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The High Level Route – Chamonix to Zermatt

Course Starts: 1800hrs on Monday 12th March 2012
Course Closes: 1700hrs on Thursday 22nd March 2012
Departs: Friday 23rd March
Course Length: 10 Active Days

Is It For Me?

The High Level Route is one of the most magnificent high mountain tours in the European Alps. The tour starts from Chamonix Mont Blanc and travels east for several days through breathtaking high mountain scenery to finish in Zermatt at the foot of the Matterhorn.

This tour is usually high on every ski mountaineer’s tick list, but the commitment and the difficulty of the tour should not be underestimated. This trip is best suited to those who have toured before.

It is a committing hut-to-hut tour, which will demand we move up and on to the next hut whenever the conditions allow. Some basic experience using crampons and axe are necessary. You should be comfortable skiing off-piste with a sizable rucksack, and happy cruising linked turns on red and black piste.

Aim

The first couple of days will be spent in and around the Chamonix valley, brushing up on skills we will need for the tour, including: skinning and avalanche search techniques. It is assumed that you will have a basic knowledge in these areas prior to booking; therefore, these sessions will be a form of refresher for you. In addition to the training, we also aim to ski some of the Chamonix Valley’s best off-piste and glacier runs such as the Grand Montets and the world famous Vallée Blanche.

The route, which the tour takes, can be varied, depending on the current weather and snow conditions. Whichever way is chosen en route, the memory of this tour will last a lifetime! Although no-one can offer a guarantee of completing this tour, we would like to think we stand a very good chance. There are some major factors in the balance: the fitness and skill level of the group (which we can do something about); the weather, snow conditions, avalanche hazard etc (which are all out with our control).

What we need is a good level of preparation and a bit of luck with the weather and snow conditions.

Provisional Programme

1800hrs	Course Starts. Introduction and sort gear
Day 1	Ski Grand Montets: Skill and Techniques.
Day 2	Ski Grand Montets – Argentiere Hut
Day 3	Argentiere to Trient Hut.
Day 4	Mont Fort Hut



Day 5	Prafleuri Hut
Day 6	Dix Hut
Day 7	Vignettes Hut
Day 8	Zermatt
Day 9	Zermatt
Day 10	Travel back to Argentiere
Day 11	Depart

Arrival/Departure

Please could you aim to meet at 1800hrs on Monday at the accommodation for a course introduction. The course finishes at 1700 hrs on Thursday, but we will provide overnight accommodation and breakfast. If you would like to book accommodation before or after the course, please contact the hotel directly:

Hotel de la Couronne 285, Rue Charlet-Stratton, 74400 Argentiere Chamonix Mount-Blanc
Tel. 00 33 4 50 54 00 02 Email: hotelcouronne@wanadoo.fr

Food

Lunch/snacks: You will need to purchase some lunch/snacks, in addition to a little emergency food, to carry each day (some of this food can be bought from the mountain huts as we go along).

Pre-Tour Preparation

Your plan is to get a fit as possible. The fitter you are, the more you will enjoy the tour.

If you're more of a skier: Some of the days are quite long, so stamina would be a good asset. Perhaps try and get out into the mountains carrying a rucksack with a 10/15kg load in it. Doing some work in the gym or aerobics will certainly help.

If you're more of a mountaineer: Make sure you get some ski lessons at your local ski slope to freshen up your technique. It is useful to have a range of different types of turns you can use to suit the varying snow conditions encountered off piste. These can range from perfect powder or spring snow; through to difficult windslab or icy conditions !

If you're a bit of both: Do a bit of everything.

Remember: When you arrive, you should have a good level of fitness and stamina and the ability to ski **in control** at Black run standard. In addition, you will have the ability to ski in an off-piste environment with a rucksack and in control even in difficult snow conditions. This is important, as much of the skiing will be on glaciers with some crevasse risk.





Equipment

If you require to borrow any equipment for the course, please indicate sizes and check what you wish to borrow, where required on the enclosed list and return it to Glenmore Lodge as soon as possible. If you have your own equipment and would like to use it for the course that is fine: **please indicate on the attached list.**

We will certainly do our best to accommodate your requirements with equipment. It is possible to hire equipment in our valley base if you prefer, but this would be an additional expense to yourself. We work very closely on equipment with our sponsors at Mountain Spirit. They are a retail outlet offering good advice, sales and hire on a range of backcountry equipment.

<http://www.mountainspirit.biz>

01479 811788

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT LIST

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ski trousers/salopettes • Waterproof shell jacket • Waterproof Overtrousers • Ski gloves and spare gloves/mitts • Fleece jacket • Spare lightweight fleece • Thermal underwear • Warm ski hat • Sun hat • Ski socks and spare pair • Sunglasses with high UV protection • Goggles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 litre water bottle/Camelback system • High factor sun cream (essential) • Glacier cream for lips • Passport • Insurance cover & European Health Insurance Card (see important detail below) • Spending money
<p>Additional Comfort Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camera - lightweight compact? • Wash kit - very small • Silk sleeping bag / liner (<i>This is required by the huts for hygiene reasons</i>) <p>Maybe one of the guidebooks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The Haute Route" by Pete Cliff ISBN 1-871890-21-7 • "Alpine Ski Mountaineering Volume 1" by Bill O'Connor. ISBN 1 – 85284 – 373 – X <p>Maps– The Swiss "Landkarte" series are excellent. Be sure to buy the ones, which have ski routes. They are 1:50 000. The tour being covered by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Martigny" 282S, "Arolla" 283S, and Mischabel" 284S 	

Use of Helmets on Glenmore Lodge Ski Courses

Whilst it is clear that the use of ski helmets does reduce injury in the event of certain accidents, it is not our policy to demand their routine use on our courses. Our courses cover a broad range of skiing activities: piste; off-piste; touring and mountaineering. Within each branch of these sports the current norm for helmet use varies and therefore we would generally leave this decision up to the individual client. Where we feel it appropriate, such as on steep ski clinics, helmets may be mandatory, in which case we will provide them.





Currently on our touring courses, the majority do not wear ski helmets, however some folk choose to. There is a trend towards more people wearing helmets for snowsports, and they are available to hire or buy in all of the valley bases we use.

More detailed information is available from:

[http://www.eurosafe.eu.com/csi/eurosafe2006.nsf/wwwAssets/C5674B101FF45387C12576E4003C2E1E/\\$file/Policy%20briefing%2010%20Snow%20sports%20helmets.pdf](http://www.eurosafe.eu.com/csi/eurosafe2006.nsf/wwwAssets/C5674B101FF45387C12576E4003C2E1E/$file/Policy%20briefing%2010%20Snow%20sports%20helmets.pdf)

Insurance

You must have adequate insurance to provide cover, should you require medical assistance / rescue, whether resulting from an incident in the valley or on the mountain.

Please **bring the certificate of cover with you**. Your insurance will require you to have a European Health Insurance Card. This is free and easy to get online. You can apply for an EHIC, free of charge by :

- Clicking on the link <https://www.ehic.org.uk/Internet/home.do>
- Calling 0845 606 2030; or
- Picking up an application form from the Post Office.

There are many sources of insurance these days. As we are involved in a mountaineering activity at times on glaciers, it would seem reasonable to contact, initially, organisations such as the BMC or Alpine Clubs, e.g. The Austrian Alpine Club, and compare the types of cover and costs offered.

- BMC, 171-179 Burton Road, Manchester, M20 2BB. Tel: 0161 445 4747
- Austrian Alpine Club, PO Box 43, Welwyn Garden City, Herts. AL8 6PT. Tel: 01707 324835 (this also gives you reciprocal rights)

If you happen to belong to an Alpine club or are a member of the BMC and have their reciprocal rights' card, please bring your membership/reciprocal rights' card with you.

COST Includes

- Valley accommodation: Half Board (Dinner, Bed & Breakfast)
- Hut Accommodation: Half Board (Dinner, Bed & Breakfast)
- Instruction/Guiding
- Equipment borrowed from Glenmore Lodge
- Return transport from Zermatt

We have tried very hard to keep costs to a minimum, however you will need to budget for the following as they are **NOT** included in the price:

- Ski mountaineering insurance (see important detail above)
- Lunches / snacks
- Additional social expenses





- Lift passes and general valley transport
- Transport to and from Start Hotel (allowing flexibility of length of stay)
- Additional accommodation out with course dates
- Beer/drinks in huts etc.

Transport

If you have a problem during your journey, you could let us know of any changes to your arrival by ringing the Lodge or Ian's mobile – 00 44 7919 595 412

Flying: Fly to Geneva, then a transfer on the bus, train or a minibus taxi to Chamonix/Argentiere.

- For airport transfer consider <http://www.a-t-s.net>

Car: You could arrange to share transport with other course members who are interested in car sharing. Telephone numbers of others who are interested are available from Glenmore Lodge.

Bus: from London to Chamonix and then by bus, train or taxi to Argentiere.

If you still have any questions, please give, Ian Sherrington, or Nigel Williams a call at the Lodge

Yours sincerely

Ian Sherrington, IFMGA Guide
Chief Instructor, Glenmore Lodge





PLEASE COMPLETE + RETURN THIS FORM TO US A.S.A.P

EVEN IF YOU DON'T REQUIRE ANY EQUIPMENT FROM US

HIGH LEVEL ROUTE TOUR SKI MOUNTAINEERING EQUIPMENT LIST			
Name:		Course & Date:	
Height:	Weight:	Shoe Size:	
PLEASE INDICATE WHICH ITEMS YOU WOULD LIKE US TO PROVIDE			
Item	Size	Pls Tick if rq'd	Pls Tick if bringing own
Ski Mountaineering Skis: complete with skins and harschiesen	Length:		
Ski Mountaineering Boots	Size:		
Rucksack	50L approx		
Ice Axe (lightweight)	45cm approx		
Crampons with anti-balling plates (to fit your ski mountaineering boots)			
2 Prussic Loops			
2 Screw Gate & 2 Snap Link krabs	HMS		
Harness with adjustable leg loops	Waist size: S M L XL		
Ski Poles	Length:		
Avalanche Transceiver 457 KHZ			
Snow Shovel			
Probe (minimum 2.5m)			
Head Torch (4.5v battery not supplied)			

