



Self-Guided Tour du Mont Blanc

FRANCE, ITALY, SWITZERLAND - TRIP CODE WSMB

WALKING AND TREKKING

Why book this trip?

An exhilarating trek around the iconic Mont Blanc Circuit through spectacular alpine landscapes littered with dramatic snow-capped peaks. Hike through France, Italy and Switzerland discovering the Alps and the unique architecture and cuisine of each country.

- **Mont Blanc** - Spellbinding views of Europe's highest mountain, over snow-capped peaks and wild open spaces
- **Food** - Rich and tasty mountain cuisine including delicious cheeses, polenta and mushrooms
- **Accommodation** - Stay in warm and cosy family-run mountain huts and small hotels



INCLUDED MEALS
Breakfast: 7
Dinner: 5



TRIP STAFF
None



TRANSPORT
None



ACCOMMODATION
2 nights
comfortable hostel
5 nights
comfortable hotel



WALKING GRADE:
Challenging To
Tough

Itinerary

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

DAY 1 - Trip starts in Les Contamines

The holiday starts in Les Contamines, a traditional French village nestled in the shadow of Mont Blanc. On arrival you can take a wander through the village and see the beautifully preserved Baroque churches. If you arrive early you may wish to go for a walk and warm up for the week ahead.

There are several shared mini-bus transfers available from Geneva Airport (GVA) to Les Contamines which can be organised at the airport.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel La Gelinotte (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: DINNER

DAY 2 - Walk from Les Contamines to Les Chapieux

After a short transfer to Notre Dame de la Gorge you start the climb over the Col du Bonhomme and the Col de la Croix du Bonhomme leading to the Chapieux valley. Walk along an ancient Roman path and one of Europe's most famous trails, across blooming meadows and striking woodland to your accommodation tonight, a typical mountain refuge. At the Refuge La Nova, walkers are accommodated in small dormitories for between six to nine people and a hearty evening meal is served in the chalet's cosy dining room.

Today's 15 kilometre walk is expected to take around seven hours and you will ascend a total of 1200 metres and descend almost 900 metres. Overnight in dormitory in the mountain lodge/hotel with dinner included.



ACCOMMODATION:

Auberge de la Nova (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hostel



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST AND DINNER

DAY 3 - Cross into Italy as you hike to Courmayeur

After the first two days spent in France, you will be entering Italy, through some of the most astonishing landscapes of the whole trip. You climb up through a deep gorge surrounded by vast pastures with a moon-like scene as the backdrop. The Col de la Seigne (2516m) and the Aiguille des Glaciers mountains loom large in the distance on the border between Switzerland and Italy. Eventually you reach the top of the pass then descend into the Val Ferret Valley, enjoying magnificent views of the snow-capped peaks. Arrive to La Cantine de la Visaille on foot then take the bus to Courmayeur, a renowned ski resort where you can have a well-deserved rest.

Today's 15 kilometre walk is expected to take around seven hours and you will ascend a total of 950 metres and descend almost 1000 metres.



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel Bouton d'Or (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 4 - Walk to La Fouly in Switzerland, bus to Champex

This morning you start by taking the bus from Courmayer to Arp Nouva from where the walk starts. Today's walk will take you up a steep ascent and past ruined farmhouses. This marks the start of your journey into Switzerland. You'll walk uphill until the top of the Col du Grand Ferret (2537 metres), where you will enter Switzerland. This side of the mountains often presents glaciers and perennial snow, as it is less exposed to the sun. The descent is through vast open meadows without any traces of human settlement, to the small hamlet of Ferret, where the trail becomes immersed in idyllic scenery of forests, creeks and picturesque bridges, leading you in a short time to the village of La Fouly from where you take the bus to Champex, a beautiful Swiss mountain village situated on a lake.

Today's 16.5 kilometre walk is expected to take around seven hours and you will ascend a total of 850 metres and descend almost 1000 metres.



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel des Glaciers (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST AND DINNER

DAY 5 - Trek to Trient (La Forclaz)

This morning you'll begin your trek from Champex as you climb over the Fen\`eatre d'Arpette (2,750 m) to Trient, through cool forests and beautiful alpine meadows across the Col de la Forclaz, an important link between Switzerland and France. This walk enjoys breathtaking panoramas of the Martigny valley and reaches 2,750 metres. In bad weather a shorter walk over the col de Bovine pass should be taken instead which is around five and a half hours of walking ascending 800 metres and descending 1,135 metres. Overnight in a lodge in Col de la Forclaz.

Today's 14 kilometre walk is expected to take around seven to nine hours and you will ascend 1050 metres and descend approximately 1385 metres.



ACCOMMODATION:

L'hotel du Col de la Forclaz (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hostel



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST AND DINNER

DAY 6 - Walk to Argentiere

Today's walk takes you to Argentiere. You are above the ski resort of Le Tour from where you hike towards Lake Charamillon (2271 metres). You then continue on to the immense Glacier du Tour and back into France. An exhilarating rocky trail along the mountain crest allows you to enjoy astounding views of the glacier and the surrounding valleys. As you reach the border between Switzerland and France, you can see the magnificence of Mont Blanc, a real highlight of the trip, especially on sunny and bright days. You will start to descend among pastures for the last section of the walk until you arrive at your overnight stop in Argentiere.

Today's 15.5 kilometre walk is expected to take around seven hours and you will ascend 1000 metres and descend approximately 1050 metres.



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel La Couronne (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST AND DINNER

DAY 7 - Final trek to Chamonix

You begin walking through the pretty little village of Les Frasserands with its typically Alpine wooden houses. You start climbing uphill, into the Aiguilles Rouges Natural Park. You can decide if you want to continue to climb up to Lac Blanc, (it involves a short climb on an iron ladder which is not recommended if you suffer from vertigo), or start descending to La Flegere. The route is very panoramic with the Mont Blanc massif of the Aiguille Verte, the Drus, the Aiguille du Midi, Mont Blanc du Tacul and Mont Blanc laid out in front of you. Descend to Chamonix via Le Praz, if you wish you can take the cable car (not included) down to Chamonix (the last one is at 17:00 hrs). If you are tired or short of time you can also catch the cable car from La Flegere (closed for renovation in 2019). You have completed the Tour du Mont Blanc and can enjoy a celebratory drink in one of the bars in town!

Today's 21 kilometre walk is expected to take around six hours and you will ascend 900 metres and descend approximately 1100 metres.



ACCOMMODATION:
Park Hotel Suisse (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 8 - Trips ends Chamonix

After breakfast, the organised part of your holiday comes to an end.

There are several shared mini-bus transfers available to Geneva Airport (GVA) from Chamonix which can be organised at your last hotel.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

Climate and country information

France

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	Plugs	Religion	Language
-9 (PST)	2 Pin Round	Catholic	French

Italy

Climate

April/May and October/November are pleasantly warm. June/September are the hottest months. Showers are common in Autumn.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
+8 (PT)	2 Pin Round	Roman Catholic	Italian

Switzerland

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	Plugs	Religion	Language
+1	3 Pin Round	Catholic	German

Budgeting and packing

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.

Footwear

We recommend walking boots with proper ankle support and good tread. Make sure that your boots are worn-in and comfortable before the start of the trip. We recommend that you wear/carry your walking boots as hand luggage on the international flight. Should your luggage be delayed, your well broken in

boots will be irreplaceable. Trainers or trekking sandals are useful for relaxing in the evening.

Luggage: On tour

You will need one main piece of baggage (up to 15kg) and a waterproof daypack sufficiently large to take spare layers of clothing, your water bottle, picnic and camera during each days walking (25-40 litres recommended).

Please clearly mark your bag with your name and the name of the next accommodation in order to indicate where the bag should go to next. Bags should be ready and at the reception or store room by 09:00 on the morning of your departure.

Luggage transfer

A luggage transfer is included between each accommodation for one item weighing up to 15kg. This is provided by a local taxi supplier.

Equipment

For the night in the dormitory you will need to bring a travel sheet and a towel (blankets and pillows are provided). All bedding is provided on the other nights. Bring a water bottle (preferably 2 litres) and high factor sun cream. Trekking poles are recommended. 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.

Maps - Along with the destination manual and route notes you will be sent a set of maps that have been created specifically for this trip to help you navigate. The route is marked on each map together with a series of numbered waypoints which correspond with instructions in the route notes. Should you wish to purchase a more detailed commercially produced map we recommend the following:-

Topographic maps

Carte de Randonées Hiking map 1:50.00 A1 Pays du Mont-Blanc Aravis, Chamonix - Courmayeur ISBN 9782841822065

France

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	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£11	£16.00 - 18.00	£4	£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.

Italy

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	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£10.00 - 15.00	£20.00 - 25.00	£2.00 - 4.00	£1.00 - 2.00

Foreign Exchange

Local currency	Recommended Currency For Exchange
Euro.	GBP.

Where To Exchange

We recommend that you change any currency into Euros prior to arrival. Bureau de Change are generally only found in major cities and large airports.

ATM Availability

Major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance

Larger hotels and restaurants.

Travellers Cheques

Only in major towns. Please note, the exchange rate for cash and Travelers Checks is poor.

Switzerland

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	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£16	£23	£5.2	£1.5

Foreign Exchange

Local currency	Recommended Currency For Exchange
Swiss Franc.	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

Recommended airport

Geneva Airport (GVA)

Flying to your destination

We recommend outbound and inbound flights to/from Geneva Airport (GVA). Geneva is served by both budget airlines (EasyJet from Gatwick, Luton and Southend) and non-budget airlines (including British Airways and Swiss Air).

Accommodation notes

Overnight accommodation ranges from simple guest houses and family-run hotels to mountain refuges. All are surrounded by the beautiful peaks of the Mont Blanc massif. The simple hotels all offer private bedrooms, some with private bathrooms, others have shared bathroom facilities. In one of the mountain refuges you will stay in a dormitory room with between six to nine beds. For the night in the dormitory you will need to bring a travel sheet and a towel (blankets and pillows are provided). Sheets and towels are included when staying in private rooms. Breakfast and a hearty walkers dinner are provided in your accommodation every day other than in Chamonix and Courmayeur where there is there are a multitude of dining out choices.

Please note that due to high demand we are unable to offer the option of booking a single room on this trip.

Arrival and departure information

For this trip you can fly into and back from Geneva Airport (GVA) in Switzerland.

There are several private companies providing minibus transfers from Geneva to Les Contamines via Chamonix and return (<http://www.chamonix.net/english/transporthared-transfers>) starting from €20 per person one way for a shared transfer and from €160 per trip for a private one. The journey takes about 1 hour 30 mins.

To travel by train between Geneva and Le Fayet railway station. From Le Fayet you will need to take a taxi to Les Contamines. Check the online timetable for Geneva Eaux-Vives - St. Gervais Connections. (<http://fahrplan.sbb.ch/bin/query.exe/en&HWAI=JS!ajax=yes!&>)

Essential Information

Government Travel Safety 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, Commonwealth & Development 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.

Price Guarantee

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 and Passport Information

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.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may be able to apply 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.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

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 receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

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, Polar, 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. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. 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)

2750

France

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory. Tetanus recommended. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. 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 Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Italy

Vaccinations

Nothing required. Tetanus recommended. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NaTHNaC link at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before traveling.

Switzerland

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.

Walking and Trekking information

DAILY DISTANCES		
Day 2	15km	7hrs
Day 3	15km	7hrs
Day 4	16.5km	7hrs
Day 5	14km	7-9hrs
Day 6	15.5km	7hrs
Day 7	21km	6hrs

Walking grade

Challenging to tough

Trek details

On this journey you walk 97 km over 6 days (an average of 16 km a day). You follow well-marked hiking trails, with the lettering TMB (Tour du Mont Blanc). The route involves some steep ascents and descents of up to 1200 m in a day and some of the days are very long. There are no technically difficult sections nor scrambling required, but the trip is not suitable if you suffer from vertigo as there are sections where you could feel exposed.

Max walking altitude (m)

2750

Additional Information



Reviews



**AWARD WINNING
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**PRICE GUARANTEE
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT
TRANSFERS**