



Trip Highlights

- Dramatic ski-mountaineering among Europe's highest peaks and glaciers.
- Chamonix to Zermatt - arguably the best ski tour in Europe.
- 120km, 6,000m of ascent and descent through magnificent alpine terrain.

Dates

18-26 March 2008

1-9 April 2008

22-30 April 2008

Price

1395€

Introduction

The Haute Route was first completed on skis in 1911. It is perhaps the most famous ski-mountaineering itinerary in the Alps and justifiably so. This is the High Alps at their best crowned by Mont Blanc in Chamonix and the Matterhorn in Zermatt.

In the company of a UIAGM Mountain Guide, the 9 day trip begins with a warm up and trip preparation in the Chamonix Valley. The 6 day alpine traverse then starts from Agentière, and follows what is known as the Verbier route. This is a superb and coveted ski tour, and by the time you reach Zermatt you will have climbed and skied through some of the most magnificent mountain scenery in the world.

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1 - Arrive Chamonix

The trip begins in the Chamonix Valley in late afternoon/evening. Before dinner, we will get together with our mountain guide to discuss the itinerary for the week ahead. Overnight in Chamonix.

Day 2 - Warm Up Grand Montets

Today we first arrange any equipment requirements and then head to the slopes of the Grand Montets. Whilst this principally serves as an essential warm up and recap on ski-touring techniques, we will have the opportunity to enjoy some great off-piste skiing. Overnight in Chamonix. (B)



Day 3 - Argentiere to the Trient Hut

A reasonably early start sees us take the first lift to the Col de Grand Montets at 3,300m. A great ski down across the Argentiere Glacier leads to the start of the climb to the Col du Chardonnet. From here, the objective is the Fenêtre de Saleina and then the Plateau du Trient. The Trient Hut is spectacularly located on the Point d'Orney. (B,D). 6-8 hrs skiing, 1082m ascent, 1165m descent.

Day 4 - Trient to Mont Fort

In good conditions the descent from Trient to Champex can be magnificent, providing fantastic skiing. From Champex, it is necessary to take a short transfer to reach the slopes of Verbier. Here we ride the lifts to near the summit of Mont Fort, before descending on ski to the luxury of this fantastic alpine hut – well equipped with hot showers! (B,D). 4-5 hrs skiing, 50m ascent, 1690m descent.

Day 5 - Mont Fort to Prafleuri Hut

A relatively easy day from Mont Fort to the Prafleuri Hut. The route climbs from Mont Fort over the Col du la Chaux and then descends to the Grand Désert - the huge glacier that spills down the slopes of the Rosablanche. If conditions are good we will ascend to the summit of the Rosablanche for one of the finest vistas. A great ski follows down the Glacier Prafleuri to the hut, which is one of the nicest on the route. (B,D).

5-6 hrs skiing, 800m ascent, 980m descent

Day 6 - Prafleuri Hut to Dix Hut

The morning begins with a climb over the Col des Roux followed by a long traverse above the frozen Lac de Dix. As we climb over the Pas du Chat the superb Mont Blanc de Cheilon comes into view. The Dix Hut is located in an impressive situation, immediately beneath the north face of the Cheilon. (B,D).

5-6 hrs skiing, 750m ascent, 420m descent

Day 7 - Dix Hut to Vignettes

This is the first of 2 superb days of ski-mountaineering. A steep descent across the Cheilon Glacier leads to the challenging climb to the Col de la Serpentine and the Pigne d'Arolla. In good conditions, we will definitely climb to the summit of the "Pigne" which at 3,796m is the highest point of the route. The descent offers a spectacular ski to the Vignettes Hut, which occupies a great position perched on the ridge. (B,D).

6-7 hrs skiing, 870m ascent, 640m descent.

Day 8 - Vignettes to Zermatt and road transfer to Chamonix

The climax of the route - a long day but undoubtedly a memorable one. 24km long, 750m of ascent, 2400m of descent and some of the finest mountain scenery in the world. In good conditions, it is possible to ski all the way into Zermatt beneath the slopes of the Matterhorn. We then transfer back to Chamonix by road, where you will be reacquainted with clean clothes and the chance to enjoy a long hot shower! (B).

10-12 hrs skiing, 750m ascent, 2400m descent.

Day 9 - Return home from Chamonix

Following breakfast, onward connections to the airport or train station for your return journey home. (B)



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

(Please note that successful completion of the itinerary is dependant upon a whole range of factors including weather and snow conditions and the ability and fitness of the group. Your Guide, Robbie Fenlon, will do everything he possibly can to make this a successful trip but you should be prepared for flexibility and possible changes in the itinerary.)

Trip Pricing

The trip price is 1395€ per person based upon a group size of 3 to 6 Person.

The trip price includes

- 8 days services of a UIAGM Mountain Guide
- 3 nights hotel accommodation on a BB basis
- 5 nights alpine hut accommodation on a DBB basis
- Return transfer from Zermatt to Chamonix
- All group ski-touring equipment required for the trip (Maps, GPS, Rope etc)

The trip price does not include

- Transport between Geneva Airport and Chamonix on the first and last day
- Personal ski touring equipment
- Ski uplift and transfers
- International flights, airport taxes and fees
- Insurance and visas
- Meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Incidental personal expenditure e.g. alcoholic drinks, laundry, etc
- Tips for guides, drivers and other staff

Important - Trip Grading

This trip is graded as a challenging ski-tour. It is essential that you have experience of ski-touring and are familiar with skinning, avalanche and crevasse rescue techniques. You should be a strong skier, being able to ski safely and in control off-piste in all snow conditions on slopes up to 35°.

A good level of fitness is also an important pre-requirement. An average day is approx 6-8 hours and you can expect to be carrying a rucksack of around 10kg. The final day into Zermatt is even longer and typically takes our groups around 10 hours.

One of the questions we are most often asked is how much uphill will we be doing each day? Daily ascent figures are provided in the itinerary and to give you some idea, a reasonably fit group will climb 300m of vertical in one hour.

In the absence of ski touring the best possible preparation is either mountain biking or hill walking or both. You should be comfortable being in the high mountains for most of the day. Getting used to skiing with a heavy backpack is also very useful preparation.

If you have any concerns regarding your suitability for this trip, please contact our office as our team are happy to offer advice.



Why the Haute Route with Wilderplaces?

Wilderplaces have been running Haute Route trips for over a decade and know what it takes to deliver a successful and safe experience. Our UIAGM guiding team is led by Robbie Fenlon who has a passion for backcountry skiing and ski-touring and has a great personality. You can be sure that Robbie and our other guides, Jeff, Linus and Pete will do everything possible to make this a successful tour and a once in a lifetime experience for you.

Our trips start mid-week to enable us to avoid the majority of groups that choose the traditional start to the Haute Route at the weekend. This start means there is much less likelihood of encountering other groups on the routes. The feeling of wilderness is greater, the huts are less busy and more relaxed and there is every opportunity of getting first tracks on the descents!

Over the years we have built up a personal relationship with the hut guardians and this makes the experience even more enjoyable. For example, in most of the huts the guardians will allocate our group a private dorm - all the better for an essential night's sleep!

The itinerary is planned over 9 days to allow plenty of time for preparation and provision for bad weather. We also offer a service which takes care of all the necessary logistics, allowing you to enjoy the experience to the full.

Group size and guides

The minimum group size is 3 and the maximum 6. As noted above, you will be accompanied by Robbie Fenlon, an internationally qualified UIAGM Mountain Guide. Originally from Ireland, Robbie lives in Chamonix and is a specialist in ski-touring. He has skied the Haute Route on many occasions.

The Route

Completing the entire route on skis from Chamonix to Zermatt is very weather dependant. Our trips are planned during the recognised ski touring "season" with the best chance of settled weather.

However, in recent years, Spring in the Alps has become more unpredictable and heavy snowfall, for example, is not uncommon during April. If you encounter poor weather, much will depend upon where you are on the route and whether it is safe to press on to reach the next hut and stay on schedule. Our 9 day itinerary offers some flexibility in the schedule and this may mean it is possible to complete the route in less than ideal weather. If the weather is good or reasonable the chances of success are equally good. If, however, the weather means part of the itinerary is not possible you can be sure our team will do everything possible to provide you with an amazing and rewarding week.

If you are lucky enough to achieve the route in its entirety, you can be well satisfied with having completed one of the most prized and challenging ski tours in the world.

Getting there and away

This trip begins and ends in Chamonix. Chamonix is directly accessible by train from Paris or by plane from the UK. If flying, the nearest airport is Geneva which is served by a wide range of airlines. Transfers from Geneva to Chamonix take approximately 75 mins and can



be easily arranged (please contact us for details if required). Also should you wish to travel direct to Chamonix by train or other means, please contact us for meeting arrangements

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 by contacting the office.

Accommodation and Food

Whilst in Chamonix, we will stay in a conveniently located comfortable hotel with breakfast included. On the route itself, accommodation is in alpine huts. These are all located in spectacular situations. Accommodation is dormitory style (duvets & blankets provided) and food is served throughout the day. 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 in Chamonix, 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

To book please send us an email and we in turn will send you a booking form and our 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:-

- Detailed equipment lists
- Passport & visa information
- Medical & health considerations
- 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

Backcountry Skiing with Wilderplaces

We are passionate skiers and view backcountry skiing as perhaps the ultimate way to explore the high mountains. Our backcountry ski courses and ski tours are born out of personal knowledge and experience and we have spent many years building partnerships with the best guides and instructors in the Alps.

Our passion for and knowledge of off-piste skiing and ski touring is combined with our skills and experience as adventure travel professionals. This means that you can be sure of a



professional service from start to finish. If you need help with deciding upon the right trip or what type of equipment to bring, then be sure to give us a call. We would be delighted to assist based upon our personal knowledge and experience.

Climate

Winter 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 checkup prior to departure.

Currency and spending money

The trip visits both France and Switzerland and the relevant currencies are the Euro and Swiss Franc CHF. To cover personal expenditure on this trip (including food and possible additional ski lifts/cable cars), we estimate that the equivalent of £300 will be sufficient. Further information regarding currency and money matters in France 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.

