



Tour du Mont Blanc North (Self-Guided)

Please email us at info@alpineexploratory.com or call us on +44 (0)1729 823 197 to chat about this holiday. You'll find all the latest information at www.alpineexploratory.com/holidays/tour-du-mont-blanc-north.html.



Forested Swiss slopes in the Trient valley

About these Holiday Notes

These Holiday Notes help you decide whether this holiday is right for you. Before your trip we send you final detailed information.

Details

Start Courmayeur
Finish Chamonix
Region Mont Blanc
Country France, Italy, Switzerland
Length 6 walking days and 7 nights
Total distance 95km or 60 miles
Typical day 16km (10 miles), 850m ascent
Highest altitude 2,537m
Grade Intermediate

Introduction

Trek half of the famous Tour du Mont Blanc route over 6 days of classic Alpine walking.

The entire Tour is an 11-day circuit of Western Europe's highest mountain; it can be split up very conveniently into two halves of roughly equal length, each fitting inside a week's break. This is the Northern half, starting in the pretty Italian town of Courmayeur and ending in the French town of Chamonix, one of the world's most lively centres for outdoor activities.

This being a self-guided holiday, you will be free to complete the walks as you choose: we arrange everything for you, including booking accommodation and providing you with routecards for the walking, and then it's up to you to carry out the walks yourself.

Our approach

Your route
This walking holiday takes you on the Tour du Mont Blanc stages around the Northern side of Mont Blanc, starting in the Italian Val Ferret near Courmayeur and finishing in the

Chamonix valley. On the way, you pass through all of the Swiss stages and complete the sections in the Aiguilles rouges above Chamonix, hopefully with some of the best views of Mont Blanc. There are six days of walking, each one a stage on the official Tour du Mont Blanc route. The terrain means that the walking is slightly easier overall in the Northern half than the Southern half.

Routecards and maps

Each day's route is explained in detail on your routecards, to bring you to your night's accommodation. We give you the real maps for you to follow, not printouts or photocopies.

Getting there and back

Your holiday starts in Courmayeur and ends in Chamonix. Travel to Courmayeur and from Chamonix is not included in the holiday price - we leave it to you to make the arrangements that suit you best. Geneva is the most convenient airport with several transfer options available. Full information on flight and transfer options will be sent to you on booking.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Courmayeur

Evening arrival in Courmayeur. There is plenty of scope for eating out in town. **Hotel in Courmayeur**

Day 2: Arnuva to La Fouly

On the first day on trek there is time to make any last minute adjustments and buy any food and equipment needed before catching the local bus up the Italian Val Ferret to Arnuva where the route starts. Trek up to the Grand Col Ferret and the Swiss border then descend into the beautiful Swiss Val Ferret, one of the most charming parts of the route. **Hotel in La Fouly**

Day 3: La Fouly to Champex

Take an easy stage today, walking gently downvalley through Val Ferret's meadows, woods and villages. A final climb to Champex is modest in the context of most Tour stages! **Hotel in Champex**

Day 4: Champex to Trient

Walk through Swiss countryside this morning before climbing up to the *alpage* at Bovine and then descending steadily through woods to Col de la Forclaz and Trient. Look out throughout the day for long views to the Rhône valley far below, and the distant Bernese Oberland. **Auberge in Trient**

Day 5: Trient to Argentière

The Chamonix valley beckons today, and with it one of the best views of the Mont Blanc

chain. This is from Aiguillette des Posettes which is an option for the afternoon. Descend to the valley and the pleasant village of Argentière. **Hotel in Argentière**

Day 6: Argentière to La Flégère

Today is the first stage of the two-day crossing of the Aiguilles Rouges, the range forming the North side of the Chamonix valley. In clear weather the views of Mont Blanc are unsurpassed. Stay high for a penultimate night. **Mountain hut**

Day 7: La Flégère to Les Houches

Complete the Northern half of the Tour today with the ascent of Le Brévent, a mountain directly opposite Mont Blanc and with an intriguing route through an enclosed hollow just near the main ridge of the Aiguilles Rouges. Take a local bus back from Les Houches to your base in Chamonix for a final night. **Hotel in Chamonix**

Day 8: Departure from Chamonix

Morning departure from Chamonix

Our usual schedule of accommodation might not be available, especially if there is not much time between booking and your trip starting. We will book accommodation as closely as possible to this itinerary and present you with a schedule for you to check before we proceed.

Accommodation

Your schedule of accommodation consists of 3 nights in 3-star hotels, 2 nights in 2-star hotels, 1 night in an auberge (simple hotel) and 1 night in a mountain hut. Hut accommodation is in dormitories.

We book ensuite accommodation except where it is not available, for example in older buildings or more remote locations.

Your info pack contains full details of your accommodation including contact details and directions.

The walking

Terrain

The Tour du Mont Blanc is a very popular trail in summer and the good solid footpaths reflect this. The terrain in these parts of the Swiss, French and Italian Alps is sometimes steep but mostly the uphill sections are long gradual tests of stamina. There are wide tracks through forests, the odd country lane, zig-zagging hillside paths and some rockier sections. In a small number of places on the trail you meet sections with ladders and other

aids to progress. These should not present a problem to regular mountain walkers and are not via ferrata or climbing sections. All such sections can be avoided by following alternative routes given in your routecards. In early summer there is a chance of snow patches lying on the higher paths, but the lower paths should be snow-free.

Your own routes

While your routecards make up the walking for the trip, you are of course free to walk wherever you choose, taking side trips or going by a different route of your own choice. Please note that if you follow your own route you will have left the holiday for the duration.

Food

Meals included are all breakfasts and 3 evening meals (at La Fouly, Trient and the hut).

For lunches there is lots of opportunity to stock up on ingredients along the route. You will find huts and cafés during the walking, useful for lunch stops. Your routecards give information about food shops and refreshment stops along the route.

For eating out there are good options along the way at Courmayeur, Champex and Argentière.

Insurance

Clients must have insurance to cover themselves for helicopter search & rescue, medical expenses and repatriation.

We recommend, but it is not compulsory, that you also have cover for personal liability, cancellation and your baggage and money.

You might find that your annual multi-trip travel insurance covers these items already. We will send you details of suitable insurance policies on booking.

Passports and visas

UK passport holders do not need a visa to enter Switzerland, France or Italy. Please check that your passport is in date.

Weather

The weather in the Mont Blanc area from July to September is generally highly suitable for Alpine walking.

While snowfall is possible on higher ground all year round, it is unlikely in July and August. On high passes, patches of snow left over from the Winter and Spring might linger into the start of July, but should not pose problems.

July and August are commonly the hottest months but with greater amounts of rain and greater risk of afternoon thunder storms; and September can be a quieter time as the

season winds down, with the chance of some beautifully clear days.

Thunderstorms are a particular danger in high summer, occurring most often in the afternoons.

This all means that it is sensible to come equipped and expecting all the types of weather that might be experienced in a typical summer in the UK: from heavy rain storms with a chill in the air, to hot sunshine.

Equipment

You will need the usual equipment for mountain walking in the Alps, plus a sheet liner for use in the huts. Especially important are good walking boots, waterproofs and sun protection. We will send you an equipment list on booking. Please also see the Equipment page of our website for more information.

Local expenses

Local expenses include food and drink other than those meals that are included, a return cable car journey (allow about €18 or £13) plus any local transport, attractions and extras.

Guided days

Hire a professional mountain leader to join you on this self-guided holiday, for one or more days. A leader helps plan and carry out each day's walking and adds interest to your holiday by pointing out local features. Please contact us for prices and more information.

Groups

Walk by yourself or in your own group, or see if we can match you up with other like-minded walkers on the same holiday. Any group will be a maximum of 8 people.

Hazards

Health

France, Italy, Switzerland and the Mont Blanc region do not require tourists to take any vaccinations. However, it is recommended to keep tetanus vaccines up to date.

Safety

This is adventure travel! This holiday takes you to some wild and remote areas, in particular some areas of upland mountains where navigation can be difficult in poor weather. The weather can also be a hazard in itself. During any walking, whether following a routecard or making your own route, you are responsible for your own actions and safety and you should join the trip with suitable skills, experience and equipment.

Further information

Please email us with any questions at info@alpineexploratory.com.

Disclaimer

This information is given in good faith and is believed to be correct at the time of issue. Alpine Exploratory cannot be liable for any loss or injury incurred.