



CLOUD 9 ADVENTURE



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Grand Traverse of the Jura Cross Country Ski - GTJ

The Grand Traverse of the Jura – the GTJ for short – is an unforgettable 142 km experience (89 miles) on classic cross-country skis. Beneath giant limestone mountains, this traverse heads through France's Haute-Jura National Park, with around 20-30 km (12-19 miles) per day, mainly on prepared, pressed tracks. Carrying just a day-pack, you'll be free to appreciate the glorious tracks and trails unhindered.

Offering panoramic scenery, world-class routes, appellation-contrôlée cheese and wine, and warm hospitality, the GTJ captures the essence of this picturesque region in classic style.

Our cross-country journey begins in the Swiss mountain village of Sainte-Croix and culminates in Giron, France. You'll explore the Jura and Haute-Jura national parks, as well as enjoying a few days on the fabled Tranjurassienne race route. Packed with diverse terrain, memorable café stops and cosy overnight accommodation, you'll be accompanied on your traverse by the impressive peaks all around. The local villagers are rightly proud of their top-notch gastronomy, and this traverse offers a delicious taste of it all.

The Jura's limestone plateau separates France and Switzerland, and its rolling peaks extend for miles. Although a hugely popular region, it's not uncommon to have the tracks to ourselves all day, barely passing another person or group. This makes this GTJ an ideal cross-country skiing experience, offering a taste of snowy, tree-lined wilderness, yet with the welcoming comfort of a bed and our luggage waiting for us at the end of each day.

Highlights

- A 6-day East to West cross-country skiing traverse
- Experience the world-famous Tranjurassienne ski race route
- Enjoy 142 km (89 miles) of mainly pressed, prepared tracks
- Stay in characterful hotels and gîtes
- An expertly guided group trip (offered by very few companies)
- Daily luggage delivery – carry just a day-pack on the route
- Group transfer to either Bellegarde-sur-Valsérine (for train connections) or Geneva Airport on departure day included

Trip Summary

	Day 1 – Arrive in Sainte-Croix, Switzerland Arrive in Sainte-Croix, Switzerland - Sainte-Croix
18:00	Trip briefing
	Day 2 – Ski from Les Fourgs to Métabief Transfer from Sainte-Croix to Les Fourgs - Les Fourgs Ski from Les Fourgs to Métabief - Métabief
	Day 3 – Ski from Métabief to Mouthe Day 3 – Ski from Métabief to Mouthe - Mouthe
	Day 4 – Ski from Mouthe to Chapelle des Bois Day 4 – Ski from Mouthe to Chapelle des Bois or Chez L'Aime - Chapelle-des-Bois
	Day 5 – Ski from Chapelle des Bois to Les Rousses Day 5 – Ski from Chapelle des Bois to Les Rousses - Les Rousses
	Day 6 – Ski from Les Rousses to Le Manon Day 6 – Ski from Les Rousses to Le Manon - Prémanon, Le Manon
	Day 7 – Ski from Le Manon to Giron Day 7 – Ski from Le Manon to Giron - Giron
8:15	Day 8 – Depart from Giron Depart Giron

Day 1 – Arrive in Sainte-Croix, Switzerland



Arrive in Sainte-Croix, Switzerland

Our trip begins in the small town of Sainte-Croix, in Switzerland's Haute Joux. Above the town is the nordic ski area of Les Rasses, a good place to warm-up your ski legs if you arrive early.

It is possible to organise ski hire here if you need it (if you are on a self-guided trip, we will need to arrange for the return of your skis at the end of the trip).

Sainte-Croix has a bank, a post office, an outdoor shop and a supermarket.

It is easy to reach Sainte-Croix by train from Geneva (see the Travel Arrangements section for more details).



Sainte-Croix

Sainte-Croix, Vaud, CH



18:00 - Central European Time

Trip briefing

Meet your guide and fellow skiers this evening for a briefing about the trip and to answer any questions that you may have. We usually aim to meet at 18:00 in your hotel or chalet.

Day 2 – Ski from Les Fourgs to Métabief



Transfer from Sainte-Croix to Les Fourgs

A short transfer of approximately 15 mins will take you from Sainte-Croix to the nordic ski centre at Les Fourgs.



Les Fourgs

Les Fourgs, Bourgogne-Franche-Comté, FR, 25300



Ski from Les Fourgs to Métabief

We'll buy our GTJ ski passes in Les Fourgs before heading off to begin our Jura traverse. The trail winds across gentle terrain through pine trees and across snowy meadows to Les Hopitaux Neufs. From here, we ski along an often untracked section to reach the French ski town of Métabief. There are not many accommodation options here, so we usually transfer to a nearby village for the night. Métabief's facilities include a bakery, a supermarket, a pharmacy, sports shops and an ATM.

Distance: 20 km / 12.5 miles

Ascent: 230 m / 754 ft

Descent: 350 m / 1148 ft

Accommodation: Hotel



Métabief

Métabief, Bourgogne-Franche-Comté, FR, 25370

Day 3 – Ski from Métabief to Mouthe



Day 3 – Ski from Métabief to Mouthe

The plateau of Mont d'Or is the day's first target. With good snow we'll ski out directly from Métabief. With lower snow levels we'll take a short transfer to the trail head instead. Weaving through picturesque forests and broad clearings (pretty pastures in summer), we'll follow the trails up to our lunchtime stop, where panoramic views and a well-earned picnic stop await. You might choose to pack a few cheeses from this renowned region – Morbier, Mont d'Or, Comté and Bleu de Gex are all produced locally. The afternoon is mainly downhill en-route to Mouthe and La Source du Doubs (the source of the river Doubs) - but do save some energy for the final climb to take you up to your accommodation at Chez Liadet.

Distance: 29 km / 18 miles

Ascent: 630 m / 2066 ft

Descent: 500 m / 1640 ft

Accommodation: Gîte (note, as this is often full, dorms are usually the only option here)



Mouthe

Mouthe, Bourgogne-Franche-Comté, FR, 25240

Day 4 – Ski from Mouthe to Chapelle des Bois



Day 4 – Ski from Mouthe to Chapelle des Bois or Chez L'Aime

Heard of the world-famous ski race, La Transjurassienne? For the next 3 days we'll be following the route! An annual event held every February, La Transju' is one of France's most iconic ski events, with thousands of skiers from across the globe converging on the region in their efforts to win this 2-day event. The race begins in Lamoura and offers a variety of challenging routes and races of up to 76 kms (47.5 miles) before its competitors cross the line in Mouthe.

Skiing at a more leisurely pace, we'll ski across rolling pastures and through picture-perfect forests of pine to reach Pré Poncet for lunch. After the Combe des Cives the terrain will ease, providing a lovely ski in to the Chalet des Anges where calories (cakes!) and the crafts of the local wood turner await. From here it's a final hour or so to Chapelle des Bois, and depending on accommodation availability, we usually continue on to the famous Chez L'Aimé for our overnight stop.

Distance: 26.5 km / 16.5 miles

Ascent: 390 m / 1,279 ft

Descent: 370 m / 1,213 ft

Accommodation: Mountain refuge



Chapelle-des-Bois

Chapelle-des-Bois, Bourgogne-Franche-Comté, FR, 25240

Day 5 – Ski from Chapelle des Bois to Les Rousses



Day 5 – Ski from Chapelle des Bois to Les Rousses

Taking to the trail today towards Bellefontaine as we head towards Les Rousses, you are entering an area of world-class tracks, and we often encounter colourful race teams practising here. Before long we'll begin an ascent into the Forêt de Risoux, famed for providing the wood from which Stradivarius violins are crafted. After our main climb of the day, we can stop for a welcoming drink at Chalet Gaillard, before skiing well-pressed trails all the way to Les Rousses.

The town is perfect for souvenir shopping, nordic ski shops and other diversions, so we'll aim for an early finish to take full advantage. Les Rousses is a buzzing nordic area with 220 km (138 miles) of nordic ski tracks.

Distance: 17 km / 10.6 miles

Ascent: 345 m / 1,131 ft

Descent: 385 m / 1,262 ft

Accommodation: Hotel



Les Rousses

Les Rousses, Bourgogne-Franche-Comté, FR

Day 6 – Ski from Les Rousses to Le Manon



Day 6 – Ski from Les Rousses to Le Manon

We depart Les Rousses and cross rolling meadows, heading towards Prémanon: home to the French National Nordic Ski School, and several Olympians. Our next destination, also popular with ski teams in training, is the rather eerily named *Forêt du Massacre*, named after a historic battle in the area. With views of the Alps on clear, sunny days, relax and enjoy the first-class skiing surrounded by some of the most ancient fir trees in France. A highlight of the day is our visit to Chalet La Frasse in the heart of the forest. Delicious cafes and caffeine will perk you up ready to enjoy the rolling descent to the picturesque village of Lajoux. Our overnight stop lies just over a kilometre away (0.7 miles) in the hamlet of Le Manon.

Distance: 21 km / 13 miles

Ascent: 425 m / 1,394 ft

Descent: 340 m / 1,115 ft

Accommodation: Hotel



Prémanon

Prémanon, Bourgogne-Franche-Comté, FR



Le Manon

Septmoncel, Bourgogne-Franche-Comté, FR, 39310

Day 7 – Ski from Le Manon to Giron



Day 7 – Ski from Le Manon to Giron

This is what you've been building up to, our final and toughest day to complete our 142 km (89 miles) traverse. We'll leave Le Manon and head towards the aptly named Bellecombe, or beautiful bowl. An impressive spot with expansive views, we'll wind our way alongside the limestone peaks and crests of the Haute Jura mountain chain, enjoying a route that abounds with photo opportunities. Pushing on through the undulating scenery, we can grab a crêpe and coffee at a cosy refuge below the Crêt au Merle (1,448 m / 4,749 feet). As the perfect end to the day and indeed to our memorable Grand Traverse of the Jura, we'll savour a final forest descent to reach Giron and the trail's end. Although do keep some energy for the occasional short climb in our descent!

Look forward to a celebratory team meal with warming wine and hearty local dishes.

Distance: 28.5 km / 17.8 miles

Ascent: 665 m / 2,181 ft

Descent: 740 m / 2,427 ft

Accommodation: Hotel / Guesthouse



Giron

Giron, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, FR, 01130

Day 8 – Depart from Giron



8:15

Depart Giron

As this is a linear traverse, we'll arrange and include one single-timed group transfer.

This will depart Giron and drop off at Bellegarde-sur-Valsérine TGV railway station for anyone with train connections, and continue on to Geneva airport. We aim to leave our accommodation at 08:15 to reach Bellegarde-sur-Valsérine at around 09:30, and Geneva airport for 09:45.

It is easy to take the train from Geneva airport to Geneva centre.

Information & Documents

What's Included



- All accommodation (including arrival day and final evening)
- All breakfasts and evening meals
- All transport mentioned in the itinerary
- Daily luggage delivery
- Fully qualified and expert Nordic Ski Instructor (also an International Mountain Leader)
- One single-timed group transfer from Giron via the TGV station at Bellegarde-sur-Valsérine to Geneva Airport on departure day



What's Not Included

- Flights
- Lunches
- Personal drinks and snacks
- Any transport, accommodation or additional expenses due to a participant being unable to complete the itinerary
- Mountain rescue / travel insurance (we can organise mountain rescue insurance if required)
- Ski hire
- Track pass
- Tips



GTJ Travel Arrangements - 6 day version

Arrival

The starting point for this trip is Sainte-Croix in Switzerland. You can reach Sainte-Croix easily by train from either Geneva or Basel airports - use www.sbb.ch/en for timetables (the relevant train station is confusing - for some reason it doesn't appear immediately on the online timetable and the main station is listed as Ste-Croix).

You can either choose to walk the 10 mins from the main railway station to the hotel (slightly uphill), or if you type in the destination as Sainte-Croix, De France (hotel), then if timings work you can occasionally jump on a bus to drop off at the stop La Charmille, which is just 2 mins walk from the hotel so is a good idea if you are carrying luggage!

If arriving by train through France rather than Switzerland, then there are connections via Besançon.

Departure

We include a single-timed transfer from Giron at the end of the trip, that will drop off at both Bellegarde-sur-Valsérine TGV railway station, and Geneva Airport. On our group trips, this transfer will depart your accommodation at 08:15, to arrive at Bellegarde for 09:00, and Geneva Airport for 09:45.

On our private and self-guided trips, we will organise this transfer to co-ordinate with your train or flight time: but we will have included one transfer per group.

If you would like an additional private transfer to accommodate different train or flight times, just let us know.



The Grand Traverse of Jura: What to expect

The Cross Country Skiing

This cross country ski trip is Grade 8: Challenging. It is suitable for experienced cross country skiers with good base fitness levels. You need to have enough cross country ski experience to be able to just 'clip in and go'. Technically, you have mastered skiing on varied terrain, can control a snow plough on steep descents and be able to ski - at a steady tempo (with breaks) - for 6-8 hours per day. We ski at a pace that suits the group, on rolling terrain for up to 30km each day. Overall, the terrain is mostly rolling and flat, which means we can cover ground quite quickly but there are some more technical sections. There are significant ascents each day and a few 'un-pisted' sections where we will have to cut our own track or walk. These are generally low angle and we will be sure to take them at a steady pace. The descents are generally not too steep; fun rather than technical!

Ski Type and Ski Hire

The ideal skis to use for this trip are classic / fish scale style for cross-country (Nordic) skiing. We will not be waxing or using skins. The majority of the skiing will be on prepared trails. Please make sure that your ski boots are comfortable, warm classic style to match your bindings (NNN if hiring). Classic length ski poles (which should sit comfortably under your arm pit once stood on your skis) are also required. This is a classic cross-country ski holiday (not skate).

If you need ski hire equipment, which includes fish scale classic skis (not skates or waxables), Salomon (or similar) boots and bindings, and poles, this can be hired locally at the start. The cost of equipment hire is approx €150 for the week, which includes the cost of returning the kit to the hire shop at the end of the trip. Please pay the guide directly, in cash, in euros.

All equipment hire needs to be booked in advance, as we will need to pre-order the correct sizes. We will need to know your height, weight and normal shoe size (please give us your everyday shoe size and not your personal adjustment for wearing boots). Plus the measurement of your height up to your armpits (for ski pole hire). Your guide will accompany you to the hire shop at the start of the trip, and will organise the return of the kit at the end of the trip.

A one-week Jura ski pass, covering the whole route and all Jura cross-country ski areas (both French and Swiss) usually costs 46€.

Accommodation

Our route through the French Jura takes us through some very remote mountain villages and accommodation is not always easy to find, especially for groups. So please be prepared for variety! We stay on a half-board basis in small, local hotels, gîtes and guest houses, and one mountain refuge. While the decor can vary, the hospitality and food is always warm and welcoming. Most accommodation is on a twin-share basis and single supplements may be available (please let us know well in advance so that we can do our best to arrange a single room). There is often a dormitory night at Chez Liadet (depending on the time of booking), and there is a dormitory night if staying at Chez L'Aime. If you're travelling alone, you will be paired to share with another same-sex group member. Most bathrooms are en-suite but there may be some nights with shared facilities.

Food

All breakfasts and dinners are included. Food on this cross country ski trip is excellent; most of our hotels are small and the Jura region takes great pride in its excellent local produce - and wine. Please be aware that there may not be a huge choice, but a vegetarian option will be available (please do confirm this in advance of the trip). Packed lunches are not included but can easily be bought locally, either from the hotel or a nearby bakery or cafe. We recommend a budget of €20 per day for lunches, snack food and soft drinks. Tap water in Switzerland and France is drinkable but any other drinks are not included. You can order beer, wine and soft drinks at all the hotels. Breakfasts are continental with coffee, tea, bread, cereal, fruit.

Luggage Delivery

Luggage is delivered each day to our next accommodation. Please allow 1 piece of moderately sized luggage per person, as our bags are delivered by car or small van, often with limited space, and some taxi companies impose a per-bag weight limit of 15 kg. Note that we pay per bag, so if you bring extra luggage you will usually need to pay a supplement.

We are often asked if people can transport extra skis along the route. Please note that this can be difficult, as it is not always the same vehicle each day (on a linear traverse like this, we use a variety of local companies). We would recommend that if you have items that you won't need whilst on the trip, you consider using the left luggage facilities at Geneva Airport.

Also worth noting for any dorm nights that there isn't a huge deal of space for a lot of luggage.

Money and Tipping

All accommodation, breakfasts and evening meals are included in this trip, but please bring additional cash for snacks, drinks and tips. Beer, wine and soft drinks are available every night and we usually have a lunch or coffee stop en-route most days.

The currency in Switzerland is Swiss Francs and we recommend bringing around 100 CHF to cover your miscellaneous expenses in Sainte-Croix.

Note that we normally buy our ski passes in France for 46€, but if there is poor snow cover, we may end up skiing in Les Rasses on the first day, in which case we will buy our passes in Switzerland for 40 CHF (not always possible to pay by card).

For the rest of the trip in France, we recommend bringing €200-€250. It is possible to pay by card in most hotels, but a lot of the refuges where we have lunch and coffees will only take cash, and our refuge nights are cash only. If you intend to hire ski equipment you will also need an additional €150 cash for this. There are several ATMs in Geneva Airport and en-route.

Please also remember to bring a credit card in the event of a medical problem or injury, meaning you cannot complete the trek.

Tipping your guide is the accepted way of saying 'Thank You' for good service. But do remember that tipping is voluntary and should only be done if you were pleased or delighted with the service. The amount is entirely up to you. Our staff are all paid fairly.

Weather

The winter weather in the Jura can vary enormously, and you'll can expect to experience anything from clear blue skies with glorious sunshine, to heavy snowfall, strong wind, rain and hail. Bad weather in the Jura, just like anywhere, can feel quite wild, and you should be equipped to deal with this.

Temperatures often depend on the month: as a general rule it's colder in December and January, where temperatures usually range from -10°C (14°F) to 3°C (37.4°F). In February it can be a tiny bit warmer and usually ranges from -5°C (23°F) to 7°C (44.6°F), and in March it's a bit warmer still at 0°C (32°F) to 13°C (55.4°F).

If the sun is shining, we may find ourselves skiing in our base layers and feeling the heat, but if it's windy or snowing, we will need adequate insulating layers, waterproofs and gloves. Staying warm and dry is very important as it can get cold very quickly! Please be prepared for any eventuality and check the kit list at the end of this document.

Snow conditions

The altitude on the GTJ ranges from 900m to 1400m - any areas under 1000m lose snow quite quickly, so it's common to have to walk short sections. We find that some of our trips do all 6 days in perfect snow conditions, but would say it is fairly common for us to have to rearrange for a day, either because there is too much snow and the tracks haven't been pressed, or due to a lack of snow on lower parts. If it is not realistic for the group to ski from A to B, then our guide will make an alternative plan for some nearby track skiing in an open ski area.

Electric Supply and Plug - France and Switzerland

The electricity supply in both France & Switzerland is 220-240V.

France uses a standard European plug - either "Type C" with 2 round pins (left-hand picture), or "Type E" (2nd picture) with 2 round pins and a hole for the socket's male earthing pin.

Switzerland, however, uses "Type J" electrical sockets with 3 round pins - note the shape of the socket (3rd picture).

This means that normal European "Type C" plugs (2nd picture) often don't fit into the socket as they are the wrong shape, and sometimes the pins can be slightly too big.

There are usually some "Type C" sockets in hotel rooms in Switzerland, but not always: **so it is a good idea to have at least one small non-circular charger (4th picture) to ensure compatibility.**

There are usually some plug sockets available in mountain huts but they are limited. Bringing a separate booster charger for your phone may be a good solution.



Guided Cross-Country Ski Track Trip with Luggage Delivery - with a hut night - Kit List

Essential items :

- **Rucksack** – approx. 30L - NO BIGGER! for you to carry each day. You may need to attach your skis as we sometimes need to carry them before we reach the snowline - side straps make this easier to do.
- **Kit bag or suitcase** - for your main luggage
- **Waterproof jacket and trousers** – goretex jacket and trousers are perfect. Insulated ski trousers and jackets are likely to be too warm for the level of activity you will do, so a goretex shell is a better option.
- **Socks** - bring a mixture of both normal hiking socks and perhaps a couple of pairs of warmer merino wool socks for the colder days. Take care if you are bringing thicker socks - it is logical to think that a thicker pair will be warmer, but the reality is that it can make your boots a bit too tight and result in colder feet due to lack of circulation. My favourite socks are merino wool for cross country skiing, but these can be a bit hot if we have spring temperatures.
- **Underwear**
- **Cross country ski trousers** - we would recommend a pair of cross-country ski trousers, designed for the job! These usually have a light amount of insulation - just enough to keep you warm on a cold day, but not so much that you will overheat whilst exercising. They usually have a windproof front, but breathable back (again, designed to keep you warm enough without overheating). And they are usually made of a stretch-type material so as not to restrict your movement whilst skiing, whilst not being too loose, which would hinder your technique. Decathlon do a good range of very reasonably-priced cross country ski pants. My other favourite brands are Swix, Maloja and Bjorn Daehlie.
- **Thermal base layer trousers** - such as long johns or thermal leggings
- **Base layer t-shirts** – wicking t-shirts are better than cotton as they are lighter and dry faster
- **Base layer top** - a long-sleeved merino wool top is the ideal base layer
- **Mid layer top** - fleece jacket is good
- **Warm jacket** - we recommend bringing a lightweight down jacket.
- **Warm hat** - woolly or fleece hat
- **Buff or fleecy neckwarmer**
- **Gloves** - we recommend bringing 2-3 pairs. I tend to bring 1 pair of lighter gloves for when it's warm (and when exercising uphill you can get quite warm, even in winter), an insulated mid-range pair which I wear most of the time, and a much warmer pair which rarely get used but when they do, in the cold weather, I'm really grateful for them. You can buy specific cross country ski gloves, but it's not essential for all your gloves to be specific to xc. You will want to check that your warmest pair can fit in the wrist loops of your ski poles - most can, but bulky mitts probably wouldn't.
- **Sunglasses** - essential as the effect of the sun reflecting off the snow can make its rays much more intense
- **Suncream** (small bottle to save weight)
- **Lip protection** (with sun screen)
- **Water bottle** - we'd recommend nalgene bottles. On cold weather days I usually take half a litre of water, plus a hot flask of tea. On warmer winter days I'll take a 1L water bottle plus a flask of tea. We don't recommend camelbaks in the winter due to the tube freezing up.
- **Goggles or cross country ski visor** - Needed in very snowy weather. I prefer a visor, because it allows good air flow and therefore rarely mists up. If you don't have a visor or xc-specific goggles, then clear/coloured cycling glasses would be okay. Normal ski goggles would be passable, but can also mist up more easily when exercising.
- **Wash kit**
- **Sleeping bag liner** (only needed for the hut nights: duvets or blankets are provided)
- **Travel towel** (only needed for the hut nights)
- **Head torch** – just a lightweight torch, such as a Petzl Tikka / Zipka is fine for this trip.
- **Plastic bags / dry sacks** to keep essentials dry.
- **Passport**
- **Cash** – for any coffee stops / lunches whilst on the trip
- **Credit card** - for emergencies
- **Basic first aid kit** – your leader will carry a large first aid kit, but you should bring a small first aid kit containing plasters, blister treatment, painkillers & diarrhea treatment (rehydration sachets & immodium)

Optional items:

- **Head band** - As you are generating quite a lot of heat whilst nordic skiing, a woolly hat can sometimes be too hot. So a head band is a great idea to keep your ears warm on a cold day.
- **Buff** – can be useful for extra warmth if it's cold, or sun protection for your neck or head on a sunny day. I bring at least one to use instead of a sun hat (a sun hat probably won't stay on properly if you're moving fast!)
- **Camera**

- **Book**
- **Comfortable shoes** – for the evenings
- **Mobile phone** – there is phone reception for the majority of the trip. It is a good idea to have a phone in case of emergency or if you need to leave the group for any reason.
- **Earplugs**
- **Snacks** – not essential as we are in the vicinity of shops most days, so you can top up your supply of snacks fairly regularly
- **Swimwear** - some of the hotels have a swimming pool, spa or sauna
- **Boot dryers** - not many places in the Jura have drying rooms, so since I discovered these, I don't go anywhere without them: <https://www.sidas.com/en/boot-shoe-accessories/304-drywarmer-neo-usb-3661267109355.html>
- **Travel kettle, mug & tea bags / coffee** - it is unusual for hotels in continental Europe to provide tea and coffee-making facilities in the rooms
- **Flask & selection of tea bags** - whilst it is on the optional list, I really rate having a flask of hot drink in the winter and would strongly recommend bringing one (plus your favourite tea bags).
- **Gaiters** - either short or long - I haven't needed these on alpine track-skiing trips.....so definitely not worth rushing out to buy some. But some folk like to bring them and they could be helpful in very heavy snow.

The following equipment is not included, but we can arrange hire:

- Classic cross country track skis (we recommend fishscales or skintec)
- Ski poles - these are specific to classic cross country skiing
- Classic cross country ski boots

General Information - Guided Cross-Country Ski Trips

Insurance

It is a condition of booking this holiday that you must be insured against medical and personal accident risks (this must include helicopter rescue and repatriation costs). You may find that your annual multi-trip insurance covers this trip, but you should check that you are covered for cross-country skiing up to 2500m. We would also recommend that you take out holiday cancellation insurance: your deposit is non-refundable once you have booked, and the full balance is usually non-refundable (see our Terms and Conditions for further details).

We recommend The BMC www.thebmc.co.uk or Snowcard www.snowcard.co.uk for UK residents, or Travelex www.travelexinsurance.com for US citizens or residents.

We can organise mountain rescue insurance for EU residents for £4.90 per day, or £8.95 per day for US and the rest of the world. You can book it online here: <https://www.cloud9adventure.com/online-store/Mountain-rescue-insurance-p101294506>

In addition to travel insurance, UK citizens should also obtain or renew the EHIC card from the [NHS](https://www.nhs.uk). This is not a replacement for insurance but it does mean you are entitled to the same treatment as any EU citizen, and unlike insurance it includes treatment of a pre-existing condition. You would normally have to pay for treatment at the time and then make a claim on return to the UK.

Please remember to bring a credit card with you on the trip: in the event of a medical problem or injury, you may be unable to complete the trek. You would normally need to pay for treatment, and would often have additional transport and accommodation costs. Although you can claim this back on your insurance, you usually have to pay at the time and make the insurance claim afterwards, so you must have a means of paying for this if necessary.

Responsible Travel

We care about the places we visit, and our philosophy is simple: that each and every one of our trips has a positive impact on the local community and environment. We use family-run hotels, gîtes and restaurants in order to support the local communities. And it's a small step but we also recommend carbon off-setting. Visit www.climatecare.org.

Adventure Travel

Please note that we specialise in Adventure Travel, the nature of which means that we cannot always follow our itinerary for a variety of reasons. All of our holidays can be subject to unexpected changes and you should be prepared to be flexible to accommodate these where necessary.

We update our itineraries on a regular basis to take into account such things as route changes and diversions, but it is not always possible to guarantee that any of our holidays will run exactly according to the proposed itinerary. If during your holiday the itinerary is affected by immediate or local circumstances, the leader will make any changes that are necessary.

As a reputable tour operator, Cloud 9 Adventure supports the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office "Know Before You Go" campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas, and we recommend that all our clients take a look at the FCO Travel Advice for their chosen destination on the official FCO website www.fco.gov.uk. North Americans can also check out the US Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

Cloud 9 Adventure treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss alternatives. We have a local office in Chamonix, and our expert team monitor the conditions regularly to ensure that our trips are run safely, and are on hand to help if we need to change arrangements.

Group Size and Holiday Status

For each of our group adventures, there is a minimum number of participants required in order for the trip to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from "Available" to "Guaranteed". In order to achieve minimum numbers, we run the trips in conjunction with several other small companies. We find that co-selling in this way means that almost all of our trips become "Guaranteed", and means that rather than 2 or 3 different companies all selling trips with 2-3 clients each, combining together with 1 guide means that we can offer the trips at a better price to you, and means that we achieve the minimum number faster. We are a small company with a high level of customer service, and we make sure that we only run trips in conjunction with companies who share our ethos. We know them well and have worked with them for years, and only use leaders who we know and trust to do an excellent job. We steer clear of large groups and cap our group size at 10 people for summer hiking trips, and 8 people for winter snowshoe or cross country ski trips, whilst many of the larger operators take up to 16 people.

Preparing for your holiday

We have tried to grade the holiday as accurately as we can, with the intention of attracting people of similar abilities to each trip. As a general guideline, for cross-country ski trips it is important that you are honest about your ability.

Our beginners trips are intended for anyone who is active, but who haven't cross-country skied before (or perhaps you tried it a while ago, but didn't have tuition, and would like to go back to the beginning and see how it's done). We also run improver, intermediate, advanced & expert trips - so please do check out the descriptions on our website particularly before committing to an advanced or expert trip.

If we have described a trip as being tough or challenging, then you need to have the fitness and skills to cope with the challenge. If you don't arrive in good shape for your trip, then you could be putting yourself and others in danger: if you're taking too long each day, at best it cuts into the time you have to relax and shower before dinner, and at worst, it can be the difference between the whole group arriving in the dark! As we are as accurate as we can be writing our trip notes, we do tend to be pretty good at making sure that the right people book each trip, but we do require a certain amount of personal responsibility for arriving fit and ready for your trip. We're not racing, so we are never expecting to be going too fast - we try to ski at a constant, steady pace, without the need to stop too frequently for rests. If you're worried about this, then please start with one of our easier trips graded Improver or Intermediate, and you can build up to an Advanced or Expert trip.

Cross-country skiing is very good for you, and will certainly make you fitter! It's a low impact sport without too much stress on the limbs - HOWEVER - it is guaranteed to use muscles that you might not be used to using in everyday life, so we do recommend that you do some advance training.

The fitter you are, the more enjoyable your trip will be. We would also recommend that you adopt a weekly exercise regime leading up to your trip. Jogging, circuit training, squash and swimming are good for developing better stamina. The "elliptic cross-trainer" in a gym in particular mimics the movement that you would make for cross-country skiing. And strength training for the arms would also be useful (you don't have to go overboard, but a small amount of training in advance will help to avoid injury on the trip).