



### Trip Highlights

- Challenging skiing covering some of the most spectacular off piste terrain in the Alps.
- Access to a vast playground of guaranteed high-altitude snow, meaning powder well into May!
- High quality UIAGM instruction designed to develop your backcountry knowledge and all-mountain skiing skills.

### Introduction

In the shadow of the Matterhorn lies some of the most spectacular ski terrain in the Alps; the Zermatt/Cervinia lift system provides access to countless high-altitude off-piste descents where the quality of snow remains well into May. The terrain is ideally suited to truly confident skiers who are looking for a new challenge or to discover what "backcountry" or "all-mountain" skiing is really about. During the week, you will be under the expert guidance of Robbie Fenlon UIAGM who is a specialist in backcountry skiing. While the focus will be on covering as much terrain as possible, significant time will be spent of covering backcountry essentials such as avalanche awareness, ski-mountaineering techniques, glacier travel and off-piste safety. You can be sure of pushing your skiing to a whole new level achieving descents on radical terrain that you thought was the preserve of extreme skiers - several descents start right from the summits of Alpine 4000m peaks. If you have ever looked beyond the boundary ropes to the lone skiers high on a high mountain powder field and thought "well, if only...", well now is your chance!

### Detailed Itinerary

#### Day 1 - Travel to Zermatt

Arrive at hotel in Zermatt prior to dinner and meet your guide for the week. You may wish to arrive early to enjoy an afternoon of skiing beforehand or organise equipment hire. In the evening, we can enjoy dinner as a group at one of the many restaurants in town and then a briefing on the plans for the week. After dinner, we can also check over any equipment if required.

#### Day 2 - On and Off Piste, Zermatt/Cervinia

Following breakfast we ride the lifts to the high slopes of the Kleine Matterhorn. This area reaches nearly 4,000m and the quality of the snow is always good. We spend the morning warming up on piste before tackling a nice off-piste route into Italy for lunch. In the afternoon we will try out some steeper terrain and spend time looking at avalanche awareness, avoidance and the use of transceivers. (B)



#### Day 3 - Ascent of the Breithorn (4,160m)

This morning we will look at the uphill ski-touring skills necessary for skiing in the backcountry. We will cover the use of skins, skinning technique, ice-axes and crampons. We will then set off from the Kleine Matterhorn for an ascent of the Breithorn (4,160m). This might be one of the most accessible 4,000m peaks in the Alps but it is still a great peak and it's fantastic to be able to ski right off the summit. Our spectacular route of descent weaves its way down 2,000m+ vertical of the Theodhul and Gorgnerglet glaciers, all the way back to the lift system at Furi. (B)

#### Day 4 - Skiing and mountain skills on steep terrain

We devote today to looking at the skiing and mountaineering skills necessary for handling steep off-piste terrain up to 40 degrees. This includes further instruction on ascending steep ground with ice-axes and crampons and assessing the suitability of such slopes for exciting ski descents. The steep slopes of the Kleine Matterhorn provide the perfect training ground and during the day we will be sure to push your limits on some challenging terrain. (B)

#### Day 5 - Off-piste tactics and mountain navigation

During our final day of "training" we will be sure to cover a lot of terrain while looking at the tactics for safe off-piste travel including a focus on navigation for skiing. There are many classic descents to choose from including some great backside routes into Cervinia from the Breithorn plateau. (B)

#### Day 6 - Ski Tour, The Schwarxtor Glacier & Monte Rosa Hut

Following a relaxed breakfast, we get our gear together for a two day ski tour into the heart of the Monte Rosa massif; the second highest mountain in Europe. We begin by ascending the Kleine Matterhorn and then skinning across the Breithorn Plateau to descend the Schwarxtor Glacier. This is undoubtedly one of the highlights of the week. The route of descent passes through some radical terrain including some of the most spectacular seracs and crevasses you will see in the Alps. We exit onto the wide Gorgnerglet glacier before skinning up to the well-equipped Monte Rosa Hut for an overnight high in the mountains. (B, D)

#### Day 7 - Ski Tour, Ascent of Cima di Jazzi

Setting off from the Monte Rosa Hut we climb north-east for approximately 2 hours to the Stockhorn Pass. From here we have the option of climbing on skis to the summit of Cima di Jazzi (3,803m) which straddles the border of Switzerland and Italy. There are superb views from the summit of many 4,000m peaks including the awesome Matterhorn to the west. It's some 1,600m vertical of descent on glacial terrain all the way back to the mountain railway stop of Riffelalp. A short ride down the valley returns us to the hotel and a well earned bath and some celebratory drinks. Final dinner and overnight in Zermatt. (B)

#### Day 8 - Depart Zermatt

Depart Zermatt following breakfast.

(Meals included indicated as B-Breakfast, L-Lunch, D-Dinner)

Please note that the exact nature of the itinerary is dependant upon a whole range of fac-



tors including weather and snow conditions and the ability and fitness of the group. Your Guide, Robbie Fenlon, will do everything he possibly can to follow the itinerary stated but you should be prepared for flexibility and possible changes in the itinerary.

### **Trip Pricing**

The trip price is 1130€ per person based upon a group size of 3 to 6 persons.

### **The trip price includes the following services:-**

- 6 days guiding services with a UIAGM Mountain Guide
- 6 nights hotel accommodation on a BB basis
- 1 night mountain hut accommodation on a DBB basis
- The shared use of group ski touring equipment.

### **The price does not include:-**

- Return travel to Zermatt
- Insurance, visas and personal equipment
- Meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Incidental personal expenditure e.g. alcoholic drinks, laundry, etc
- Any other expenditure not detailed in the inclusions

### **Trip Grading - Challenging**

This trip is graded as challenging and is pitched at confident skiers who are happy to have a go at anything. You may have a significant amount of off-piste skiing experience or you may be able to ski every run in-resort with a good deal of style and control. Previous experience of ski-touring or mountaineering is not necessary to join the trip. A good level of fitness will ensure that you enjoy the week to the full and gain maximum benefit. You can expect to be skiing for an average of 6-8 hours each day on a wide range of snow, terrain (slopes up to 40 degrees) and weather conditions.

### **Why Off Piste Skiing in Zermatt with Wilderplaces?**

With a range of off-piste/ski mountaineering weeks and courses available it is difficult to know which one to choose.

We believe the key to an enjoyable and safe off-piste experience is a clear understanding and grasp of the skills required. In joining this week, it is assumed you will have a high level of skiing ability and therefore the focus will be on the mountain skills required for safe and enjoyable backcountry skiing.

The terrain in Zermatt is just superb and there are countless off-piste lines to choose from. In late April, the majority of the high-altitude routes are in great condition and powder is most definitely a possibility. On the lower slopes there is some great spring skiing to be had. It's the ideal way to end the season when most people have gone home and put the skis in the cupboard!

You will be in the safe and highly experienced hands of our director Robbie Fenlon, a qualified UIAGM mountain guide who has a passion for off piste skiing and ski touring. He is a great personality and you can be sure to have a lot of fun in the mountains with him. Above



all, Robbie will do everything possible to impart his vast knowledge, develop your skills and make this an unforgettable experience for you.

The quality of the instruction and guiding is supported by some excellent hotel accommodation in Zermatt (see notes below). This provides the perfect retreat from a hard day's skiing in the backcountry.

### **Group size and guides**

The minimum group size is 3 and the maximum 6.

### **Getting there and away**

The week begins and ends in Zermatt which is easily accessible by train from Ireland and the UK. The amazing journey climbs through the mountains right into the centre of Zermatt. If flying, the nearest airport is Geneva. It is approximately 3.5 hours by train from Geneva airport to Zermatt.

### Important Note

When booking your travel arrangements, you must check with us that the minimum numbers have been reached to enable the trip to run. This can be done either by contacting the office or by checking our website.

### **Accommodation and Food**

Whilst in the valley, we will stay in a superb hotel located in a peaceful part of Zermatt, with awesome views of the Matterhorn and the Breithorn. In one of the rooms you can even see the summit of the Breithorn from the bath! The en-suite rooms are very comfortable and the breakfasts superb. The spa is a real bonus with sauna, steam room and relaxation area, perfect for some post-ski stretching.

On one night we stay in the Monte Rosa hut, an alpine hut spectacularly situated beneath several 4000m peaks in the heart of the mountains. Accommodation is dormitory style (duvets and blankets provided) and food is served throughout the day, including dinner. Upon arrival it is often popular to take a late lunch at the huts such as rosti and cheese .

### **Single room supplement**

We do not charge single person supplements to people booking on their own. However you will be expected to share a room with another person of the same sex. However, it may be possible to book a single room, provided one is available. Please request at the time of booking and we will let you know if one is available and the relevant supplement charge.

### **How to Book**

Full details of the booking procedure are set out in our booking form and terms and conditions. Within 7 days of receipt, we will confirm your booking by e-mail. At this time we will send you joining instructions and further booking details including Essential Information. The Essential Information includes:-

Passport & visa information  
Medical & health considerations  
Detailed equipment lists



Useful country and travel information

In your booking confirmation, we will also send an invoice for payment of the balance.

### **Insurance**

It is a condition of booking that you are insured against medical and personal accident risks. This must be for the activities undertaken and include repatriation costs, air ambulance and helicopter rescue services and cancellation and curtailment. We also recommend that you take out insurance which includes baggage cover.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

#### **Climate**

Spring in the Alps can bring a wide range of temperatures and weather conditions. During the day it is possible to experience sub-zero conditions through to ambient temperatures in the high 20's. Your personal clothing and equipment should reflect the wide variety of possible conditions.

#### **Medical Information & Safety**

We will provide you with detailed information when you book your holiday. On all our trips each guide is qualified in First-Aid and they will carry a comprehensive first aid kit with them at all times and have experience of treating medical situations in an outdoors environment. In addition, we do encourage clients to bring their own first aid kit. **It is your own responsibility to ensure that you are physically fit enough to join an adventurous trip such as this. We recommend that you have a complete medical and dental check-up prior to departure.**

#### **Currency and spending money**

To cover personal expenditure on this trip (including ski pass, food, drinks and additional items), we estimate that the equivalent of £250 will be sufficient. Further information regarding currency and money matters in Switzerland is contained in the Essential Information, sent to you at the time of booking.

#### **Extending your Trip**

Should you have more time before or after your chosen itinerary, we would be pleased to organise a trip extensions customised to your requirements. A wide range of options are available and you could choose from personalised off-piste ski instruction to private mountain guiding and an ascent of a remote alpine peak. Alternatively relax at the end of your trip by staying in a beautiful mountain spa lodge or stay in an innovative mountain ecocamp.



**Alpine Adventure Specialists**

**Off Piste Skiing - Zermatt & Monte Rosa**

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