

Tour du Mont Blanc



Trip type:	Scheduled group trip with guide.
Grading:	7 days intermediate walking for fit walkers.
Accommodation:	8 nights in hotels, mountain huts and gîtes.
Meals:	6 days half board, 2 days B&B.
Group sizes:	Minimum 4 - maximum 8 (plus guide).
Price:	€845 per person. Trip qualifies for discounts.

Trip dates:
26 June - 4 July 2010
4 - 12 September 2010
More dates on request.

Introduction

The Tour du Mont Blanc is a spectacularly long circular trekking trip around Mont Blanc, the highest mountain in Western Europe, standing 4810 meters tall. The tour starts and finishes in Chamonix, the world famous mountaineering centre, and travels through a variety of stunning mountain scenery. You will walk through traditional alpine villages and mountain pastures, along deep valleys and rivers and over impressive mountain passes. All along towering rugged peaks and the many glaciers flowing from the Mont Blanc massif will surround you. The tour passes through no less than three countries and you will experience the flora, fauna and cultural heritage of these places along with fascinating mountaineering history. It is easy to understand why the Tour du Mont Blanc is considered one of the most famous trekking trips in the mountainous world.

Our Tour du Mont Blanc Profile

There are several variations and approaches to completing the Tour du Mont Blanc. Our trip is aimed at fit walkers with an adventurous attitude, who wish to complete the tour in a one week window. We will be on the trail for around 8 hours every day, covering on average 15-20 km and 1000-1200 meters of ascent. We will stay in mountain huts as often as possible and we will not have support vehicles ferrying equipment up and down the valleys. This is a true mountain walker's itinerary and therefore a reasonably challenging proposition.

Day-by-day Itinerary:

Day 1 (Saturday):

This is your travel day from your departure point. You should aim to arrive 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. After the meeting you are free to explore the many restaurants in Chamonix.

Day 2 (Sunday):

We take the lift from Les Houches (993m) in the Chamonix valley and climb to Col de Tricot (2120m). From here we descend below the breathtaking Dome du Gouter and Aiguille de Bionnassay to the historic Nant Borrant hut (1450m) where we spend the night.

Breakfast and dinner is included.

Day 3 (Monday):

From Nant Borrant we start the ascend over no less than three cols - Col du Bonhomme (2329m), Col de la Croix de Bonhomme (2479m) and Col des Fours (2665m), which is one of the high points of the tour. From here we descend to La Ville des Glaciers (1789m) followed by a short ascent to Refuge des Mottets (1870m) for the night.

Breakfast and dinner is included.

Day 4 (Tuesday):

We leave Refuge des Mottets and ascend immediately to Col de la Seigne (2516m). We are now in Italy and begin the mainly descending journey along the beautiful Val Veny into Courmayeur (1226m). We will have great views of the south side of 'Monte Bianco', which features some of the most challenging mountaineering routes in the Alps.

Breakfast and dinner is included.

Day 5 (Wednesday):

From Courmayeur (1226m) we travel along Val Ferret and today the backdrop is provided by the majestic Grandes Jorasses. We climb to the Grand Col Ferret (2537m) and enjoy the views into the Swiss Valais region, which lie ahead. We descend to the small hamlet of Ferret (1705m) and spend our first night in Switzerland.

Breakfast and dinner is included.

Day 6 (Thursday):

From Ferret (1705m) we travel via la Fouly through mountain pastures along the idyllic Val Ferret to Champex (1477m), which is a stereotypical old Swiss mountain village. This is a straightforward day with very little ascent and descent.

Breakfast and dinner is included.

Day 7 (Friday):

Leaving Champex (1477m), we ascend to the Fenêtre d'Arpette (2665m), which is the highest point of the tour. Crossing this rocky col is alpine walking at its best and the views of the Trient Glacier are awesome. We end the day at the Swiss village Trient (1297m).

Breakfast and dinner is included.

Day 8 (Saturday):

We leave Trient (1297m) and return into France via Col de Balme and descend via le Tour to Argentière (1244m). We are now back in the Chamonix valley and transfer the final kilometers to our hotel. The evening is free for you to explore the bars and restaurants in Chamonix. You stay the night at the hotel in the Chamonix valley.

Breakfast is included.

Day 9 (Sunday):

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

Breakfast is 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).
8 nights accommodation (6 nights on half board and 2 nights in Chamonix on B&B basis).
All planned transport and cable cars along the tour
Guaranteed maximum of eight people in groups (plus leader).

Exclusions

Insurance.
Flights and transfers to/from Chamonix.
Meals not mentioned above.
Drinks, snacks 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 mixture of hotels, gîtes and mountain huts. All offer clean and comfortable accommodation and will include bedding. Single rooms are not an option on the tour but may be arranged in Chamonix at an extra cost.

Food

Breakfast will consist of cereals, bread with butter and jam and coffee or tea. Dinner will normally consist of a starter (often soup) and a main course followed by dessert or cheese. Drinks can be purchased separately. It will also be possible to buy packed lunches and snacks.

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 as well as a few items for overnight stay in huts. 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 lunch/snacks, bottled water and other drinks on the tour as well as any other personal expenses such as souvenirs. We estimate 10 EUR (15 CHF) per day for lunch/snacks plus another 10 EUR (15 CHF) for bottled water and other drinks, depending on your preferences. Remember to bring enough cash in both Euros (EUR) and Swiss Francs (CHF). In Chamonix you also need to pay for your dinners but credit cards are widely accepted there.

Baggage

You will need to carry all the equipment you need on the trek yourself. Any items that you do not need on the trek may be stored at your hotel or at the Alpine Treks office in the Chamonix valley. It is therefore advisable to take a spare bag for these items. Please note that Alpine Treks cannot be held responsible for any of the items that you chose to store.

Health and Safety**First Aid**

This is a long but relatively safe trek following marked paths and starting from, and finishing at, a manned base every day. 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 till altitudes of around 2700 meters and sleep at altitudes up to 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 and Italy have adopted the Euro (EUR). In Switzerland the currency is Swiss Francs (CHF). As we will be staying in mountain huts or small villages once we leave Chamonix, credit cards, traveler's cheques etc. are not accepted and there are no cash machines. You therefore need to bring enough cash in both currencies to cover your personal expenses along the tour. There are plenty of banks, exchange bureaux and cash machines in Chamonix.

Language

In France and Switzerland the language is French. In Italy the language is Italian. Some English is spoken but 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 multi-day 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, Italy and Switzerland 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 the tour: 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.