

EXPLORE!

Highlights of Mont Blanc

8 days

France, Switzerland - Trip code MBH



Highlights of Mont Blanc

The Mont Blanc massif provides outstanding mountain scenery and is home to the charming Chamonix Valley. Our day walks in the Alps include sections of the famous Tour du Mont Blanc route, including the spectacular trail to Lac Blanc, where we can enjoy panoramic views of the whole Mont Blanc range. Based in a comfortable hotel, we can relax at the end of each day, with no need to carry luggage during walks or pack up every night.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Mont Blanc massif** - Enjoy spectacular scenery of snowy peaks, glaciers and granite spires
- ★ **Tour du Mont Blanc** - Day hikes along some of the most scenic sections of the classic circuit
- ★ **Chamonix life** - Relax in one of the many open-air cafes and watch the street life
- ★ **Optional activities** - Chance to try out rock climbing, cycling or whitewater rafting

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

WALKING GRADE:

Easy To Moderate

This grade is ideal if you want to enjoy both easy and moderate level walks on the same tour. You'll be walking mainly on good paths and at low altitude, with occasional more demanding ascents or descents.

GROUP SIZE:

10 - 16

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join trip at Geneva Airport; drive to Les Houches near Chamonix

Arriving at Geneva Airport we transfer in 1.5 hrs to our hotel in Les Houches (990m) in the Chamonix Valley. Hotel du Bois is our home for the week. A relaxed atmosphere, pool and gardens with views across the Mont Blanc range make this family-run alpine chalet a comfortable place to relax at the end of the day's walk. The bedrooms are full of light and enjoy mountain views.



Accommodation: Hotel du Bois (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Dinner

DAY 2 - Walk along the Petit Balcon Sud to Paradise du Praz

From the hotel, we walk along the Petit Balcon Sud to Chamonix town with excellent views of the glaciers and ridges that descend from Mont Blanc into the valley. We then continue along the River Arve to Paradise du Praz where we have picnic lunch in a shaded spot. In the afternoon, you can opt to take the bus back to the hotel or climb to a pretty mountain café with wonderful flowers and a view down to Chamonix, an ascent of some 300 metres. We then descend to Chamonix with time for a look around the town before heading back to our hotel by local bus. The morning walk of 12 kilometres will take us around three-and-a-half hours and is pretty much on the flat. Our optional walk in the afternoon is five kilometres and will take around two-and-a-half hours with a total ascent and descent of 250m each way.



Accommodation: Hotel du Bois (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 3 - Cable car to Bellevue; walk to Le Prarion (1969m)

We walk from the hotel to Le Bellevue cable car which takes us up to 1800m in a matter of minutes. At the top of the cable car we are on part of the Tour du Mont Blanc circuit trek and it is an amazing spot to see Mont Blanc looming above. It is also the starting point of the main route for climbing Mont Blanc and we may see some mountaineers returning from the summit. We see views of the Contamines Valley, Mont Joly and towards the Aravais mountain range. Our walk descends to the Col du Voza (1653m) and then up to Le Prarion - a small peak at 1969m with spectacular 360 degree views. We then descend through the forest back to Les Houches. For those not wishing to make the descent, you can save your knees and take the cable car. Today's 13 kilometre walk is expected to take around four-and-a-half hours with a total ascent of 300m and a descent of 1150m which can be reduced by 1000m (and five-and-a-half kilometres) by taking the cable car down.



Accommodation: Hotel du Bois (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

DAY 4 - Hike from Le Buet to the Cascades de Berard

We travel along the length of the Chamonix Valley passing some beautiful scenery and iconic mountains such the Les Drus and the Aiguille d'Argentiere. After an hour we arrive at the pretty hamlet of Le Buet (1300m). From here we take a short walk to the river and then climb to Les Cascades du Berard - waterfalls in a lovely setting (1400m). We then continue alongside the river and further into the forest of the Berard Valley. A short climb brings us to Les Granges (1566m), a hamlet with summer houses and a viewpoint of the Mont Blanc range from the east. We descend via a different route and then take the train or a local bus back to Les Houches. Today's eight kilometre walk is expected to take around four-and-a-half hours with a total ascent of 300m and descent of 500m.



Accommodation: Hotel du Bois (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 5 - Free day for various optional activities

Today has been left free. You can relax at the hotel, go into Chamonix, take a walk or take part in some optional activities. Activities include a ride up the spectacular cable car to the Aiguille du Midi at 3842m for arguably the finest view in the Alps. At this height you are among the great Alpine peaks and glaciers with unimpeded views from Mont Blanc to the Matterhorn almost 100km away. Other activities include rock climbing, cycling, rafting and visiting Chamonix's Alpine museum. You may also like to take the cog-railway to Montenvers where you can take a series of steps down to the Mer de Glace and go inside the glacier itself.



Accommodation: Hotel du Bois (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available

DAY 6 - Walk from Servoz to Lac Vert

We travel to the pretty village of Servoz. We then climb through meadows and forest to Lac Vert, flanked by huge limestone cliffs. The lake has many varieties of tree which are helpfully labelled. From here there are magnificent views of the North-West faces of the Mont Blanc range. We then climb a little higher before returning to Servoz via a different path. Today's eight kilometres walk will take us around four to five hours with a total ascent and descent of 470m each way.



Accommodation: Hotel du Bois (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

DAY 7 - Tour du Mont Blanc walk to Lac Blanc (2352m)

We take the bus to Les Praz and then a short telecabin ride to Chalet de la Flegere (1871m). We then make our way on the Tour du Mont Blanc to Lac Blanc (2352m) for panoramic views of the whole Mont Blanc range. It is approximately 2-2.5 hours to the lake and is a fitting end to the holiday with magnificent views all around. We descend to Chalet de la Flegere and return to Chamonix via a forest walk. For those with tired legs, you can take the cable car back down to the valley floor. Today's ten kilometre walk is expected to take around six hours with a total ascent of 470m and descent of up to 1300m depending on the route taken.



Accommodation: Hotel du Bois (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 8 - Drive to Geneva Airport where the trip ends

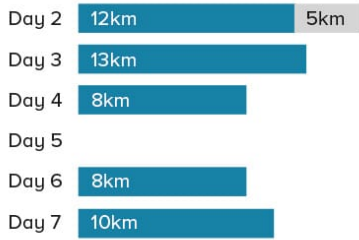
Today we drive back to Geneva airport where the trip ends.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

Walking and Trekking information

DAILY DISTANCES



Optional Walks

Walking grade

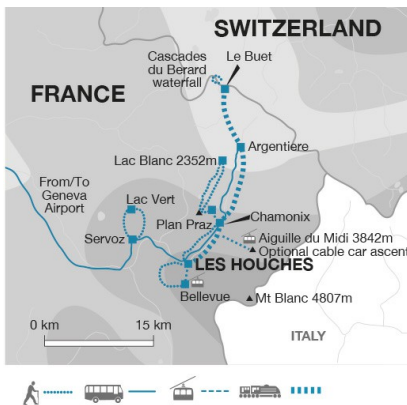
Easy to moderate

Trek details

Walks on 5 days for between 3.5 to 6 hours. We follow well-maintained and marked mountain trails. We have graded this trip as Easy to Moderate and, as the itinerary is centre-based, any walk can be opted out of if desired.

Max walking altitude (m)

2352



Why book this trip

This trip stays at the Hotel du Bois, an attractive alpine chalet in the village of Les Houches, a few kilometres from Chamonix which can easily be reached by local bus. It makes a great base for accessing some of the most beautiful walking in the Alps. The hotel's restaurant serves French cuisine and wine and there is a cosy bar with outside seating where you can enjoy a drink in the sunshine; an ideal spot to wind down after a day walking. The large garden has wonderful views of Mont Blanc and the Chamonix Valley and the hotel has a heated indoor pool and a sauna.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7
Lunch: 5
Dinner: 4



Transport

Bus
Train



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader / Trek
Guide
Driver(s)



Accommodation

7 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

France Holidays & Tours

Climate

Across France, from April - August, weather conditions are generally warm and pleasant with moderate rainfall; Autumn temperatures are a bit lower and the winter months (though colder) remain mild. The summer months on the Mediterranean Coast in the south tend to be warmer than the rest of France and have less rainfall, and also more mild winters; freezing conditions are nearly unheard of. The mountainous areas of the Alps, Juros and Pyrenees can be quite different. During summer the morning and evening temperatures are considerably cooler and it becomes much colder in winter with heavy snowfall. Western France, along the English Channel, there can be very strong winds and frequent rain during the winter months Nov - Apr. Wine harvesting takes place in late August/early September.

Time difference to GMT

+1

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Catholic

Language

French

Switzerland Holidays & Tours

Climate

Summers are generally warm, or even hot, with a three-month period when rain rarely falls. When it does rain in this season, it is heavy and often accompanied by thunder. There are as much as eleven to twelve hours' sunshine a day in summer, but as with anywhere in mainland Europe it can occasionally be cold and wet. Early and late summer is generally the best times to visit this region.

Time difference to GMT

+1

Plugs

3 Pin Round

Religion

Catholic

Language

German

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

Aiguille du Midi - Panoramic views of Alps €55 Mountain biking - Full day's hire €30 Rock climbing - Half day €45 Rafting - 1.5 hours / €40-60 per person (depends on number of people taking part) Public swimming pool - (3 pools, jacuzzi, death slide) €6 Paragliding - 1000m vertical descent €120 / 2550m vertical descent €220 Cable Cars - From Le Prarion to Les Houches €15.50, from Chalet de la Flegere to Les Praz €15.50.

Clothing

The following are essential: Good quality waterproof jacket and trousers, fleece jacket, comfortable walking trousers, shorts, warm hat and gloves, sunhat, sunglasses and high factor sun-cream. Jeans are not ideal for walking. There is a good public swimming pool in Chamonix so bring your swimming things. Note that French health regulations require men to wear proper swimming trunks, not loose Bermuda / boxer-style trunks. For around-town wear in Chamonix, you may like to bring some slightly smarter clothes.

Footwear

We recommend you bring walking boots with ankle support- leather or fabric are both fine. Trekking shoes are okay as long as you are confident on your feet in the mountains, however, they do not give ankle support. In addition, you should avoid cheap boots

found in high-street shops that are merely trainers with a higher canvas side sewn on. Make sure that your boots are worn-in and comfortable before the start of the trip. Also trainers or sandals for relaxing and general wear. We suggest that on international flights you either carry your walking boots in your hand luggage or wear them - should your luggage be lost or delayed, your own boots are the one thing that will be irreplaceable.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a waterproof daysac (30-40 litres recommended).

Equipment

You will need a water bottle (preferably 2 litres) and high factor sun cream. You may like to bring trekking poles. It is a good idea to line your day-sac with a good quality plastic bag. This will go a long way in protecting your gear from any rainstorms we encounter. Tap water is safe to drink as are the fountains found in villages, but water sources along the trail may not always be drinkable. Using tap or purified water rather than bottled water will help avoid creating plastic bottle waste. Energy snacks including chocolate and sweets are recommended whilst on trek.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Service is included in French restaurants, although it is polite to tip 10% if the service has been very good. Bar staff and café waiters expect a small tip or loose change.

Country Information

France Holidays & Tours

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£11

Dinner price

£16.00 - 18.00

Beer price

£4

Water price

£1.3

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Euro

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Pounds Sterling and US Dollars can only be changed in larger airports with a Bureau de Change. Please change currency into Euros prior to arriving in France.

Where To Exchange

Bureau de Change can only be found in major cities and large airports. Many French banks no longer exchange Foreign currency.

ATM Availability

In cities and most major towns

Credit Card Acceptance

In major restaurants (make sure you have informed your credit card company that you are travelling abroad as some companies will reject payments)

Travellers Cheques

Travellers Cheques are no longer commonly accepted and can only be changed in larger airports with a Bureau de Change.

Switzerland Holidays & Tours

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£16

Dinner price

£23

Beer price

£5.2

Water price

£1.5

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Swiss Franc.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Euros.

Where To Exchange

Most major towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival

ATM Availability

Local currency can be obtained using credit cards in ATM's.

Credit Card Acceptance

In major restaurants.

Travellers Cheques

Not recommended.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Train

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

The three-star Hotel du Bois is an attractive alpine chalet with 43 guest rooms in the heart of the small village of Les Houches, just five km from Chamonix. The village has some small bars, a couple of supermarkets, a post office, bank and tourist office, and makes

a great base for accessing some of the most beautiful walking in the Alps. The hotel's restaurant serves French cuisine and wine and there is a cosy bar with outside seating where you can enjoy a drink in the sunshine; an ideal spot to wind down after a day walking. The large garden has wonderful views of Mont Blanc and the Chamonix Valley and the hotel has a heated indoor pool and a sauna. Breakfast comes as a continental buffet with cereals and dinner is generally a three-course set menu. WiFi internet connection is available free of charge. Mountain bikes are available to hire if you fancy exploring on 2 wheels for a while. All bedrooms are light and enjoy views of the mountains. They have en suite private bathrooms with a full bath and a hairdryer provided. Simply and tastefully furnished, rooms are equipped with a flat screen TV, telephone, mini bar, small desk and wardrobe.

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click [here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, click [here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

France and Switzerland: Visas are not required by UK, E.U Nationals, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station. Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer click [here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities.

Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them here.

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Maximum altitude (m)

2352

Non refundable permits

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Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory. Tetanus recommended. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

Switzerland Holidays & Tours

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory; Tetanus recommended. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.
