

# Jotunheimen



Day 1. Looking south from the edge of Tyin lake towards Tyinkrysset 3 km away in the trees below. From here Fondsbu lodge is a quick 19km ski on the snow-covered road along the lake. Snow-Cats can be hired for this 19 km drive if needed



Day 1. Eidsbugården lodge was once a grand hotel at the west end of Bygdin lake. However it is now closed and not likely to reopen. Fondsbu lodge lies nearby (just beside the photographer) and is open from mid Feb to very early May in winter

Jotunheimen is a mountainous area which is about 60km across. About 400 million years ago, in a collision of continents, immense geological terranes along the edge of these continents were thrust up onto the existing bedrock of gneiss. The Jotunheimen is such a terrane and was kilometres high, and whose lower layer was gabbro. These upper layers have eroded exposing the gabbro, which ice ages shaped into jagged ridges and deep valleys of today in Scandinavian's most spectacular landscape; alongside Lofoten and Sunnmøre.

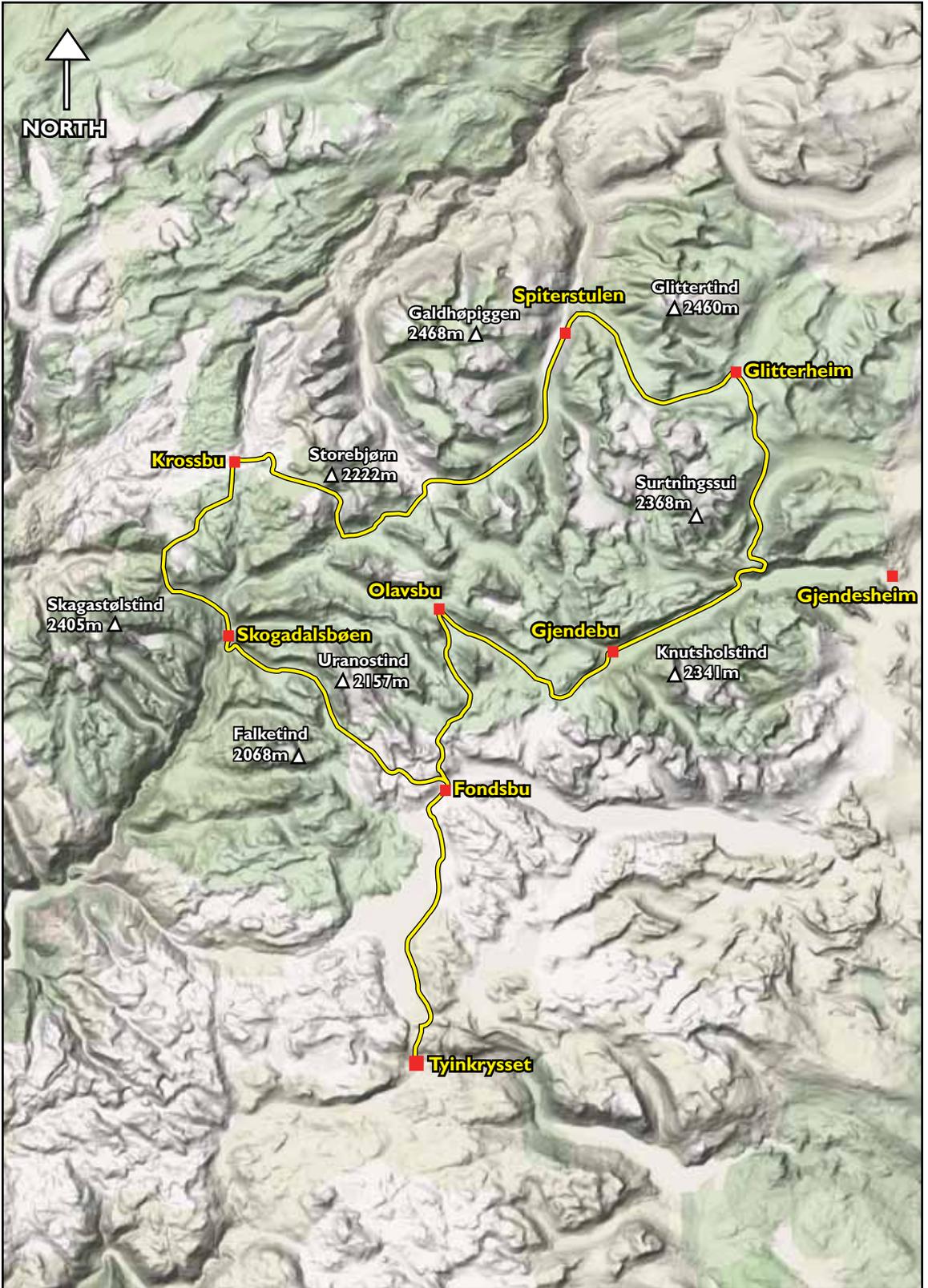
The 2000m mountains are found in clusters in 13 different massifs each separated by deep valleys. The ski tour largely follows these valleys but occasionally cuts over the middle of a massif on a glacier. Around Easter the routes through the valleys and over the popular glaciers are marked with *kvister* branches. It is almost foolhardy to venture onto these glaciers unless the *kvister* have been put out as in poor weather with zero visibility you might easily stray into a crevasse field or avalanche zone without them. If the weather

is good it is easily possible to have a day's ski trip from one of the lodges up a 2000m mountain.

The DNT (Den Norske Turistforening) and most private lodges open in late February to mid March and stay open for a couple of months. However there are self-service cabins at Skogadalsbøen and Glitterheim, and a cabin without provisions at Krossbu, when they are closed. Olavsbu in the middle of Jotunheimen is self-service and always open. Spiterstulen lodge is also always open.

Access to Tyinkrysset from Oslo and Bergen is on a bus called "Valdresexpressen." There are a few departures each day and it takes about 5-6 hours. You can either have an expensive night here or set off to Fondsbu at once. It is possible to go from Oslo to Lom by intercity bus and then from Lom to Spiterstulen by local bus in a day.

A 2-map set (Jotunheimen Aust and Vest) at 1:50,000 covers the area. It is in the "Turkart" series published by Nordeca AS in 2011.



Map of Jotunheimen. The ski tour starts in Tyinkrysset, but can also start at Spiterstulen or Gjendesheim. It then goes in a circuit round this mountainous area for 8-9 days which is home to the highest mountains in Scandinavia. There are many more cabins and lodges than shown, but only a few are open all year.



Day 2. Skiing over Kvitevatnet with the sharp knife edge of Uranostind. 2137m, in the background. To the right of this distinguished mountain is Uranosbreen which is the easiest route to the summit, but is littered with open crevasses in the summer time.



Day 2. Looking over the huge boulders at Storurdi at the end of Urdadalen and down the deep chasm of Utladalen. Utladalen goes all the way to the sea and Sognefjord (which is the flooded part of Utladalen). There has been little recent snow and the polished surface is reflecting the sun down this valley



Day 2. After Fondsbu the ski track to Skogadalsbøen climbs up the slopes at the west end of Bygdin lake and up onto Sløtafjell before it skirts round the south side of Uranostind, 2137m.



Day 2. From Sløtafjell there is a great view over to the well known Falketind, 2068m. There is a rock spire just to the left of Falketind called Falkungen which can just be seen emerging from the mist



Day 2. The four giants of the Styggedal-Skagastøls ridge. From the right is Gjertvasstind, 2351m, Styggedalstind, 2387m, Sentraltind, 2348m and finally Store Skagastølstind (Storen), 2405m



Day 2. After the trail leaves the boulders at Storurdi in Urdadalen it descends through woods to Skogadalsbøen lodge. Early in the season you will have to break your own trail in deep snow



Day 2. Skogadalsbøen lodge is a large grass-roofed building. When it is closed there is a self-service cabin which is the building to the south of the main complex (to the left of it in this photo)



Day 2. The interior of the self-service cabin has a stove, provisions and 5 bedrooms each with 4 beds. With the stove going it does not take long to warm this well insulated place up



Day 3. Looking back to Keisarpasset, 1500m, from the very steep slope up to the saddle between Grånosi and Fannaråknosi. In the background is the east ridge of Gjertvasstind



Day 3. Having passed through the saddle between Grånosi and Fannaråknosi you reach the vast Fannaråken glacier great views over Fannaråken, 2068, (left) and Steindalsnosi, 2025m (right)



Day 3. The view to the saddle between Grånosi and Fannaråknosi over the east edge of the Fannaråken glacier. In the background is the Styggedal-Skagastøls ridge. From the left is Gjertvasstind, 2351m, Styggedalstind, 2387m, Sentralstind, 2348m and finally at the back is Store Skagastølstind (Storen), 2405m



Day 3. Looking east from Fannaråken glacier over to the mountains each side of Rauddalen valley. The self-service cabin of Olavsbu is well sited in that valley in the very heart of these mountains



Day 3. Looking south east from Fannaråken glacier to the mountains in the Uranos massif. Uranostind, 2137m, is on the centre right of the photo and Sagi, 2040m, is just left of centre



Day 3. Looking north east from Fannaråken glacier to the Smørstabb massif and the large Lier and Smørstabb glaciers. To the left is Smørstabbtind, 2208m, and to the right is Storbjørn, 2222m



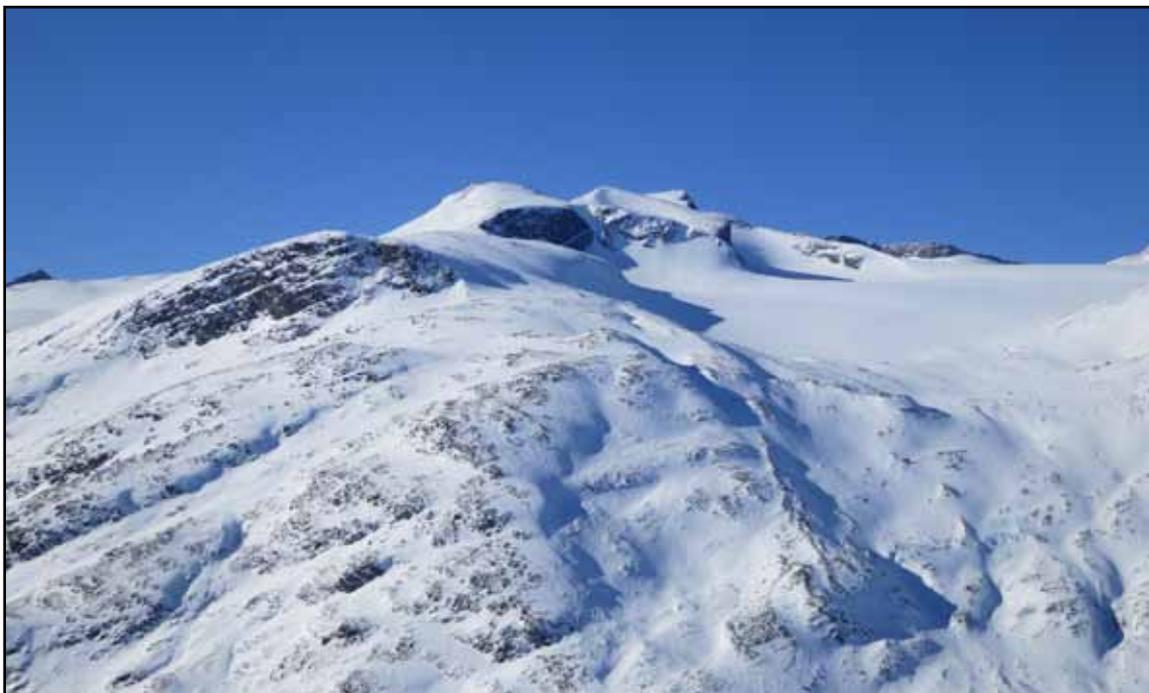
Day 3. Where there are reindeer there will also be wolverine. This ferocious animal is only 15-20kg but will easily take down a reindeer with their huge teeth and powerful claws.



Day 3. Smørstabbtind, 2208m, rises above the large Leirbreen glacier which covers its western flanks. The ski-track for the next day goes up this glacier and round the south of Storbjørn, 2222m



Day 4. Kyrkja, 2032m, is one of the most iconic mountains in Jotunheimen. It lies near the large Leirvassbu lodge from where it can easily be climbed in half a day via the south (right) ridge



Day 5. At the west edge of Skautflye there is a wonderful view across Visdalen to Galdhøpiggen, the highest mountain in Scandinavia at 2469m. It is easily possible to climb this mountain from Spiterstulen lodge in a day. The route either goes up the left side of the ridge or up the diagonal ramp near the top of the shoulder to reach the Styggebrean glacier (right of photo). This glacier is then followed to the top



Day 5. At the south east end of Skautflye the large Veobreen glacier emerges out of the Memuru-Veo massif flowing down the flanks of 5 mountains over 2000 metres. The ski track reaches the snout of this glacier and then follows it down into Veodalen for a km to the end. On the opposite of the valley is the large rounded southern slopes of Glittertind, 2460m, the second highest mountain in Scandinavia



Day 5. The mountain of Styggehøe, 2200m, rises up above the large Spiterstulen lodge which lies spread out on the valley floor beneath it. Spiterstulen is open all year - as is it's access road



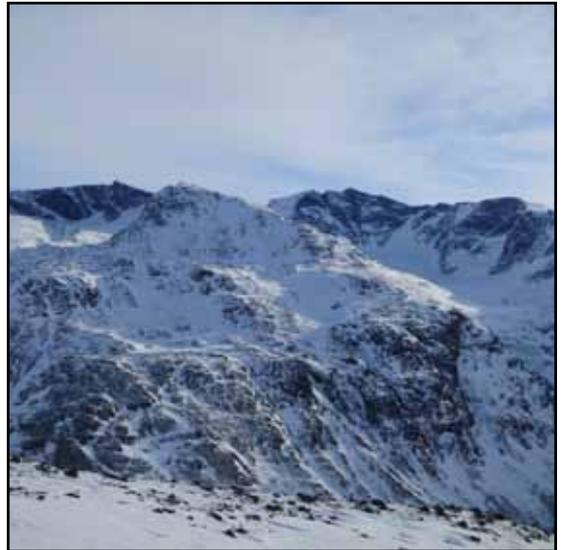
Day 5. Glitterheim lodge is a large friendly lodge at the foot of Glittertind. The lodge is open much of the ski season but when it is closed there is a small self-service cabin beside it which opens



Day 5. Skiing down from Skautflye into Veodalen with the massive Veobreen glacier on the left and in the centre of the photo. This gentle slope is a delight to ski down and is surrounded by 2000m mountains. The mountain in the centre left is Veobratind, 2183m, and it is a nunatak in the middle of Veobreen glacier



Day 6. After having skied down Russvatnet and climbed onto the ridge above Memurubu lodge there is a great view north to Surtningsue, 2368m, which is easy to climb from the west side



Day 6. From ridge above Memurubu lodge there is also a great view to the south and the mountain of Tjønnholstind, 2331m, which is just to the right of centre and has three small steep-sided tops



Day 6. Memurubu lodge is closed for all but a short time around Easter and if it is closed it will be necessary to ski on to Gjendebu lodge or cabin. As you leave Memurubu lodge there is a wonderful view east up the lake to Veslfjell and the west arete descending from it - which is the famous Besseggen



Day 7. Gjendeby lodge sits on the shore at the west end of Gjende lake. The main lodge has over 100 beds but when it is closed there is a small self-service cabin available nearby. Gjendeby is sited at the hub of a number of ski tracks



Day 7. Having climbed up Veslådalen from Gjendeby lodge there is a good view back east to Gjende lake and the large Besshøe, 2258m. The famous Besseggen ridge is just out of view on the right of the photo



Day 8. Olavsbu cabin is self-service and is open all year. It is sited in the heart of Jotunheimen and is surrounded by many sharp mountains, most of which are difficult to climb, especially in winter



Day 8. A few hours after Olavsbu cabin there is a great view south east to the Slettmark massif with its 2 huge mountains separated by a deep cleft in which the large Slettmarkbreen glacier flows



Day 8. After leaving Olavsbu cabin you ski south and cross a small saddle into Mjølkedalen. Here there is a lake which the large Mjølkedalsbreen glacier flows into under the sharp Sagi, 2040m



Day 8. The final run down from Sløtafjell to the west end of Byggin lake is steep enough to be exciting but not uncontrollable. Fondsby lodge lies just to the right of the many leisure cabins below

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Day	Start	Finish	Km	Up	Down	Time	General
1	Tyinkryset	Fondsbu	23	430	250	5	A snow scooter trail leads north from the fjellstue by the road junction in Tyinkryset. Take this track which goes up the middle of the steeper valley, undulating considerably as it makes it short way up to Tyn lake some 3 km away. The route now can either go across the lake for 15km to Tynholmen lodge at the north end or it can follow the snow covered road on the east side of the lake. The latter is slightly longer but if conditions are difficult on the ice then the snow covered road will be easier. As you head up the lake the mountains of Jotunheimen materialize. The sharp peak of Uranostind dominates the skyline until the even sharper Falketind appears when half way up the lake. Although visible for a long time it takes a while to reach Tynholmen lodge. Just before this lodge the snow covered road climbs up over a shallow rise for 2 km and then drops down the other side of this saddle to reach the cabins of Eidsbugården at the west end of Bygdin lake. Fondsbu lodge lies among these cabins.
2	Fondsbu	Skogadalsbøen	25	620	850	7	Leave Fondsbu and head north through the cabins for half a km and then put on the skins and turn west up the hill. Climb 300m over the next 2 km to reach the frozen Sløttjern lake where a great view of Hjelledalstind unfolds. Now head west for 3 km across undulating ground to reach Kvitevatnet lake at 1400m. Here there are tremendous views to the sharp towering mountains of Uranostind and Falketind. Ski to the NW end of this lake and then cross a small pass to reach the frozen Urdalvatnet lake under the west face of Uranostind. At the north end of this lake there is a climb up to the pass called Urdalbandet at 1420m and right under the west face of Uranostind. From here there is a lovely 7 km run down Urdadalen with the jagged giants of Hurrungane straight ahead dominating everything. This easy run ends in a boulder field of huge stones and the best way through is on the very north edge. After the km of boulders the route drops quickly through birch woods and the remainder of the boulders. Drop down through difficult terrain to a shelf some 200m below where the route turns quite sharply north. Ski up this shelf for a km to a small pass at 900m. The tranquil grass roofed buildings of Skogadalsbøen are now clear just half a km to the north down a birch covered slope and across a frozen stream.
3	Skogadalsbøen	Krossbu	23	1270	780	9.5	If the weather and conditions are good then you could either follow Vete Utledalen 16km to Krossbu or take the much more ambitious way over Keiserpasset and Fannaråknosi (as I did). Both routes head north for 2km to the bridge, 800m, over the Utlå river. Both cross the river here but the Keisarpasset route now leaves the valley and climbs 600m relentlessly over 4km to reach Gjertvatnet lake. As you climb views open up in all directions especially to the Hurrungane massif towering above to the SW. At the end of the lake climb a steeper slope to Keisarpasset, 1500m. From here traverse north round the steeper slopes at the head of the next valley to gain the saddle between Fannaråknosi and Grånosi. The last part of this traverse is very steep and avalanche prone and can only be considered in good conditions with the right equipment. At the saddle there is a great view to the highest ridge in Hurrungane with its jagged skyline and lofty summits. Head over to top marked 1688m to enjoy more great views in every direction but especially east to Jotunheimen. Initially the descent is to the N down the smooth gentle slopes of Fannaråkbreen glacier. However at the bottom you reach the surprisingly gnarly Rundhaugan hills of moraine deposits and lakes. Head NE through all this for 5km aiming for the Utledalstjønne and the pass over into Bøvredalen where you meet the normal route which came up Vete Utledalen. Ski the 3 km down this valley to reach Krossbu cabins at 1250m
4	Krossbu	Spiterstulen	39	1100	1280	10.5	Head east from Krossbu towards the towering Store Smørstabbtind. After 3 km you reach Leirbreen glacier and head south towards the buttress of Kalven which sticks out like a jagged peninsula in a sea of ice. Head to the west of Kalven on this glacier to reach the next ocean of ice which is Smørstabbreen. The route now goes up the middle of this glacier heading SE to a high point of just under 1900m south of the looming tower of Storebjørn. There are unrivalled views here over to Hurrungane to the SW. Now begin the descent which is initially shallow but soon steepens as the glacier plunges down to the lower glacier of Sandelvbreen. Ski or walk down this steeper section keeping to the north of the middle of the glacier until you reach the lower one. Then cross the lower one to the east side and descend the east side of it to the snout. As you descend the east side of the valley floor to the main Gravdalen valley a great view over Raudalstind unfolds. Head east up Gravdalen for about 7km to reach Leirvatnet and Leirvassbu lodge in the heart of Jotunheimen. Ski across Leirvatnet lake and go to the north of the sharp peak of Kyrkjå where there is a shallow watershed with Visdalen. The next 12km are all pretty much gently down as you follow this deep arterial valley past many jagged 2000m mountains high on each side. If the snow conditions are good and the waxing is right you make short time to the large Spiterstulen lodge, 1100m, huddled in Visdalen valley between the two highest mountains in Scandinavia.

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Day	Start	Finish	Km	Up	Down	Time	General
5	Spiterstulen	Glitterheim	20	730	380	6	Head down beside the road from Spiterstulen for a km before traversing up the hill to the east. This climb is often unpleasant as it can be icy but after an hour you reach the lip of the plateau. Behind you across the other side of Visdalen is the huge glaciated bulk of Galdhopiggen, the highest mountain in Scandinavia at 2469. You now start to ski SE across a wide open valley called Skautflye which climbs gently for 8km to the day's high point of 1700m. As you ski up this easy valley the view to the north is dominated by the huge rounded mass of Glittertind at about 2460m. However the eye is really drawn to the south where the huge Veobreen glacier flows down from the vertical rock faces of Leirhø, Memurutind and Veotind. The high plateau of Skautflye is really moraine debris from this glacier. After the high point the route drops down beside the snout of the Veobreen glacier and into Veodalen valley. Once down the skiable slope and on the valley floor there is just 7km of reasonably flat skiing to go before you reach the large Glitterheim lodge at 1400m.
6	Glitterheim	Gjendebu	31	750	1120	10	There are 2 routes from Glitterheim to Memurubu and then Gjendebu. The first is the longer and good weather option which goes up Styggehøbrean glacier, crosses a potential bergschrund at Styggehøbreanskardet pass, 2100m, and then descends the Austre Memurbreen glacier and the long Murudalen valley to Memurubu lodge. The poor weather option is to follow the route to Gjendesheim for 8km over the Hestlægerhøe pass at a mere 1700m and down towards Russvatnet lake. Leave this well travelled route here and veer to the south traversing down the slope to the south end of Russvatnet. Once on the lake ski to the south end and up the small Russglopet valley between the very high Surtningsssue and Besshøe. The valley seems a cul-de-sac ending in steep side sides. However on the east there is an easier slope up to the ridge on the south side of Gjende lake. At this ridge there are wonderful views over to the jagged Gjendealpen mountains between the Bygdin and Gjende lakes. Head west along this crest for a km before starting the steep descent to Memurubu lodge. For all but experts it is too steep to ski down in less than perfect conditions. Once at Memurubu the two alternatives meet and head onto the Gjende lake. Once on the lake head west for 10km on the frozen surface between steep sided mountains to Gjendebu lodge which lies at the end of the lake.
7	Gjendebu	Olavsbu	17	600	110	5	From Gjendebu head through the birch woods and into Veslådalen valley. After a couple of km you leave the trees and climb onto the bare white hillside with the frozen Gjende lake white in its rocky slot behind you. As you climb the Slettmark massif with its glaciers and peaks slowly appear to the south. After 2 hours leave this valley and head NW into Rauddalen valley. The route now follows a string of frozen lakes climbing gently to the days high point of 1450m before it starts the gentle descent down across more lakes to the self-service cabin of Olavsbu in the very heart of Jotunheimen. For the 9km ski down Rauddalen the long Rauddalseggje ridge, topped with steep cliffs, looms over the northside of the valley while Snøholstind graces the south side of the valley.
8	Olavsbu	Fondsbu	17	350	750	4	Head south from Olavsbu across lake 1444m to the saddle between Snøholstind and Mjølkedalstind at 1600m. The climb up from the lake is not steep but it takes a good hour to reach the top. From here there is an easy descent down to Snøholsvatnet lake. Ski across this lake until you are on the south side of Snøholstind then climb to another small pass at 1550m, which gives you great views to the east over the Slettmarks massif. From this pass there is another easy descent into a small side valley followed by a long descent down to Mjølkedalvatnet, which is a glacial lake. Across the frozen lake the Mjølkedalsbreen glacier flows out of the Uranos massif and the sharp serrated ridge of Sagi. From the east end of the lake ski for a km down a small valley to meet the frozen Mjølkedøla river. Here you have a short steep climb up the south bank of the river valley where it may be easier to walk. Once you have climbed the far side there is a long run down the hillside to the scattered cabins at the west end of the vast Bygdin lake which stretches nearly 30km to the east. This final descent is reasonably steep but wide enough to make long traverses. At the bottom of the slope and amongst the wooden cabins turn south for half a km to reach Fondsbu lodge. This is the end of the Jotunheimen circuit but it is possible to continue for another day retracing the route of Day 1 to Tyinkryset. Alternatively instead of skiing one can take one of the ancient Bombadier Weasel belted snow cars to Tyin to catch the bus.
			195	5850	5520	57	