

ALPINE
DEVELOPMENT
WEEK

INFORMATION FOLDER

2022

Many thanks for booking your Alpine Development Week with us. We're here to give you the best week of alpinism possible. With a ratio of 1 Guide to 2 people the sky is the limit. Rocky ridges, steep faces, and high summits are all waiting for you.

Contents:

- Itinerary
- Equipment
- Valley Accommodation
- Frequently Asked Questions

ITINERARY

Day 1 – Your trip will start with a briefing at 6:30 pm at your accommodation.

Day 2 – Warm up day. Usually this will be a day route from the valley to blow off the cobwebs. You will most likely be in the valley again for that evening.

Day 3-7 – At a ratio of 1:2 there are a huge number of routes than can be undertaken. Some will require nights in mountain refuges. A few examples of typical routes undertaken on this week are below:

- Traverse of the Aiguille Crochues. A superb rock scramble in the Aiguilles Rouges above Chamonix.
- Traverse of the Aiguilles d'Entreves. A rocky ridge traverse on the Franco Italian border with some very "airy" moves.
- Traverse of the Tour Noir. A classic route high above the Argentiere Glacier.
- Milieu Glacier - Aiguille d'Argentiere. A steep glacial route to the top of this iconic peak.
- Half Traverse of the Breithorn. A fantastic climb above Zermatt on both rock and snow.
- Pollux. Another 4000m peak above Zermatt that combines scrambling, fixed ropes and a snowy finale to the summit.

Day 8 -Time to go home. It is recommended that flights be booked for around lunchtime to avoid needing an early departure.

We will climb for 5 out of the 6 days possible. This allows flexibility in case of bad weather and also a rest !

EQUIPMENT

Each day you will be wearing the following:

- Mountain Trousers. *Mammut* "Base Jump" (Schoeller fabric) or similar recommended.
- Thermal shirt/T shirt. Merino wool (eg *Icebreaker*) recommended as they don't smell.
- Thick socks. *Smartwool* or *Teko* recommended.
- Mountain Boots. *La Sportiva* "Nepal Extreme" recommended. Boots must have a rigid sole for crampons. Excellent boots can be hired in Chamonix for around €50/week.
- Fleece/Soft Shell top. *Arc'teryx* recommended.
- Thin gloves. Fleece or leather gloves recommended.
- Gaiters. Gore tex. Black diamond recommended. Ankle length are fine.
- Sunglasses. Category 4 glacier glasses by *Julbo*, *Cebe*, *Vuarnet* and *Adidas* recommended.

You should be carrying the following:

- Waterproof Jacket and Trousers. Gore Tex. *Arc'Teryx* Recommended.
- Warm Gloves. *Black Diamond* "Patrol" Gloves recommended.
- Sun Hat
- Warm Hat
- Goggles. Low light lenses recommended as goggles most likely used in poor weather.
- Packed lunch and drink
- Sun cream and lip salve. SPF >30.
- Blister Kit and personal medication if required. "Compeed" recommended.
- Head torch. *Petzl* "Tika Plus" or similar recommended.
- Ear Plugs (in case of snorers in the huts). Wax ear plugs are far better than foam.
- Compact camera (fully charged)
- Wash kit ie toothbrush, small tube of toothpaste, wet wipes.
- Sheet liner to sleep in. These are mandatory for the Mountain Huts for hygiene reasons. Silk bags are best due to their weight. *Summit to Sea* recommended.
- Antiseptic hand gel – some huts do not have running water to wash with.
- Mitts. Dachstein wool mitts recommended, or fleece with Gore Tex shell.

- Duvet Jacket. Synthetic jackets recommended as they stay warm if wet. *Arc'teryx* and *Decathlon* recommended.

Technical Equipment:

- Harness. *Black Diamond* "Alpine Bod" and Beal "Aero Team III" recommended.
- Helmet. *Petzl* "Ecrin Roc" and *Black Diamond* "Half Dome" recommended.
- Ice Axe. *Grivel* "Air Tech" recommended. The bottom of your axe should reach your shin when held in your hand standing upright.
- Crampons. *Petzl* Vasak and *Grivel* G12 highly recommended.
- Walking Poles. These can be handy when crossing glaciers, and on paths for reducing shock on your knees. *Leki* and *Komperdell* recommended. Snow baskets essential. It is personal preference whether to use one pole or two.
- Rucksack. 30-40 litre maximum.
- Rock Shoes. If the weather and conditions dictate then you may go rock climbing this week. Rock shoes can be hired very cheaply in Chamonix, so if you don't own any then don't feel you need to buy them !

Anyone wishing to hire equipment in Chamonix rather than buy it can do so. We use a local shop for boot hire (allow €50 for the week), and other items are available as follows:

EQUIPMENT HIRE PRICES IN €

Ice Axe	24
Harness	16
Helmet	16
Crampons	34
Duvet Jacket	27
Mitts	12

Full Package: Duvet Jacket, Mitts, Axe, Harness, Crampons, Helmet – €99, payable in cash in Chamonix

Valley Accommodation

We do not use set accommodation for this trip. Please check with us before booking anything. We will encourage participants to use the same hotel, or if numbers allow to even get an apartment together for the week to give maximum flexibility. The first, second, and last nights you should expect to be in the Chamonix Valley.

Packed Lunches:

Packed lunches can be collected each morning from a local bakery or purchased from a mountain refuge.

Transfers to and from Geneva Airport

The transfer is approximately 70 minutes. The following company is recommended:

www.mountaindropoffs.com When booking use code SMGUIDE15 to receive a discount on your transfer

At the end of the trip, try and arrange your return flight for early afternoon. This will allow you to have breakfast before you leave. Transfers usually leave Chamonix 3 hours before flights depart.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How much does the trip cost ?

The week costs €1500. There are additional costs, and these are outlined later in this section.

A 20% deposit is payable upon booking via www.stuartmacdonald.org.

The balance is required two months before the start of the trip.

What is included in the week ?

- Transport to and from local training venues.
- All Guiding and Guides expenses at a max ratio of 1:2 for 5 days.

What costs extra ?

- Flights
- Transfers
- Insurance
- Equipment hire
- Lunches, snacks, drinks
- Mountain Refuges
- Mountain Uplift
- Travel beyond the local area

Do I need specialist Insurance for the trip ?

Absolutely. To go on an alpine climbing trip without insurance would be foolhardy. Rescue costs and medical bills are something you don't ever want to worry about, so we insist on everyone being fully insured. If you are UK based, then we recommend BMC Insurance - www.thebmc.co.uk/modules/insurance/Default.aspx . If living outside the UK then we recommend World Nomads (www.worldnomads.com).

What if the trip does not run ?

If the trip does not run, through insufficient bookings, sudden illness, or other unforeseen circumstances, you will be offered a full refund, or transferred onto an expedition with one of our partner firms.

What are the mountain huts like ?

Mountain Huts are mostly owned by the Alpine Clubs. They are there to provide accommodation and food for mountaineers. They often cater for large numbers (>100), and hence can be quite busy. Meals are usually simple but plentiful, and anyone with special dietary requirements must let us know in advance so we can inform the hut guardian. Please note that while huts will usually try and accommodate vegetarians etc they do sometimes struggle with more specialised requirements such as gluten free. Showers and running water are not usually available. Meals, drinks, and snacks can be purchased for cash. The rooms are usually dormitory style, with large alpine bunks (up to 15 people in a row). Indoor footwear is provided in the refuges so there is no need to take your own.

How long are the days ?

The length of days will vary when Alpine Climbing, but you should expect to be moving for 6-9hrs per day.

How much water should I carry each day ?

Do not carry too much water – it is very heavy. As a general rule 1-2 litres is the right amount. Avoid using Camel Back style systems with drinking straws. They leak, the tubes freeze, and they will always let you down when you need them most. Nalgene style plastic bottles are the best.

What type of food should I carry ?

Everyone is different, however it is essential to eat well in the mountains. Sandwiches are hard to beat, supplemented by fruit and chocolate bars. Don't carry too much food, and remember that some foods will freeze solid unless kept in jacket pockets.

What camera should I take ?

Avoid carrying bulky SLR style cameras. They are too heavy, and slow to use. Compact cameras that fit into a pocket are best. CAMERAS IN RUCKSACKS NEVER TAKE PHOTOGRAPHS. Digital cameras must be kept warm in a pocket or they will freeze and cease to function.

What sun cream do you recommend ?

Any brand will be fine. The most important thing is the SPF – Do not bother with anything under SPF 30. Creams with UVA and UVB protection are best. Any don't forget lip salve.

If there is no water in the huts for washing, what should we do ?

Take some wet wipes to give yourself a clean in the evening. A toothbrush, some wet wipes, and a small tube of toothpaste (shared between several people) is plenty. Some alcohol hand gel is also handy.

How does every company claim to use the best Mountain Guides ?

We always use the very best Mountain Guides possible. But then every company says that don't they ? To ensure we genuinely do use the best Guides, we pay our Guides well. That way we always have the pick of the very best.

Are all Mountain Guides certified ?

All Guides operating in the European Alps must be Internationally Certified. Training and Assessment takes a minimum of three years and anyone caught operating without a license will be prosecuted.

Occasionally we employ trainee guides (known as Aspirants). They are in the final stages of qualifying as Guides and are allowed to operate under the tutorage of an experienced Guide.

Where can I get a packed lunch for each day ?

Before leaving Chamonix you can buy lunch from a local bakery. Once in the mountains you can buy a good packed lunch from the Mountain Refuge (don't forget to order the night before).