

Trip type:	Scheduled group trip with guide	Trip dates:	14 - 20 June 2009
Grading:	5 day-walks for walkers with some experience		12 - 18 July 2009
Accommodation:	5 nights in hotel, 1 night in mountain hut		9 - 15 Aug 2009
Meals:	Breakfast included		More dates on request.
Group sizes:	Minimum 2 - maximum 8 (plus guide)		
Price:	€625 per person. Trip qualifies for discounts		

Introduction

Chamonix is the birthplace of mountaineering and home to the highest mountain in the Western Alps, Mont Blanc, standing 4810 meters tall. For trekkers, Chamonix offers a plethora of famous trekking itineraries, such as the Tour du Mont Blanc, but equally many less frequented walks. This week is put together to explore a wide variety of what the Chamonix valley and surrounding area has to offer. On some days we will travel along the classic trekking trails where we will be met with mountaineering history aplenty and get a feel for the mountaineering legacy that is Chamonix. On other days, we will explore quieter trails on the outskirts of the Chamonix valley where we will see a different side to Mont Blanc. We will be able to admire the wonderful flora and fauna and get a feel for how life once was in the mountains. We will cover many different types of terrain, ranging from gentle paths through mountain pasture to steeper and more rugged terrain. For many, the high point of the week is a climb to the summit of one of the peaks in the area, which will include an overnight stay in a traditional mountain hut.

Our Trip Profile

This trip is a great introduction to Alpine trekking for walkers who are reasonably fit and have some hill walking experience. We will be walking 5-6 hours per day and will typically cover 8-10 kilometers and 600-1000 meters of ascent. We will reach altitudes up to 3000 meters and spend one night in a mountain hut at around 2000 meters.

Day-by-day Itinerary:

Day 1 (Sunday):

This is arrival day. You should aim to be in Chamonix no later than 17.00. You will meet with your leader in the evening for welcome and briefing at the hotel where you will be spending the night.

Day 2 (Monday):

Our first walk takes us to the Aiguille Rouges, where we stop by the beautiful Lac Blanc, a mountain lake from where we have amazing views of the Mont Blanc chain and the Chamonix valley. The Aiguilles Rouges is a natural reserve and we have a good chance of spotting Chamois and Ibex. This is a great day to get used to the altitude and familiarize ourselves with the terrain.

Breakfast included.

Day 3 (Tuesday):

We travel to the small hamlet le Baptieu above the village les Contamines in Val Montjoie. From the village we walk through lush mountain pastures until the trail steepens and we climb onto a wonderful ridge. We follow the ridge to the summit of Mont Joly (2525m). From the summit we have amazing views of the Mont Blanc chain to the East and the Aravis chain to the West.

Breakfast included.

Day 4 (Wednesday):

Today we travel to the small Swiss village Trient (1297m) on the North side of Mont Blanc. From here we join a part of the famous Tour du Mont Blanc, which takes us to Col de Balme (2191m). Col de Balme marks the border between Switzerland and France and we have views into the top of the Chamonix valley. We descent back to Trient below the impressive Trient Glacier.

Breakfast included.

Day 5 (Thursday):

We have a short transfer to the lovely hamlet of le Buet (1330m) in the Vallorcine valley near the Swiss border. From here we walk up the small Berard valley along a wonderful mountain stream. We will stop to investigate waterfalls and caves on the way. At the top of the valley

we arrive at the Pierre a Berard mountain hut (1924m) where we will spend the night away from the hustle and bustle of Chamonix.

Breakfast included.

Day 6 (Friday):

In the morning we say goodbye to the comforts of the Pierre a Berard hut and start the climb to the summit of Mt Buet (3096m). The summit offers the most amazing panoramic views across the Mont Blanc Chain, the Aiguilles Rouges and into the Swiss Valais region. After enjoying the stunning views we descend all the way back to le Buet for a celebratory drink and transfer back to Chamonix.

Breakfast included.

Day 7 (Saturday):

Today is departure day. You will normally need to leave your hotel after breakfast. This is the official end of your trip.

Breakfast included.

Please note that we keep the itinerary flexible so we can match it as closely as possible to the group members aspirations and abilities as well as the current mountain conditions and any other circumstances that may arise. Any decision by the leader to change the itinerary must be accepted by the group members.

Trip Information

Inclusions

Trip planning and leadership by professional and fully qualified English-speaking guide (UIMLA).
6 nights accommodation in Chamonix on B&B basis.
All planned transport and cable cars during the trekking.
Guaranteed maximum of eight people in groups (plus leader).

Exclusions

Insurance.
Flights and transfers to/from Chamonix.
Other meals than those mentioned above.
Snacks, drinks and other personal expenses.
Any un-planned transport and cable cars (e.g. due to bad weather or other unforeseen circumstances).

Leadership

Your leader will be a fully qualified International Mountain Leader (UIMLA). Not only is this a legal requirement in the countries we visit but it is also your guarantee of a safe and knowledgeable leader on your trek. Your leader will have local knowledge of the area.

Accommodation

We will stay in a hotel in Chamonix, which offers clean and comfortable accommodation and includes breakfast. Single room is an option at an extra cost. Please contact us to discuss at least four weeks in advance of your trip.

One night will be spent in a mountain hut on half board basis where single rooms are not an option.

Food

Breakfast will consist of cereals, bread with butter and jam and coffee or tea. In the evening, you are free to explore the restaurants and bars in Chamonix to suit your taste and budget. In Chamonix the options are endless ranging from local Savoyard dishes such as fondue to international dishes such as Mexican and Japanese. Your leader will be happy to recommend some options.

When staying in mountain hut the dinner will normally consist of a starter (often soup) and a main course followed by dessert or cheese. Drinks, including wine and beer, can be purchased separately.

Equipment

Weather in the mountains is prone to variations. Although, we mostly enjoy fine weather in the summer, it has been known to change from baking hot and sunny to cold or wet, literally within minutes. Therefore, you should have the clothing to deal with both of these extremes and anything in between. You also need good walking boots with a sturdy sole and good ankle support. A full equipment list is available on our web site.

Personal Expenses

You should be prepared to cover expenses such as dinner, lunch/snacks and any other personal expenses such as souvenirs. The night we stay in a mountain hut dinner is included, but drinks must be purchased separately. We estimate 5-10 EUR per day for lunch/snacks plus another 15 EUR upwards for dinner, depending on your preferences. Drinks are not included in these estimates

Baggage

You will need to carry all the equipment you need on the trek yourself. Your leader will advise you what to take each day depending on conditions.

Health and Safety

First Aid

This trip consists of day-treks from our valley base, following primarily well-marked paths, and is therefore considered very safe. In case of any incidents, your leader will carry mobile phone and first-aid kit and will have a first-aid qualification. You are advised to carry essentials such as blister treatment, pain relief etc for personal use.

Vaccinations

No specific vaccinations are required in France, Italy and Switzerland

Altitude

We will travel to altitudes of up to 2500-3000 meters and spend one night at around 2000 meters. For normally fit and healthy people this should cause no problems and your leader will be experienced in helping you acclimatize in the best way and deal with any discomfort.

Practical Information

Money/currency

France has adopted the Euro (EUR). There are plenty of banks, exchange bureaus and cash machines in Chamonix. On the trail, we may stop at mountain huts for lunch or refreshments so it is worth having enough cash to deal with any such personal expenses.

Language

In France the language is French. Chamonix does see a lot of international visitors so some English is spoken, although this cannot always be expected. Knowing a few phrases in the local language goes a long way.

Weather

The weather in July and August is generally stable and warm with temperatures ranging from 18°C to 28°C during the day. In June and September the weather is slightly cooler and there may be patches of snow around. At altitude the temperature gets much lower, particularly at night and early morning, where it can go down to 0°C degrees. Afternoon showers are not uncommon in the mountains. The effect of the sun at altitude is not to be underestimated.

Insurance

You must have adequate insurance to cover trekking up to an altitude of 3000 meters in the Alps. This must include search and rescue by helicopter, medical

expenses and repatriation. You need to show us proof of this insurance before the start of the trip.

For your own peace of mind, we recommend you also take out normal holiday insurance and cancellation insurance.

Visa Requirements

All travellers require a valid passport. Travellers from EU, US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand can travel as tourists in France for up to three months without a visa. We recommend that travellers from other nations check with the relevant embassies.

Travelling to/from Chamonix

You will need to arrange your own transportation to and from the starting point in Chamonix. Please do not book your transport until the trip has reached minimum numbers and have been confirmed. More transport information will be provided with your booking.

Maps

Members do not need to bring any maps but for those wishing to bring their own, the following French IGN hiking map covers most of the areas that we are likely to visit: A1 Pays du Mont-Blanc (1:50000).

Disclaimer

Alpine Treks has provided all information in good faith and believe it to be correct at the time of writing. Alpine Treks cannot be liable for any loss or injury incurred.