



MOUNTAIN GUIDES

specialists in the alps



Michael Silitch

UIAGM Mountain and Ski Guide

270 Chemin de la Deviaz

74400 Chamonix, France

tel. +33 6 89 48 41 18

michael@high-alpine.com

www.high-alpine.com

Equipment List for the Alps--Summer

Boots—Plastics (Mt. Blanc only), Nepal Extremes, Trangos, approach shoes, rock shoes.

Socks and Liners

Gaitors—long and short.

Overboots—without plastics or Nepal Extremes (Mt. Blanc only or winter).

Climbing Pants—Schoeller or nylon.

Long Underwear Bottoms—midweight.

Goretex/Rain Bottoms.

Short sleeve shirt (synthetic), optional

Long Underwear Top—midweight.

Long Underwear Top—stretch midweight with pocket.

Fleece or Synthetic Fill Jacket

Goretex/Rain Jacket.

Heavy Insulated Jacket—synthetic or down (Mt. Blanc only or winter).

Light Gloves—leather palms best for all

Medium Gloves—ski glove weight

Super Heavy Gloves—like BD Guide Glove or Patagonia Nitro

Fleece Hat—(neck gator and balaclava optional.)

Sun Hat—baseball cap style is fine.

Bandana—for long days on glacier.

Helmet—light but durable. Recommendation: Petzl Elios

Sunglasses—Category 4 and side shields best for long days on sunny glaciers, wrap around cat. 3 sport glasses fine for most things.

Goggles—(Mt. Blanc or winter only)

Food—Sandwiches, bars, and salty snacks—can easily be had here—if you have specific favorites, bring from home.

Water—One to two liters, soda bottles lightest option—hydration systems with hoses not recommended as they freeze.

Harness—Rap prussik, 1-2 single & double slings, 2 locking biners. Rock: 2 locking biners and belay device.

Ice Axe—shorter the better no leash necessary. At 6'2" I use a 48 cm for alpine rock and a 53 cm for snow routes. If the terrain is less steep, I'll use a ski pole. Recommendation: Petzl/Charlet Cosmique.

Ice Tools—not necessary for Mt. Blanc, Eiger, Matterhorn, but very useful in Chamonix for other routes.

Recommendation: Petzl/Charlet Quarks or Aztars.

Ski Pole—(one three section useful, but optional.)

Crampons—12 point, anti balling plates useful. Recommendation: Petzl/Charlet Vasak.

Headlamp—spare batteries. small and light. Recommendation: Petzl Tikka Plus.

First-aid Kit (small)—blister kit and ibu.

Sunscreen and Lipscreen, small bottles

Camera—small and light.

Thermos (Mt. Blanc and winter)

Pack—30-40 Liters.

Hut Extras (Optional)—ear plugs, sleeping bag liner.



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EQUIPMENT LIST—Haute Routes

Skis: A randonnee (alpine touring) ski set up is essential. It allows for ski touring up the mountain and gives a solid performance for skiing down hill. Any good **shaped** alpine “freeride” ski in a **mid-fat to fat** width will work well, with at least a 75 mm waist, preferably 85 mm. *Some suggestions: Atomic Beta Ride 9.22, Dynastar Intuitiv 74, Fischer FX 8.6, Rossignol Bandit XX, Salomon 1080, Volkl, G3/4, Black Diamond Muira or Crossbow.*

Bindings: It is important for your randonnee binding to be easy to get on and off, durable, have a **ski brake and ski crampon**. *Some suggestions: Diamir Fritschi Freeride or the Diamir Fritschi Titanal 3. A ski crampon (harcheisen) is essential.*

Poles: An adjustable probe pole is versatile, but a fixed length pole is fine and less likely to malfunction. Powder baskets recommended. *Some suggestions: Lifelink carbon fiber adj. probe, Black Diamond carbon fibre adj. probe. The carbon fibre poles are lighter and have a lighter swing weight, but any adjustable or fixed length probe pole will do.*

Ski Boots: Any good Randonee (alpine touring) boot that fits your foot well and seems comfortable. *Some suggestions: Dynafit, Lowa, Nordica, Scarpa. The Scarpa Denali and the Lowa Struktura Evo are about the stiffest.* You might consider getting a Raichle Thermoflex, Intuition, or Scarpa **thermally molded liner** for more warmth and touring comfort—these seem to alleviate almost all blister problems! A custom foot bed is will also give you more comfort and control. Fit the randonee boot a little bigger than an alpine ski boot but maybe a little smaller than a plastic climbing boot. The more toe room the warmer your feet will stay, but if too big, you give up some edge control.

Climbing Skins: A full length, full width, “shaped” climbing skin with glue and some sort of clip on system is your best bet. *Some suggestions: Backcountry Access, Black Diamond, G3.*

Ski Strap: One ski strap is essential for attaching your skis to your pack, while hiking.

Avalanche Transciever: What to look for: Acoustic loudspeaker (no ear piece), European frequency 457 Khz. *Some suggestions: DTS Tracker, Mammut Barryvox, Ortovox F1 Focus.*

Shovel: Any lightweight shovel made specifically for removing avalanche debris. *Some suggestions: Backcountry Access, Black Diamond, Life Link, Ortovox (the Eco with a non-extendable shaft is the lightest).*

Probe: Again, the lighter the better. There are some hot new carbon fibre probes available. *Some Suggestions: Backcountry Access (they have a slick probe and shovel combo where the probe is stored in the shovel shaft.), Life Link, Ortovox.*

- Not every one in the group needs a probe and shovel. The guides will have them. Two to three more sets would be good.

Boot Crampons: Any crampon is fine as long as it fits on your ski boot well and is quick to take off and put on. Aluminum is highly recommended for ski touring for its lightness. Point protecters are not needed on trip! *Some suggestions: Camp LC 480, Grivel aluminum, Petzl Ecrin (steel but fairly light).*

Ice Axe: Any ice axe will do, however the lighter the better. Aluminum axes work well and save weight. An ice axe leash and protective covers are not needed on trip! Length recommendations: 45cm to 50 cm is best. If an axe is too long it gets unwieldy on steeper slopes and is awkward getting in and out of trams. *Some Suggestions: Charlet Moser Snowracer (one of the lightest steel axes), Cassin Ghost (Aluminum and extremely light), Camp Aluminum.*

Harness: It needs to fit over all your lower layers and be comfortable to walk or ski tour in. Again light weight and compact are desirable features. *Some suggestions: Black Diamond Alpine Bod, Petzl Pandion and Tetrax.*

Carabiners: One small locking biner. For crevasse rescue gear (optional-guides will have) add: 2 non-locking biners and 5 ft. of 6-7mm prussick cord. *Some suggestions: Petzl Attache, Petzl Spirit straight gate.*

Headlamp: Small and reliable. *Some suggestions: Petzl Tikka Plus, Black Diamond.*

Gaitors: **Optional**, need to fit over your ski boots. Some Gore-tex or ski pants have **internal** gaitors or fastening systems which work great.

Socks: good warm ski sock. However, if it is too thick, it might restrict circulation and make your toes cold. *Some suggestions: Smartwool or Thorlos.*

Shell Clothing: A Gore-tex top and bottom will be the most weather proof. Make sure it fits with all the possible layers under it. There are other options to Gore-tex that work fine. The top should have a comfortable protective hood. Light weight is best.

Inner Layers: Mid weight long under wear top and bottom (bottom optional), mid weight fleece top. Heavier weight fleece jacket or insulated "Primaloft" sweater. Schoeller fabric stretch climbing pants are useful, but optional—with these you can leave the long underwear bottoms to go light.

Gloves: Standard warm ski glove and a lighter Windstopper glove.

Hat: Warm fleece hat, additional thin balaclava, ear band, and/or neck gaiter optional.

Sun Hat: A brimmed “baseball cap”.

Bandana: Optional, but good for sun protection (ears) and can be used as a “towel” for washing in the huts.

Pack: A medium sized pack between 30 and 40 Liters is best. If the pack is too big, the straps often slap you in the face when it is windy and it won't ski as well as a smaller model. It does need to fit all your gear, but don't forget you'll be wearing most of the clothing. A ski oriented pack with pockets and slots for the shovel blade, probe, and shovel handle is very nice, but not imperative. *Some suggestions: Backcountry Access (Stash BC), Ortovox, Life Link,*

Food: You can bring your favorite snack food and energy bars and gels or find similar bars over here, as well as good chocolate. We can buy lunches and bars daily at the huts. If you fly over with Gels and powder drink mixes double bag them as they tend to explode in the duffel!

Fluids: One to two liter total capacity. Go light and use soda bottles instead of nalgens. A steel thermos (.5-1 L) is nice to have, but not essential. Drinking systems (bladders) tend to freeze and leak and are not recommended.

First-Aid Kit: Small and light. *Some suggestions: Ibuprofen, blister kit(Compeed and athletic tape).*

Sun Screen and Lip Screen: Small and light containers. At least SPF 15.

Toiletries: go light—a toothbrush.

Sunglasses: At least category 3 (cat. 4 for sensitive eyes), wrap around sports style is fine, glacier glasses with side shields are also good, but tend to fog up more.

Goggles: With good low light lens is very important.

Camera: I find when I bring along my small and light camera, I take more pictures. I love my new digital camera.

Optional Items: Map, Compass, Altimeter, and GPS are all fun, but optional as the guides will have these items. The map for the area is the ST-GERVAIS-Les-Bains Massif Du Mont-Blanc map, 1:25,000 scale, put out by L'Institut Geographique National (www.ign.fr). And in Switzerland, three maps of 1:50,000 scale: Martigny 282 (S), Arolla 283(S), Michabel 284(S). (www.swisstopo.ch). The guide book is Peter Cliff's Chamonix-Zermatt. Maps and guide books can be nice for before and after, but the guide will have them on the trip—think light.

Optional Hut Items: 1 T-shirt (hut T-shirts can be bought at many huts) ear plugs, sleeping sack (cotton or silk), baby wipes, reading book, MP3 player, pee funnel for ladies.

Passport:

Money: ATM cards are a good way to get cash.

Duffel bag: For transporting gear.

Town Clothes and Shoes: Used at trip start and delivered to trip end.

Any of these items can be purchased here in Chamonix and the technical gear (skis, ice axes etc), can be rented. However, in April the selection can be slim for buying. Check out Mountain Gear in the US as they have a great ski specific catalog and website with many hard to find items.

A lightweight pack is super important—your pack should weigh no more than 20 pounds.

Please let me know if you have any questions about equipment; for example, if you have something that you think will work, but are not sure.

All the best, Michael

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Equipment List for the Alps and Matterhorn--Summer

Boots—La Sportiva Trango S (medium weight, mountain boot designed with rock climbing in mind and crampon compatible), approach shoes, and a bigger boot for climbing the surrounding peaks, like the La Sportiva Nepal or Nepal Extreme—this boot may be used on the Matterhorn, but the lighter rock oriented Trango S will climb better and easier.

Socks and Liners

Gaitors—short.

Climbing Pants—Schoeller or nylon.

Long Underwear Bottoms—midweight.

Lightweight Goretex Bottoms.

Short sleeve shirt (synthetic), optional.

Long Underwear Top—lightweight or midweight.

Long Underwear Top—stretch midweight with pocket.

Fleece or Synthetic Fill Jacket

Lightweight Goretex Jacket

Light Gloves—leather work glove. leather palms best for all.

Medium Gloves—like BD ice glove or ski glove weight.

Heavy Glove—like BD Guide Glove or Patagonia Nitro.

Fleece Hat—(neck gator and balaclava optional).

Sun Hat—baseball cap style is fine.

Bandana—for long days on glacier.

Helmet—Light and durable. Recommendation: Petzl Elios.

Sunglasses—Category 4 and side shields best for long days on sunny glaciers, wrap around cat. 3 sport glasses fine for most things including the Matterhorn.

Food—Sandwiches, bars, and salty snacks—can easily buy here—if you have specific favorites, bring from home.

Water—One to two liters, soda bottles lightest option—hydration systems with hoses not recommended as they freeze and leak.

Harness—Rap prussik, 1-2 single & double slings, 2 locking carabiners. Rock: 2 locking carabiners and belay device.

Ice Axe—shorter the better no leash necessary. If an axe is a comfortable length for walking or scrambling on moderate terrain, it becomes cumbersome on steeper more technical terrain such as the Matterhorn. Also, a long axe stowed on the pack catches against the rock more. At 6'2" I use a 48 cm for the Matterhorn, a 53 for the Mont Blanc and if the terrain is less steep I'll use my ski pole. Recommendation: Petzl/Charlet Cosmique.

Ski Pole (one three section useful on some prep climbs, but optional)

Crampons—12 point with toe strap on front for Trango S boots, anti balling plates useful. Recommendation: Petzl/Charlet Vasak.

Headlamp—spare batteries. Recommendation: Petzl Tikka Plus.

First-aid Kit (small)—blister kit and ibu.

Sunscreen and Lipscreen, small bottles

Camera—small and light.

Pack—30-40 Liters.

Hut Extras (Optional)—ear plugs, sleeping bag liner.



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EQUIPMENT LIST—Haute Routes, Ski Touring and the Mont Blanc Descent

Skis: A randonnee (alpine touring) ski set up is essential. It allows for ski touring up the mountain and gives a solid performance for skiing down hill. Any good alpine “freeride” ski in a mid-fat to fat width will work well. *Some suggestions: Atomic Beta Ride 9.22, Dynastar Intuitiv 74, Fischer Big Stix 74, Rossignol Bandit XX, Salomon, Volkl*

Bindings: It is important for your randonnee binding to be easy to get on and off, durable, have a ski brake and ski crampon. *Some suggestions: Diamir Fritschi Freeride or the Diamir Fritschi Titanal II.*

Ski Crampons: *A ski crampon (harcheisen) is essential and is bought with the binding.*

Poles: An adjustable probe pole is the most versatile. *Some suggestions: Life Link carbon fibre adj. probe, Black Diamond carbon fibre adj. probe. The carbon fibre poles are lighter and have a lighter swing weight, but any adjustable or fixed length probe pole will do.*

Ski boots: Any good Randonnee (alpine touring) boot that fits your foot well and seems comfortable. *Some suggestions: Dynafit, Lowa, Nordica, Scarpa. The Scarpa Denali and the Lowa Struktura Evo are about the stiffest. You might consider getting a Raichle Thermoflex or an Intuition thermally molded liner for more warmth and touring comfort. Fit the randonnee boot a little bigger than an alpine ski boot but maybe a little smaller than a plastic climbing boot. The more toe room the warmer your feet will stay on summit day, but if too big, you give up some edge control.*

Climbing skins: A full length, full width climbing skin with glue and some sort of clip on system is preferable. *Some suggestions: Backcountry Access.*

Avalanche Transceiver: What to look for: Acoustic loudspeaker (no ear piece), European frequency 457 Khz. *Some suggestions: DTS Tracker.*

Shovel: Any lightweight shovel made specifically for removing avalanche debris. *Some suggestions: Backcountry Access.*

Probe: Again, the lighter the better. There are some hot new carbon fibre probes available. *Some Suggestions: Backcountry Access (they have a slick probe and shovel combo where the probe is stored in the shovel shaft. It's called the BCA Tour Shovel/Probe system). * Not every one in the group needs a probe and shovel. The guides will have them. Two to three more sets would be good, but it doesn't hurt if every one wants to carry these items.*

Crampons: Any crampon is fine as long as it fits on your ski boot well and is quick to take off and put on. Steel is fine but aluminum is preferred for ski touring for its lightness. *Some suggestions: Camp LC 480, Grivel aluminum, Petzl Ecrin (steel but fairly light)*

Ice Axe: Any ice axe will do, however the lighter the better. Aluminum axes work well and save weight. An ice axe leash is not necessary. Length recommendations: 48cm to 60 cm. If an axe is too long it gets unwieldy on steeper slopes and is awkward getting in and out of trams. *Some Suggestions: Grivel Air Tech Racing (one of the lightest steel axes), Cassin Ghost (Aluminum and extremely light).*

Harness: It needs to fit over all your lower layers and be comfortable to walk or ski tour in. Again light weight and compact are desirable features. *Some suggestions: Black Diamond Alpine Bod, Petzl Pandion and Tetrax.*

Carabiners: One small locking biner. For crevasse rescue gear (optional-guides will have) add: 2 non-locking biners and 5 ft. of 6-7mm prussick cord. *Some suggestions: Petzl Attache, Petzl Spirit straight gate.*

Headlamp: Small and reliable. *Some suggestions: Petzl Tikka Plus.*

Gaitors: Need to fit over your ski boots; optional. Some Gore-tex or ski pants have internal gaitors or fastening systems which work.

Socks: good warm ski sock. If it is too thick, it might restrict circulation and make your toes cold. *Some suggestions: Smartwool.*

Shell clothing: A Gore-tex top and bottom will be the most weather proof. Make sure it fits with all the possible layers under it. There are other options to Gore-tex that work fine. The top should have a comfortable protective hood.

Inner layers: Mid weight long under wear top and bottom, Mid weight fleece top and bottom, Heavier weight fleece jacket or insulated sweater. Schoeller fabric stretch climbing pants are useful, but optional.

Insulation layer: Down jacket or synthetic insulation jacket. *Some suggestions: Patagonia DAS Parka, Marmot, etc.* A down sweater could be a little on the cold side depending on the weather; a jacket with a hood is preferable. Thinner for Haute Routes and thicker for Mont Blanc.

Hat: Warm fleece hat, additional thin balaclava optional.

Sun hat: A brimmed “baseball cap”.

Gloves: Standard ski glove plus and additional super warm glove. *Some suggestions: Black Diamond Guide Glove, Patagonia Nitro Glove, and an optional glove liner.*

Pack: A medium sized pack between 30 and 40 Liters is best. If the pack is too big, the straps often slap you in the face when it is windy and it wont ski as well as a smaller model. It does need to fit all your gear, but don't forget you'll be wearing most of the clothing. A ski oriented

pack with pockets and slots for the shovel blade, probe, and shovel handle is very nice, but not imperative. *Some suggestions: BCA Stash BC, 2400 cu. In.*

Food: You can bring your favorite snack food and energy bars and gels or find similar bars over here, as well as good chocolate. *Some Suggestions: Power Bars Harvest and Powergels.*

Fluids: One to two liter capacity. A steel thermos is very nice to have.

First-aid kit: Small and light. *Some suggestions: Ibuprofen, blister kit.*

Sun screen and lip screen: Small and light containers. At least SPF 15.

Camera: I find when I bring along my small and light camera, I take more pictures. I love my new digital camera.

Optional Items: Map, Compass, Altimeter, and GPS are all fun, but optional as the guides will have these items. The map for the area is the ST-GERVAIS-Les-Bains Massif Du Mont-Blanc map, 1:25,000 scale, put out by L'Institut Geographique National (www.ign.fr).

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Please let me know if you have any questions about equipment; for example, if you have something that you think will work, but are not sure.

All the best, Michael

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