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Tour of Mont Blanc Challenge

France, Switzerland, Italy

Hotel Trek

Trip Code: TMBO8

Clockwise Route

This is a fantastic area to visit, for over a thousand years people have lived in this dramatic landscape, trying to conquer the mountains and to climb Mont Blanc. This journey is one not to be missed, as you go in to three countries each so contrasting.

This is a trip where you can walk through fantastic countryside and at the end of the day enjoy the relative comfort of a bed each night, this is a fully accommodated trek. We use a variety of accommodation from small inns to refuges, small hotels. Some of them are not star rated but have a friendly warm atmosphere usually family run. Rooms will vary from doubles, twins' triples and bathrooms will be shared. You still complete the famous circuit and your baggage will be transported for you by using our support vehicle. Most days we moved from hotel to hotel but in one or two places we stay for a couple of nights and we use local transport to take on to the next section of the circuit. A journey I completed myself last year and one I would recommend to anyone, but you must get fit before you begin!

The Mont Blanc Massif sits astride the junction of France, Switzerland and Italy, and is served by a system of seven rivers. The Massif is made up of a tight cluster of mountain peaks such as the Gouter, Augille, & Jorasses. This Massif is dominated by Mont Blanc, at 4807m it is Western Europe's highest peak. The peak was first climbed and conquered by Michael Paccard a local doctor in 1786.

TRIP PROFILE

This walk is a classic walk known as the 'Tour of Mont Blanc'. It is a walk that allows you to walk through three different countries each with their own individual styles, cultures and gastronomic delights. The official circuit covers over 100 miles of ground with about 10,000 metres of climbs and descents! The average days walking is about 7 hours and between 11-13 miles in distance. Although some of legs are demanding and tiring overall the route is moderate, you still need to be fit to enjoy it. The paths are fairly well maintained and there are plenty of opportunities to take photographs and enjoy the view and a glass of vino or a beer. On the route many of the passes are over 2,300m and at least 8 days involve ascent of 1,000m or more. Therefore

ITINERARY AND HIGHLIGHTS

From London 15 days Start Sat end Sat
From Chamonix 15 days Start Sat end Sat

Day 1 Depart London to fly to Geneva. On arrival we will transfer by coach to our hotel in Chamonix, France. Those who have the land only option will join us at the hotel. In the evening there will be an introductory meeting with me.
Hotel Chamonix (France)

Day 2 We take either the Teleferique to Plan Praz or to Chalet de I Flegere, the trail is named the 'Grand Balcon' and is on the opposite side of the valley to Mont Blanc. You have spectacular views of the whole Mont Blanc Massif. We follow the trail up to Lac Blanc at 2,352m the highest point of the day have some refreshment at the Lac. Then we descend steeply down to the Col Montets (1461M). We catch the bus back to Chamonix. **Overnight Hotel.**

Day 3. We travel to Le Tour and take the Telepherique a short way up, and then start our climb to the Col de Barme (2,191). Where we cross the border from France into Switzerland. We then descend to Le Peuty (1296m) and then a short ascent to the Col Forclaz. **Hotel at Col Forclaz (Switzerland)**

Day 4 We depart the Col Forclaz and go into the woods and you can look down the Rhone Valley and directly beneath you is the Swiss town of Martigny. We follow the Bovine way (1986m) through lush, high alpine pastures to the delightful Swiss town of Champex by a lovely small picturesque lake.
Auberge at Champex (Switzerland)

Day 5 This day we approach the eastern side of the Mont Blanc Massif, we trek south, descending through woods to the Val Ferret and the small hamlet of Issert (1,055 m). Today, we walk through small alpine villages. We continue up the valley to La Fouly (1593 m). We are now beneath the summit of Mt Dolent, whose summit is the meeting point of France, Italy and Switzerland. **Hotel in La Fouly (Switzerland)**

Day 6 We continue day this valley and follow the river 'La Drance' and eventually climb up to the highest pass of the Tour the Col Ferret (2,536 m). We now enter into Italy. The views are spectacular; we descend to Refugio Elana (Italy) for refreshments and then continue our walk to Planpincieux (1,600 m) Catch the bus to Entreves. **Overnight Hotel in Entreves (Italy)**

Day 7 Rest Day. A well earned rest but you can visit the picturesque town of Courmayeur. There is also the telepherique from Entreves to Point Helbronner (3,461 m). If you wish you can continue your journey across to the Aiguille du Midi and down into Chamonix. This is a great optional excursion as it allows you to see all the major peaks of the massif. **Hotel in Entreves (Italy)**

Day 8 Go by bus back to Planpincieux and then climb steeply from the valley to Mont de la Saxe (2346 m). Fantastic views of the 'Grande Jorasses'. We make a long descent into Courmayeur, via an old mule track and then onto Entreves. **Hotel in Entreves. (Italy)**

Day 9 We take the bus from Courmayeur to La Vissaille (1600 m) Then we climb steeply from the valley to the Col de la Seigne (2,516 m) by doing so we re-enter into France. A steep descent into La Ville de Glaciers (1,789 m) and then onto Les Chapieux (1553 m) This is a long walking day. **Auberge in Les Chapieux. (France)**

Day 10 We are now not far from the end, we take a northerly direction and climb to the Col de la Croix Bonhomme (2,478 m) and then contour round to the Col du Bonhomme (2,328 m). From here we descend via an old roman road to the town of Les Contamines (1,175m). **Hotel near Les Contamines (France)**

Day 11- Rest Day You can relax in this little town or go to the local Market or even opt for a small walk in the surrounding area.
Hotel near Les Contamines (France)

Day 12 From here we ascend to the Chalets du Miage (1,560 m) and then climb steeply to the Col de Tricot and then descend to the snout of the glacier de Bionnassay. From here we ascend to the Col de Voza (1652 m) and re-enter the Chamonix valley. We descend into Les Houches (993 m) **Hotel in Les Houches (France)**

Day 13 Today is a very steep climb for the valley floor up to Le Brevent (2,525 m), this is a long walking day but you have some fantastic views of the massif. We descend to Plan Praz and via telepherique to Chamonix. **Hotel in Chamonix**

Day 14 A free day in Chamonix. There are many activities you can undertake from here, they include such activities as paragliding, Canyoning, mountain biking or rock climbing. You can also take the Mountain railway up to Glacier de Mer or go on the telepherique up to the Aiguille du Midi a fantastic journey. Or you can have just a nice relaxing day in Chamonix.

Day 15 Transfer to Geneva airport and then fly to the UK.

This itinerary is the one we hope to follow, but sometimes due to a variety of factors – climate conditions, political physical or others the itinerary may have to be changed or amended. If we do have to change or make alternative arrangements we will try to keep the programme as close to the one outlined above.

WEATHER

When we are traveling the weather is expected to be fine. But as with any mountain area the weather can vary dramatically. During June to early October the weather is generally fine. But it can and does even snow on some of the higher passes. On the higher passes it can be cold at times. In July /August expect daytime temperatures of between 15° C to 25° C in the valleys, sometimes in July/August it can reach 30°C and 5 to 15°C in the passes. (it will also feel colder if wet and windy) and 5 to 15° in the valleys at night. Last year in July/August we had huge hail stones! So be prepared!

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Flights from the UK

We use a variety of airlines depending on fare costs, but we will get the group on the same flight from either London City via Swiss Air or from Gatwick using either British Airways or Easyjet.

For details of how to get to London City please check out their Website: www.londoncityairport.com

London City departure Time

Swiss Air departure time is 8.15am

Gatwick Departure Time

British Airways departure time is 9.00 am
Easyjet departure time is 8.05 am

All times are local.

These times are correct at time of printing but cannot be confirmed until two weeks prior to departure.

All make sure you allow enough time for check in, at Gatwick for International flights allow 1.5 hours.

Joining locally for 'land only' bookings

If you want to join the trip in the destination country you may do so. The local start point for this trip is the hotel in Chamonix. Details of how to reach the start point are on the pre departure information. This will be sent to you when you book.

Transfer (from Geneva to Chamonix and back) are arranged to coincide with the arrival time of the group flight from London. To take this transfer you must arrive before the group flight and meet the group there. The transfer arrival and return must be pre booked with walkingjersey.

Private transfer can be booked and are available through Mountain Drop Offs: they can be booked on their website at www.mountaindropoffs.com

Passports and Visas

All nationalities require a full passport that must have six months validity beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to make sure you have the correct personal documentation and the relevant visas, if they are needed.

Visas regulations are continually changing therefore you need to check the current regulations that apply to you. Visas are not required by the following nationalities: British and other EU countries, Nationals of Australia, New Zealand, United States and Canada. If you are not one of the above then check your visas requirements.

For information on how to obtain visas then call Travcour on 02072235295 or visit their web site www.travcour.com

Vaccinations and Health

No specific vaccination requirements for this trip when traveling from the UK. It is recommended that you have up to date tetanus and polio immunization. Please consult your doctor for up to date information.

Accommodation

We use throughout our trek a variety of accommodation from small village inns, pension, Auberges and small hotels. The standard of the accommodation will vary greatly due to the fact that this is the high season and due to the limited accommodation available. Most of the places are simple family run, village hotels some of which are not classified, but maintain a friendly atmosphere.

Please be aware that room sizes and combinations vary, but couples will always have a room on their own, but it may be a twin or a double. Single clients must be prepared to share with one or two other members of the same sex. **We are unable to accept bookings for single rooms, due to the small size of the hotels and that in most we are staying just one night.** You may wish to bring a large towel as continental ones in hotels are small.

Food Included

Included in the trip are all breakfasts, 10 picnic lunches and 12 hotel/restaurants dinners. On free days 7, 11, 14 and both transfer days lunch is not provided. On free days 7 and 14 dinner is also not included and needs to be bought locally. We take our evening meals in the hotel we are staying in or at a nearby restaurant. Please note that no refund will be given for meals not taken or taken other than where designated. We are able to cater for vegetarians as long as they are prepared to be flexible. Drinks are not included in the price of the evening meals taken in Restaurants or hotels.

Group, Staff and Support

The group will be between 7 and 15 people. I will be leader of the group and escort you around the massif. Your luggage will be transferred from hotel to hotel as we move on. Please note your baggage is not carried to your room. **Your main luggage must be no more than 15kg**

Transport

Transports on the Free/Static days are not included. Transfer to and from Geneva to Chamonix is included. We will also use some local buses for journeys to and from our hotel.

Walking Conditions

Some of the days are long and involve many ascents and descents of over 900m- 1000m. Generally, the paths are reasonably well maintained but you have to be fit in order to enjoy this trek. Walking days are quite long!

Essential Equipment and Clothing

As extras to your normal clothing you will need to have the following: Traditional or lightweight walking boots with good ankle supports, a good quality waterproof/windproof anorak and over trousers; gloves and hat; a warm 2/3 seasons fleece jacket; day sac 30- 40 litres capacity; towel.

Plus a positive attitude; which will ensure you'll enjoy the Tour.