

Trek the Classic Tour du Mont Blanc

Trip style: Guided trails

Destination:  France

Trip code: XMB10-LDW13

Grades: 1-6

Carbon Footprint:  454kg CO2



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

This is the big one. At a whopping 4,807 metres above sea level, Mont Blanc is the highest mountain in the Alps and the tallest in Western Europe. The Mont Blanc trail winds through the eye-popping Alpine passes of France, Switzerland, and Italy with all sorts of sightseeing opportunities along the way. Trek through the spectacular Chamonix Valley and the famous Bovine Route before spending time in Courmayeur – one of Italy’s most popular ski resorts located on Mont Blanc’s southern side. Take a ride on Skyway Monte Bianco – a cable car that ascends to an altitude of 3,466 metres at its highest point – or rest up ready for the final stages of your epic adventure conquering

one of the world's greatest mountain trails.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Soaking up spectacular scenery on one of the world's top trails
- Circumnavigating Mont Blanc, the highest mountain in Western Europe
- Spotting marmots, weasels, and chamois
- Trying hearty regional food in mountain restaurants
- Shopping for speciality breads, local cheeses and traditional treats

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Full programme of guided walks
- Experienced International Mountain Leader Guide
- Transport and luggage transfers on all walking days
- 10 Breakfasts, 8 Lunches, 8 Dinners
- Comfortable accommodation
- Cable car to the top of Flegere and any other required cable cars, lifts or buses during walking days
- Group airport transfers
- Return flights from the UK including hold baggage and airport transfers

Please note:

Accommodation is not en-suite on one night in Les Chapieux.

On this tour rooms are twin share, and we cannot guarantee single rooms. If you are travelling solo, you may be asked to share with someone of the same gender within the group.

TRIP SUITABILITY

This trip is graded Activity Level 5, We follow established paths with long ascents and descents that can take 3-4 hours. Some of the descents can be steep in places and walking poles can be useful. There is no issue with steep drops or exposure on any part of the TMB – so is not a problem if you have a fear of heights. Our route avoids the long ladders and fixed equipment above Argentiere. We only use one short ladder (15 feet high) on the descent from Lac Blanc (Day 2). The Guide will be happy to assist if you find this ladder a bit tricky. In the early season we may encounter patches of old winter snow and so walking boots and walking poles are essential.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival in Geneva

Transfer to our hotel in Les Houches in the Chamonix Valley in 1 hour 20 mins. Les Houches is a small village 8km from Chamonix and has a few restaurants, bars and outdoor equipment shops. If you want to visit Chamonix town, it takes 20 minutes by public bus or train.

Day 2: Chamonix – Lac Blanc – Argentiere

After breakfast we begin our journey. We take the short bus ride to Chamonix (20 minutes) and then walk along the river to the pretty village of Les Praz. We take the Flegere cable car and continue our walk to Lac Blanc. We walk through open countryside with incredible views of the whole Mont Blanc range and may hear the occasional whistle from a marmot. Our decent follows a beautiful path, through the forest, descending to Argentiere where you will find your hotel. 12 miles (19km) with 1450 feet (450m) of ascent, and 3600ft (1,100m) of descent

Day 3: Argentiere – Col de Balme – Col de la Forclaz (Switzerland)

From the hotel we hike through old Argentiere and up to the Col des Posettes for superb views of Mont Blanc and the Chamonix Valley. From here, we traverse to the Col de Balme and look directly into Switzerland. We descend through open country with views of glaciers to Trient and then a short climb to the Col de la Forclaz where we spend the night. 11 miles (17 ½ km) with 3,800 feet (1,180m) of ascent, and 2,950 feet (900m) of descent.

Day 4: Col de la Forclaz – Bovine Route – Champex

From Forclaz we hike along the 'Bovine Route' to Champex. The route winds its way through meadows, forests and open country with views of the mountains of Verbier and the great Sion Valley. There are no great ascents today. We pause at Bovine farm, set on a beautiful alpage, with cows and Alpine flowers everywhere. The farm has home-made cakes and biscuits, cheese and charcuterie. Afterwards, we will continue walking eventually stopping to make a picnic with lots of variety and local produce. Later we arrive at our hotel, located in central Champex overlooking the beautiful lake. 9 miles (14km) with 1500 feet (460m) of ascent, and 1750 feet (540m) of descent. Accommodation : Departure on 12 June 2024 - Hotel Splendide, Champex Departures on 31 July and 21 August 2024 - Hotel du Glacier, Champex

Day 5: Champex – La Fouly

From Champex it is a gentle 6-7 hour trek to La Fouly along the Val Ferret. We start our walk from Champex Lac and then descend to the valley floor and follow the river through forests and meadows to Praz-de-Fort. We then ascend in similar surroundings with wonderful views of Mt Dolent and the surroundin mountains. 12½ miles (20km) with 1,800 feet (550m) of ascent, and 1,450 feet (440m) of descent. Please be prepared to carry overnight clothing with you in your day sack on Day 5 (La Fouly) and Day 8 (Les Chapieux), when you will not have access to your luggage. The remainder of your luggage will be transferred on to the next evening's accommodation.

Day 6: La Fouly – Grand Col Ferret – Courmayeur (Italy)

We continue from La Fouly along the Val Ferret and cross into Italy via the impressive Grand Col Ferret. From here, the descent is slightly steeper but rewards us with outstanding views of two of the Alps most iconic mountains – Les Grandes Jorasses and Mont Blanc. Our hotel is in La Palud – a small hamlet 3km outside of the centre of Courmayeur (45mins walk / 10mins bus ride). This is a long day if the entire walk is done, and many choose to take the bus from Arnuva to the hotel. You will have the choice of both options. If you take the bus the total distance for the day is 14 miles/ 22km. If you hike all the way to the hotel it is 18 miles/ 29km. Today has 3,180 feet (970m) of ascent, and 3,850 feet (1,170m) of descent. *Please note evening meals are not included on this day

Day 7: Rest day in La Palud, Courmayeur

Courmayeur is one of Italy's premier ski resorts and is full of pretty shops, cafés and restaurants. Close by, there is the new Skyway cable car, the spa at Pre St Didier and lots of walking options. *Please note evening meals and packed lunches are not included on this day

Day 8: Courmayeur – Col de la Seigne – Les Chapieux

We travel to Val Veny under the spectacular South Face and ridges of Mont Blanc. We trek along a wide glacial valley surrounded by glaciers and high peaks to the Col de la Seigne which marks the border between France and Italy. We then descend to Les Chapieux. Today is quite a long day, although it is not steep. 13 miles (21km) with 2,820 feet (860m) of ascent, and 3,170 feet (970m) of descent.

Day 9: Les Chapieux – Col du Bonhomme – Les Contamines

We make a steep ascent above Les Chapieux through marmot country and on through open meadows to more barren scenery. We cross two cols in wild surroundings with fabulous Alpine flowers and marmots, weasels and chamois. We then head down through open country and on to a narrowing valley. Our destination is Les Contamines – a pretty ski village with an interesting church. The hotel is located 1km outside of the centre of Les Contamines. 13 miles (21km) with 3,050 feet (930m) of ascent, and 4,350 feet (1,320m) of descent.

Day 10: Les Contamines – Les Houches

We follow the Bon Nant river for approximately 4km and then head into the hills near la Gruvaz. We pass the pretty villages of le Champel and Bionassay and then make our final climb of the holiday to the Col de Voza (1653m). This is a fitting end to our trek with the most outstanding views of the Chamonix Valley, the Chamonix Aiguilles and the Mont Blanc massif. We descend by cable car to Les Houches. 9 miles (14km) with 3850 feet (1170m) of ascent, and 2150 feet (650m) of descent.

Day 11: Departure day

Free leisure time until your transfer to the airport.

Hotel Col de la Forclaz - Tour du Mont Blanc

A regular stop off point for travellers trekking the Alpine passes of Mont Blanc, this family-run inn offers simple-yet-comfortable rooms for weary walkers. Built in 1830, it sits in an enviable position overlooking the Tient valley and the popular cafe terrace comes with beautiful mountain views. When you're hungry, the cozy restaurant serves home-style specialities typical of the region. Free Wi-Fi is available.

Hotel du Glacier - Tour du Mont Blanc

This is a traditional hotel that dates back over 100 years. The hotel offers well-furnished rooms with shower or bath, WC, radio, telephone and TV. Free Wi-Fi is available throughout the hotel and also in bedrooms.

Hôtel Edelweiss La Fouly - Tour du Mont Blanc

Hotel Edelweiss La Fouly is situated under the Grand Col Ferret and is one of the most authentic valleys of the Valais region. There are 20 rooms in this small family-run hotel with private bathrooms and cable television. The hotel benefits from free Wi-Fi, a sauna, and private tennis courts.

Hotel Astoria - Tour du Mont Blanc

The Astoria Hotel is located in La Palud, a few metres from the entrance of the Mont Blanc Tunnel and 3km from Courmayeur town. The hotel has 34 rooms furnished in wood with typical mountain taste; all equipped with telephone, private bathroom, satellite TV and hairdryers. Free Wi-Fi is available in the lobby.

Auberge de la Nova - Tour du Mont Blanc

Auberge de la Nova is a small hostel nestled in the mountains. The hostel consists of 15 rooms and 4 dormitories with hot showers, hand basins and toilets. A drying room is available for clothes and shoes (slippers can be borrowed). There is no internet access. Please be aware that there may be occasions where you will need to share a triple room, rather than a twin.

Hotel le Dahu - Tour du Mont Blanc

Hotel le Dahu is situated in the alpine village of Argentière at the foot of the Mont Blanc massif. Comfortable rooms, free Wi-Fi access and stunning views.

Chalet Hotel Du Bois Les Houches - Tour du Mont Blanc

Chalet Hotel Du Bois Les Houches is located in the center of Les Houches. Rooms have private bathrooms and the guests have access to the swimming pool and spa. Free Wi-Fi throughout the hotel.

Hotel Splendide Champex - Tour du Mont Blanc

A 19th century manor house with a stunning hilltop position, the Splendide offers spacious, modern rooms with high ceilings and large windows for admiring the views. All include a balcony, work desk, TV, and private bathroom with hairdryer.

Hotel Chemenaz - Tour du Mont Blanc

A chalet style hotel with views of the majestic Mont-Blanc massif. The hotel features a sauna, hot tub, and heated swimming pool.