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Website: www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk
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2023 trip | **Gran Paradiso Trek & Summit £1199**

Website link | <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/gran%2Bparadiso%2Btrek.html>

Key features

- A mix of trekking and alpine climbing to reach the highest point solely in Italy.
- 5 days guiding (Monday - Friday) with 4 nights in Italian mountain refuges.
- Trek in the unspoiled Gran Paradiso National park and learn basic alpine climbing skills.
- Led by top qualified guides (IFMGA), ratio 1:3 throughout, for itinerary flexibility and safety.
- Specified glacier safety kit (crampons, helmet, axe and harness) loaned free of charge.
- 2023 dates; 30 July - 5 August, 20 - 26 August 2023.



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Course overview

- This is a classic route and is a great mix of challenging trekking and easy Alpine climbing to reach the highest point completely in Italy. The holiday is over seven days, with five days trekking and climbing.
- The vast majority of the trek is in the Gran Paradiso National Park, and so the area is unspoilt by cable cars or development. Most nights on the trek you stay in Italian mountain refuges, and can indulge in great mountain food. You stay in huts on a half board basis (included) for four nights during the week.
- The trekking in the region is remote and unforgiving, so you need to have a good level of trekking fitness. For the ascent of Gran Paradiso no previous climbing experience is required, as you can be taught any skills on the mountain. We provide all the safety equipment such as crampons, axe and harness for free.
- You can look on this week as tough trekking or easy climbing, and it will appeal to those who enjoy remote areas, but love staying in mountain huts, and there is a real sense of challenge with the prospect of what is probably your first Alpine 4000m peak at the end of the week. For those who do not want a 'climbing' course, yet want to experience remote and easy Alpine summits, this is the holiday for you. If you are looking at more of a 'climbing' course, consider the Alpine Intro 4000m Course.
- This trek has great guiding ratios where we guarantee a maximum group size of three people on each day of the holiday. There are also four nights half board in mountain huts in the remote and unspoilt Gran Paradiso National Park.

Sample itinerary

Sunday - Travel to Chamonix to arrive for the 17:00 check-in followed by our course safety and itinerary briefings. There is time for kit checks or rental of equipment. Chamonix hosts accompany the group to pre-dinner drinks. Night in Chamonix.

Monday - Today you travel through the Mont Blanc road tunnel into Italy, and after passing Courmayeur, to turn up the Valgrisanche. At its head you trek up to the Mario Bezzi refuge, then in the afternoon a popular option is to visit the Lago di Vuert. Another option is to head to Valsavaranches, and to head from Eaux Rousses or Pont up to one of the refugios above the valley, such as Vittorio Sella. Typically the walking time on the first day is c. 5 hours. Night in mountain hut.

Tuesday - The objective for the day is to reach the Benevolo refuge, and this involves crossing either Col Bassac Dere 3082m or Col Bassac 3155m. If you have energy you can take in the summit of Becca della

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Traversiere 3334m or Punta Basei 3388m. On an alternative itinerary, you might take in a summit to the North of the Gran Paradiso massif, above the Valnontey and Cogne valleys. There is a huge range of options to select from. Walking time: 6 - 7 hours. Night in mountain hut.

Wednesday - Today there is a choice of routes, such as the remote Col Rosset 3023m, or the ascent of the Punta di Leynir 3240m, before crossing back to the Valgrisanche via a quieter route to the north. Alternatively you might continue to cross Colle Rosset, to descend to Pont via Croce dell'Arolley, again with the possibility of taking in a trekking peak on the way. Walking time: 6 - 7 hours. Night in Valsavaranches or on Gran Paradiso in Chabod / Vittorio Emanuele II rifugios.

Thursday - Today is deliberately flexible dependant on where you stayed the previous night. As you crossed the valley at Pont, you'd have collected the glacier equipment (crampons, harness, ice axe), and so if high already you might head for one of the satellite peaks of Gran Paradiso, such as Tresenta. This ascent will involve crossing some dry (non snow covered) glaciers, and some roped scrambling near the summit, to help you prepare for the next day. Walking time: c. 6-7 hours. Night in mountain hut.

Friday - A very early start to cross the boulder field behind the hut, to reach the glacier, then crampons and harnesses on for the ascent of the highest point completely in Italy. On the glacier you are roped up for safety, and it is a long but gradual ascent to Col Montcorve, then steeper to reach the summit ridge. Here it is a short and easy but exposed scramble to reach the summit at 4061m. After the summit celebrations you descend to Pont and return to Chamonix. Walking time: 9 - 10 hours. Night in Chamonix.

Saturday - Breakfast, then accommodation check out at 10:00, then depart for home.

ITINERARY NOTES: Where possible we follow itineraries. Mountain adventures are weather and conditions dependant, so occasionally we are forced to alter the plans. If this is the case, suitable alternatives are offered. Please use this outline itinerary as a guide to the types of route / activity that you will attempt.

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Course Inclusions

1) IFMGA Guide for five days, 2) Chamonix course hosts for logistics & briefings, 3) Self-catered accommodation or hotel in Chamonix (inc. beddings & towels), 4) Up to four nights half board in mountain huts (inc. costs for guides), 5) Pre course information booklet, 6) Equipment discount voucher for UK shops, 7) Free 36 page technical Course Instruction Booklet, 8) Road transport in Chamonix valley, including travel to / from Gran Paradiso region, 9) Evening technical instruction when in Chamonix.

Course Exclusions

1) Travel to and from Chamonix, 2) Equipment hire, 3) Personal laundry, telephone calls, lunches, evening meals in valley, & any purchases in mountain huts / hotels / restaurants, 4) Cable cars and mountain uplift (not normally required), 5) Activities insurance, & excess baggage charges.

Notes: 2 - 3 people per group. Two people booking together guarantees any date. For this season we have improved the guiding ratio to adapt to climate change, and to improve the safety on the glaciers. If you require the loan of any specified free safety kit (crampons, helmet, axe and harness), this must be reserved at least 2 weeks before the course. Extra rental items e.g. B3 boots must be paid for.

Pre-requisite skills

These are outlined on this page; <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/courses.html>, and this course is;

Course level: **Beginner**
Mountaineering: **no experience necessary.**
Ice & Rock: **no previous experience is needed.**
Fitness: **good general fitness and stamina**

Fitness & stamina

The ideal fitness levels are detailed at; <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/trainingpreparation.html>, and there are links to general training advice and planners that you can adapt to suit and follow.

This trip is graded: **Level 2** - We suggest that people on courses of this grade can run 10km without a problem, but we stress that for courses of this level you do not need to be any fitter than this minimum level, though it is there to ensure a good basic level of aerobic fitness and training.

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How to book

- All bookings are made securely online, and deposit of £250 is payable (with secure payments handled via our travel bonding by SinGS / Felloh). Ensure that when completing the form, you fill in all the required fields, in order for the 'SUBMIT' button to appear.
- All payments are protected by our Tour Operator travel bonding with ATOL and TTA, and your monies are held in trust until after you have travelled home. You are fully financially protected, in accordance with UK and EU laws.
- Website link: <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/booking.html>

Before your trip

- As soon as you book online, you are sent confirmation of this, and attachments including joining instructions, course specific kit lists. If you haven't received this e-mail within half an hour of booking online, please check your junk / spam folder.
- At the office, we manually check all bookings, and you'll also receive a personalised e-mail from us formally confirming your course space, and sending you a deposit payment link. Once you have this office confirmation and paid the deposit, it's fine to go ahead and book your travel arrangements, and to arrange your activities insurance.
- Activities insurance is a requirement for all trip participants. Organise it as soon as you are booked, and ensure that it covers you for cancellation or curtailment, in case you injure yourself or get ill before your trip. This ensures you'd be fully reimbursed for the trip, and all travel costs.
- Website link: <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/insurance.html>

Travel to the Alps

- The closest international airport to Chamonix, is Geneva (airport code GVA). There are many direct flights from the UK every day, and it's well served by the budget airlines e.g. EasyJet.
- Geneva is a small but busy airport, and it's only a very short walk from baggage reclaim into the arrivals area, where all the airport transfer companies meet. In the Course Information Booklet is a code for preferential rates from our reliable transfer partner Mountain Dropoffs.
- Chamonix is also very easy to travel to by rail, from the UK to Paris via Eurostar, then from Paris Gare du Lyon (or Austerlitz) to Saint Gervais by high speed TGV, then the local train up the valley to the Chamonix Aiguille du Midi (or Chamonix central) stop.

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- Driving can work out cheaper, if you're with others, and there's free parking close to the accommodation, on a first come first served basis. Generally a couple of laps, and a space will be freed up for you. See the Course Information Booklet map for the locations of this free parking.
- Website link: <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/travel.html>

Meeting point

- Once you've booked, you'll receive the Course Information Booklet, which details the meeting point for Chamonix course clients.
- If you want an address for your airport transfer, provide the Aiguille du Midi cable car, on Rue Lyret, 74400 Chamonix. The accommodation is situated in a pedestrianized area, so you cannot be dropped off at the door, and the cable car station, or Chamonix Sud bus station are the closest access points. If arriving on EasyBus, Ouibus, or Flixbus, these all arrive at the bus station.

Course accommodation

- Most course clients stay in Chamonix in en-suite rooms, in a purpose built ski village in Chamonix Sud. These have a small kitchenette, for those wishing to self-cater.
- Check in time is from 16:00 (4pm) on the Sunday, and the meeting point to be shown into your accommodation is detailed in your Course Information Booklet, that is sent upon booking.
- The flats are normally twin rooms for two people sharing. If you are travelling as a couple (or named friends), you will share. If travelling on your own, you will be matched with another course client of the same sex.
- This accommodation is small and basic, to provide you low cost accommodation in Chamonix, but it is functional and really well located. If you wish to upgrade to higher quality accommodation, there is a £100 discount available for sourcing your own accommodation, which is applied to your invoice.
- Website link: <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/chamflat.html>

Course briefing

- The course briefing for this trip is at 17:00 on the Sunday evening. The Course Information Booklet will confirm the exact location for this briefing. When you attend the briefing, take your passport and activities insurance details, for these to be noted.
- The briefing takes about 45 minutes, and it aims to answer all your queries about the course.

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- Attendance at the course briefing is obligatory, and you are asked to sign a copy of the Terms & Conditions. These are the same as those you accepted online when you booked, but it's for us to have a signed paper copy on record.

Equipment checks

- Take any equipment to the briefing that you would like one of our guiding team to advise you about. For some people that may be very little, whilst others want to double-check a few bits of kit. It's always a good idea to take your boots and crampons, so we can check the fit for you.
- If you've your own safety equipment, it's worth having one of the team check this over for you.
- Note that if you require any hire equipment, or any kit that is loaned on a course, you need to attend the course briefing, as it's straight after this that is when it is allocated.
- Website link: <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/hire.html>

Late arrivals

- If they are pre-booked days ahead, we can accommodate late arrivals. We will organise for you to be able to check into your course accommodation at any time that you arrive. We do however ask you to assess how necessary a late arrival is, and for you to consider the disruption to your flatmate.
- You will require a separate Course Briefing, which involves an early start for our team, to fit this in before your guiding. It's not an ideal start to schedule a late arrival, followed by an early start, and sets you on the back foot. Please select suitable flight times to fit the advertised course timings.

Cable cars

- For the days you are climbing in Chamonix, the most cost effective cable car pass is called the Mont Blanc multi-pass. For this course you require a 5 day pass, from Monday to Friday (plus extra days if you arrive earlier). A 5 day pass costs 99.20€ (*2021 prices).
- Website link: <https://www.montblancnaturalresort.com/en/montblanc-multipass>

Breakfasts

- When you are in town and accommodation is included on a self-catering basis. There are a great range of cafes, bakeries, and coffee shops in town, where you can get breakfast, and there are a few offering cooked breakfasts too. Alternatively you can self-cater in your accommodation.

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- As the room is self-catering, it's yours for the week, so no need to check out when you are away in mountain huts. Should you use up any items from your breakfast or room supplies, there's a supermarket located just across the pedestrian square from the course accommodation.
- Website link: <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/chamflat.html>

Lunches & drinks

- Everyone has their own idea of what they would like for lunch whilst in the mountains, varying from a stack of Mars bars to a large ham sandwich. For this reason we let you choose your own lunches, which may be easily purchased locally from shops and supermarkets.
- You will be advised in the briefings as to how many days lunches you should plan ahead and purchase. There is never time to cook hot lunches while on a course, but you could take a thermos.
- Website link: <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/chamflat.html>

Evening meals

- In town clients normally take advantage of the excellent variety of local restaurants, and also the town's bars to celebrate week's achievements. We are also happy to book places in restaurants for you, should you wish an evening on your own.
- Some clients want an early night or to budget, so opt to cook for themselves in the self-catering flats. In guarded huts, the cooked evening meal is normally three courses.
- Website link: <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/chamonix.html>

Mountain huts

- Mountain Huts are run by a 'Guardian' who cooks, cleans and is on hand for your assistance. On most courses, the itineraries detail a specific number of nights in mountain huts.
- Clients share rooms, which often are on tiered bunks. Each person is allocated a mattress with its own pillow and blankets, but you should take a sleeping bag liner for comfort.
- There are normally storage / drying rooms. Meals are on a half board basis, with a basic continental breakfast and a three course cooked evening meal. Any extras you order, such as bottled water, beer or wine, packed lunch, or chocolate, must be paid for by you.
- Website link: <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/chamflat.html>

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Weather & conditions

- It's natural for you to be avidly checking the weather on the weeks and days preceding your course, and we try and keep our social media channels updated daily, so you can see what's going on, and how the conditions are evolving. The website links below give you trustworthy weather forecasts.
- Website link: <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/webcams.html> and https://www.meteoblue.com/en/weather/week/gran-paradiso_italy_3175889

Maps & guidebooks

- You don't need to take any maps and guidebooks for your trip, as you are being guided, but it's always a good idea from a safety perspective to have a map with you. Here are the key links;
- Chamonix map; <https://shop.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/79/BooksMaps/Maps/Alpinemaps/IGNChamonix3630Omap.html>
- Gran Paradiso map; https://shop.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/149/BooksMaps/Maps/Alpinemaps/09-Valsavarenche_GranParadisomap.html
- Instructional book; <https://shop.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/165/BooksMaps/Books/Instructional/AlpineClimbing:TechniquetoTakeYouHigher.html>

Equipment lists

- You will be sent a precise course specific kit list upon booking, but we have a huge amount of kit advice on our website; <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/boots.html>
- Website link: <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/icicleshop%2BKIT%2BMTR.html>

Any questions?

Even if you've read all the detail here and in your Course Information Booklet, and on the website, you may still have some queries about your trip, so don't hesitate to get in touch.

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- Facebook message <http://m.me/iciclemountaineering>
- Here's our office hours, and online chat <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/contact.html>
- When you're on a trip, you'll also be provided an in resort WhatsApp number for our team, so if you haven't already, please ensure that you download this free app to your phone.



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