

# EXPLORE!

**Tour du Mont Blanc**  
11 days

France, Italy, Switzerland - Trip code MBT



## Tour du Mont Blanc

The Tour du Mont Blanc is one of the most spectacular treks in Europe. Hike 148 kilometres through France, Switzerland and Italy, across five major passes, staying in comfortable hotels and a traditional auberge along the way. Trek among breathtaking mountain scenery on the flanks of Mont Blanc, with views of some of the most dramatic peaks in the Alps.

## Trip highlights

- ★ **Completing the Tour du Mont Blanc** - A great personal achievement
- ★ **Superb and varied mountain scenery** - World class trekking through spectacular Alpine landscapes
- ★ **Chamonix and Courmayeur** - Hang out and enjoy the views from restaurants and pavements cafés
- ★ **Food and Wine** - Sample great local cuisine at our family-run hotels and guest houses

### 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:

#### Challenging

You need to have a good level of fitness and previous trekking experience is recommended. Trekking days are generally longer, challenging and at higher altitudes. Terrain may be difficult and ascents and descents are often demanding.

**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 Geneva airport; drive to Argentiere near Chamonix

Arriving at Geneva airport, we transfer in around one hour 20 minutes to our hotel in the pretty village of Argentiere (1252 m) in the Chamonix Valley. There will be a short briefing by our Leader about the week ahead, followed by dinner at a local restaurant.



**Accommodation: Hotel de la Couronne** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: None

## DAY 2 - Cable car to La Flegere and trek via Lac Blanc to Argentiere

After breakfast we take a local bus for 15 minutes from Argentiere to Chamonix and walk along the River Arve for about 30 minutes to Les Praz (1065 m) from where we take the Flegere cable car up to 1900 m. From here we hike through open countryside for one-and-a-half to two hours to Lac Blanc (2352 m). There are incredible views of the whole Mont Blanc range, including the Grandes Jorasses, Aiguille Vert and Le Dru. We then follow a beautiful path back through the forest back to our hotel at Argentiere (1252 m).

Today's trekking will take approximately six to seven hours with a cumulative ascent of 450 m and descent of 1110 m.



**Accommodation: Hotel de la Couronne** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

## DAY 3 - Hike to La Forclaz in Switzerland

From the hotel we walk through Old Argentiere and hike up to the Col des Posettes (1997 m) for superb views of Mont Blanc and the Chamonix Valley. From here, we traverse to the Col de Balme (2191 m) and look directly into Switzerland. We then descend through open country with views of glaciers to Trient (1297 m) and then on to La Forclaz (1526 m) where we spend the night. You will have your main baggage delivered to the hotel tonight.

Today's trekking will take approximately five to six hours with a cumulative ascent of 980 m and descent of 894m.



**Accommodation: Hotel de la Forclaz** (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

## DAY 4 - Hike along the 'Bovine Route' to Champex

We hike along the Bovine Route to Champex (1486 m). The route winds its way through meadows, forests and open country with views of the great Sion Valley and the mountains of Verbier. There are no great ascents today and we arrive at our hotel near Champex Lake where you can head to for a sundowner. You will not have access to your main luggage tonight.

Today's trekking will take approximately five hours with a cumulative ascent of 540 m and descent of 600 m.



**Accommodation: Hotel Splendide** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

## DAY 5 - Trek along the Val Ferret to La Fouly

From here it is a gentle five to six hour trek to La Fouly (1600 m) along the Val Ferret. We start our walk descending from Champex following the river along a pretty valley covered in trees to Praz-de-Fort. We then ascend in similar surroundings with wonderful views of Mt Dolent and the South Face of the Mont Blanc range. You will not have access to your main luggage tonight.

Today's trekking will take approximately five to six hours with cumulative ascent of 540 m and descent of 440 m.



**Accommodation: Hotel Edelweiss** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

## DAY 6 - Trek via Grand Col Ferret to La Palud in Italy

We continue from La Fouly along the Val Ferret and cross the impressive Grand Col Ferret (2537 m). From here, the descent is slightly steeper but rewards us with outstanding views of two of the Alps most iconic mountains - Le Grandes Jorasses and Mont Blanc. We stay at La Palud (1350 m), 3 km from Courmayeur and you will have your main baggage delivered to the hotel tonight. It's worth noting that it's possible to shorten today's walk by taking a bus for the final seven kilometres of the walk.

Today's trekking will take approximately nine hours with a cumulative ascent of 830 m and descent of 1170 m.



**Accommodation: Hotel Astoria** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

## DAY 7 - A rest day in La Palud near Courmayeur

Today has been left free to take a rest from the trail and soak up the ambience of the Alps. Nearby Courmayeur is one of Italy's premier ski resorts and is full of pretty shops, cafés and restaurants. Close by, there is the hot spring spa at Pre St Didier, the Skyway cable car that revolves as you ascend and plenty of other walking opportunities.



**Accommodation: Hotel Astoria** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 8 - Bus to Val Veny and trek to Les Chapieux

We take two public buses (approx 10 and 20 minutes each) and 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 (2516 m) which marks the border between France and Italy. We then descend to Les Chapieux (1549 m). Today is quite a long day (it is possible to take a bus for the final five kilometres if you wish), although it is not steep. You will not have access to your luggage tonight, so you will want to pack accordingly.

Today's trekking will take approximately seven hours with a cumulative ascent of 860 m and descent of 967 m.



**Accommodation: Auberge de la Nova** (or similar)



Simple Auberge



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

## DAY 9 - Hike via Col du Bonhomme to 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 (2479 m and 2329 m) in wild surroundings with fabulous Alpine Flowers and marmots, weasels and chamois. We then head down through open country and a narrowing valley. Our destination is Les Contamines (1167 m) - a pretty ski village with an interesting church. We will stay approximately 1 km before the village of Les Contamines. There will be no access to your main luggage tonight.

Today's trekking will take approximately six to seven hours with a cumulative ascent of 850 m and descent of 1320 m.



**Accommodation: Chalet Hotel La Chemenaz** (or similar)

---



Standard Hotel

---



Swimming pool available

---



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

---

## DAY 10 - Trek to Les Houches via Col du Voza

Leaving Les Contamines we follow the Tour du Mont Blanc, passing the pretty hamlets of Gruvaz, Champel and Bionnassay. We then make the short, 500m ascent to the Col du Voza (1653m) which forms part of the huge massif above Les Houches. 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 from the col to the road at Les Houches where we take the bus back to Argentiere where we started our trek nine days ago. We are reunited with our luggage and will have a final nights meal in the evening, bidding farewell to our Leader.

Today's trekking will take approximately seven hours with a cumulative ascent of 700 m and descent of 900m.



**Accommodation: Hotel de la Couronne** (or similar)

---



Standard Hotel

---



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

---

## DAY 11 - Drive to Geneva Airport where trip ends

Transfer to Geneva Airport where our trip ends.

---



Meals Provided: Breakfast

---

# Walking and Trekking information

## DAILY DISTANCES



## Walking grade

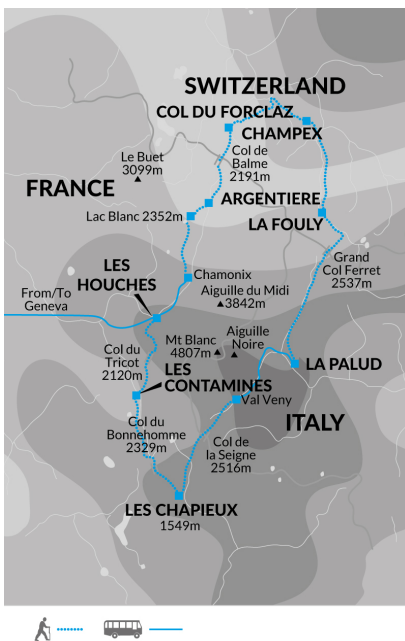
Challenging

## Trek details

This is an 8-day trek with an average of 6 to 8 hours of walking a day. We will make climbs and then descents of around 1000 m on five of these days, reaching a maximum altitude of 2,537 m. On days 6 and 8 there is the option to shorten the total walking by catching a bus for the final few kilometres. We have graded this trek as challenging.

## Max walking altitude (m)

2537



2019 itinerary map

# What's included?



## Included meals

Breakfast: 10  
Lunch: 8  
Dinner: 6



## Transport

Bus  
Public Bus



## Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader / Trek  
Guide  
Driver(s)



## Accommodation

1 nights simple auberge  
8 nights standard hotel  
1 nights simple hotel

# Trip information

## 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

+1

#### Plugs

2 Pin Round

#### Religion

Catholic

#### Language

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

+1

#### Plugs

2 Pin Round

#### Religion

Roman Catholic

## Language

Italian

# 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

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Aiguille du Midi - Panoramic views of Alps Cable Car €55

Mountain biking - Full day bike hire €30

Rock climbing - Half day from €45

Rafting - 1.5 hour / €40-60 per person (depends on number of people taking part)

Public swimming pool - (3 pools, jacuzzi, death slide) €6

Paragliding - 1000 m vertical descent €120 / 2550 m vertical descent €220

Skyway Cable Car at Courmayeur - €40

## Clothing

The following are essential for your tour: Good quality waterproof jacket and trousers (e.g. Gore-Tex / e-Vent), a pac-a-mac is not good enough, fleece jacket, comfortable walking trousers, shorts, warm hat and gloves, sunhat, sunglasses and high factor sun cream. Please be aware that temperatures can change dramatically at altitude and at night. For around-town wear in Chamonix, you may wish to bring some slightly smarter clothes.

## Footwear

You will need walking boots with proper ankle support and good tread. Trekking shoes are not good enough for the walks as 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 daypack. A capacity of 40 litres is recommended as you will need to carry enough overnight clothes (spare underwear, T shirt and toiletries etc) for the nights when you will not have access to your main luggage (days 4,5,8,9). There are showers at every night stop.



## Equipment

You will need a reusable water bottle (preferably 2 litres), torch, insect repellent and high factor sun cream. You may like to bring trekking poles. It is a good idea to line your daysac 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 from the hotels and auberges, but water sources along the trail may not always be drinkable. Using tap water rather than bottled water will help avoid creating plastic bottle waste. Energy snacks including chocolate and sweets are recommended whilst on trek as well as a lunch box/Tupperware for picnic lunches. Towels are not provided at Les Chapieux though you can hire one for €1: we suggest that you bring an easi-dry towel as they are lightweight and easy to carry. You may also wish to bring a sleeping bag liner for the stay at the auberge.

Equipment Hire and Trek Training Days - Trek Hire UK hire out a wide range of kit including quality sleeping bags, down jackets, therm-a-rest sleeping mats and walking poles <http://www.trekhireuk.com>. They also run regular trek training and preparation days from their base in the Surrey Hills, ideal for getting an indication of your overall fitness level and also covering advice on kit and altitude.

## 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.

In Italy service is not included - allow 10% - and they also have a cover charge, or coperto, of 1 or 2 euros which is obligatory and literally pays for you to sit down.

## Country Information

### 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

£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.

# 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**

£5.00 - 10.00

**Dinner price**

£15.00 - 20.00

**Beer price**

£2.00 - 4.00

**Water price**

£1.00 - 2.00

## Foreign Exchange

**Local currency**

Euro.

**Recommended Currency For Exchange**

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 Travellers Cheques is poor.

# 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, Public Bus

### 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.

We stay at small, family-run hotels for nine nights and in a traditional auberge (guesthouse) for one night. In the hotels you will usually be accommodated in twin rooms with private bathrooms, though occasionally you may have the use of a shared bathroom along the corridor. At Les Chapieux we stay at an auberge: this is a traditional mountain inn that is clean, friendly, full of fellow trekkers and has a great atmosphere. At the auberge we aim to have twins, triples or quads, but you may be in a dormitory if it is a busy part of the season. The bathrooms are shared. All bedding is provided.

Most meals are included at the hotels and auberge and will be a fixed three or four-course meal with vegetarian options. Drinks are not included, but all hotels have a selection of wines, beers and soft drinks.

## 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.

### 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

France: Visas are not required by UK, EU nationals, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens.

Italy: Visas are not required by UK, EU nationals, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens.

Switzerland: Visas are not required by UK, EU 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 consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://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 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, 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)

2537

## Non refundable permits

### 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 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.

---

### 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.

---