



Tour du Mont Blanc South (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-south.html.



Congestion on the Italian side of Mont Blanc

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 Chamonix
Finish Courmayeur
Region Mont Blanc
Country France, Italy
Length 5 walking days and 7 nights
Total distance 90km or 55miles
Typical day 17km (11 miles), 1,100m ascent
Highest altitude 2,584m
Grade Intermediate

Introduction

Walk half of the Tour du Mont Blanc in an exhilarating week's walking holiday.

The whole Tour is an 11-day circuit of Western Europe's highest mountain Mont Blanc. It can be split up very conveniently into two halves of roughly equal length, each fitting inside a week's break.

Trek over classic Alpine passes; spot flowers in lush meadows; eat your lunch beside a stream, cool with meltwater from the glaciers high above; these experiences and more define what it means to walk in the Alps during the summer season.

This being a self-guided holiday, you will be free to complete the walks as you choose: we arrange everything for you, including booking your 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 Southern side of Mont Blanc, starting in Les Houches near Chamonix and finishing in Courmayeur on the Italian side of the mountain. There are five days of walking, each one a stage on the official Tour du Mont Blanc route, and one rest day in Courmayeur. The terrain means that the walking is slightly tougher overall in the Southern half than the Northern 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 Chamonix and ends in Courmayeur. Travel to Chamonix and from Courmayeur 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 Chamonix

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

Day 2: Les Houches to Les Contamines

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 to Les Houches where the route starts. Today's trek takes you up to Col de Voza above Les Houches from where the Chamonix valley is waved good-bye. An afternoon descent brings you to Les Contamines in Val Montjoie. **Hotel in Les Contamines**

Day 3: Les Contamines to les Chapieux

Today's stage is reasonably tough with an ascent of Col de la Croix du Bonhomme at 2,483m. However, the ascent is gradual and then there is a pleasant downhill to the next staging post, the hamlet of les Chapieux. **Auberge in les Chapieux**

Day 4: les Chapieux to Rif. Elisabetta

A simple, quiet road stage warms you up this morning as you head towards Italy. Col de la Seigne on the frontier is climbed and then there follows a descent to Rifugio Elisabetta (Italy) walking towards the best views of the route so far. **Mountain hut**

Day 5: Rif. Elisabetta to Courmayeur

The route to Courmayeur is now straightforward but involves a surprising, short uphill section to gain a terrace path with stunning views of what is now called Monte Bianco. Courmayeur is in some ways the Italian equivalent of Chamonix but has a very different atmosphere. **Hotel in Courmayeur**

Day 6: Rest day in Courmayeur

Today can be a rest day in Courmayeur. Many options exist for sight-seeing or activities such as mountain biking, or day-walks exploring the surrounding hillsides. **Hotel in Courmayeur**

Day 7: Courmayeur to Rif. Bonatti

Complete the Southern half of the Tour today with the toughest yet the most spectacular stage of the whole circuit. Mont de la Saxe is the highest point on the Tour du Mont Blanc at 2,584m. Near the end of the stage, call in at Rifugio Bonatti for a rest. A bus takes you back into Courmayeur for a final night. **Hotel in Courmayeur**

Day 8: Departure from Courmayeur

Morning departure from Courmayeur

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 a schedule for you to check before we proceed.

Accommodation

Your schedule of accommodation comprises 3 nights in a 3-star hotel, 2 nights in 2-star hotels, 1 night in an auberge and 1 night in a mountain hut. All are friendly and well-situated.

The hut is comfortable and welcoming and has a brilliant view. Accommodation is either on Alpine-style communal sleeping platforms or in bunks.

We book ensuite accommodation except where it is not available, in this case in your auberge.

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 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 early or late summer there is a good chance of snow patches lying on the higher paths, but the lower paths are likely to 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 2 evening meals (at Les Chapieux and Rifugio Elisabetta).

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 Chamonix, Les Contamines and Courmayeur.

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 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. 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, 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 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.