva airport

Lift passes

Lunches

Equipment hire

Personal Insurance

Single room occupancy charge (subject to availability)

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.

If you need to hire skis and/or boots while in Chamonix we work with Sanglard Sports who have 2 large shops one in Chamonix and one in Argentiere stocked with the latest skis and boots.

Mountain Tracks customers receive a 15% discount when you book your ski/boots with them.

You need to request the specific booking form from the Mountain Tracks office and email it to

resa@rentski.com

We strongly recommend you do this in advance of your holiday. They have a selection of skis for off piste and ski touring, all touring set up's come with skins cut to fit the skis and couteaux.

You will also need to ski with the 3 items of safety equipment, avalanche transceiver, shovel and probe, if you do not have your own equipment. Your guide can rent these to you for a cost of 36€ for the 3 items for the 3 days. Please let us know in advance if you need to rent these items.

Essential items you need to have:

- Skis with ski touring bindings (Diamir Fritschi or similar)
- Ski touring boots
- Ski poles
- 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.

- 20 - 30 litre rucksack with straps on the side for carrying your skis
- Boot crampons
- Ice axe
- Harness with karabiner, sling and prussic loop

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