

ALPINE COURSES AND GUIDING - INFORMATION

I organise tailored courses and itineraries for individuals and small groups throughout the summer alpine mountaineering season (normally from June to September). This means you get just what you want, and it is also economical if there are two of you or more.

The Alps provide fantastic mountaineering opportunities and challenges. The blend of glacier, crag, snow and rock, all on a grand scale draw people back year on year. Here to inspire you perhaps, are some examples of holidays people have spent with me.

Dare to Dream

EXAMPLE ITINERARIES

A two-week hut-to-hut glacier trek in the Stubai, Austria, bagging some peaks on the way.

North Faces and technical rock ridges for a couple, based in the Vallais, Bernese Oberland, and Central Switzerland.

One week's rock climbing in the Vercors, Southern France, including ascents of Mont Aiguille by impressive, technical and very long rock routes. Descents were by easier rock climbs, and our accommodation was camping at an idyllic and very rustic farm.

A ten-day basic Alpine instructional course for a group of four based in Chamonix. We included use of axe and crampons on hard glacier ice, glacier travel and crevasse rescue, ascent of introductory peaks involving moving together on snow, rock and mixed terrain, ascents of Aig du Tour, Aiguilles Crochues, Aig du Moine, Gran Paradiso, Mont Blanc du Tacul, Mont Maudit and Mont Blanc.

A six-day Introductory Alpine course for an individual person with less time to spare. We covered all the basic Alpine skills, ascended several peaks and made full use of the local glaciers and multi-pitch mountain crags.

A day's rock climbing at Handegg, Central Switzerland.

A ten day first Alpine season for a couple, based at Saas Grund in the Pennine Alps, Switzerland. We did a glacier trek above Saas Fee, ascended the Lagginhorn and Weissmies (both 4000ers), had a day on the Trift Glacier, did a superb Alpine rock route on the Wiwannahorn in the Bernese Oberland and traversed the Nadelgrat - a magnificent ridge taking in a further four 4000 metre peaks. We wound down with an ascent of the South East Ridge of the Joderhorn and a bonus day climbing at a crag called Zeneggen above the Rhone Valley.

A four-day holiday to build up to and climb a four thousand-metre snow peak. High-level glacier trek from Saas Fee to Mattmark, ascent to Weissmies Hut and climb Jagihorn, climb Fletschhorn and Weissmeis.

A five-day hut-to-hut tour in the Bernese Oberland climbing the Gross Grunhorn, Jungfrau and Monch.

A two-day glacier tour and ascent for a group of three, on holiday with their family in Morzine in the French Pre-Alps.

A glacier trek with 3 nights in mountain huts for a father and son team who only had 4 days available, Luton airport to Luton airport.

Successful ascents of the Dent Blanche and the Zinal Rothorn during 5 days on a 1:1 ratio. I have led parties successfully on 47 out of a list of 61 4000m peaks.

Ten day holiday to do as many good routes as possible with some Alpine instruction as well. This included glacier travel and crevasse rescue, a warm up rock route on the Dri Hornli, traverse of the Portjengrat (a high quality rock route above Saas Almagell), traverse the Weissmies, climb the Aletschhorn (a really superb outing, almost Himalayan in scale), climb the Matterhorn.

A gruelling programme of 4000 metre peaks requested by a summit collector! Gross and Hinter Fiescherhorns and Gross Grunhorn in the Oberland, the Lenzspitze and Nadelhorn in the Pennine Alps and the Dent du Geant from Cormayeur.

A three-day trip to Zermatt to do the Matterhorn with a regular Alpinist. A great achievement at 66 years of age! The Matterhorn is normally done on a 1:1 ratio, and you should have some previous experience or take more days to allow time for some training climbs.

Six-day introductory course for a group of eight based in Chamonix and including Mont Blanc. The Chamonix Valley has long been a "Mecca" for the serious Alpinist. Mont Blanc, the highest summit in Western Europe, lies in the massif above, and the surrounding range holds a wide selection of rock, ice and mixed routes. The climbing areas are extensive, and you can make use of the telepherique systems and local buses for fast access to the mountains.

A three day introductory course for a large group of students at the start of their two week holiday. They went on to make successful ascents independently after their course, and we were there to advise on choice of route etc.

We will prepare an itinerary to your specific requirements - just ring to discuss your plans!

INTRODUCTORY ALPINE MOUNTAINEERING

I have provided introductory alpine courses since 1992. A six day course will offer an ideal introduction to mountaineering in the Alps, including the use of ice axe and crampons, glacier travel, crevasse rescue, rope management, belaying techniques and movement on rock, snow, ice and mixed terrain. The aim is to help the Alpine novice acquire the basic techniques, and to update the skill of the more experienced. They will give you the grounding you need before going to the high mountains on your own. A suitable course ratio is 1:3, which allows close attention from your instructor, and flexibility to cater for all abilities.

I now offer Introductory Alpine Courses on a private tuition basis at any time during the June to September season. Please phone to check the dates you would like are available. This is economic for two or more people, having the advantages of a good guide:client ratio and flexibility of venue. For private groups of any size, the notes on cost that follow apply.

COSTS, INSURANCE AND PREPARATION

The guiding/instructional fee in the Alps is from £270 per day, and this may be split between group members if applicable. A 25% deposit is required on booking. If you are planning a fortnight's holiday, you can pay for ten days on the hill, which would leave a few rest/contingency days. You would also have to pay for my guiding expenses i.e. hut fees and cable cars etc, but I could give you an "all in" price if you prefer. I would suggest that an ideal number is two people, which would split my fee but not restrict the routes we could attempt. However, I generally take individuals and groups of up to four, though obviously with larger parties I would undertake very simple ascents or treks. I normally undertake all instruction and guiding personally, but I can of course arrange for extra guides for one or more days where larger groups are concerned. You may book as many or as few days as you wish. Additional costs to be considered are travel to the Alps, mountaineering holiday insurance, hut fees, transport including cable cars etc and accommodation and meals in the valley.

You should be fit, and ideally have some mountaineering experience in the UK before your first alpine season. You should have knowledge of basic rope work and experience of "Difficult" standard rock climbing if possible, unless you wish to undertake glacier treks and very simple routes only. Some experience of snow and ice work would also be useful.

You must take out an insurance policy that covers you for mountain rescue. Please see my Booking Conditions for details of the insurers I recommend.

Alpine mountaineering generally requires a greater degree of commitment and advance preparation than we are used to at home. The scale is bigger than in the UK, and there are the additional effects of altitude and glaciated terrain. Speed is more important, and you should be able to organise yourself and your equipment effectively.

I offer **ALPINE PREPARATION WEEKENDS** specifically to complement alpine courses and guiding. The topics covered will include equipment, basic rope work, simulated crevasse rescue and use of huts. There may be an evening slide show. Participation on one of the Preparation Weekends is strongly recommended in order to gain maximum benefit from your Alpine holiday, and attendance is not restricted to Alpine course members. So if it's your first time in the Alps, or you just want to brush up before you go, phone to see what we can offer by way of advance preparation.

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