



Vaudoise Alps Snowshoeing (Guided)

Please email us at info@alpineexploratory.com or call us on +44 (0)1729 823 197 to chat about this holiday. You'll find all the latest information at www.alpineexploratory.com/holidays/vaudoise-alps-snowshoeing.html.

About these Holiday Notes

These Holiday Notes help you decide whether this holiday is right for you. Before your trip we send you final detailed information.

Details

Length	4 walking days, 5 nights
Grade	Intermediate
Region	Vaudoise Alps, Rhône
Country	Switzerland

Introduction



The Bretaye Lakes area above Villars

Snowshoeing is simply walking in snow with a large footprint to stop yourself sinking in. The activity is now a winter staple of Swiss ski resorts and mountain villages. This holiday is an introduction to snowshoeing based in a beautiful area of Switzerland known as the Vaudoise Alps. This area is just two hours by train from Geneva to the East of the Rhone valley and forms a network of pretty villages, forests and middle-height mountains that makes it well suited to an introductory snowshoeing holiday.

What does snowshoeing involve?

Snowshoeing is no more difficult than walking and within 15 minutes you should be confident on your feet. The equipment needed is the usual winter walking clothing; to this, add snowshoes, a pair of walking poles and an avalanche transceiver (a beacon to help rescue in the unlikely event of an avalanche). Bring your own poles, preferably with larger-diameter snow baskets fitted, then hire snowshoes, a transceiver and any other equipment from a shop in Les Diablerets.

Our approach

Walks will pass through pastures, along forest tracks and sometimes onto the open mountains. Hopefully the group will get to know the area very well. The emphasis will be more on exploration of the winter countryside, less on climbing the mountains, but there will be scope for all types of walking depending on the group. This holiday therefore suits the complete snowshoeing beginner.

Because of the unpredictable nature of the Alps in winter, in large part due to the avalanche risk, the itinerary must be flexible and some walks might not be offered - but the group will almost always be able to go snowshoeing in the valleys if not higher up.

Profile

This holiday involves 4 days of moderate walking on snowshoes, typically climbing 600m in 12km. The highest altitude you might reach is around 2,000m and the valleys are around 1,000m above sea level.

Terrain

The mountains of the Swiss Alps are transformed in winter. Underfoot conditions are very different to the summer - where in summer there might be a footpath, in the winter it could be one or two feet deep with snow. There might be a line of snowshoe prints, with the tell-tale pole marks along the sides, or it could be untouched. Much also depends on recent snowfall and temperatures. Thin compressed snow is possible, in which case the metal spikes on the snowshoes will be useful. There could be some steep slopes to climb... but there should also be some exhilarating descents in deep snow calling for a mix of stomping and sliding!

Group size

The group will be a maximum of 8 people, plus the leader.

Itinerary

This holiday starts with arrival in Les Diablerets on the first day of the trip. The holiday ends with departure from Les Diablerets in the morning on the last day of the trip.

This itinerary is a plan only and can change according to the group and conditions. Snowshoe walks in particular are very dependent on snow and weather conditions,

so it will often not be possible to offer all of the walks below.

You are of course free to enjoy your own activities during the day instead of joining the guided walking. There is a lot to see and do in the area or you might just prefer to spend a day in the village. Please note that walking routes and activities other than those led by Alpine Exploratory leaders do not form part of this holiday. Alpine Exploratory cannot be held liable for any loss or injury resulting from an activity whether the activity is part of the holiday or not.

Day 1: Arrival in Les Diablerets

Evening meeting in Les Diablerets. We will have an introductory meeting before going out for a meal in the village to start the trip. **Hotel in Les Diablerets**

Day 2: Introduction to snowshoeing

There's plenty of chance to sort out kit on this first morning before setting off for a full day's snowshoeing. The group will use straightforward terrain as an introduction or refresher to the simple skills involved. The route will be along local footpaths and snowshoeing trails into the woods. **Hotel in Les Diablerets**

Day 3: Lac Retaud

Today, head up slightly higher into the hills with the aim of reaching Lac Retaud (1,685m), a frozen lake on the linguistic border with the German-speaking area of Switzerland. There are options to walk up through snowy *alp*pages or to catch the local ski bus leaving just a gentle walk to the day's highest point. On the way down there's big potential for yomping through the deep powder in the fields and forests. **Hotel in Les Diablerets**

Day 4: La Forclaz and forests

Here's a chance to see a lot of the local life in the valley. The local train goes Les Planches from where the group can set off back to Les Diablerets, with views across the valley for much of the day. The route climbs through a forest to reach the pretty village of La Forclaz before heading along wide forest tracks back to the upper valley and our base, or to another station along the line for a shorter option. **Hotel in Les Diablerets**

Day 5: Pointe d'Arpille

There are forests to explore near Les Diablerets, or interesting views to be had from other villages nearby, and if the group feels energetic then Pointe d'Arpille (1,982m) above Col de la Croix could be a fitting walk for the last day of the trip. The group finishes the trip

with a celebratory meal in Les Diablerets.
Hotel in Les Diablerets

Day 6: Departure

Morning departure from Les Diablerets

Accommodation

This holiday stays in a simple but comfortable 2-star hotel in Les Diablerets. Showers and toilets might be shared. Details of your accommodation will be sent on booking.

Insurance

Clients must have insurance to cover themselves for helicopter search & rescue, medical expenses and repatriation.

We recommend, but it is not compulsory, that you also have cover for personal liability, cancellation and your baggage and money.

You might find that your annual multi-trip travel insurance covers these items already. We will send you details of suitable insurance policies on booking.

The walks

Please note that during any walking, whether following a routecard or making your own route, you are responsible for your own actions and safety, and further that if you follow your own choice of route then you will have left the holiday for the duration.

Money

Switzerland's currency is the Swiss Franc, whose symbol is CHF. 100 *centimes* or *rapen* make CHF1.

Local expenses

Local expenses include local transport and cable cars, food and drink (except breakfast which is included), snowshoeing equipment hire and any local attractions and extras.

Food

The local region is bursting with delicious food. The cheeses are particularly special and so readily available. We will have plenty of opportunity to buy food for lunches at the three small supermarkets in Les Diablerets. For evening meals, we will eat out in local restaurants.

Please note that no food is included in the holiday except breakfasts.

Local transport

Some of our walks use the good local trains and buses. We might also use some ski lifts.

The **train** runs from Aigle in the Rhône valley to Les Diablerets, following a spectacular hillside route. Going from Les Diablerets there

are many useful stops on the line before the train leaves the upper valley.

The other mountain villages in the area – Leysin, Villars, Gryon - are linked up by an excellent network of buses and trains.

Language

French is the local language. It is considered polite to always open a conversation with *bonjour* before starting your question. **English** is spoken to some degree by most local people, but it is wise to assume that you will have to speak in French.

Travel from the UK

Travel from the UK is not included in the holiday price. We leave it to you to make the arrangements that suit you best. We recommend [easyJet](#) who fly to Geneva from the UK. The meeting point is Les Diablerets, easily reachable from Geneva by train in around two hours. Full information on flight and transfer options will be sent to you on booking.

Passports and visas

UK passport holders do not need a visa to enter Switzerland. Please check that your passport is in date.

Health hazards

Switzerland and in particular the Vaudoise Alps region do not require tourists to take any vaccinations. However, it is recommended to keep tetanus vaccines up to date.

Weather

Alpine winter weather is generally drier, sunnier and more stable than in the UK's mountains. It would be usual for a week to contain some sunny and bright days, some overcast days, some days with snow showers and perhaps a day or more of bad weather. There is a great range of weather patterns that might prevail during the trip.

Equipment

We will send you a suggested kit list on booking.

You will need good walking boots, waterproofs and sun protection and the usual equipment for mountain walking.

In addition you will need extra warm clothing for winter plus snowshoeing equipment including snowshoes, walking poles, ski goggles and an avalanche transceiver (also known as a beacon or ARVA). The snowshoes and transceiver can be hired in Les Diablerets.

Further information

Please email us with any questions at info@alpineexploratory.com.

Disclaimer

This information is given in good faith and is believed to be correct at the time of issue. Alpine Exploratory cannot be liable for any loss or injury incurred.