



GLACIER SKI TOURING COURSE



2022 COURSE NOTES





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2022 COURSE DETAILS

Dates: GSTC 1: August 22–27
GSTC 2: August 29 to September 3
GSTC 3: September 5–10
GSTC 4: September 12–17

Duration: 6 days

Departure: ex Wanaka, New Zealand

Price: NZ\$2,630 per person

▲ Skiers taking in beautiful West Coast glacier views. Photo: Camilla Rutherford

Welcome to Adventure Consultants' Glacier Ski Touring Course. Our 6-day course is designed to provide you with up-to-date techniques and safety skills for skiing in New Zealand's high mountains. It is directed toward fit and motivated people who have a background in resort-based skiing or snowboarding and wish to extend their skills into the New Zealand's premier glaciated terrain.

The New Zealand Mountain Safety Council (MSC) Backcountry Avalanche qualification is included in this course.

We operate the course in either Westland or Aoraki Mount Cook National Parks, depending on where conditions are best. Each park has its own huge selection of glaciers, bowls and peaks to explore while learning skills. We will be based from one of the local mountain huts after accessing the glaciers by helicopter or ski plane. This allows us to start skiing the minute we get up each morning.

You will share the experience with other people hungry for knowledge and skills. At the end of the course, participants will have the skills to plan and explore backcountry skiing and/or snowboarding terrain almost anywhere in the world.

SKILLS COVERED

The following is an outline of skills taught during a Glacier Ski Touring Course:

- Rope handling skills applicable to glaciated backcountry touring
- Crevasse rescue
- Avalanche awareness and rescue (MSC qualification)
- Route finding
- Ski and snowboard touring techniques
- Trip planning and navigation

Factors such as weather and snow conditions may at times dictate that not all topics are covered in full.



▲ Skiers on the Franz Josef Glacier. Photo: Steve Moffat

MSC QUALIFICATIONS

BACKCOUNTRY AVALANCHE CERTIFICATE

An advanced avalanche awareness course providing further skills and knowledge necessary to travel and make sound safety decisions while in more complex avalanche terrain.

HOW THE COURSE OPERATES

We will spend as much time in the glaciated mountains as possible actually skiing and riding, whilst developing skills. Initially, we will develop and reinforce skills in a contained environment and move onto more challenging terrain during the course if conditions permit.

The emphasis of the course will be on route finding through complex glaciated terrain, plus avalanche awareness techniques and will involve fairly long days where your guides will progressively introduce a wider range of skills and techniques.

Weather plays a major factor in any mountain experience and New Zealand's Southern Alps get their share. We intend to run the course according to schedule however as we at the whim of the weather, we often have to adjust our program accordingly. This in itself is an important lesson for the group in versatility and objective selection based on the present and forecast conditions.

COURSE OUTLINE

The course begins at 9.00am on Day 1 at the Adventure Consultants Office in Wanaka. If you are renting your ski touring equipment, please collect

items the day before. This will enable us to leave Wanaka as soon as possible on the first morning to get into the mountains.

Following morning introductions, your guide will present the course syllabus, outlining how the week will operate. Equipment pertinent to the course will be discussed and you will be able to get all the equipment advice you need from the guides. We will ensure that your rental equipment fits and final purchases can be made.

We then drive to our chosen destination, Aoraki Mount Cook National Park or Westland National Park, both 2-3 hours drive away. Before long we're loading up the helicopter or plane and flying into the mountains. Leaving our gear in the hut, we're off for our first ski or board of the trip!

Each day, depending on conditions, we will be touring around the glaciers while doing workshops on different aspects of glaciated backcountry skiing and snowboarding techniques. A few turns are high on the list, as well as a little time to take in our surroundings. At the end of the course, we will make our way to a lower elevation and fly back to our vehicle (weather permitting) with an approximate 5.00pm finish on the final day.

SAMPLE COURSE ITINERARY

The following is a sample itinerary for a prior course operated in Westland National Park:

DAY 1

We meet at the Adventure Consultants office in Wanaka, have a meet and greet session and discuss the plan for the week, including the latest weather



▲ There are plenty of fresh tracks to be had. Photo: James Hamilton



▲ Practice avalanche rescue techniques. Photo: Steve Moffat



▲ Learn self rescue techniques. Photo: Camilla Rutherford

forecasts. We sort our gear and drive to Fox Glacier township, from where we fly to Centennial Hut, high on the Franz Josef Glacier. After some initial transceiver training, we spend the last of the afternoon skiing the bowls of the Chamberlin Snowfield. It's back to the hut for dinner and a weather talk by our guide.

DAY 2

It's up early and we tour around to Graham Saddle where we get to ski off the Main Divide! This involves stunning turns down the upper Rudolf Glacier. It's not all about the turns though as our guide takes us through looking at layers in the snowpack by digging a snow pit. Things are looking stable, so we get to ski some steeper lines as we tour back towards Centennial Hut. Back at the hut, it's a hungry team that devours their dinner with a continued talk on avalanche awareness and what we noted out in the field.

DAY 3

Another fine day dawns so another full day's touring is planned. We skin over to Penck Ridge at the start of the Fritz Range. We ski the long and powder-filled Melchior Glacier. At the toe of the glacier, we break into teams to go through snow anchor

building using our skis and boards and run through different crevasse rescue techniques. Then we tour back up through the canyonlands type country of the Agassiz Glacier before heading back to our cosy base of Centennial Hut. A superb day out.

DAY 4

High cloud is building today with a deteriorating forecast. It's time to get out of here! It's big packs on and out across the mighty Davis Snowfield towards West Hoe Pass. With the wind increasing, we ski down into the Explorer Glacier and tour across in a whiteout (GPS in use) to Pioneer Hut. A welcome sight, once we finally get to see it! The windy storm blows all night, making even going to the loo quite an exciting experience.

DAY 5

There is still a stiff breeze blowing but it is clear again, so we don windproof layers and get out amongst it. We tour around to the Albert Glacier and up the slopes that lead to Gray Peak. For the second time we get to stand on the Main Divide, looking down into the Tasman Glacier. To climb to the high point of Gray Peak we park our skis, strap on crampons and do a couple of short rope pitches up hard ice to the summit.



▲ Stay in some of New Zealand's iconic alpine huts—Tasman Saddle Hut. Photo: Elmo Cotter

After summit photos, we retrace our steps back down and get to ski the long sunny slopes back to the Albert Glacier and back around to Pioneer Hut.

DAY 6

It's up early for breakfast and a tidy up of the hut. We say goodbye to the high alpine as we ski down the Fox Glacier and around the impressive Chancellor Dome. A short hike up a steep section sees us on the Chancellor Shelf, which leads to a short ski down to the historic Chancellor Hut. There is time for lunch and a brew and to watch the local keas bouncing around the hut before our helicopter picks us up and whisks us back to Fox Glacier township. We freshen up and drive back to Wanaka by early evening.

OUR GUIDES

Adventure Consultants has a commitment to ensuring the highest standard of instruction and guiding practices. We only employ guides who share our philosophy. Our professional and experienced mountain guides will offer you the best possible learning experience, plus a safe and enjoyable time. An open and helpful approach is encouraged within the group to help communicate and reinforce the learning process.

Our guides are all NZMGA and/or IFMGA internationally qualified. They have been trained and assessed through the New Zealand Mountain Guides Association and operate to the high standards and guidelines set out by the Association.

2022 COURSE DATES

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CLASS SIZE

Each course will run with a minimum of 3 students and 1 guide and has a maximum class size of 8 students and 2 guides.

GROUND & AIR TRANSPORT

Return ground transport from Wanaka to the course venue is included in the cost of the course.

We also utilise helicopters or ski planes access depending on availability and the region we are operating in. This alleviates long and tiring walks into the alpine region with heavy packs. It allows you to start the course fresh, gain more valuable instructional time and take advantage of fine weather periods. This flight into the alpine region is included in the course fee.

We also include an egress flight out from the mountains, so your course spends the maximum amount of time above the snowline learning skills rather than walking.



▲ Learn about the snowpack and techniques to assess stability. Photo: Camilla Rutherford

EQUIPMENT

Climbing in winter in the New Zealand Mountains requires good personal gear due to the potential cold weather conditions. Our focus is on having the essential clothing and equipment, whilst keeping pack weights as light as possible for your comfort and ease of travel.

We carry a good range of modern rental equipment. If you will be renting equipment from us please advise your requirements in advance to ensure correct sizing and availability. If you intend on buying any equipment items, we are happy to advise on recommended brands and models, and of key importance, their suitability to the type of activity. We offer our clients discounted prices on a selection of climbing equipment and clothing, and can arrange for the equipment to be available upon your arrival.

Upon receipt of your deposit and registration form, we will send out a comprehensive equipment list. Your guide will go through this with you prior to the trip. All group equipment will be organised by your guide. For snowboarders, we can assist you in hiring a splitboard, and for skiers we have a rental fleet of wide touring skis and skins, plus a selection of touring boots.

WEATHER

Weather is an integral facet of any mountain range and getting to understand and work with this major environmental factor is what will distinguish you from the others. The New Zealand weather can be fierce but also benign. A climber who learns to optimise their opportunities here will have the skills to climb in any other mountain environment on Earth.

Our backcountry skiing and snowboarding season runs from August through to December. Our experience with New Zealand weather shows that August has more stable weather conditions, and in October the glaciers are 'nice and full' (fewer crevasses) with longer days and warmer weather. Daylight hours are approximately 9 hours in winter. Temperatures can drop to as low as -10°C and could rise to as high as 15°C.

On your course, it is probable that some adverse weather may affect our touring plans, however we will attempt to anticipate what best moves to make for the positive outcome of the course. If adverse weather affects our access into the high mountains, we can utilise the excellent backcountry skiing terrain accessible around Wanaka with day trips until it improves.



▲ Of course it's all about the skiing! Photo: Adrian Camm

Adventure Consultants reserves the right to cancel or alter the course at any time, if the glaciers are not in condition due to climatic influences or if the mountain conditions are perceived by Adventure Consultants as being too hazardous. However, if this happens, we will endeavour to find alternative touring venues for the course to take place.

FITNESS & HEALTH

To make the most of your skiing experience we encourage you to work on your fitness and skiing/snowboarding prior to the trip. You need to be a strong intermediate skier or snowboarder to get the most out of the course. Your guide places special focus on fitness levels and will regulate the pace accordingly.

Our registration form requests that you advise us of any medical problems you may have and of any medication you are taking. Any information you supply will be treated as confidential.

FOOD

We place emphasis on providing nutritious meals and a good supply of snack food throughout the trip. If you have any special dietary requirements, please advise us at the time of registration. For special diets such as vegan and gluten/dairy free, we will call you to discuss your needs and how this will work in the group cooking situation.

INSURANCE

We highly recommend that you take out trip cancellation insurance via your travel agent. Trip cancellation insurance is usually packaged together with your travel insurance and covers you for loss of deposits should you not be able to make the trip for personal reasons or have a mishap prior to/whilst on our trips.

Whilst our focus is on safety and our track record supports this, the mountains do have hazards and there is always the potential for mishap. If you were injured whilst on the trip the New Zealand Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) will pay rescue costs, however, you may not be eligible for bulk compensation payments. You are responsible for any medical or evacuation costs beyond the cover provided by ACC.

TRAVEL TO WANAKA

We commence the Glacier Ski Touring Course from our base in Wanaka. Air New Zealand and Qantas/Jetstar provide daily services for flights from Christchurch, Auckland and Wellington to Queenstown. There are also direct international flights from most major Australian cities to Queenstown.

A shuttle service operates several times daily between Queenstown and Wanaka (approximately one hour driving time and at a cost from NZ\$35 each way), check <https://www.ritchies.co.nz/wanaka> for details. Bus services operate daily between Christchurch and Wanaka (approximately 6 hours travel time).

Wanaka has a range of accommodation from backpackers, youth hostels, motels, and hotels to luxury lodges. We are happy to assist with your accommodation and bus transfer arrangements.

COURSE ACCOMMODATION

Adventure Consultants will provide your accommodation while the course is running, which is from 9.00am on Day 1 until 5.00pm on Day 6. When in the mountains, you will stay in mountain huts with shared bunk rooms and basic facilities. There are no single rooms available and unlike European huts, you need to provide your own sleeping bag. Some mountain nights may be spent in tents or bivvies, where you will be more exposed to the elements but the final decision on this will be made by the guides after weighing up all the factors.

For overnights in Fox Glacier and Aoraki Mount Cook villages you will be accommodated in dormitory style Alpine Club huts and in Wanaka, dormitory style backpackers with shared bathroom facilities. You can upgrade to single accommodation in Wanaka at your own expense, should you require.

NOTE: Adventure Consultants will provide food and accommodation while the course is running which is from 9.00am on Day 1 until 5.00pm on Day 6. All food and accommodation outside this time will be at your expense.



▲ Skiers skinning on Fox Glacier. Photo: Dean Staples

COURSE FEE

The course fee is NZ\$2,630 per person.

The price includes:

- Guide and permit fees
- All trip-related meals and energy foods
- Hut fees
- Group technical equipment
- Avalanche rescue equipment
- Handbooks — 'A Climber's Guide to New Zealand Mountaineering Techniques' by Guy Cotter and Mark Sedon, 'Avalanche Awareness in the New Zealand Backcountry' by Penny Goddard
- MSC avalanche course certificate
- Helicopter/plane access/egress flights and landing fees
- 15% NZ Goods and Services Tax

PAYMENT DETAILS

All payments should be made by bank transfer to the following bank and account:

Bank: Bank of New Zealand
For the Account of: Adventure Consultants Limited

Account Number: 02 0673 0043443 00

Account Type: NZ Dollars

NOTE: All bank transfer charges are for the remitter's account.

We also accept your deposit and balance payment by credit card (Visa, Mastercard and Amex) plus a 3% card charge.

DEPOSIT

To secure a place on the course, we require a completed Registration Form and a NZ\$1,000 deposit.

BALANCE

The balance of payment is then due 60 days prior to the start date.

CANCELLATION & REFUND POLICY

- Cancellations outside of 60 days incur a NZ\$500 cancellation fee.
- For cancellations made within 60 days of the trip commencement date we reserve the right to retain 50% of the full fee.



▲ A group skiing above the Franz Josef icefall. Photo: Camilla Rutherford

- For cancellations made within 30 days of the trip commencement date we reserve the right to retain 75% of the full fee.
- For cancellations within 15 days of the departure date a cancellation fee of 100% of the full fee applies.

We recommend you take out trip cancellation insurance via your travel agent if you wish to be covered against cancellation due to medical or personal reasons.

HOW TO JOIN THIS COURSE

If you would like to join one of our Glacier Ski Touring Courses, please complete our online booking form and forward your deposit payment at <https://www.adventureconsultants.com/skiing/new-zealand-guided-ski-touring/glacier-ski-touring-course/book-now>.

CONTACT US

If you require more information, please contact us at:

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▲ Backcountry skiing at its finest. Photo: Camilla Rutherford



Adventure Consultants is affiliated to the New Zealand Mountain Guides Association (NZMGA), New Zealand Alpine Club (NZAC) and a corporate member of the American Alpine Club (AAC). Adventure Consultants is a supporter of the dZi Foundation in Nepal for their 'Revitalise a Village' programmes.

Adventure Consultants perform to IFMGA/UIAGM standards and are world leaders in high altitude guiding.



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