



1266 66th Street, Suite 4
Emeryville, California
94608-1117

T: +1 510 594 6000
I 888 MTSOBEEK (687 6235)
F: +1 510 594 6001
info@mtsobek.com
www.mtsobek.com



©Mountain Travel Sobek Photo File

SNOWSHOEING THE MONT BLANC MASSIF

Discover Chamonix in Winter, Blanketed in Snow!

TRIP DETAILS

7 days ~ France, Italy &
Switzerland

5 days snowshoeing (moderate
hiking), including 1 day guided
glacier snowshoeing

6 nights hotel

2009 DATES

Jan 25–Jan 31
Feb 8–Feb 14
Mar 8–Mar 14

2009 LAND COST

\$2,995 per person
(5-16 members)

\$3,495 per person
(3-4 members)

TRIP LEVEL
MODERATE

HIGHLIGHTS

- Experience the hushed winter wilderness of Mont Blanc—a sparkling white wonderland of snow!
- Snowshoe across three international borders, with hikes tailored to your ability level
- Revel in breathtaking scenery every day, and relax in a charming Chamonix hotels every night—no packing & unpacking!



SNOWSHOEING THE MONT BLANC MASSIF

Discover Chamonix in Winter, Blanketed in Snow!

Looking for a new way to see the spectacular European Alps? Avoid the crowds of the summer hiking season, and skip the lift lines at the ski resorts. Experience the Mont Blanc wilderness at its best on our classic winter snowshoeing trip through this sparkling white wonderland of snow and ice. Follow Mountain Travel Sobeks' expert Compagnie des Guides for five days of snowshoeing, tailored to your ability level. Each day we'll take you to a new destination in this enchanting wilderness. One day, you'll snowshoe beneath the silhouette of massive Mont Blanc on a glistening glacier that's above 11,500 feet in elevation. Another you'll traipse through Italy's Val Ferret with views of the mythic Grandes Jorasses. You might trek through a thick Christmas tree forest leading to a clearing with snug Swiss chalets. Or enjoy a romantic nighttime tour to a small auberge for hot mulled wine and a delicious dinner!



This trip gives you a chance to see Western Europe's highest peak—15,771-foot Mont Blanc—in a new light. As you step through the stunning scenery of France, Italy, and Switzerland, you'll marvel at the constantly changing views of the mountains, and be delighted by the peoples of these three different countries (an unexpected bonus—three countries, three languages, three cuisines, three cultures—all on one great trip!).

Every day, the guides will evaluate the weather and snow conditions, as well as your fitness level, and take you on a trip perfectly suited to the environment and your desired level of physical challenge. The guides will also fix a picnic lunch of regional cheeses, cold cuts, fresh bread, and chocolate, which you'll share in a picturesque spot with unforgettable views of snowy peaks and yawning white meadows. After the day's excursion, you'll return to our "base camp"—a comfortable hotel in Chamonix—to relax in this quintessential European mountain town. Chamonix's winding streets and wide plazas are filled with charming shops, irresistible restaurants, and boisterous pubs. Here you'll unwind in the evenings with newfound friends at whatever dining establishment best suits your style.

We know the Alps better than any U.S. tour company—we've been leading adventures here since 1970. We know the best way to go, where to get the best views, and which accommodations and restaurants are the best in town.

Experienced mountain guides—accredited, certified members of the prestigious Compagnie des Guides—bring a wonderful dimension of history, geology, and local color to every aspect of the trip. Their flawless guiding skills and intimate knowledge of the area create a can't-be-beat adventure!



ITINERARY

☞ This trip begins with a rendezvous at the airport in Geneva, Switzerland on Day 1. Actual snowshoeing trips may vary with weather conditions, your physical condition, and/or the recommendations of your guide.

Note—This trip includes five days of snowshoeing, but the actual itinerary is flexible. The day-by-day descriptions below cover the destination options but will not necessarily match your itinerary for this trip.

DAY 1 ~ Arrive, Transfer to Chamonix

Arrive at the airport in Geneva, Switzerland. You will be picked up *promptly* at 2:00 p.m. for a group transfer by private car to the mountain-ringed resort town of Chamonix, France. We suggest you arrive early enough (by 1:00 p.m.) to allow time to get through customs and immigration before the scheduled pickup. The transfer takes approximately 1½ hours, and once at the hotel, you'll have time to rest a bit or explore the town before meeting the guides and the rest of the group for a “welcome” dinner and orientation.

D...Hotel Le Prieuré



DAY 2 ~ Col du Géant

For your first day out, get used to your new “shoes” (snowshoes that is!) on a glacier walk led by a certified mountain guide. Take the Hellbronner cable car on the Italian side of Mont Blanc (a.k.a. Monte Bianco) an elevation of 11,500 feet, where we will strap on our snowshoes and walk toward the Col du Géant—“Pass of the Giant.” This stunning landscape is set amid glacier-clad peaks and sharp needles that pierce the sky. Enjoy a delectable picnic lunch, and then return to your cozy room in Chamonix for a rest before a gourmet meal in town.

B, L...Hotel Le Prieuré

DAY 3 ~ Les Bénés

Now acclimated to the elevation, you'll make a steep ascent up a forested trail to a wide clearing at the foot of France's Aravis mountain range. This north-to-south range provides the perfect vantage point for stunning views of Mont Blanc and surrounding summits.

B, L...Hotel Le Prieuré



DAY 4 ~ Le Val Ferret (Into Italy!)

Perhaps the greatest benefit of France's Haute Savoie region (other than the spectacular peaks, fine food and wine, and charming mountain villages, of course!), is its proximity to two other countries—Switzerland and Italy, which each offer their own unique cultures and cuisine. Today we explore the Italian side of Mont Blanc, as we head into the Val Ferret. The views here are dominated by the Grandes Jorasses, whose dizzying north face is a prized climb in mountaineering communities. There are no roads here, and no engines to disrupt the silence—just the hissing of cross-country skiers, and the crunching of our snowshoes. At the

end of the valley, we'll stop at an inviting auberge for lunch.

B, L...Hotel Le Prieuré



DAY 5 ~ L'Arpille (Into Switzerland!)

After yesterday's excursion to Italy, it's time to visit the Swiss side of the Mont Blanc range. Today, you'll follow a dense spruce forest so picturesque you'll half-expect to see a gingerbread house at the end of the trail. Instead, this trail takes use over rolling slopes to a clearing dotted with Swiss chalets. Views from here extend to the Mont Blanc range, as well as the Rhône Valley and the Valaisan summits.

B, L...Hotel Le Prieuré

DAY 6 ~ Chamonix – Aiguille du Midi – Night Excursion

Save the best for last, and combine a half-day hike and cable car excursion to the Aiguille du Midi with a lazy afternoon strolling Chamonix, followed by a romantic night walk to dinner at an auberge nestled in the heart of the mountains. The dramatic pinnacle of Aiguille du Midi, sits at 12,605 feet, atop what was once the highest cable car in the world. At night, strap on your snowshoes and follow the soft glow of your headlamp for an hour or so of hiking to a warm inn, where we'll share a delicious homemade dinner (with warm, spiced wine!) to celebrate our final day of hiking

B, L, D... Hotel Le Prieuré

DAY 7 ~ Fly Home

After breakfast, transfer to Geneva to connect with homebound flights. Be sure to schedule your flight for anytime after 11 a.m.

B...



2009 LAND COST

\$2,995 (5-16 members)

\$3,495 (3-4 members)

Rates quoted are per person, based on sharing double accommodations.

Single Supplement—\$900 for “requested” singles; \$450 for “forced” singles. If you prefer single accommodations, you must pay the Single Supplement Fee. If you're traveling alone and wish to share accommodations, we'll try our best to find you a roommate. If that's not possible, we will only charge you half of the single supplement.

What's Included

- ◆ expert leadership
- ◆ accommodations
- ◆ meals as noted (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- ◆ group airport transfer from Geneva to Chamonix and return
- ◆ sightseeing as noted in the itinerary
- ◆ ground transportation by van
- ◆ local group transfers by bus or cable car
- ◆ additional guides where necessary
- ◆ basic medical and evacuation insurance

What's Not

International airfare to Geneva and return; insurance other than basic medical and evacuation insurance noted above (we strongly recommend you purchase the supplementary trip insurance offered by Mountain Travel Sobek, which includes trip cancellation insurance); individual transfers for early arrivals or late departures; optional tipping to leader, guides and local staff; excess baggage charges; airport taxes; cost of medical immunizations; items of a personal nature (sodas, alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.).

Air Travel

Airfare is not included in the cost of our trips. For air reservations, we recommend you contact the airlines directly, either by phone or the Internet. In addition, many travelers elect to use their "frequent flyer" miles when traveling with us. **But please check with our staff before purchasing or obtaining your tickets.** We need to verify your arrival and departure schedule and ensure we have enough participants to operate the trip.

How We're Giving Back

Compagnie des Guides' Trust for Fallen Climbers: As self-employed workers, mountain guides and leaders must subscribe to expensive private health cover and indemnity insurance. Nowadays, the Caisse de Secours (Emergency Fund) compensates for this failure in the French social system and provides financial assistance to injured or deceased guides and their dependent families via the fund.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

Expert Leadership

Expert leadership is the key to an exciting, unforgettable experience. Our trips feature gifted leaders for whom leading trips is a true vocation. Besides showing you wonders you'd never find on your own, they make sure everything runs smoothly and safely without a hitch. They are knowledgeable about all aspects of your trip, and take great pleasure in sharing their insights with you. More than just guides, they positively elevate your experience by being teachers and great companions. You'll be in good hands with them every step of the way. Although trip leader assignments may change, the following people regularly lead this trip:



Laurent Langoisseur arrived in Chamonix nearly 20 years ago after working for the national railroad system. Upon his arrival in the valley, he immediately fell in love with the mountains. After passing all his qualifying tests to become a hiking guide, he was awarded the coveted patch of the Compagnie des Guides, and has now guided well over 100 trips to the mountains. An avid sports enthusiast and inexhaustible hiker, Laurent's knowledge of flora, fauna, and geology are a

good complement to his guiding skills. During the winter, he's a ski patrol monitor in the mountains above Chamonix.



Jean Marc Vaillant, a member of the Compagnie des Guides, began guiding for MTS several years ago. Jean Marc is what the French call *polyvalent* (“able to do many things”). His talents range from being a licensed pyrotechnic specialist, snowboard manufacturer, journalist, musical group crew, and theater worker. If this weren't enough, in addition to his passion for hiking, he also teaches children the skills of mountain biking, skiing, and snowshoeing. Jean-Marc has led over 60 trips to the Alps and proudly carried the Olympic torch to the 2008 Ticino winter games.



Florence Simond, a native of Chamonix, is a descendant from two of the area's oldest families. After growing up in the Chamonix Valley, “Flo” spent several years in the south of France, and then traveled abroad to South America and Asia. She returned to her ancestral home, where the mountains now form an integral part of her life. She has led nearly 50 trips to the Alps, not counting how many times she has done this trip for her own fun! In addition to being an accomplished hiking guide, Flo is a skier and climber. As a member of the Compagnie des Guides, she follows in the footsteps of her forefathers.



Stéphane Berger is a true man of the mountains, with a Savoyard father and Swiss mother. He grew up in Chamonix, then left the valley to follow his first love, architecture. But the call of the wild proved too strong: numerous travels in North Africa, Siberia, and the Himalaya opened a new door to him—the profession of hiking guide. Nowadays Stéphane lives in a chalet in Chamonix from where he escapes frequently to travel the mountain areas of the world. “Steph” has now been a member of the Compagnie des Guides for many years, with over 100 trips to the Alps under his belt.

All are certified by the Union of International Mountain Leader Association and members of the prestigious “Compagnie des Guides de Chamonix,” a professional guide association that dates back to the first climb of Mont Blanc over 200 years ago. (They are part of a larger team of experienced guides who have worked consistently with Mountain Travel Sobek.) Other equally accomplished people make up our list of MTS guides. Leader assignments will be confirmed in the Final Bulletin sent to you three weeks prior to departure.

Activity Level

Mountain Travel Sobek trips are designed for flexible, energetic people who like to be active and intellectually involved, and have a spirit of adventure and a positive attitude. ***You should be an experienced hiker in excellent physical condition, with adequate cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, and excellent balance.*** This trip is ***moderate***; you must be prepared and capable of walking an average of five to seven hours a day on trails with steep ascents and descents averaging ***2,500 to 3,000 feet up and 2,000 to 3,000 feet down each day.*** No technical climbing or other special abilities are required.

We recommend that you start a moderate training program ***several months*** before departure, then slowly build up to a more strenuous level. Since training is highly sport-specific, include some hiking or running in your program. Hiking up and down steep trails with a daypack, mountain biking, running, jogging, and other aerobic exercise for at least one hour four or five times a week is very important if you want to enjoy the hike. Remember, the best way to train for a hike is to go hiking. Wear your boots and go up and down as many hills as you can to strengthen your leg muscles and build up your stamina.

Consult your physician if you have questions concerning your underlying health. We can answer questions for you or your physician concerning required levels of fitness, health conditions, and what to expect. If you have concerns about your ability to do this trip, we can suggest appropriate trip alternatives.

Accommodations

The accommodations on this mountain snowshoeing trip are at the Hotel Le Prieuré. Recently renovated, and ideally situated in the heart of Chamonix, this large, comfortable, 3-star, Savoyard-style chalet hotel harmoniously mixes a warm welcome with its full range of services. And the best part? All rooms have balconies facing due south that open out onto spectacular views of the Mont-Blanc!

THE NEXT STEP

Ready to go? Signing up is easy!

Just call us at 1-888-MTSOBEK (687-6235) and reserve your spot! You can also book a reservation online at our website (www.mtsobek.com). If you prefer to use a travel agent, he or she can book your trip at no extra cost and provide other helpful assistance.

Then Leave the Rest to Us

Before you go, we provide you with extensive pre-departure information, including clothing recommendations, suggested reading lists, and other details.

Why Mountain Travel Sobek is Your First Choice for Adventure

Mountain Travel Sobek is the pioneer in active adventure travel. No other adventure travel company can lay claim to that title. We were the first to take Americans trekking in Nepal, raft the wild rivers of Africa, and open up many previously inaccessible corners of the world to curious travelers. We set the standard for adventure travel and have a strong reputation for excellence that we do everything we can to maintain. Since we are the leading adventure company, we have a lot to live up to, so we make sure we provide safe, quality trips and the best customer service to our passengers.

With Mountain Travel Sobek, you'll see the Alps as only an insider can, with friendly, hospitable guides who know the region intimately. They'll accompany you throughout the day, lending support and insights about where you are and what you see. Their close familiarity with the local geography, history, culture and traditions (plus their entertaining stories and great jokes) are the key to a superb, informative experience—one you just can't get on your own.

References

Don't take our word for how great our trips are. We'll be happy to provide you with references of satisfied past travelers.

Questions?

Feel free to call us at 1-888-MTSOBEK (687-6235) if you still have any questions or concerns. We're here to help you. You can also check out our award-winning website at www.mtsobek.com.

Note on Itinerary

Although we will do our best to adhere to the itinerary schedule as listed, it is subject to change. Please read the Limitation of Liability and Booking Conditions in the four-page Participant Information Form. You can find all this information on our website at www.mtsobek.com/faq and the form itself at www.mtsobek.com/pdf/participant_info.pdf.

Terms & Conditions

Once you have made a deposit for a trip, you agree to be bound by all our terms and conditions including the Limitation of Liability Clause. The full Terms and Conditions can be found at www.mtsobek.com/faq/#liability or call 1-888-MTSOBEK (687-6235) for a copy. These are partial conditions. Your participation is contingent on your signature on the full list of terms specified in the four-page Participant Information Form (www.mtsobek.com/pdf/participant_info.pdf). Any dispute concerning, relating or referring to the Terms and Conditions, to any literature concerning this trip, or the trip itself, shall be resolved exclusively by binding arbitration in San Francisco, California, according to the then existing commercial rules of the American Arbitration Association. Such proceedings will be governed by substantive California law (but not procedural law) without regard to the California Arbitration Act.

©2008, *Mountain Travel Sobek*

CST 2014882-10

Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California.