

Aiguille Verte course

Mont Blanc range

Technical and instructional content of ***« SNOW and ICE »*** ***courses***

Duration 8 days. Price per person: 1300 EUROS for training and supervision + QUALITY GUARANTEE - possibility of 2 extra days, if conditions are bad; (2 to 3 participants), from the beginning of October until the beginning of July.

Dates confirmed : 15th May 2004 ; in June : **starting 10th + 13th + 24th June**

N.B : 2 extra days will be added, free of charge, if the conditions have been very bad (during the course), as for all our high mountain or ice courses in FRANCE costing more than 750 euros (supervision and training).

Aiguille Verte courses (4201m) : from March to July, ascent generally via the 'couloir Couturier' or the 'Couturier + sortie Bettembourg', descent via the Jardin ridge or by abseil down the Whymper (East face) , or the Moine ridge; OR the FRENDO/ RAVANEL gully, 5+, which does not finish on the summit; and, another day, ascent of the AIGUILLE VERTE by the VIVAGEL gully, or maybe an easier route!

In the middle of summer, or in September, the gullies are too dry, and are impracticable (as well as being subject to stonefall from mid-July onwards...), so we will climb the sensational 'Grands Montets' ridge (or the 'sans Nom' ridge) with one or two bivouacs during the ascent : this is a mixed route resembling the 'Cosmiques' ridge, but eight times longer.

Technical and instructional preparation for the Aiguille Verte is divided into 3 parts :

a) Training in French crampon technique (10 point crampons) mostly on training slopes (Mer de Glace) but also on routes such as the 'couloir du Diable' or 'Jagger' (Tacul) or the north east face of the Courtes, or the Forbes ridge, or the Desmaison route on the Dolent (etc...)

b) Training in and introduction to the use of technical ice axes on seracs (ice towers) (Mer de Glace, Taconnaz) or in short gullies, such as the Chéré or the Contamines gully on the Tacul or on the Tour Ronde (north face or gullies).

Contrary to a widely-held belief, it is easier to become competent using technical axes, than with the '10 point crampon' techniques. We will learn to place ice screws and set up belays whilst climbing with technical axes.

c) This third part is, along with part (a), the most important, as well as the most difficult. The 'safety and belaying' skills and needed by a guide or a competent amateur become apparent.

This 3rd part could be called : 'Belaying whilst moving together and rope techniques; safety of the party off-belay'.

As preparation for 'Belaying whilst moving together on snow and all terrains (including narrow ridges), and rope techniques', you could complete one of our 'Aerial ridges in the Mt Blanc range' courses.

As on the Aiguille Verte courses, we learn to vary the length of rope between party members; change the manner of roping up as necessary; belay whilst walking, whilst climbing (moving) on snowfields + training slopes + snow or ridge routes.

Ideal preparation routes : for example, the traverse of the Petite Aiguille Verte, starting by the north face or the couloir Chevallier , or the Cosmiques ridge, or the Tour Ronde, or the Forbes ridge and traverse of the Chardonnet.

