



2021 MONT BLANC ASCENT EQUIPMENT LIST

EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

You MUST bring all items listed on the clothing and equipment checklist below. The only exceptions are items listed as optional. This is very important. At the same time, you must keep your equipment weight to a minimum and please contact us with any questions you may have about the equipment or clothing on this list.

Body Wear

- Waterproof shell jacket
- Waterproof shell pants
- Down or insulated jacket
- Lightweight fleece top
- Softshell jacket/windshirt
- Softshell climbing pants
- Base layer top and leggings x 1 set
- Underwear

Head Wear

- Sun hat
- Warm hat
- Bandana or Buff
- Sunglasses
- Ski goggles

Hand Wear

- Liner gloves
- Leather gloves
- Mountaineering gloves

Foot Wear

- Socks x 2–3 sets
- Mountaineering boots
- Snow gaiters (only required, if your boots do not have an integrated gaiters)
- Lightweight shoes
- Rock shoes (*optional—can be rented locally*)

Packs & Bags

- Mountaineering pack (50–65 litres)
- Small duffel/travel bag

Camping Gear

- Sleeping bag (-10°C/14°F)
- Sleeping bag liner (a requirement for all huts)
- Camping pillow (*optional*)

Accessories

- Surgical style face mask
- Rubbish bag
- Hand sanitiser
- Headlamp and spare batteries
- Water bottle—1 litre x 2
- Thermos flask (*optional*)
- Ear plugs
- Personal first aid kit and medications
- Personal toiletries
- Sunscreen and lip balm
- Wet wipes (*optional*)
- Stuff sacks
- Camera and spare batteries (*optional*)
- Personal entertainment (*optional*)
- Pocket knife/Leatherman/tool kit (*optional*)
- Additional snack food

Climbing Equipment

- Ice axe—55–66cm
- Crampons
- Climbing harness
- Belay Device
- Climbing helmet
- Locking carabiners x 3
- Ice Screw (can be rented from AC)
- Prusik x 1 (made from 1.6m of 6mm cord)
- 120cm sling
- Collapsible trekking poles with snow baskets (*optional*)

Travel Gear

- Casual wear
- Passport, documents plus copies

CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT INFORMATION GUIDE

The following information is a guide to assist you in securing the required clothing and equipment for climbing in the Alps in summer, along with recommended brands. You may have equipment you have used which is different to what is on the list, so please read thoroughly and get back to us with any questions you may have.

Fabrics/Garment Designs/Garment Selection

Today there is a bewildering and ever-changing array of modern technical fabrics and garments on the market. Accordingly, suitable mountain attire can be derived from a wide variety of garments utilized in varying combinations. The clothing on our gear list can be creatively substituted according to your preferences but ensure your choices are functional and adequate. For example, a functional and often utilized garment that does not appear on our list is a vest.

A basic principle in selecting clothing and equipment is to minimize weight and bulk while still ensuring adequate warmth and functionality. It can be difficult to find a brand that has all the features you prefer which means you must make prudent compromises. In the description below and for certain items, we suggest brands and specific products that we have found to be suitable; this is by no means definitive. In some cases, there are multiple suitable brands on the market and hence we do not make specific suggestions.

Appropriate fabrics used in thermal underwear include polypropylene, silk and merino wool. The only cotton garment worn during the climb is your glacier shirt. Warmer insulating materials can be made from fleece, softshell or Primaloft. Varieties of fleece include Windstopper, Wind Pro, Power Shield, Windbloc, Power Dry and Power Stretch. Be aware that fleece garments that incorporate stretch fabric take longer to dry. Softshell garments integrate stretchy nylon fabrics to increase freedom of movement while also providing various degrees of wind and water-resistance in a 'softshell'. They are often lined with a microfleece for increased insulation. Synthetic insulation materials such as Primaloft are advantageous as they are warm even when damp, are water-resistant and quick-drying.

You can read Guy Cotter's thoughts on the ultimate lightweight layering system at: <http://adventureconsultantsblog.com/optimum-layering/>.

BODY WEAR

Waterproof Shell Jacket

Bring a non-insulated, fully waterproof shell jacket with a good hood and water-resistant zip closures. The jacket should be easy to move in with your base and mid-layers on underneath, as well as providing a good overlap with your pants but should not be so long that it restricts access to your harness. Chest pockets are useful to things like snack bars and sunblock during the day. Pit zips allow for increased ventilation and cooling.

There are numerous waterproof/breathable fabrics on the market such as Gore-Tex, eVent, Futurelight, MemBrain, PreCip, Hyvent and Entrant etc. These fabrics can be expensive but last for years when well looked after.

Shell clothing should be seam sealed during the manufacturing process or the garment will leak through the stitching. Shell clothing made of PVC or similar is waterproof but does not breath, which means you can become damp from the inside out as moisture cannot escape while you are moving. This style of waterproof shell is not suitable for mountaineering.

We recommend The North Face Summit L5 LT Futurelight Jacket, Arc'teryx Alpha AR Jacket, Montane Alpine Pro Jacket and the Rab Muztag GTX Jacket.

Waterproof Shell Pants

Your waterproof shell pants should allow good freedom of movement to enable you to lift your legs easily when worn with your softshell pants and base layer leggings during inclement weather.

Your shell pants should also have $\frac{3}{4}$ or full-length (preferred) zips down each leg to allow you to easily put them on and take them off while wearing your boots and/or crampons. Bib/salopette styles are warmer as they extend above the lower back/kidney area giving a good overlap with your jacket.

We recommend The North Face Dryzzle Full Zip Pants, Arc'teryx Beta SL Pants, Marmot PreCip Full Zip Pants or the Rab Muztag GTX Pants.

Down or Synthetic Insulated Jacket

You will need a lightweight down or synthetic insulated jacket for climbing in the Mont Blanc region or enough layers to stay warm at the higher altitudes.

Down jackets that we recommend include The North Face Summit L3 Down Hoodie, Patagonia Down Sweater Hoody, Arc'teryx Thorium AR Hoody and the Rab Electron Jacket.

Synthetic insulated jackets that we recommend include The North Face Summit L3 Ventrax 2.0 Hoodie, Rab Xenon Jacket, Montane Prism Jacket and the Arc'teryx Nuclei FL Jacket.

Lightweight Fleece Top

A lightweight, air-permeable fleece top made from Polartec Power Stretch, Polartec Power Grid, Polartec Alpha, Pontetorto Tecnopile microfleece or an expedition-weight base layer is a good additional layer to add over your base layers when the temperature drops.



Rab Muztag GTX Jacket



The North Face Dryzzle Full Zip Pants



Rab Xenon Jacket



Montane Alpine Raid Hoodie



Marmot Scree Softshell Pants



Smartwool Merino 150 Base layer Quarter Zip

This layer can either be a pullover or a jacket. Hoods are optional but recommended and a zippered chest pocket can be useful for keeping sunblock and snack bars accessible.

We recommend The North Face Summit L2 Power Grid Lightweight Hoodie, Rab Alpha Freak Pull-on, Montane Alpine Raid Hoodie, Patagonia R1 Hoody or the Arc'teryx Delta MX 1/2 Zip Hoody.

Softshell Jacket/Windshirt

These jackets are ideal for aerobic activity in light weather conditions. They are wind-resistant, water-repellent and highly breathable. They are used either alone or as an insulating layer under a waterproof shell jacket and models with a hood are best.

Softshell jackets we recommend include the Arc'teryx Gamma LT Hoody, Outdoor Research Ferrosi Hoody, Montane Dyno Stretch Jacket and the Rab Torque Jacket.

Windshirts we recommend include the Marmot Ether Hoody and the Rab Vapour-rise Alpine Jacket.

Softshell Climbing Pants

Softshell pants are made from stretchy, comfortable, wind-resistant and water-repellent materials that are also highly breathable. They are the perfect active layer for your legs. Your pants should fit comfortably with or without your base-layer leggings.

Please note that while softshell pants shed light rain and snow, and will dry quickly when they get wet, but they do not replace your Gore-Tex shell pants, which will still be needed if the weather turns bad.

We recommend The North Face Summit L4 Soft Shell Lightweight Pants, Arc'teryx Gamma LT Pants, Marmot Scree Pants, Rab Vector Pants and the Montane Terra Mission Pants.

Base Layer Top and Leggings x 1 Set

Base layers must be made from materials such as merino wool or polyester. Please, no cotton!

Tops should have long sleeves and a high neck with a zip. This allows for better temperature control and sun protection than crew neck styles.

Base layer leggings should fit snugly without constriction. These can be worn as a single layer on hot days or under your shell or softshell pants when additional warmth is required.

We recommend Icebreaker, The North Face Warm, Rab Forge and Pulse, Earth Sea Ski First Layer and Merino, Montane Primino and Smartwool Base Layer Ranges.

Underwear

Bring enough changes of underwear to keep you feeling fresh. We recommend treated polyester or merino underwear instead of cotton as they wick away sweat from your skin, working with your thermal, fleece and shell layers to keep you dry. They also dry extremely quickly when washed. However, most people use their normal underwear.

We recommend the Icebreaker, Smartwool, Patagonia Capilene, Earth Sea Sky Merino, Montane Primino and Rab Forge Underwear Ranges.



Rab Forge Boxers



The North Face Bones Beanie



Julbo Explorer 2.0 Sunglasses

HEAD WEAR

Sun Hat

A wide-brimmed soft hat or baseball cap in conjunction with a bandana to protect you from the sun.

We recommend The North Face Adventure Consultants Branded Caps, available from our office.

Warm Hat

Your hat can be wool, merino, Windstopper or fleece. It should extend over the ears and be snug enough not to fly off in a strong wind.

We recommend The North Face Bones Beanie or the Rab Logo Beanie.

Bandana or Buff

A fleece, merino wool or silk neck gaiter, neck warmer or Buff is a great idea for added warmth and sun protection. A Buff makes a good face mask in windy cold weather and can replace a balaclava, when used with a warm hat.

We recommend the Adventure Consultants Branded Buff, available from our office.

Sunglasses

Bring sunglasses with good lenses and side-protection. The lens should be dark enough to withstand the intense reflection from the snow and MUST filter 100% of UVA, B and C radiation. Snow reflects up to 85% of solar radiation and the UV index increases 10% with every 1,000m gain in altitude, so it is of utmost importance that you protect your eyes. We recommend photochromic or category 4 polarised lenses with an anti-fog coating.

If you wear prescription glasses, we recommend you get prescription sunglasses with the above specifications.

If you wear contact lenses, bring a pair of prescription glacier glasses as a backup.

Leashes are essential and nose guards are optional.

We recommend Julbo, Smith, Bollé, Oakley and Adidas Sunglasses.

Ski Goggles

High-quality goggles for sun and wind protection at altitude. The lens should offer visible light transmission (VLT) of no more than 30%. Those with light-sensitive eyes may wish to use a darker lens. Photochromatic models are ideal for use in changing conditions.

If you wear prescription glasses, please ensure they fit under your goggles.

We recommend Oakley, Bollé, Adidas, Julbo and Smith Ski Goggles.

HAND WEAR

Liner Gloves

These very thin, lightweight finger gloves form a base layer and are worn whenever climbing. On hot days, they protect against sunburn and can be worn under heavier gloves or mittens on colder days.

Ensure the gloves fit closely to allow you to handle ropes and carabiners easily. Wearing liner gloves will prevent cold injuries in situations requiring full finger dexterity. They can also be worn doubled up and should fit underneath your other glove combinations.

We recommend Budget Polypropylene Gloves, available from most hardware or safety stores, Black Diamond Lightweight Fleece Gloves or the Rab Stretch Knit Liner Gloves.

Leather Gloves

A leather palmed glove that is dexterous is invaluable for the days when climbing on rock or on the warmer mountain days, where you still want hand protection.

We recommend the Marmot Spring Gloves, Rab Axis Gloves, Black Diamond Crag Gloves and the Outdoor Research Direct Route Gloves.

Mountaineering Gloves

Gloves with removable insulated liners are extremely versatile as you can wear them with or without the liners depending on the temperature.

A good model will have abrasion-resistant palms, shaped fingers, a waterproof outer and an insulating removable liner. Cheaper models are not waterproof, so it's worth investing in a good quality pair.

Please ensure that you can fit your liner gloves underneath your mountaineering gloves.

Mountaineering gloves are not as warm as expedition mitts but have the advantage of being more dexterous. Because of the time that you will spend dealing with ropes and equipment, the dexterity your gloves provide will be extremely useful.

We recommend that you attach wrist loops to your gloves to prevent them from being dropped or blown away by the wind when you take them off.

We recommend Black Diamond Guide Gloves, Hestra Army Leather Blizzard Gloves and the Outdoor Research Alti Gloves.

FOOT WEAR

Socks x 2–3 Sets

Have at least two pairs of socks with you for the trip. Socks made from wool or a mix of fibres with good thermal properties are the best choice.

Various combinations suit different people. Some people prefer to wear just one pair of socks in their boots, while others wear two; a thicker pair over a thin liner sock.



Adventure Consultants Branded Buffs



Outdoor Research Direct Route Gloves



Black Diamond Guide Gloves

Try your socks out with your boots before your trip to ensure a good fit. This will help minimise cold toes while you are climbing.

We recommend Smartwool, Bridgedale, Darn Tough and Thorlos Socks.

Mountaineering Boots

An insulated leather mountaineering boot with a fully rigid sole is ideal for climbing in Europe. Ensure that they are waterproof, supportive and warm enough for snow and ice climbing. The boots must have a reasonably sized welt on the back and front to accept 'clip-on' crampons.

Three-quarter shank boots do not give enough support the extended periods of snow and ice climbing as they are too flexible. This style of boot is not generally insulated so they are not warm enough, but some styles are excellent for rock-based mountaineering routes elsewhere in the Alps.

While it is possible to use plastic boots, they have become somewhat outdated, are very clumsy to wear and will not perform well.

New-generation synthetic double boots with removable liners can also be used for higher elevation ascents around Mont Blanc or when it is very cold. However, single leather and synthetic boots are the status quo for summer mountaineering in the Alps.

The right fit is more important with leather boots than for plastic boots, so make sure they are worn in by doing several multi-hour hikes on hills and rough terrain before you wear them in the mountains. Your boots are perhaps the single most important piece of equipment and can make or break a trip depending on whether they fit well or not, so please ensure your boots are of high-quality and fit your feet well.

We recommend the Scarpa Mont Blanc Pro GTX (no surprise there!) and Phantom Guide, La Sportiva Nepal Evo GTX, G5 and Trango Tower Extreme GTX, Lowa Alpine Expert GTX, Garmont Mountain Guide Pro GTX and the Salewa Vultur Vertical GTX Mountaineering Boots.

Snow Gaiters (Only Required, If Your Boots Do Not Have an Integrated Gaiter)

Calf-length gaiters with a velcro or zip closure at the front keep the snow out and prevent you snagging your trousers with your crampons. They need a good tie-down system underneath the in-step to stop them creeping up at the heel.

We recommend the Sea to Summit Alpine eVent Gaiters or the Rab Latok Extreme Gaiters.

Lightweight Shoes

Lightweight shoes are handy for walking around in at the end of the day and for the walkout down the valley. Believe it or not, a pair of Crocs can be good lightweight slippers for use at the huts.

We recommend Salomon XA Pro 3D Ultra 2, Salewa Wildfire and La Sportiva TX4 Shoes.

Rock Shoes (Optional—Can Be Rented)

Bring these with you if you have them as they are used on training days and non-mountain days. If you don't own a pair, these can be rented locally if needed.



Smartwool PHD Outdoor Mountaineer Socks



La Sportiva Nepal Evo GTX Mountaineering Boot



Sea to Summit Alpine eVent Gaiter



La Sportiva TX4 Approach Shoe



Black Diamond Speed 50 Pack



Petzl Actik Core Headlamp

PACKS & BAGS

Small Duffel/Travel Bag

This is for storing clothing and items left in town, while you are out climbing. Bring a lock and if you're good at losing keys, make sure to buy a combination lock and set to an easy to remember number!

We recommend The North Face Base Camp Duffels and Osprey Transporter Duffels.

Mountaineering Pack—50–65 Litres

Your pack should have at least a 50-litre capacity but no more than 65 litres in volume. Required features include a good expansion/compression system, attachment points for ice axes and crampons, plus a top pocket.

We recommend The North Face Phantom 50, Cobra 60, Macpac Sentinel 50L, Osprey Mutant 52, Arc'teryx Alpha AR 55 or the Black Diamond Speed 50 Packs.

CAMPING GEAR

Sleeping Bag (-10°C/14°F or better)

You will need a down sleeping bag rated to -10°C/14°F or better with around 700g or more down fill. Synthetic bags tend to be too heavy and bulky. Your sleeping bag should be long enough so that your feet do not press hard against the foot of the bag, as this will cause the insulation to be compressed and lose heat. It also needs to have enough room for you to fit in with lots of layers on.

Please note that the ratings quoted above are the sleeping bags 'Limit' temperature. If you are a cold sleeper, consider a warmer bag. If you are using the EN temperature ratings when choosing a sleeping bag, a general rule is most women or cold sleepers should tend towards the 'Comfort' rating and most men should tend towards the 'Comfort Limit' rating. Sleeping bags that do not have the EN rating tend to be rated at their 'Comfort Limit' temperature.

We recommend The North Face Blue Kazoo, Mountain Equipment Glacier 700, Marmot Helium and the Rab Alpine Pro 600 Sleeping Bags.

Sleeping Bag Liner (A Requirement For All Huts)

These are for use with the blankets supplied in the huts.

Small Pillow or Pillow Case (Optional)

Consider bringing your own camping pillow to use if camping for added comfort.

We recommend the Therm-a-Rest Compressible Pillows or Sea to Summit Aero Series.



Sea to Summit Silk Sleeping Bag Liner



Personal First Aid Kit



Sea to Summit Stuff Sacks

ACCESSORIES

Surgical Style Face Mask

A mask is required at all mountain huts in the European Alps while COVID-19 restrictions are in place.

Rubbish Bag

To carry out any used masks and your used disposable sheet from the mountain huts.

Hand Sanitiser

This is a requirement at all mountain huts in the European Alps while COVID-19 restrictions are in place. Remember that golden rule—wash your hands, wash your hands, wash your hands!

Headlamp and Spare Batteries

Headlamps are more versatile than hand torches as they allow you to keep your hands free. High-output LED headlamps are superb as they provide an excellent level of lighting and are also very lightweight. We recommend hybrid headlamps that run on both AAA or AA disposable batteries and rechargeable batteries.

Bring two NEW sets of lithium or alkaline batteries for the trip.

We recommend the Petzl Actik Core, LED Lenser MH5 and Black Diamond Storm 375 Headlamps.

Water Bottle—1 Litre x 2

Wide-mouthed plastic bottles are a versatile option. Bladder style hydration systems are good in theory but can often freeze and are easily punctured. Metal bottles are not suitable due to the cold air temperatures. Narrow-mouthed bottles are difficult to fill and clean.

We recommend the Nalgene 1 Litre and 500ml Wide Mouth Bottles.

Thermos Flask (Optional)

You can bring an insulated vacuum flask made from stainless steel of about 500ml–1 litre in capacity for hot drinks on the go.

We recommend Primus and Lifeventure Vacuum Bottles.

Ear Plugs

A handy way to get a night's sleep when sharing a room with a snorer!

Personal First Aid Kit and Medications

You should always carry a basic first aid kit including blister tape, second skin, gauze pads, crepe bandage and painkillers.

Include any personal medication you may require and be sure to inform our office and your guide, if you are on prescription medicine.

Store your first aid kit in a waterproof container, if possible and if you do not have one of these, a plastic bag inside a nylon stuff sack usually works well.

Personal Toiletries

Bring a small toilet kit—flannel, some soap, toothpaste and toothbrush. Keep it light so do not bring anything that isn't absolutely necessary.

Sunscreen and Lip Balm

Conditions in the mountains can be extreme, so you will need a bottle or tube of SPF 50 sunscreen.

Lip balm (with SPF 15 or higher) is also worth carrying in your pocket for application during the day.

Sunscreen loses SPF rating over time; we strongly recommend bringing brand-new sunscreen.

Wet Wipes (Optional)

Baby Wipes or similar pre-moistened cloth wipes for personal hygiene. These antibacterial wipes are excellent for cleaning hands and other hygiene issues, whilst away from civilisation. Just a few in a small zip lock bag will suffice.

Stuff Sacks

Lightweight nylon bags with draw cords to store spare clothes, etc are very useful for organising gear in your pack or when you're in a hut. We suggest bringing 2–3 small or medium sized sacks.

We recommend the Sea to Summit Stuff Sacks and Dry Bags.

Camera and Spare Batteries (Optional)

Bring along your choice of either a SLR or fully automatic camera. We recommend using a camera with replaceable batteries, NOT rechargeable, as this allows you to have spare fresh batteries for summit day. Be aware that batteries can be a problem with cold temperatures, so it is a good idea to bring a spare set or two.

Spare batteries should be only carried in carry-on luggage when travelling, as they are likely to be confiscated if carried in your checked luggage.

Don't forget to bring extra memory cards!

Personal Entertainment (Optional)

Feel free to bring your phone, MP3 player, Kindle or a good book for any downtime.

Pocket Knife/Leatherman/Tool Kit (Optional)

Choose the Swiss Army style, Leatherman or equivalent. A personal repair kit for your equipment is also useful.

We recommend Victorinox Knives and Leatherman Multi Tools.



iPhone



Leatherman Wave Multi Tool



Petzl Summit Evo Ice Axe

Additional Snack Food

Bring any of your favourite snacks. We recommend you bring at least 4 energy gel sachets for instant carbohydrate replacement on the climb. You may also wish to bring electrolyte powder to mix in your water bottles.

CLIMBING EQUIPMENT

Ice Axe—50–66cm

For general alpine climbing, you will need a straight shafted axe between 50–66cm long, depending on your height. A longer axe is more helpful on the moderate ground and even the most difficult climbs have approaches and descents for which this is helpful. Short axes with curved shafts and moulded handgrips are fine on hard technical ice climbs, but not suited for the majority of alpine climbing.

The head of the axe should be comfortable to hold when using the axe as a walking stick and not have any protrusions which will dig into your hand.

The pick can be a normal downward curve or a 'reverse curve'. Reverse curve picks hold better on steep ice but they are more difficult to self-arrest with. Some ice axes come with replaceable picks, so it pays to check that the bolts are tight before each climb.

An adze is still used a lot for chopping steps in the ice and snow, so ensure that the adze has a good angle to do so. Some adzes, particularly on technical axes are designed for climbing steep unconsolidated snow and are too drooped to chop steps easily. Avoid this type of adze for general use.

Ice axe shafts are made from metal, fibreglass or wood and some have rubber handgrips. A rubber grip at the base of the shaft makes it easier to hold when self-arresting or climbing steeper ground, as well as keeping your hand warmer. The shaft must be smooth enough to be forced into the snow and should not have protrusions which can get caught up on a crusty snow surface.

The spike at the bottom of the tool should be sharp enough to penetrate hard snow. A wrist loop is needed for support when climbing on steeper ground. The correct length allows you to hold the bottom of the shaft with the sling tight.

We recommend the Petzl Summit Evo, Grivel Air Tech Evo G-Bone, Blue Ice Bluebird and the Black Diamond Venom Ice Axes.

Crampons

Steel crampons with a toe harness and heel bail are best as they fit a variety of boots and are easy to put on in the cold. Ensure your crampons are fitted with 'anti-balling' plates and avoid technical ice climbing crampons with vertical front points.

Please check that the set-up is secure on your boots and that the fastening strap is long enough. Do not cut or trim your crampon straps under any circumstances.

We recommend the Petzl Vasak Leverlock Universel, Grivel G12 New-Matic and the Black Diamond Sabretooth Clip Crampons.



Grivel G12 New-Matic Crampons



Mammut Zephir Altitude Climbing Harness



Black Diamond Vapor Climbing Helmet



Petzl William Screw Gate Locking Carabiner



Beal 10mm Dyneema Sling



Black Diamond Expedition Ski Poles

Climbing Harness

Bring a lightweight alpine climbing harness. Your harness must have gear loops, adjustable leg loops and waistband large enough to fit over all your clothing layers. The waistband and leg loops should be able to completely separate. Do not bring a harness with fixed leg loops.

We strongly recommend newer models with a belay loop and buckles that do not require you to “doubling back” your waist belt.

We recommend the Petzl Aquila or Altitude, Arc’Teryx AR-395A, Black Diamond Technician or Couloir, Blue Ice Choucas Pro, Edelrid Huascaran or the Mammut Zephir Altitude Climbing Harnesses.

Belay Device

You will need to bring a belay device. We use tubular style units which have two holes for the rope to pass through. They are lightweight, easy to use and are compatible with single or double ropes.

We recommend the Black Diamond ATC-XP or the Petzl Verso Belay Devices.

Climbing Helmet

Helmets designed for climbing are lightweight and designed to deflect falling ice and rocks. They also protect the head in a fall. All helmets must meet industry standards for impact protection and with the standard for overhead protection being greater than the side-protection standard.

There are two kinds of climbing helmets available today—hardshell helmets and shelled foam helmets. Helmet makers use different terms for each type of helmet, so focus instead on tell-tale construction details like shell hardness, foam thickness and the number of vents.

Plastic becomes brittle as it ages so ensure your helmet for the course is no more than 4 years old.

Check the size and make sure that it will adjust for when you are wearing your hat underneath.

We recommend the Petzl Sirocco or Meteor, and the Black Diamond Vapor or Vector Climbing Helmets.

Locking Carabiners x 3

Bring two lightweight locking carabiners which have either a ‘screw gate’ or ‘twist lock’ gates. Do not buy the ball lock type. Whichever you choose, please practice with them with your gloves on at home.

We recommend the Petzl and Black Diamond Carabiners.

Ice Screw

This is very useful to secure yourself in steep icy ground.

We recommend the Black Diamond Express Ice Screws.

120cm Sling

Bring along a 60cm sewn/tied length of sling.

Prusik x 1

A prusik is a friction hitch or knot used to attach a loop of cord around a rope. Prusiks are generally made from 6mm cord. You will need to bring 1 prusik on this trip - a short prusik made from 1.6m length of cord. Use a double or triple fisherman's knot to join the ends and create the loop.

Collapsible Ski/Trekking Poles With Snow Baskets (Optional)

Compulsory as these are great for walking on snow or to save the knees on long days. Snow baskets are a worthy addition for when walking through deep snow.

We recommend Leki and Black Diamond Trekking and Ski Poles.

TRAVEL GEAR

Casual Wear

Bring a selection of casual clothes to wear on the in-between days, when not in the mountains and at the end of the trip.

Passports, Documents and Copies

You will be in at least two countries when around the Mont Blanc region.

NOTE: If you found you have forgotten anything when you arrive in Chamonix, do not worry as there are plenty of stores that specialise in mountaineering equipment. Your guide will be happy to help you with any purchases you would like to make. If you have any questions, please ask.