

ICE AXE EXPEDITIONS

2023 GULMARG KASHMIR SKI TOURING

An awe-inspiring powder and cultural experience for those who dare to ski off the beaten track in Gulmarg Kashmir.

Perched at the very top of India, the beautiful village of Gulmarg sits on the rim of the Kashmir valley in the Pir Panjal range of the mighty Himalaya. With the installation of “The World’s Highest Gondola” in 2005 and a skiable vertical of 2000 meters consisting of vast alpine bowls and awesome tree skiing it has become one of the world’s must visit destinations for adventurous skiers and boarders.

The gondola rises from the village in two stages to an elevation of 4000 meters. During big storms, the huge pines from the mid station offer great protected tree lines while the options off the top are endless. Lap the main bowls, hike to the summit and explore the northern slopes or drop off the ridge to remote mountain villages.

The majestic views, amazing powder, unique cultural experience and our tailored Gulmarg backcountry ski tours make this place one of the greatest ski and boarding destinations on earth.



Dates:

Trip 1: January 22 - February 5, 2023

Trip 2: February 5 - 19, 2023

How to Book:

To sign up for the 2023 Gulmarg Kashmir Ski Tour, [follow this link](#). You will be able to create a portal where you can track your submitted orientation material and set up a payment plan for the total cost of the trip.

2023 Pricing:

\$6,200 USD per person

Expedition Overview:

Our highly qualified experienced Gulmarg ski guides structure each day around your specific needs. Each morning we assess the weather, avalanche and snow conditions and present you with the best available options for the day. Our focus is on finding and riding the best untracked snow possible using all the resources we have available to us.

When the snow is fresh, we cut laps straight off the Gondola or chairlift, other days we utilize taxis to return us to the village after skiing the trees off the Gulmarg plateau, and we often put on skins for a hike to access or return from our favourite runs.

The choice is yours, ski the trees, explore the upper mountain, drop off the plateau to outlying villages, or partake in formal avalanche awareness and Gulmarg back-country skills training. With a client to guide ratio of 4 to 1 we are able to group together guests with a similar skill level, equipment choice and daily objectives.



We stay at the grand Highlands Park Hotel which sits in a majestic position on the Gulmarg plateau with uninterrupted views of all the terrain accessed by the “World’s Highest Gondola”. Breakfast is served in the Highlands Park restaurant where you can savor your meal while eyeing off the untracked lines, then at the end of the day, ski through the trees to the back gate, enjoy an Après beer in the lounge and check out your tracks. Kashmiri and western style banquets are served each night with great style and laughs in the hotel restaurant while we relive the day’s adventures. If/when your rest day arrives you can walk to the markets to shop for local handicrafts and soak up the atmosphere or simply relax at the Highland Park and take in the views.



No trip to Kashmir is complete without a stay on one of Dal lakes famous houseboats and checking out the vibrant city of Srinagar . At the end of your final day on the mountain we head to one of Bill’s close friend’s houseboats to relax and enjoy the hospitality. Finish off your adventure with a city tour taking in the sights, sounds and smells, shop for rugs, Pashminas and handicrafts and end the day with a relaxing Shikara cruise on Dal Lake.

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Itinerary:

DAY 1: Arrive at Srinagar airport early afternoon to be met by your guides for the two hour transfer via private vehicle direct to the Highlands Park Hotel, Gulmarg (your accommodation for the next 12 nights). Pre sitting down for a welcome banquet, your guides introduce you to Gulmarg with a resort familiarisation and trip overview presentation.

DAY 2-13:

Twelve full days of guided off-piste adventure skiing and snowboarding with a maximum client to guide ratio of 4 to 1. The snow and weather conditions are assessed early each morning by the guides and the best available options will be presented over breakfast. Choose to stay within the resort, explore from the top station or ski off the plateau to the valley floor. There are enough guides available to allow the group to be split to meet everyone's daily objectives. Untracked, great snow is usually on offer somewhere nearby. You will be instructed in the use of backcountry equipment and safe travel practices while exploring the mountain each day. Further avalanche awareness and rescue training will be provided to groups and individuals who are keen to learn the finer of points of back-country safety.

DAY 13:

When you have had enough riding for the day a vehicle will be waiting to transfer you to your floating accommodation on Dal Lake for the next 2 nights.

DAY 14:

Explore Srinagar city with a sightseeing and shopping tour then finish off the day with a relaxing shikara cruise around Dal lake and a delicious meal on the houseboat.

DAY 15:

Listen to the "call to prayer" for one last time, relax on the houseboat or go for another shikara ride before a late morning departure to meet your flight.

**This program is subject to change throughout the journey depending on ice, weather, and local conditions.*

What's Included:

- 12 days fully guided off piste adventure skiing and snowboarding
- Client to guide ratio of 4 : 1
- 12 night's accommodation at the Highland Park Hotel
- 2 night's deluxe houseboat accommodation on Dal Lake
- Srinagar sightseeing and shopping tour
- Dal lake shikara cruise
- All breakfasts, 1 x Welcome banquet and 2 x dinners on the houseboat
- Lift tickets
- All transfers
- Local taxis when returning from outlying villages
- Avalanche awareness presentation
- Backcountry skills instruction
- 24 hour hosting

Not Included:

- Airfares to or from your home city, whether on scheduled or charter flights.
- Passport and visa expenses. Tourist entry fees may apply depending on your nationality.
- Any government arrival and departure airport taxes.
- Ski, snowboard, or trekking equipment.
- Avalanche safety equipment.
- Snacks, Dinner and Lunch unless listed above.
- Baggage, cancellation, and travel insurance (emergency medical and evacuation insurance is mandatory).
- Excess baggage charges.
- Laundry, bar, beverage, and other personal charges.
- Telecommunications and wifi charges or the customary gratuity at the end of the voyage for stewards, guides, and other service personnel.
- Tips for guides and hospitality staff.

The Mountain:

Gulmarg village sits on a mountain plateau at 2600 metres beneath the 4200 metre summit of Mt Apharwat. A table-top shaped mountain, Mt Apharwat has a crest approximately 5 kilometers long with ridges and gullies dropping towards the resort offering countless skiing opportunities.

The first stage of the gondola delivers you from the village to the top of the tree line at 3000 metres from where big pines offer great protected tree skiing and the second stage of the gondola drops you at 3960 metres just shy of Mt Apharwat's summit.

From the top station you can drop straight into the gondola bowl or traverse in either direction to ski the 1000 vertical metres back to the mid station. A 20-30 minute hike to the summit opens up the northern end of the mountain and an amazing choice of lines. From Mt Apharwat's main ridgeline it is possible to ski 2000 vertical metres of awesome terrain an amazing snow down to and through local villages.



Gulmarg has fantastic terrain and great snow but the facilities are not yet up to the standard of western resorts. It is best described as lift-accessed back country. The grooming is very minimal and lift operations are often hindered by weather conditions and other factors. There is avalanche control, hazard marking and ski patrol in the main gondola bowl however this only accounts for about 10% of the terrain that is ridden on a daily basis.

The Mountain (cont'd):

To make the most of the mountain, short hikes are necessary to either access or return from your chosen line. If you are an advanced skier or snowboarder, solid in a variety of off-piste snow conditions and not afraid of putting in a little effort for your turns you will be hugely rewarded. Most of our clients call "best run of my life" at least once during their stay.

There are two very different but equally as awesome skiing and boarding experiences to be had in Gulmarg, the trees and the alpine.

The tree skiing from the mid station of the gondola and off the Gulmarg plateau down to outlying villages is world class in its own right. During the big storms when the upper gondola is closed is when we normally enjoy the deepest and driest snow conditions while skiing the perfectly spaced huge old pines. The lines from the mid station back to the gondola base offer undulating and mainly cruisy trees while off the Gulmarg plateau and Monkey Hill the pitches are steeper and faceshots are the norm.

When the storms clear and the avalanche conditions settle is when the vast alpine bowls above the mid station become the main focus. This terrain is perfect for big fast turns and with the predominant wind coming from the West (over the back of the mountain), the front face is usually blanketed in a smooth cover of great snow.

One of the best runs you could ever do in your life involves 1000 vertical metres of awesome alpine terrain down into beautiful Birch trees, busting out for some big cruisy turns across the mid mountain bench and then dropping into the perfectly spaced ancient pines. The variety of the mountain is part of the magic of Gulmarg.

Although the trees or the alpine are reason enough in their own right for a visit to Gulmarg, you will find it very hard to leave if you have not experienced both the upper and lower mountain conditions at their best. We have structured our trips at 12 days on snow to give you a very real chance of scoring both of these epic skiing and riding conditions. To avoid disappointment do not opt for a shorter stay in Gulmarg. Great things come to those who wait.

Insurance:

We always encourage folks to purchase TRIP CANCELLATION insurance in addition to the mandatory medical evacuation insurance. We require that you have at least \$100,000 in medical evacuation insurance. Your insurance policy should cover hazardous sports and we recommend that your policy cover search and rescue. Since we cannot confirm each client's policy individually, it is your responsibility to make sure your policy will cover you while you participate in your activities of choice on the expedition.

For US citizens, we recommend the [Travelex Travel Select Insurance](#) with the Adventurer Pak upgrade. Other commonly used companies include Global Rescue and World Nomads.

You are welcome to seek out other insurance options, as these are only recommendations. When selecting a policy, please make sure they insure a) the region and b) ski mountaineering-which involves the use of ropes, crampons, ice axes and is a guided activity. Ski mountaineering is not considered the same as skiing by many insurers, and you need to confirm that they will cover this activity.

Gear List:

This is an extensive list that will allow for a participant to access the most extreme of terrain. All items are not necessary for all participants. Please contact Ice Axe with questions about rentals.

- Ski/Board: appropriate form ski mountaineering
- Skins
- Helmet
- Alpine Touring Boots
- Ski Poles
- Ice Axe
- Crampons
- Ski/ board: crampons
- Transceivers
- Shovel
- Probe
- 20-35L backpack
- Sunglasses
- Goggles
- Gore-Tex shell Jacket
- Ski Hat or Fleece Beanie
- Sun Hat
- Headlamp and batteries
- Balaclava
- Light weight base layers
- Mid weight base layers
- Gloves
- Insulated Jacket
- Sunscreen
- Lip screen
- Thermos
- Water Bottles (2)
- Pak Towel
- Walking Shoes
- Polar Fleece
- Street Clothes for Traveling
- Personal Toiletries
- Ski Socks

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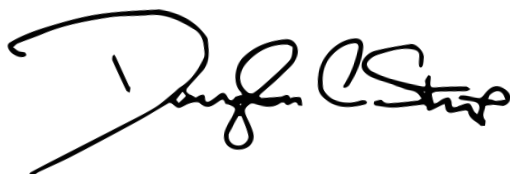
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We look forward to having you join us on this trip of a lifetime! Don't hesitate to contact us with any questions, (530) 582-1246 or questions@iceaxe.tv.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doug Stoup". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Doug" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Stoup".

Doug Stoup
President
Ice Axe Expeditions