



**COSLEY & HOUSTON ALPINE GUIDES**  
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## **SUMMER HAUTE ROUTE GLACIER TREK** **Personal Equipment List**

The Alps are noted for incredible climbing in a very civilized setting. The high towns and villages, numerous mechanical lifts and well-maintained trails all make the approaches short and relatively painless. In addition the extensive network of huts and high refuges permit climbers to normally travel with little more than a small daypack.

Our route will take advantage of these amenities. Our first day starts with a chair lift to the Col du Balme. The huts have blankets, pads, and all the eating utensils and plates you could possibly want.

The trekking on this program is strenuous, occasionally exposed and every day involves thousands of feet of ascent or descent. Because of this we will need to travel very light. On this program, weight is our enemy.

### **CLOTHING**

**Semi-rigid Mountaineering Boots (B2)** - Boots have gotten lighter, warmer and more comfortable in recent years. If you are considering investing in a new pair, it is a good time to do so. Boots are rated according to intended use.

B0: Not really suitable for crampons.

B1: Flexible boots that are suitable for trekking and hill walking only. C1 crampons only.

B2: Semi-rigid boots designed for mountaineering and easier grade snow and mixed climbing, but not for steep ice and harder mixed climbs. C1 or C2 crampons.

B3: Fully rigid boots for mountaineering, ice and mixed climbing at all grades - but not always the most comfortable boots to walk in (though things are improving). C1, C2 or C3 crampons.

The ideal boot for this trip would receive a B2 rating. A B1 boot may serve but won't perform as well (feel as secure, be as warm or be as waterproof) as most B2 boots. A B3 boot will not be enjoyable on the trail sections of the route.

**Gaiters** - In summer conditions an ankle gaiter is sufficient, is cool to walk in and weighs almost nothing. The REI Mistral Gaiters or Outdoor Research Flex-Text gaiters are good examples.

**Socks** - For fitting your boots use a single medium thick sock, with an additional and optional thin liner sock.

**Pants** - It's worth having some kind of light synthetic pant with a hard finish. In our opinion the best pants incorporate Schoeller or a similar light soft-shell type fabric. Stretchy and comfortable, this kind of fabric is also somewhat resistant to wind, snow and light rain. Many pants of this kind are made by both U.S. and European manufacturers. Patagonia's Guide Pant is one such example.

**Rain/Wind Pants** - Normally we do these climbs in our synthetic climbing pants described above. If the weather turns foul, however, you will need a pair of very lightweight waterproof rain pants to keep you dry. Our favorites are extremely light weight two-ply Gore-tex. Our pants weigh 8.5 ounces.

**Rain/Wind Parka** - Again, go for extreme lightweight. Our two-ply hooded Gore-tex jackets weigh in at 12.5 ounces.

**Long Underwear Tops** - Light synthetic.

**Long Underwear Bottoms** - Light synthetic.

**Light fleece shirt** - Something about the weight of Polartec 100, (very heavy synthetic underwear).

**Heavier insulating layer** - A light-weight down or synthetic insulated sweater or pull-over. Marmot's Zeus jacket or Patagonia's down sweater are good examples of what we mean. A heavier and bulkier fleece or pile jacket will also work here.

**Gloves** - Fairly lightweight windstopper gloves are idea. The Marmot Windstopper Glove is one example. Very light liner gloves are not sufficient. And heavily insulated gloves for winter conditions will be too hot on most days.

**Warm Hat or Balaclava**

**Baseball cap** or other sun-hat with a brim

**Buff** - The Buff is a Spanish invention. Its a stretchy lightweight neck gaiter, headband, pirate head piece, hair control unit, and Lord knows what else. Google Buff to learn more. Indispensable!

**Around-town clothes and shoes** - For around town only. You won't want to bring these on the trek.

## CLIMBING GEAR

**Ice Axe** - 50 to 60 cm maximum length is recommended. Again, look for a light weight axe for this purpose. For many nontechnical glacier climbs (and even on some steep terrain) our preferred axe is the very light 53 cm Air Tech Evolution axe. Other good options include the Petzl Summit, or slightly more technical Sum'Tec. All of these axes weigh in at 500 grams or less.

**Crampons** - Like boots, crampons are rated as to their attachment method and stiffness. Some boot types require one method while others will use another.

C1 crampons are flexible and will strap onto B1, B2 or B3 boots.

C2 crampons are stiffer and require a heel shelf on the boot and are compatible with B2 and B3 boots.

C3 crampons are quite stiff and require a toe and heel shelf, for example B3 boots.

C1 or C2 crampons are ideal for this program. Crampons **MUST** be equipped with anti-balling plates. (Nearly all modern crampons are.)

**Harness** - Most modern harnesses are great. A belay loop is a good idea, as are adjustable leg loops for multiple leg layers.

**Carabiners** - Bring one locking and one non-locking carabiner.

**Trekking Poles** - (Optional) Some folks, ourselves included, like to use trekking poles for routes such as this.

Three-section collapsible trekking poles are best, as they collapse shorter and are less cumbersome when packed. Be sure to bring the baskets! Avoid poles with "shock absorbers", they add unnecessary length and weight, without adding any significant benefit.

## MISCELLANEOUS

**Food** - Breakfasts and dinners are provided by the huts. We can either buy lunch food in towns or huts or, if you prefer you can bring your own special bars, Gu's or potions from home. Keep it light!

**Climbing pack** - A simple and lightweight pack with a capacity of about 30 liters is recommended. The Black Diamond Speed and also the Deuter Guide Lite are some good choices.

**Water bottle** - Bring bottles or a combination of bottle and thermos to carry 1 to 2 liters of water. Bladder style hydrations systems are becoming increasingly popular.

**Head lamp** - For this trip we recommend a Petzl Tikka XP or similar LED headlamps. Bring a fresh set of batter-

ies.

**Pocket knife** - Keep it simple and light. The Victorinox Spartan model is our favorite.

**Repair kit** - Crampon tools if necessary (the Charlet Mosers and Grivels don't require anything).

**Blister kit** - Moleskin, athletic tape. Spenco Second Skin or Compeed or similar products are worth the price.

**Sun Glasses** - Make sure they screen out 100 % UV. Modern wrap-around glasses are great, if the lenses are dark enough to block 90% of visible light (it's very bright up there!). Traditional glacier glasses with side shields are also fine for this climb, though you may find them hot and annoying on the trail and approach. If you use prescription glasses you should get prescription dark glasses or use contact lenses if you can. We like to use sport sunglasses with dark lenses, designed for skiing or mountaineering.

**Sunscreen** - Look for as small a container as possible, or decant into a smaller container. There is no point in carrying month's worth of cream on a two-day climb.

**Lip Protection** -

**Toiletries** - Here again, try to minimize, for instance look for those small tubes of toothpaste, or simply don't bring any toothpaste up to the huts. A small bottle of Purel or singles packets of Handi-wipes would not be amiss.

**Silk Sleeping Sack** - A silk or cotton-blend sleeping sack is required for many of the huts. And it is more comfortable than scratchy blankets. This is NOT for insulation (the huts are often too hot as it is, and they provide plenty of blankets) but only for hygiene and comfort. Do not bring a sleeping bag!

**Ear Plugs** - VERY IMPORTANT! For noisy huts.

**Camera** - (optional, of course) To get the best photos, your camera will need to be accessible at a moments notice. An easy-to-use camera pouch that can be worn over a shoulder is ideal. Also, learn to use your camera with your gloves on. We recommend against SRLs. They are simply too big and bulky to be convenient.

**Entertainment** - We like to carry an iPod Nano. Preload it with a couple of good books from iTunes or Audible.com for days of listening pleasure. Don't watch movies as the battery won't last.

A note on mobile phones: Many folks like to carry mobile phones. In general, this is a good idea from a security perspective. Be aware, however, that coverage is often spotty when deep in the mountains and only about half the huts have reception. Likewise battery life is limited (especially when in and out of coverage and the phone is constantly trying to reconnect). Many of the huts run on a 12-volt electrical system and you won't be able to recharge.

**Small duffel** - For leaving street clothes in hotels. Its a good idea to lock it.

**Money** - We usually use ATM cards to supply us with cash. Hotels, shops and restaurants all readily accept credit cards. You will want to have some cash (either Euros or Swiss Francs) for lunch in Champex and for shopping for snacks in Arolla.

We recommend carrying your passport and credit cards with you on this trip, buried in a plastic bag in the bottom of your pack. Other papers, such as plane tickets and such can be left in the hotel, awaiting your return.