

FRANCE – EXPLORE THE MAGNIFICENT FRENCH ALPS

8-day / 7-night one-hotel group guided walking tour based at Annecy



The French Alps are one of our most popular walking destinations, offering outstanding Alpine views, iconic peaks, a rich history and culture, and hearty mountain cuisine. On this holiday, we are based in Annecy, one of France's most attractive towns, on the shores of Lake Annecy. Walks may include a traverse of Mount Veyrier, with the turquoise waters of the lake far below, and hikes through marmot territory to a high mountain refuge in the Aravis Mountains. We follow in the footsteps of the French Resistance on the Glières Plateau, and discover the Massif des Brauges Natural Park, over 81,000 hectares of limestone cliffs, forests, and alpine pastures, ideal for hiking in any season. There is a wide selection of walking trails in the nature reserve dotted with wine-producing villages along the way. There is a free day midweek allowing time to explore Annecy's lakeshore walking and cycling paths and its Vieille Ville (old town), with its famous canals and bridges.

Our centre-based or one-hotel walking holidays offer a choice of two guided walks each day – usually an easier walk or a more challenging option. There is a free day midweek to relax or explore independently.

Cost from: **\$3060** (per person, twin share) Single room supplement from \$870

Departs: 16th, 23rd, 30th May; 6th June; 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th September, 2020

Includes: 7 nights in a comfortable 3-star hotel room with ensuite bathroom, 7 breakfasts, 7 evening meals, local transport to / from the walks, experienced walks leaders with a choice usually of two levels of walking on 5 days.

Not included: Meals & drinks not mentioned, personal expenses, transport and/or excursions on your free day. Airport transfers from / to Geneva at set times can be pre-booked at extra cost.

Accommodation: We stay at the **Hotel Splendid**, a 3-star hotel on the shore of Lake Annecy and in the historic centre of town. There are 47 en-suite bedrooms with views of the lake or old town, and a cosy bar and lounge overlooking the Canal du Vasse. Each room has a small, thoughtfully selected library. Evening meals are taken at a local brasserie, allowing you to sample the seasonal *Savoie* cuisine.



Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations

Footpath & walking information: Distances are approximate



Easier Walks: 8 to 13km on good paths with up to 550m of ascent in a day.



Harder Walks: 11 to 18km walking with some steep ascents and rough sections with up to 1100m of ascent in a day.

Suggested itinerary: The itinerary below should give you a good feel for the walks at the resort but is subject to change. The final selection of walks each day will be made by your walking leaders.

Day 1: Arrival day. Plan to arrive at the hotel in Annecy by mid-afternoon. Annecy (reached by train from Paris in 4½ hours or Lyon in 2 hours. We offer a coach transfer at a set time from Geneva airport at extra cost – ask for details when you make your booking. Dinner and briefing on the week ahead with walking guides.

Day 2: Exploring Lake Annecy. We transfer to St Jorioz, on the western shore of Lake Annecy, and follow a lakeside path, passing marinas and reed beds, then ascend to a belvedere with fine views over the lake. The harder walk takes a detour on a rougher path, scrambling over limestone to reach the Taillefer ridge. Both groups finish their walk in Duingt, with its typical 17th and 18th Century Savoyard stone houses and its chateau on a peninsula jutting into the lake, and we take the ferry back to Annecy.

Day 3: Glières Plateau. The Free French Resistance used the plateau as a command post for attacks against the occupying German forces and the Vichy government. In March of 1944 the *maquisards* of the plateau were overrun by opposing forces; however the Resistance were able to regroup and eventually, with weapons and equipment supplied by Allied forces, they liberated the Haute-Savoie in August 1944. We visit the memorial and small museum, then head uphill into lush green alpine pastures and the Pas du Loup (Wolf's Step) for far-reaching views. The harder walk continues upward to the Chalets des Auges (1822m) on a remote ridge before an eventual descent and return to the hotel in Annecy.

Day 4: The Bauges Mountains. We explore the Massif des Bauges in neighbouring Savoie. With its traditional farms and barns built of stone and timber, and unhurried way of life, it feels like we have stepped back in time. The easier group contours the flanks of the Montagne du Charbon while the harder group walks steeply up to and traverses the ridgeline. We walk down the valley to the village of Bellecombe.

Day 5: Free day. No walks are organised on this day. You may like to stroll around Annecy's Vielle Ville (old town), visit the chateau, tour the museum at the Palais de l'Île, hire a bike to ride the cycle path through the city and along the lakeshore. Annecy is also a top destination for paragliding, so perhaps take a tandem paragliding flight to see the area from a bird's-eye perspective.

Day 6: The Aravis Mountains. We transfer by coach to the start of our walk at Les Confins. We contour high above the valley of the Borne River and beneath the towering limestone peaks of the Aravis Mountains. The easier walk ascends to the Col des Annes for refreshments and to perhaps see Tomme de Savoie or Reblochon Fermier cheeses being made by the Alpagistes. The harder walk continues through marmot territory to the mountain refuge Gramusset below Pointe Percée. Some scrambling over limestone during the descent and we too finish at the Col des Annes.

Day 7: Eastern shore of Lake Annecy. Both walks start from the Col de Bluffy but take very different paths. The easier route heads south through forest to Planfait, a popular take-off spot for paragliders, then descends through pastures and villages to the Cascade d'Angon and follows a trail dating back to medieval times to Talloires on the lake shore. The harder walk ascends 840 metres in total to the limestone ridge of Mont Baron, then traverses the crest of Mont Veyrier, gaining outstanding views. We then descend steeply to the lake shore and return to the hotel on foot.

Day 8: Departure day. Tour ends after breakfast. Ask about departure transfer to Geneva airport (at extra cost).

Outdoor Travel offer guided centre-based or self-guided inn-to-inn walking holidays in many areas of Europe including the **Cinque Terre, Tuscany, Umbria**, the **Amalfi Coast** in Italy, the **Dalmatian Coast** of Croatia, **French Catalonia, Provence, Dordogne**, or **Riviera Coast**. Try Wainwright's challenging **Coast to Coast** walk in England or the **West Highland Way** in Scotland, or walk pilgrimage routes such as the **Way of St James** or Camino de Santiago in France & Spain, or the pilgrims' road to Rome, the **Via Francigena** in Italy.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more details and reservations:

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