

# WAM'18

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(RC members - sandwich break whilst piste skiing)

## Winter Alpine Meet - Summary

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> to 17th March 2018

Arguably the jewel in the crown of alpine mountain resorts is Chamonix Mont Blanc. The town has been at the leading edge of mountaineering ever since 1760, when a Genevois scientist offered a prize for the first ascent of its 4,808m peak. Chamonix led the way throughout the Victorian golden era of mountaineering and hosted the first ever Winter Olympics in 1924. Today it is a truly International destination and undisputed capital of all-mountain skiing. That's why in 2006 the Rucksack Club ran its first Winter Alpine Meet here in the valley.

So whether your enthusiasm takes you towards the 20km off piste Valley Blanche; gentle cross country through the forests, long easy cruising pistes or the famous "Vert" World Cup Men's Down Hill course you won't be disappointed. During the week will be Piste skiing (beginner to advanced), Off Piste skiing, Cross country skiing, Ice climbing, ski touring, ski mountaineering and "Iglooming"!

## Igloo Meet

Date: 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> March 2018

The 2017 Igloo meet will take place on the second Saturday night of the Winter Alpine Meet allowing members to make "Saturday to Saturday" accommodation bookings if they wish. Best quality Igloo building snow is guaranteed! The precise location will be decided based on the weather and the ability of the party to access the various potential igloo sites. Previously we have "Igloomed" on the summit of Mont Le Chat, Col du Tour, Lac Blanche and the Argentière glacier.

## Winter Alpine Meet - General details

### Date:

10th to the 17th March 2018 followed by the Igloo Meet on the night of Saturday the 17<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

### Location:

Vallée de Chamonix Mont Blanc, FRANCE. On the border with Italy (Cormayeur is 12km away through the Mont Blanc Tunnel) and Switzerland over the Col de Grand Montets.

### Travel:

Drive or fly to Geneva then hire car or "transfer mini bus" to the Chamonix Valley.

### Accommodation:

It is equally convenient to stay in Les Houches, Chamonix, Argentière or Le Tour as excellent bus and train services run the length of the valley. There is a great choice of accommodation for example Bunk House, Rented Apartment, Chalet, Hotel. The Tourist Information offices in Les Houches, Chamonix and Argentière are extremely helpful and all speak English. [www.chamonix.com/tourist-office,99,en.html](http://www.chamonix.com/tourist-office,99,en.html) Members need to book their accommodation direct. I will try to coordinate and those attending and keep everyone informed. If difficulties arise I will be available to assist so please let me know if you are thinking of joining us on WAM'18.

### Activities:

As with any Rucksack Club meet members and guests are free to pursue any route/activity they wish.

In addition I will be coordinating activities each day. The weeks programme is flexible will be tailored to suit member's ability.

Members are always generous towards less experienced skiers/mountaineers offering help and advice but please remember that the Rucksack club is not a training organisation and we are not qualified ski instructors or mountain guides. Internationally qualified professionals are readily available for hire through several ski schools and local guides' offices. Lessons are an excellent way to accelerate progress for those wishing to undertake more ambitious objectives.

### Igloo Meet:

The Igloo meet will take place on the night of the second Saturday. Depending on the weather/avalanche forecast access will be by cable car/chair lift followed by about an hour's skinning or snowshoeing (alternatively about 2.5 hours from the valley if you're feeling fit). Avalanche transceivers are highly recommended whenever travelling in the Alpine mountains in winter and these are available for hire locally along with snowshoes or ski touring equipment. Other equipment: sleeping bag, Thermarest/Karrimat, backpacking stove, pans, food etc., snow shovel/snow saw plus all your normal winter mountaineering safety kit. Winter mountaineering experience necessary. Please let me know if you interested in attending the Igloo meet.

## EQUIPMENT

### Ski Equipment & Hire

Piste Skiing and Ski Mountaineering equipment can be hired at most ski shops throughout the valley. Just ask the shop staff as they are very good at advising customers and keen to ensure that the hire equipment matches the skier's ability.

### Safety Equipment for off-piste skiing and Ski Mountaineering

If you go off-piste skiing or ski mountaineering in Europe or North America you would be expected to have the following safety equipment. In Italy it is obligatory to carry the correct equipment when Off Piste.

#### Safety Equipment for off-piste skiing

- Transceiver
- Snow shovel
- Avalanche probe

#### Safety Equipment for Ski Mountaineering

As for off piste skiing plus the following:-

- Ice axe
- Crampons
- Climbing harness
- 2 prussic loops and pulley (or 2 auto bloc plus pulley)
- 4 locking karabiners
- 8' tape sling
- Ice Screw
- Rope - minimum one 30m for each pair of skiers
- Normal winter mountaineering safety kit.



(RC members glacier skiing)

## Insurance

I can't advise on insurance matters as everyone has different requirements.

Piste skiing only accident insurance is sold by the Lift Company and can be bought at the ticket office.

Off Piste and mountaineering Insurance - please make sure you have adequate insurance for whatever winter sport you might be doing on the trip. In particular I know that most ordinary 'ski holiday' insurance has very limited cover, if any at all, for off-piste skiing, and never covers ski mountaineering or winter mountaineering type activities.

The BMC Insurance department is one possible source of advice on these matters.

**For more details keep an eye on the club site where I will be posting further information, resources & regular updates or contact me using the details in the club handbook.**