



Winter Mountaineering Swiss Alps

Course Description

From learning risk management to placing rock protection to effective communication, this exclusive course will give you a solid foundation in winter mountaineering. If you're looking for a challenge and you are intrigued in climbing one of the 4000m peaks of the Swiss Alps, this is the course for you.

Features

- Duration 30 days
- Minimum Age 16
- Group size 4-10 Participants/2-4 Instructors
- Tuition 13.900 CHF
- Accommodation Double rooms, mountain huts, bivouac
- Elevation range 1000 – 4500 m

Overview

The course encompasses a wide range of mountaineering skills to create a unique experience of the Swiss Alps. From glacier travel and peak ascents, to ice climbing, to back country skiing and avalanche rescue this is an unparalleled immersion into the vertical world of the Alps.

This course is split into different sections, which will be explained below. The order of skill sections can vary due to weather conditions and will be located in the Bernese Alps, while the challenge section makes use of the whole Swiss Alps.

Mode of travel in the back country will be on skis/snowboard. Hence it is essential to be a good skier, even though there are plenty of opportunities to improve your back country and free riding skills during the duration of the course.

In between sections you'll be back in Gstaad for one night to reorganize equipment for the following section and make necessary arrangements.

Course Section

Safety and avalanche course

This section focuses on risk management and safety in a winter environment. You will learn the fundamentals of travelling in avalanche terrain. Furthermore you will increase your knowledge about avalanche awareness and rescue techniques and you will learn to use your avalanche safety equipment efficiently.



Mountaineering

Your development as a mountaineer begins with basic techniques such as rope handling, glacier travel, belaying and knots. As your experience builds you will move into technically more demanding terrain. This includes ice climbing some of the stunning frozen water falls of the area. You will learn how to plan routes and travel safely in back country terrain using your knowledge gained previously on the course. Focus lies on the development of technical and leadership skills needed to climb mountains long after your adventure in Switzerland has ended.

Student challenge expedition

Under the supervision of your instructors you will plan and execute this section in small groups. You have the opportunity to set your own mountaineering goals, plan the route, arrange and prepare the equipment, organize provisions and discuss emergency plans.

The goals will depend on the skill levels and competencies attained by individuals. But our student-instructor ratio allows you to fulfil your dreams like climbing the world famous Matterhorn

Group size depends on the skills of individuals and the technical difficulty of the set goal.

This intensive course aims at developing a solid understanding of the basics of winter mountaineering through experiential learning in a fun and supportive environment.

Learning Goals

OCLS courses not only teach technical climbing skills but also teach leadership skills in challenging outdoor environments. Our students have the chance to apply these skills and hence have the chance for a positive transformational experience. In consequence our students take ownership of their own learning process.

At OCLS we design courses so that students are able to assume leadership roles, learn to make thoughtful decisions and manage risks, respect other team members, develop confidence, communicate effectively and appreciate simple living in the outdoors.

Weather and other Challenges

The Alps are known for extreme weather conditions, especially in winter. Students should expect anything from cold and sunny days, to consistent snowfall, to winter storms and very cold spells. Weather changes can occur in a matter of minutes or can last for several days. There may be times when you are cold and wet, but you will learn to adapt and manage these situations. To help you keep warm and comfortable make sure you bring the appropriate gear from our equipment list.

Terrain



During this course you will be travelling in a mountainous area characterized by steep slopes, snowy and rocky terrain. The approach to a ice climbing venue can be exclusively off-trail, demanding constant attention. Snow and ice can be a hazard, adding to the challenge of climbing and hiking. Furthermore we will be travelling on glaciated terrain, using crampons and ice axes, or even exposed ridges and peaks.