

Classic Tour du Mont Blanc

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£1495 or 1795 Euros

Demanding

At the heart of the European Alps, the massif of Mont Blanc straddles the borders of France, Italy and Switzerland and includes some of the most spectacular mountain scenery imaginable. With its rich mountaineering history and unsurpassed cultural diversity, this corner of Europe has an irresistible attraction for the world's adventurers, climbers and hikers. Mont Blanc itself, at 4807 metres (15,770 feet), is the high point of the range and the biggest peak in Western Europe. When viewed from the French town of Chamonix, arguably the capital of world mountaineering, the snowy bulk of this commanding peak exerts a strange fascination. Streamers of cloud trailing from its summit bear witness to the fact that Mont Blanc stands high above the surrounding, and in some respects more dramatic, rocky peaks. The trekker and mountain walker is spoiled for choice in this part of the world, but one obvious challenge is to complete a circuit of the Mont Blanc Massif. The well-known long distance walk (or Grand Randonee) known as the Tour du Mont Blanc does just that.

- Enjoy hotel accommodation
- Luggage transfer provided
- Travel through 3 countries
- Hike to the Brevent Summit

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[Departures](#)

Based on a series of ancient pathways used by hunters, herdsmen and traders, this classic long distance walk passes through some of the most breathtaking Alpine landscapes, crosses several high mountain passes, takes time out in pretty Alpine meadows and visits a succession of picturesque hamlets and villages. At the height of the summer, the trails are coloured by an abundance of wildflowers and alpine wildlife species, including chamois, ibex, marmot and golden eagle, are at their most visible. Our version of this justifiably popular trek starts out in the Chamonix Valley and crosses first into Italy and then into Switzerland. We have allowed 10 days to complete the circuit, taking care that each of the stages represents a reasonable day's walk and also ensuring that we have access to a good standard of overnight accommodation. A small daypack including the bare essentials is all that needs to be carried on a daily basis, since we provide vehicle support to carry baggage from one overnight halt to the next.

This is a classic walking route on good trails. The average distance covered each day is around 15 kilometres (9.5 miles) and there is a fair amount of ascent and descent so this trip is suitable for regular hikers or those with a good level of fitness. Your luggage will be transferred between hotels, which means that you need carry no more than a small daypack. Carrying only a daypack and staying in comfortable valley hotels, makes this trip quite relaxed for its DEMANDING grade.

Day 1. Arrive in Les Houches

The group will rendezvous at our hotel/chalet in Les Houches, just a few kilometres from

Chamonix. Lying beneath the stunning north face of Mont Blanc, the views are awesome from the start!. Before dinner, you will meet your trip leader to have an informal chat about the days ahead and have the chance to check out your clothing and gear and to decide if you will need to pick up any further items of equipment, before setting out in the morning. The group package services begin with the evening meal. Overnight at the hotel in Les Houches.

Day 2. Col de Tricot to Les Contamines

A very gentle introduction on this first day, with a cable car ride to Bellevue, where our trek starts in earnest. A short descent takes us to the start of the Bionassay Glacier with the Aiguille de Bionassay towering above. Crossing the torrent via a fine new suspension bridge, we climb easily to the Col de Tricot. Ahead lies the bulk of the Dome de Miage and below us is the idyllic summer hamlet of the Chalet de Miage which will take us 45 minutes or so to reach. After a welcome drink at the Chalet de Miage, a relatively short climb and easy descent takes us into the colourful village of Les Contamines. Approximate walking time 5.5 hours. Ascent 700m

Day 3. Col de Bonhomme to Les Chapieux

A leisurely wander by the river to Notre Dame de la Gorge is our start for today. Leaving the river our route then climbs steeply, following the 'paved' Roman road thought to have been a route taken by Hannibal in an early version of the Tour du Mont Blanc. Our next stop is at the refuge at Le Balme, a good place to contemplate the climb to the Col de Bonhomme. This is a long, steady plod and the pass itself often has snow patches early in the season. At 2469 metres, this is considerably higher than the Col de Tricot, but at least the climbing is over for the day, as we traverse round the Croix de Bonhomme before dropping gently down to Les Chapieux. Approximate walking time - 6.5 hours. Ascent 1300m

Day 4. Courmayeur via the Col de la Seigne

A short section of road takes us out of Les Chapieux towards the refuge Le Mottet, which doubles as a donkey and mule sanctuary. Many of these animals earn their keep by transporting baggage to our next high point, at the Col de la Seigne, 2513m. This is a significant col on the border between France and Italy and gives superlative views of the Brenva face of Mont Blanc. An easy descent takes us past the Elizabetta Refuge and down into the head of the Val Veni, under the awesome ridge of the Aiguille Noire de Peuterey. After lunch, we catch a bus down to the vibrant town and mountaineering centre of Courmayeur. We stay tonight in a hotel at La Palud above the town. Approximate walking time - 6 hours. Ascent 970 m

Day 5. Via Monte de la Saxe Ridge to Arnuva

Leaving La Palud we climb towards the Monte de la Saxe Ridge. This is a spectacular grass ridge which provides fantastic views of the Italian side of Mont Blanc and the Grandes Jorasses. We pass above the Bertone Hut, and from here there are options depending on the weather. We can drop down to La Vachey and walk up the road, or we can cross another col - Deux Sauts - and go past the Bonatti refuge and contour round to Arnuva. Ascent approx 1300, another 200m if the route goes via the Col Entre Deux Sauts another 200m. 5 ? 6 hours.

Day 6. Col du Grand Ferret to La Fouly

We start the day with a short walk up to the Elena Refuge, which makes an excellent place to stop for morning coffee. After this pleasant interlude, we set off on the long climb to the Col du Grand Ferret (2530m). From this pass, there are views of the snow-capped Grand Combin (4090m) and also Mont Dolent, the summit of which is shared by France Switzerland and Italy. Beyond the pass, we have entered Switzerland and the terrain is very different, less rugged, as we descend to La Fouly. We stay overnight in a hotel. Walking time - 5 hours. Ascent 870 m

Day 7. An easy day to Champex

A relatively easy day, which starts off with a gentle downhill walk through woodland and typically Swiss villages. There are plenty of opportunities to sample the delights of local hostelrys and a stop in Champex, the 'Chocolate Box Village', is a must. A final 30 minute ascent takes us to our overnight stop at the Relais D'Arpette. Ascent 500m. Approximate walking time - 5 hours.

Day 8. Cross the Fenetre d'Arpette to Trient

The climb up to the pass known as the Fenetre d'Arpette (2670m) is perhaps one of the most demanding days of the tour, but there are compensations. On reaching the rocky col the spectacular view across the Trient Glacier is quite breathtaking. We will take time out at the pass to fully appreciate the position, looking down towards a veritable sea of seracs and crevasses. Ascent 1180m An alternative route for those with a less stout constitution (or indeed, a wet weather variation) is via the Bovine Route. This is a gem in its own right and provides spectacular views of the Rhone Valley. Ascent 570m. We overnight in a gite at the village of Trient. Walking time ? 6.5 hours.

Day 9. Col de Balme to Argentiere

We retrace our steps along the Trient Valley for a short distance and then start the climb up through fine woodland to reach the Col de Balme. Our route to the pass can be varied to take account of the prevailing weather conditions. The preferred route, via Les Grands, allows us to linger over views of the Trient Glacier and to better appreciate the exposed position of the Fenetre d'Arpette which we crossed on the previous day. On reaching the Col de Balme, we cross the border back into France where below us lies the Chamonix Valley, dominated by the Aiguille Verte at one end and Mont Blanc at the other. We descend from the Col de Balme to Argentiere. Ascent approx 1000m. Approximate walking time ? 6.5 hours.

Day 10. Col des Montets to La Flegere

From Le Buet our path meanders up to the Col des Montets before heading off towards the cliffs of Le Chesery, where our route takes a seemingly impossible line helped on more difficult sections by cables and ladders. This is very easy and not something to be worried about! Leaving the cliffs behind, easier ground takes us to Lac Blanc where we take lunch. This is arguably one of the Chamonix Valley's best viewpoints. Ascent approx 1000m. We descend to La Flegere and

use the transport system for the short drive back to our accommodation in Argentiere.

Day 11. Via the Brevent summit to Les Houches

Today we complete our Tour du Mont Blanc. Returning to the end point of the previous day's walk we use the lift system to get back up to La Flegere and continue to climb on a superb trail to the Col du Brevent and on to the Brevent summit. The views across the Chamonix Valley to Mont Blanc are excellent and the walking is delightful. Finally, we descend via Merlet to Les Houches, the starting point of our trek! After a celebratory drink, we transfer back to Argentiere where we check into our chalet and have a final celebratory dinner to mark the end of our classic circuit. Ascent 670m.

Day 12. Services end after breakfast

The holiday package ends after breakfast.

Price

Included:

A professional English-speaking guide. Hotel or gite accommodation for 11 nights based on twin or triple rooms possibly with a shared bathroom. All meals, with the exception of lunches, as we find that many people prefer to eat certain foods while walking and prefer to have the flexibility of choosing their own. Bellevue & Flegere lifts / bus transfer in Italy Val Veni to Courmayeur - Courmayeur to La Palud, and baggage support on all days.

Not Included:

Travel Insurance, airport transfers, snack food, transfers and cable cars not part of the itinerary, personal expenses such as alcohol, souvenirs etc. No single supplement is available on this trip. Lunches are not included.

Luggage

On each trekking day, there will be vehicle support to carry your luggage to the next overnight stop. To make things efficient during the luggage transfer process, and to prevent any losses, please keep luggage to a minimum. IE: A day sac whilst walking and one bag labelled clearly to transfer.

Spending money

You will need to allow approximately 10 - 15 euros per day for snacks and you should also make an allowance for drinks, including bottled water. Beer, wine and soft drinks are available every night. We estimate that approximately 200-300 euros should cover all your personal expenses. Please note that a part of the route is in Switzerland and you should consider taking a small quantity of Swiss francs. These are particularly useful at Geneva Airport.

Minimum numbers

This trip will run once a minimum number of 4 clients have booked. We will take a maximum of 10 clients. We advise you not to make your travel arrangements until the trip is guaranteed to run.

Accommodation

All accommodation is in twin rooms, either en suite or with shared bathrooms. Occasionally single travellers will be in triple rooms. Depending on availability we may have to use larger rooms in Le Chapieux where accommodation is limited.

Further Information

Chamonix is easily reached from other European & Worldwide destinations by road, rail, coach or plane. For suggested travel links please refer to our Booking & Information pages for further details. Geneva is the closest international airport, only 1 hour 15 minutes away by road, making shared transfers, buses or trains easy to arrange. Please contact us if you need further advise on your specific travel requirements. You will join the group at the group hotel in Les Houches on the evening of Day 1 of the trip itinerary.

More information on ~~France and Chamonix~~ www.chamonix.com in touch to chat through the details. Once you have booked we will send you a list of suggested equipment and clothing for the trek. Group transfers are available from around 25 Euros per person each way. ~~We can book Chamonix direct~~ [We can book Chamonix direct](#) online, just click on the link. Please note that transfers are subject to availability and your flight details are required a minimum of 72 hours before your arrival in Geneva. Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your joining instructions 3 to 4 weeks prior to departure.

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Lunchtime at the Swiss border