

Chamonix - Zermatt (The Walkers Haute Route)

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From: £1645 or 1975 Euros

Demanding

France and Switzerland - 13 days

Another of the 'must do' routes in the Alps which links two of the most famous mountain towns in the world. We begin in Chamonix, France with views of Mont Blanc, and end in Zermatt in Switzerland home of the Matterhorn. We climb over high mountain passes using ancient trails previously used for trade and travel. Some of the terrain is wild and remote, scattered with glacial lakes and moraine, but we also walk through pleasant green valleys, flower-strewn meadows and a series of beautiful Swiss villages.

- An historic point to point trail
- Traverse some of the highest Alpine walking trails
- Stay in rustic mountain inns

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Day 1 Arrival in Chamonix Valley

On the evening before we start our walk we will meet you in your hotel in the Chamonix Valley to brief you on the trip and answer any questions.

Day 2 Chamonix to Col de Montets

We ease into our walk gently by making use of the Flégère cable car in Les Praz where we gain 800m of ascent through forest. We have increasingly extensive views of the Mont Blanc massif, glaciers and Aiguilles Rouges. We also gain our first views of the Mer de Glace glacier, with the

Grand Jorasses (one of the great alpine north faces) beyond. We then continue up to the Lac Blanc basin at 2350m. The lake sits below the impressive 'Aiguilles Rouges' a popular rock climbing area. We traverse the easy rocky ridge line slowly descending to the Col de Montets and to our first nights accommodation in the village of Argentiere. Ascent 500m - Descent 1100m.

Day 3 Col du Montets to Col de la Forclaz

We leave Argentiere and reach the village of Tre les Champs and climb up the Possettes ridge towards the Col de Balme, our first alpine pass at 2191m. It was here that *Charles Dickens* penned a letter describing the stunning beauty of the mountains. As we leave the pass we also leave France and move into Switzerland. We descend steeply towards the hamlet of Le Peuty and on to the village of Trient where we make one final climb to the Col de la Forclaz for our second night. Ascent 1250m - Descent 1000m.

Day 4 Col de la Forclaz to Champex

From Trient to the beautiful village of Champex-le-Lac we have two choices which are fitness and weather dependant. We either climb high over the Fenêtre d'Arpette, at 2665m, where we enjoy views of the Trient glacier and its' seracs and crevasses, or we take the lower traverse on the Bovine route through meadows and have views of the Rhone Valley. Both bring us to the lakeside village of Champex. Ascent 1140m or 461m and Descent 1183m or 500m

Day 5 Champex to Cabane du Mont Fort

Today we enjoy a more leisurely day with time to enjoy the Champex lake and village before we transfer by bus to the famous Swiss ski town of Verbier. After lunch in Verbier we save our legs and take the cable car up this famous ski area and then walk to our accommodation for the night at the Cabane du Mont Fort at 2457m where we have stunning views of the Mont Blanc Massif. Ascent 257m - Descent 0m.

Day 6 Cabane du Mont Fort to Cabane de Prafleuri

Today we cross three different mountain passes, including the Col de Pra Fleuri which is the highest point of our trek at 2965m. It is a demanding day, but worthwhile as we gain outstanding panoramic views from the Sentier des Chamois. The route is entirely above the tree-line crossing glacial debris and there is some exposure. The landscape is made up of the raw remains of the receding glaciers. Ascent 885m - Descent 740m.

Day 7 Cabane de Prafleuri to Arolla

Another big day, we start early from the Pra Fleuri and start up to the Col des Roux. We gain expansive views and see the Lac des Dix, our next stop, which follows a walk down and through lush alpine meadows. In the distance the pyramid of Mt Blanc de Cheilon rises beyond. The route crosses the Col de Riedmatten where we get our first distant glimpse of the Matterhorn before continuing on down to Arolla for the night. We are truly in the heart of the French Swiss alps. Ascent 735m - Descent 1353m.

Day 8 Arolla to La Sage

Today is an easier day as we walk from Arolla to the alpine village of La Sage. It involves a beautiful traverse through alpine meadows to Lac Bleu before dropping into the valley of Les Hauderes and a final climb brings us up to our accommodation for the night. Ascent 300m - Descent 650m.

Day 9 La Sage to Zinal

No rest day today! We have an early start as today's walk involves crossing two high cols. The first ascent is the higher of the two, the Col de Torrent (2912m), is long but not difficult due to the good conditions underfoot. We descend to the milky waters of Lac Moiry, which makes a good lunch stop. Ahead we can see some of the giant peaks of the Pennine Alps, including the Dent Blanche. Of more concern will be the imposing Col de Sorebois, a climb which is shorter but steeper than the ascent to the Torrent, but again presents no real problems. From here, we have spectacular views of the Weisshorn, Dent Blanche and Zinal Rothorn. Although it's steeply downhill from here, the hotel at Zinal is at least a further 2 hours away and makes a welcome sight after the hardest day of the trip so far. Please note that it is possible to vary this section with use of a cable car down to Zinal or a bus via Grimentz. Ascent: 2000m - Descent 1850m.

Day 10 Zinal to Gruben

The trail from Zinal to Gruben offers several options and is a delightful place to slow the pace down a little. You can choose to extend your walk and break this day into two making it a more leisurely journey to give you time to enjoy the valley and stay at the historic Hotel Weisshorn. Or continue and cross either the Meidpass (2790m) or Forcletta Pass (2874m) to reach Gruben in a day. Both trails involve steep but pleasant ascents on good forest trails and on a good day views of the Matterhorn. We then traverse the mountainside before we climb either pass where the views open up even more into the Swiss alps. We descend steeply down to the German speaking village of Gruben also known as Meiden in the Turtmantel valley. Ascent 1200m - Descent 1000m.

Day 11 Gruben to St Niklaus

Today we head for our final pass, the Augstbordpass at 2894m. The descent from the pass leads to the lip of the deep trench of the Mattertal valley and presents us with yet again another magnificent mountain panorama, with Dom 4545m, the highest mountain completely in Switzerland, opposite. The route passes down through the delightful Jungen, an isolated mountain farming village, before reaching the valley floor at St. Niklaus which is a charming village with narrow alleyways, slate roofs and cobbled streets. There is an optional cable car to save the knees on the descent here (price not included in the itinerary). Ascent 1100m - Descent 1767m.

Day 12 Randa to Zermatt

We begin our final day into Zermatt with a short train ride to Randa. We then climb through the forest from the Mattertal valley floor to the Ottovan hut (2214m) nestled in the meadows of the Taschalp where we join the Europaweg trail. This new 'super path' between Grächen and Zermatt is a high-level trail that averages 2000m in elevation. If you would like to complete this trail as part of your walk add in another day to your Haute Route from St. Niklaus and stay at the Europa Hut. We complete our walk on the Europaweg trail which leads us right to our destination and where we enjoy continually expansive views of the Matterhorn as the town of Zermatt are unveiled. Ascent 900m - Descent 620m.

Day 13 Departure

Today is departure day.

Prices

£1645 or 1975 Euros includes: half board accommodation in mountain inns and 2 nights half board accommodation in a 2* hotels (based on 2 people sharing) at the start and the end of your trip. The services of a professional mountain leader and their expenses. Cable car access in Chamonix and Verbier. The bus from Champex to Verbier, Les Ruinettes ski lift and the train from St Niklaus to Randa.

£1845 or 2215 Euros includes: half board accommodation in 2* hotels (based on two people sharing) and 2 mountain inns. The services of a professional mountain leader and their expenses. Cable car access in Chamonix and Verbier. The bus from Champex to Verbier, Les Ruinettes, ski lift and the train from St Niklaus to Randa.

£2150 or 2580 Euros includes: the luxury of luggage transfers so you only have to walk with a light rucksack (except on two nights where vehicle access is not possible). Half board accommodation in a 2* hotel, or similar, and two nights half board accommodation in a mountain inn. The services of a professional mountain leader and their expenses. Cable car access in Chamonix and Verbier. The bus from Champex to Verbier, Les Ruinettes ski lift and the train from St Niklaus to Randa.

Not included: flights, insurance, airport transfers, other transport outwith the itinerary, lunches and drinks.

Accommodation

On most nights we have several options of half board accommodation available to us. When enquiring please state which level of comfort and accommodation you would prefer. Prices vary accordingly. Choose from mountain lodges or a variety of hotels where single room supplements maybe available. The above itinerary uses rustic mountain lodgings with dormitory style accommodation. The dormitories are unisex and normally sleep 4 or more people often in non-segregated style bunk rooms. Showers are available each night. Please note that on two nights the only accommodation available is in the mountain lodges. Lunches packs can be arranged each night at your accommodation or on some days there will be bakeries, supermarkets or small restaurants available along the route.

Luggage Transportation

Walking the Haute Route can be arranged in several different ways. This particular itinerary involves carrying a few basic extra items of clothing and comforts for your overnight stays. It is a very satisfying experience to complete a trip like this, carrying everything you need day by day. However, if you would prefer it is possible to have the luxury of your luggage transported for you

to your accommodation each night so you carry a lighter day pack. Please make enquiries for this additional cost.

Please note it does not include 2 nights where vehicle access is not possible.

Insurance

Please note that you must have the appropriate insurance for your chosen activity. You must be covered for helicopter rescue, repatriation and medical costs. With regard to this please be sure you have read the [Insurance section in our Terms and Conditions](#)

Options

There are a number of different options for doing the Haute Route from as little as 8 days or more. The trip length depends on how many days you want to spend walking, if you'd like to build in any rest days or if you'd like to save your legs and use any buses, trains or ski lifts. Another option to consider a demi or 'half' Haute Route travelling from Chamonix to Grimentz, or from Grimentz to Zermatt.

Further Information

Chamonix is easily reached from other European & Worldwide destinations by road, rail, coach or plane. For suggestions ~~edges~~ [travel links please refer to our Booking & Information](#) 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.

[Haute Route](#)

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Zermatt