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Névache Snowshoe Week

- A week-long snowshoe trip exploring the beautiful Vallée de la Clarée
- Based in an authentic hotel in the ancient hamlet of Névache
- Includes a night in a remote eco mountain refuge
- Enjoy the stunning scenery of the Haute Alps
- Visit the walled city and UNESCO World Heritage site of Briançon
- Savour traditional local food (all meals included)
- Fully qualified and expert guide (International Mountain Leader)
- Return airport transfers from Turin included

Grade: 6 - Moderate

On our Vallée de la Clarée Snowshoe Summits trip we will be based in a comfortable and traditional hotel in the tiny hamlet of Névache. From here we will fully explore the summits and snowy landscape of the Vallée de la Clarée, also known as Val Claret.

Without a doubt, this is one of our favourite snowshoe destinations; one of those hidden gems that once stumbled upon, is impossible to forget. With its quintessentially French culture, food, and tradition and its sense of peace and tranquillity, it's the perfect place to get away from it all and enjoy a week of excellent snowshoeing routes in an area that's renowned for having some of the best snow cover in the Southern Alps.

Trip Summary

Day 1 - Arrive in Névache

Arrive in Névache

Explore Névache - Névache

Day 2 - Névache's Haute Vallée

Névache's Haute Vallée

The Haute Vallée - Refuge du Chardonnet

Day 3 - Col de l'Echelle

Col de l'Echelle

Day 4 - Les Acles

Les Acles

Day 5 - Col des Thuers

Col des Thuers

Day 6 - Briançon and Refuge de Buffère

Briançon and Refuge de Buffère

Day 7 - Col de la Buffère

Col de la Buffère

Day 8 - Depart Névache

Depart Névache

Travel to Turin Airport

Day 1 - Arrive in Névache



Arrive in Névache

The nearest airport is Turin and there will be a private transfer to your accommodation. This will be at a time to suit the majority of the group, but no later than 16:30 on your arrival day. The transfer time is approximately 2 hours 15 mins. Please see the Travel Arrangements section towards the end of this document for more detailed travel information.

Your guide will meet you this evening for a trip briefing; we will confirm the precise briefing time with your arrival instructions.

Accommodation: Hotel



Explore Névache

You can normally check-in to your rooms from around 16:00. If you arrive early, it's no problem to leave your bags at the hotel and explore (what there is of) Névache.

Névache is a tiny but, nonetheless, charming little village in the Hautes-Alpes region, nestled in the heart of the valley of La Clarée. It's peaceful and protected and an enchanting area to locate ourselves in.

It also happens to be situated on the 45th parallel, making it equidistant from the North Pole and the equator.



Névache

Névache, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, FR, 05100

Day 2 - Névache's Haute Vallée



Névache's Haute Vallée



The Haute Vallée

Today we'll enjoy a pleasant introduction by exploring the Haute Vallée above the ancient hamlet of Névache. The traditional old homes and refuges along the route offer echoes of times gone by, when the locals and their herds would use the forest clearings and the high meadows to their advantage. 'Transhumance' (the seasonal movement of communities and their animals) still happens here.

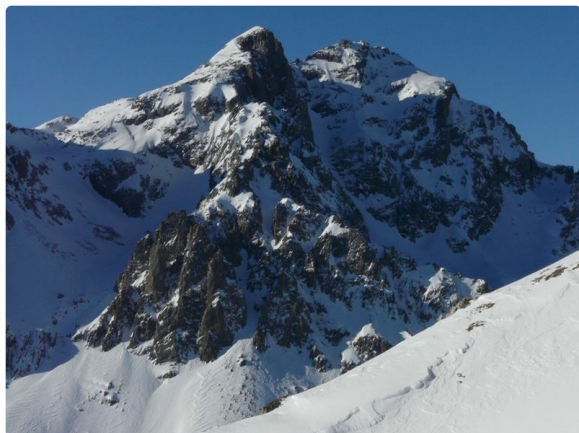
We'll view rocky peaks as we pick up a riverside route through the narrow valley, aiming for the Chalets de Fontcouverte. Energy permitting we might push on to Chalets de Queyrillin (1985m) with its ancient chapel. The Auberge La Fruitière may well be open for some coffee and calories.

Accommodation: Hotel, dinner included

Walking: approx. 5 hrs

Distance: 10km

Ascent: 450m



Refuge du Chardonnet

Névache, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, FR, 05100

Day 3 - Col de l'Echelle



Col de l'Echelle

Known as Colle della Scala in Italy, this mountain pass is between Italy and France, connecting the Vallée de la Clarée with the Vallée Étroite. We'll start our ascent from Roubion (1300m) and will climb steadily to 1762 metres, passing the ancient Chapel of Saint Hypolite, near Col the Notre Dame de Bon Secours ('Our Lady of Good Rescue'). This is a delightful walk with panoramic views down across the town of Bardonecchia and across to Mont Thabor (2178m). In the snowy peace it's hard to imagine it as a busy summer thoroughfare!

Accommodation: Hotel, dinner included

Walking: approx. 4 hrs

Distance: 10km

Ascent: 462m



Day 4 - Les Acles



Les Acles

The Vallée de la Clarée offers abundant local routes such as the beautiful yet lesser-known Chalets des Acles. We'll start out with a steep, tree-lined trail from Plampinet. We'll continue past the Oratoire Saint-Roch to reach the farm buildings of Chalet des Acles, which cluster around the hamlet's ancient church. We'll picnic nearby and enjoy high-mountain views then descend back to picturesque Névache.

Accommodation: Hotel, dinner included

Walking: approx. 4.5 hrs

Distance: 9.8km

Ascent: 400m



Day 5 - Col des Thures



Col des Thures

Our first target today is a high-mountain valley and combe up above Névache, silent without the grazing herds of summer. This leads us to the Col des Thures. We'll begin in terrain that feels like a snow-covered Mediterranean region, with gnarled old trees and limestone outcrops and crags that echo more southerly climes. We'll ascend steadily along a tree-lined route which leads us into a gorge with dramatic rock spires rising high above the pines. We'll break free of the treeline to reach the col at 2194m, perched above the snow and ice-covered Lac Chavillon.

Accommodation: Hotel, dinner included

Walking: approx. 6 hrs

Distance: 10.8km

Ascent: 600m



Day 6 - Briançon and Refuge de Buffère



Briançon and Refuge de Buffère

Our two-day, overnight adventure begins today. First, we'll visit the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Briançon. This walled city is the highest in France (with more than 2,000 inhabitants) at 1326m. Many of its buildings have heritage status and were designed by Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban. We'll get underway proper by midday with a gentle climb to the rustic Refuge de Buffère. The trail is generally prepared in advance by snowmobiles. The refuge is renowned for its excellent, locally sourced produce and beers, and its homemade Génépi and Edelweiss liqueur! We'll spend the night here. If conditions dictate, your guide may decide to take you straight up to the refuge, leaving Briançon for tomorrow.

Accommodation: Mountain refuge, dinner included

Walking: approx. 3 hrs

Distance: 4.5km

Ascent: 400m



Day 7 - Col de la Buffère



Col de la Buffère

Today we'll wake up in our cosy high-mountain refuge. After breakfast we'll head for the Col de la Buffère which will reward us with panoramic views over the Ecrins massif. We'll pick our way up through larch trees, soon reaching the more open terrain of a grand valley. We'll follow a steady trail towards the Col de la Buffère (2427m) for a picnic lunch. Sated with food and views we'll head back down for a warming drink at the refuge en route back to the village. (If we swapped things about yesterday due to weather, we'll head into Briançon today instead.)

Accommodation: Hotel, dinner included

Walking: approx. 6 hrs

Distance: 11.5km

Ascent: 350m



Day 8 - Depart Névache



Depart Névache

Our trip finishes after breakfast.



Travel to Turin Airport

There is a private transfer back to Turin airport, leaving in time to reach the airport by 11:00, so your return flight from Turin wants to be from 13:00 onwards. Further information can be found in the Travel Arrangements section.

Information & Documents



What's Included

- All accommodation (including arrival day and final evening)
- All breakfasts and evening meals
- Fully qualified and expert guide (International Mountain Leader)
- Snowshoes, walking poles and avalanche safety equipment
- Single-timed airport transfers to and from Turin Airport (at around 16:30 on arrival day, leaving at around 08:00 on departure day)



Not Included

- Flights
- (Packed) lunches

- Personal drinks and snacks
- Any transport, accommodation or additional expenses due to a participant being unable to complete the itinerary
- Mountain rescue / travel insurance (we can organise mountain rescue insurance if required)
- Tips

Névache Snowshoe - Travel Arrangements

- **IMPORTANT: Please do not book your flights or transport until we have confirmed to you via email that the trip is guaranteed to run. Once booked, please inform us of your flight times as soon as possible.**
- The nearest airport to Névache is Turin, Italy (TRN), which is approximately a 2 hour 15 minute drive away.
- Arrival day: there is a private transfer arranged from Turin Airport at 16:30, however, once we have all the guests' arrival times we may bring this forward if it suits all the members of the group.
- Public transport to Névache from Turin Airport: we highly recommend booking flights that co-incide with the private transfer, as, whilst it's possible to get to Névache by bus, train and taxi, it can take up to 4 hours 30 mins (and there's obviously the additional cost). However, if for whatever reason, you need to take public transport, instructions are included below:
Take the 000268 bus from Caselle T.Se- Str.Aeroporto 23 to Piazza Carlo Felice (7 stops, 50 mins).
Walk 2 mins to Torino Porta Nuova Railway Station and take the Sfm 10364 train to Modane (13 stops, 1 hour 45 mins).
Take a taxi from Modane to Névache (73km, 1 hour 30 mins)
Total estimated travel time: 4 hours 30 mins
- Your guide will meet you this evening for a trip briefing, usually at 18:00, but we will confirm the precise briefing time with your arrival instructions.
- Departure day: there is a private transfer leaving around 08:00 back to Turin Airport (aiming to arrive by 11:00); we recommend booking flights that depart from Turin from 13:00 onwards.
- Full joining instructions together with contact and location details of the group hotel and an emergency telephone number, are provided with your booking confirmation.

Névache Snowshoe - What to Expect

The Snowshoeing

This trip is graded 6 - Moderate. While this is a great introductory trip for those new to snowshoeing, it is also good for intermediate walkers and hikers who like longer days. The itinerary is flexible so for those looking for a more relaxed holiday there are opportunities to choose to do a half-day, or take a full day off to rest, or explore Névache.

Cloud 9 will provide all the specialist kit you need. As well as snowshoes and poles we will also provide safety equipment including a snow shovel, avalanche probe and transceiver, and will show you how to use them.

Altitude

We will reach moderately high altitudes - sometimes in excess of 2500m - during the trip. Most people should have no difficulty with this level of altitude.

Accommodation

On this trip, we will be based in a comfortable and traditional hotel in the tiny hamlet of Névache, with one night spent in a charming mountain refuge. Accommodation is on a twin share or dormitory basis (usually in small, mixed dormitories of 4-6 people), although we book private rooms of 2 wherever possible. If you have booked on your own, we will generally pair you up with another member of the same sex. A single room may be available for a supplement - just ask at the time of booking.

Food

All breakfasts and dinners are included. Each night we usually eat in the hotel or refuge where we are staying, and we will experience fantastic, local French food. Packed lunches are not included, but each day we tend to order food from the hotel or refuge where we are staying (we do not go past many shops en-route). Occasionally we may be able to have a sit-down lunch in a café, restaurant or refuge. Drinks are not included with dinner, but you can normally order beer, wine and soft drinks at all hotels including the mountain refuges. Breakfast in our hotel is excellent, but in the mountain huts it tends to be slightly more basic and usually consists of tea, coffee, bread, jam and cereal.

Luggage delivery

For international flights please remember to check your baggage allowance with your airline and preferably keep your main kit bag to 15kg or less. Please note that you will be asked to carry your own luggage from the reception area of the hotel up to your room, and bring it down again at the end of your stay. Please also bring a day pack for everything you need on the mountain; see the kit list below for more details.

Money and Tipping

There are no cash machines in Névache, so we recommend taking out whatever cash you'll need for the trip at Turin Airport. Most hotels accept cards but the refuges and mountain huts tend not to. Lunches cost around €12-15 per day if we order them from the hotel, but we can often stop at shops en-route to make our own lunches for considerably less. A coffee or soft drink costs around €3-5, and a beer around €5-7. Around €200-250 per person should be enough to cover your personal expenses, but it does depend how many coffees, beers and wines you consume!

If we eat in a restaurant or stop for coffees, we normally recommend rounding up the amount to leave a tip, but usually only if the service has been good.

Tipping your guide is the accepted way of saying thank you for excellent service. Do remember that tipping is voluntary and should only be done if you were pleased with the service: our staff are all paid fairly.

Weather

In mountainous terrain in the winter and spring, the weather can vary enormously. Temperatures may reach -15°C on cold days, but spring-like +10-15°C is also possible. If the sun is shining, we may find ourselves skiing in our base layers and feeling the heat, but if it's windy or snowing, we will need adequate insulating layers, waterproofs and gloves. Staying warm and dry in the mountains is very important! Please be prepared for any eventuality and check the kit list at the end of this document.

Electric Supply and Plug

The electric supply in France is a standard European 2-pin. Please make sure you bring an adaptor for your UK plugs. There are usually some plug sockets available in mountain huts but they are limited. Bringing a separate booster charger for your phone may be a good solution.



General Information - Guided Group Trips

Insurance

It is a condition of booking this holiday that you must be insured against medical and personal accident risks (this must include helicopter rescue and repatriation costs). You may find that your annual multi-trip insurance covers this trip, but you should check that you are covered for trekking up to 3000m. We would also recommend that you take out holiday cancellation insurance: your deposit is non-refundable once you have booked, and the full balance is usually non-refundable (see our Terms and Conditions for further details).

We recommend The BMC www.thebmc.co.uk or Snowcard www.snowcard.co.uk for UK residents, or Travelex www.travelexinsurance.com for US citizens or residents.

We can organise mountain rescue insurance for EU residents for £4.90 per day, or £8.95 per day for US and the rest of the world. You can book it online here: <https://www.cloud9adventure.com/online-store/Mountain-rescue-insurance-p101294506>

In addition to travel insurance, UK citizens should also obtain or renew the EHIC card from the [NHS](http://www.nhs.uk). This is not a replacement for insurance but it does mean you are entitled to the same treatment as any EU citizen, and unlike insurance it includes treatment of a pre-existing condition. You would normally have to pay for treatment at the time and then make a claim on return to the UK.

Please remember to bring a credit card with you on the trip: in the event of a medical problem or injury, you may be unable to complete the trek. You would normally need to pay for treatment, and would often have additional transport and accommodation costs. Although you can claim this back on your insurance, you usually have to pay at the time and make the insurance claim afterwards, so you must have a means of paying for this if necessary.

Responsible Travel

We care about the places we visit, and our philosophy is simple: that each and every one of our trips has a positive impact on the local community and environment. We use family-run hotels, gîtes and restaurants in order to support the local communities. And it's a small step but we also recommend carbon off-setting. Visit www.climatecare.org.

Adventure Travel

Please note that we specialise in Adventure Travel, the nature of which means that we cannot always follow our itinerary for a variety of reasons. All of our holidays can be subject to unexpected changes and you should be prepared to be flexible to accommodate these where necessary.

We update our itineraries on a regular basis to take into account such things as changes to trekking routes and the conditions of footpaths, but it is not always possible to guarantee that any of our holidays will run exactly according to the proposed itinerary. If during your holiday the itinerary is affected by immediate or local circumstances, the leader will make any changes that are necessary.

As a reputable tour operator, Cloud 9 Adventure supports the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office "Know Before You Go" campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas, and we recommend that all our clients take a look at the FCO Travel Advice for their chosen destination on the official FCO website www.fco.gov.uk. North Americans can also check out the US Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

Cloud 9 Adventure treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss alternatives. We have a local office in Chamonix, and our expert team monitor the conditions regularly to ensure that our trips are run safely, and are on hand to help if we need to change arrangements.

Group Size and Holiday Status

For each of our group adventures, there is a minimum number of participants required in order for the trip to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from "Available" to "Guaranteed". In order to achieve minimum numbers, we run the trips in conjunction with several other small companies. We find that this means almost all of our trips become "Guaranteed". We are a small company with a high level of customer service, and we make sure that we only run trips in conjunction with companies who share our ethos. We know them well and have worked with them for years, and only use leaders who we know and trust to do an excellent job. We steer clear of large groups and cap our group size at 10 people for summer hiking trips, and 8 people for winter snowshoe or cross country ski trips, whilst many of the larger operators take up to 16 people.

Preparing for your holiday

We have tried to grade the holiday as accurately as we can, with the intention of attracting people of similar abilities to each trip. As a general guideline, if we have described a trek as being tough or challenging, then you need to be fit and capable of the challenge. If you don't arrive in good shape for your trip, then you could be putting yourself and others in danger: if you're taking too long each day, at best it cuts into the time you have to relax and shower before dinner, and at worst, it can be the difference between the whole group being caught in an afternoon storm. As we are as accurate as we can be writing our trip notes, we do tend to be pretty good at making sure that the right people book each trip, but we do require a certain amount of personal responsibility for arriving fit and ready for your trip. We're not on a route-march so we are never expecting to be going too fast - we try to walk at a slow, steady pace, without the need to stop too frequently for rests. If you're worried about this, then please start with one of our easier trips graded Easy or Moderate, and you can build up to a Challenging trip. If you've booked an Extremely Tough trip, then you definitely need to be an experienced and fit hiker, used to long days in the hills.

Rather than hoping your trek will make you fitter (it will definitely help!), it makes a lot of sense to spend some time before your trip getting some additional exercise and preparing properly. The fitter you are, the more enjoyable your trip will be. The best preparation is long day hikes in the run-up to your trip.

We would also recommend that you adopt a weekly exercise regime leading up to your trip. Jogging, circuit training, squash and swimming are good for developing better stamina. Before departure, we also suggest that you try to fit in a number of long hikes in hilly terrain.

Snowshoe Kit List - with hut night

Essential items :

- **Rucksack** – approx. 30L - for you to carry each day. You may need to attach snowshoes as we sometimes need to carry them before we reach the snowline. Also bear in mind that you'll be given a portable shovel and avalanche probe to carry, so make sure you will have room for this
- **Kit bag or suitcase** - for your main luggage
- **Hiking boots** – you need to have a pair of waterproof hiking boots **with ankle support** and a good sole. Most of our guests use the same boots that they wear for hiking in the UK - this is fine most of the time but you do want to make sure your feet will be warm enough. A very lightweight pair of summer hiking boots is not going to be okay, but a sturdy leather pair should be fine. It will make a difference whether your trip is in Jan, Feb or March - Jan is colder! If you are thinking of buying a winter pair of boots, then good examples are Salomon Quest or Merrell Thermo Adventure or similar.
- **Waterproof jacket and trousers** – goretex jacket and trousers are perfect. Insulated ski trousers and jackets are likely to be too warm for snowshoeing, so a goretex shell is a better option.
- **Socks** - bring a mixture of both normal hiking socks and perhaps a couple of pairs of warmer merino wool socks for the colder days. Take care if you are bringing thicker socks - it is logical to think that a thicker pair will be warmer, but the reality is that it can make your boots a bit too tight and result in colder feet due to lack of circulation - so do check them first! My favourite socks are merino wool for winter walking.
- **Underwear**
- **Trekking trousers** - there are so many types of trousers for the outdoors, that it can be overwhelming trying to decide what to bring. If you go for something with too much insulation, you'll be far too hot, but standard trekking trousers are likely to be too cold in the winter (although they would be fine on a warm spring day). Some folk like to wear leggings with a goretex layer over the top. My personal choice is to wear a thinly-insulated pair of goretex trousers (Arcteryx Sabre) with no leggings underneath: these have seen me through years of snowshoeing and I don't have to worry about layering. Softshell trousers can also be a good idea. If in doubt, bring goretex trousers, trekking trousers, and thermal leggings, and a combination of those 3 options will see you through your trip.
- **Thermal base layer trousers** - such as long johns or thermal leggings
- **Base layer t-shirts** – wicking t-shirts are better than cotton as they are lighter and dry faster
- **Base layer top** - a long-sleeved merino wool top is the ideal base layer
- **Mid layer top** - fleece jacket is good
- **Warm jacket** - we recommend bringing a lightweight down jacket.
- **Warm hat** - woolly or fleece hat
- **Buff or fleecy neckwarmer**
- **Gloves** - we recommend bringing 2-3 pairs. I tend to bring 1 pair of lighter gloves for when it's warm (and when exercising uphill you can get quite warm, even in winter), an insulated mid-range pair which I wear most of the time, and a much warmer pair which rarely get used but when they do, in the cold weather, I'm really grateful for them
- **Sun Hat**
- **Sunglasses** - essential as the effect of the sun reflecting off the snow can make its rays much more intense
- **Suncream** (small bottle to save weight)
- **Lip protection** (with sun screen)
- **Water bottle** - we'd recommend nalgene bottles. On cold weather days I usually take half a litre of water, plus a hot flask of tea. On warmer winter days I'll take a 1L water bottle plus a flask of tea. We don't recommend camelbaks in the winter due to the tube freezing up.
- **Sheet sleeping bag** – only needed for any nights in a mountain refuge (duvets or blankets are provided). Silk is best, it's lighter than cotton.
- **Travel towel** – again, only needed for the mountain refuges – the hotels provide towels.

- **Wash kit** – Bring whatever you like for wash kit - but for any refuge nights where you have to carry it, small bottles will be perfect: you would normally just take a toothbrush, travel size toothpaste, mini contact lens solution if applicable, a couple of wet wipes and a tiny travel soap.
- **Head torch** – just a lightweight torch, such as a Petzl Tikka / Zipka is fine for this trip.
- **Plastic bags / dry sacks** to keep essentials dry.
- **Passport** – to be carried whilst snowshoeing (we often cross borders on the drive to each venue). Make sure you keep it dry.
- **Cash** – for any coffee stops whilst on the trip
- **Credit card** - for emergencies
- **Basic first aid kit** – your leader will carry a large first aid kit, but you should bring a small first aid kit containing plasters, blister treatment, painkillers & diarrhea treatment (rehydration sachets & immodium)

Optional items:

- **Walking poles** - we do provide poles, but you are welcome to bring your own if you prefer: please ensure that they have snow baskets.
- **Buff** – can be useful for extra warmth if it's cold, or sun protection for your neck on a sunny day
- **Camera**
- **Book**
- **Lightweight sandals / crocs** – whilst these are usually provided at the mountain refuges, you can bring your own if you prefer.
- **Mobile phone** – there is phone reception for the majority of the trip. It is a good idea to have a phone in case of emergency or if you need to leave the group for any reason.
- **Earplugs**
- **Snacks** – not essential as we are in the vicinity of shops most days, so you can top up your supply of snacks fairly regularly
- **Antibacterial handwash**
- **Swimwear** - some of the hotels have a swimming pool, spa or sauna
- **Boot dryers** - not many places in the Alps have drying rooms, so since I discovered these, I don't go anywhere without them:
<https://www.sidas.com/en/products/204-drywarmer.html>
- **Travel kettle, mug & tea bags / coffee** - it is unusual for hotels in continental Europe to provide tea and coffee-making facilities in the rooms
- **External battery pack** - for charging your phone in a hut
- **Flask & selection of tea bags** - whilst it is on the optional list, I really rate having a flask of hot drink in the winter and would strongly recommend bringing one (plus your favourite tea bags).

The following items are provided:

- Snow shoes
- Ski poles
- Avalanche probe
- Snow shovel
- Avalanche transceiver