

Trek the Classic Tour du Mont Blanc

Tour Style: Guided trails

Destinations: France, Italy & Switzerland

Trip code: XMLDW

Trip Walking Grade: 6



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'S INCLUDED

- Full programme of guided walks
- Experienced International Mountain Leader Guide
- Transport and luggage transfers on all walking days
- 9 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 two nights in Courmayeur.

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.

HOLIDAYS HIGHLIGHTS

- 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

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 1460 feet (450m) of ascent, and 4,264 feet (1,300m) of descent.

Day 3: Argentiere – 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 3,820 feet (1,180m) of ascent, and 2,932 feet (894m) 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 2,300 feet (700m) of ascent, and 2,400 feet (730m) 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 surrounding mountains.

12½ miles (20km), with 1,804 feet (550m) of ascent, and 1,443 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 Arnuda 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 3,181 feet (970m) of ascent, and 3,837 feet (1,170m) of descent.

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.

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 (24km), with 2,829 feet (860m) of ascent, and 3,171 feet (967m) of descent.

Accommodation:

For June departure - Auberge de la Nova

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 4,329 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 2,625 feet (800m) of ascent, and 650 feet (200m) of descent.

Day 11: Departure Day

Free leisure time until your transfer to the airport.

ACCOMMODATION

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 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.

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.

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.

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.

USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

Joining Instructions (With Flights)

A group transfer is included in the price for those who have booked the "with flight" option.

Start: For those who have booked our "with flight" holiday, a coach transfer from Geneva Airport direct to your first accommodation is automatically included. A representative of our partner agent will meet you upon arrival and direct you to your transfer.

Finish: Similar arrangements apply. A coach transfer to Geneva Airport will be arranged to connect with the HF Holidays flight.

Please note that these transfers will be timed to connect with the HF Holidays' flights. We cannot make separate arrangements for guests arriving/departing at different times.

Transfer times:

Arrival day - transfer departs from Geneva Airport (details to be confirmed)

Departure day - transfer arrives at Geneva Airport (details to be confirmed)

Book your holiday 'with flights' and you can choose to depart from a range of UK airports* to your destination. For latest flight times and prices please call us on 0203-974-8865 or email reservations@hfholidays.co.uk

If you choose to book your flights with us, we automatically include return transfers between the destination airport and hotel.

Joining Instructions (Without Flights)

Alternatively, tailor your journey to suit you by booking your holiday 'without flights' and you'll have the freedom to book your own flights from your local airport.

If you choose this option, transfers are not included in the price. However, below are some suggestions to help you reach your destination:

Shared group transfer

You can still purchase a seat on our group airport transfer, but you must arrive in destination prior to the main group. It is your responsibility to book flights which allow enough time to meet our shared transfer.

Please note, all flight times are subject to change. If your arrival and/or departure time changes and no longer fits our group transfer, we will be unable to delay departure for you. Should this occur, we will refund you the cost of the transfer and you can either make your own way to the accommodation or we can book a private taxi transfer (at your expense). HF Holidays cannot be held responsible for your onward travel if you are unable to meet the transfer coach.

Private taxi transfer

Depending on your destination, we may be able to arrange a private taxi transfer for you. Please call us up to 5 weeks in advance to enquire about availability and costs for this option on 0203-974-8865.

*Subject to availability

Essential Information

It's best to be prepared for all weather conditions. To make it easier, here is a list of items you should consider packing.

Essentials

- Walking boots
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Insulated jacket/top
- Walking clothing
- Walking socks (plus spares)
- Sunhat
- Gloves/mitts and warm hat
- Water bottle (minimum 2 litre capacity)
- Headtorch
- High-factor sunscreen (minimum SPF 30)
- Sunglasses with a dark lens
- Rucksack (15-30 litres)
- Mobile phone
- Personal first aid kit (containing your medication, blister plasters, etc.)
- Passport
- Visa (if applicable)
- Copy of your travel insurance policy
- UK Global Health Insurance Card (**formerly known as EHIC**)

Recommended

- Collapsible walking poles
- Swimwear and travel towel
- Snacks
- Dry bags
- Rubbish bags
- Insect repellent

Optional extras

- Camera
- Sit mat
- Flask for hot drinks
- Durable lunch box
- Gaiters
- GPS device

Useful Information

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is a condition of booking. Therefore, if you have not already arranged insurance, it is imperative that you do so, and advise us of the insurance company and policy number.

We work with Campbell Irvine to provide you with competitive single and annual multi-trip insurance. Please see our website for more information and details of how to contact them for a quote:

<https://www.hfholidays.co.uk/about-us/booking-information/insurance>.

For more information about healthcare abroad and its costs, please visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/>.

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred.

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

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