

## FRANCE SWITZERLAND ITALY – TOUR DU MONT BLANC

11-days / 10-nights group guided walking holiday – the classic circuit of Europe's highest mountain



One of the most popular and classic alpine long-distance walking routes, the famous **Tour du Mont Blanc** circumnavigates the majestic Mont Blanc massif, Western Europe's highest mountain. The trail traverses the alpine passes and pastures of France, Italy and Switzerland, following ancient pack animal routes, with each ascent and descent to the next pass rewarded by a new and exciting vista of the great peaks of the Alps. This 11-day tour allows plenty of time to soak up the atmosphere of this iconic trail.

- Be inspired by magnificent mountain panoramas of glistening glaciers and snow-capped summits
- Savour the food and wine of the three contrasting countries of France, Switzerland and Italy
- Stay in comfortable hotels and gites with luggage transferred for you
- Explore the charming Italian resort of Courmayeur on your free day

**Cost from:** \$4525 (per person, twin share) Single room supplement on request (limited availability)

**Departs:** 24<sup>th</sup> June, 5<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> August, 2020

**Includes:** 10 nights' accommodation in comfortable hotels with ensuite on 9 nights and in a simple mountain auberge with shared facilities on 1 night; full board (breakfast, lunch and dinner) except for two dinners and one lunch in Courmayeur; qualified and experienced guide; transport to/from route on all walking days; luggage transport on most days (one medium-sized bag per person – except as indicated below for 2 nights \*); cable car journeys during the tour; standard coach transfers from/to Geneva airport at set times.

**Not included:** One lunch and two dinners in Courmayeur, drinks and personal expenses.

\* Please be prepared to carry overnight clothing with you in your day pack on 2 nights, as there is no vehicle access to the mountain refuges used. Your luggage will be transferred on to the next hotel for these nights.

### Footpath and walking information:



A good level of fitness and stamina is required, and you should expect rocky terrain and sustained ascents and descents. Walks visit high summits and ridges, where you'll need a good head for heights, and may include some easy scrambling. 14 to 21 kilometres of walking in a day, with up to 950m of ascent (1190m on one day).

**Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations**

**Suggested itinerary:** The walking guides are responsible for the final walking agenda each day.

**Day 1 Arrive Argentière.** Make your way to the hotel in Argentière in the Chamonix Valley, or join the 1.5 hour group transfer from Geneva airport at a set time. Argentière is a small town seven kilometres from Chamonix and has a few restaurants, bars and outdoor equipment shops. Chamonix town can be reached in about 20 minutes by public bus. This evening our Trek Leader will brief us about the week ahead, followed by dinner

**Day 2 Argentière - Chamonix - Lac Blanc - Argentière** Meals: BLD (Breakfast, lunch, dinner)  
After breakfast we go by local bus to Chamonix and cable car to the summit of Le Brevent at 2525m. From here we hike through open countryside for 2 - 3-hours to Lac Blanc (2352m). There are incredible views of the whole Mont Blanc range, including Les Grandes Jorasses, Aiguille Vert and Les Drus. We then follow a beautiful path through the forest to Argentière (1244m).

**Walk distance: 19km with hiking time @ 7 hours. Ascent 450m, Descent 1300m**

**Day 3 Argentière - Col de Balme - Col de la Forclaz (Switzerland)** Meals: BLD  
From the hotel we hike through old Argentière and up to the Col des Posettes (1997m) for superb views of Mont Blanc and the Chamonix Valley. From here, we traverse to the Col de Balme (2191m) and look directly into Switzerland. We descend through open country with views of glaciers to Trient (1297m) and then a short climb to the Col de la Forclaz (1526m) where we spend the night.

**Walk distance: 18km with hiking time @ 7 hours. Ascent 1180m, Descent 895m**

**Day 4 Forclaz /Trient - Bovine Route - Champex** Meals: BLD  
From Forclaz we hike along the 'Bovine Route' to Champex d'en haut (1444m). The route winds its way through meadows, forests and open country with views of the mountains of Verbier and the great Sion Valley. There are no great ascents today and we arrive at the hotel located in central Champex overlooking the beautiful lake.

**Walk distance: 14km with hiking time @ 6 hours. Ascent 465m, Descent 545m**

**Day 5 Champex - La Fouly** Meals: BLD  
From Champex it is a gentle 5-6 hour trek to La Fouly (1600m) along the Val Ferret. We start our walk from the auberge continuing to Champex Lac and then descend to the valley floor and follow the river through forests and meadows 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. We carry our overnight clothing in our daypack on this day.

**Walk distance: 20km with hiking time @ 5-6 hours. Ascent 550m, Descent 440m**

**Day 6 La Fouly - Grand Col Ferret - La Palud, Courmayeur (Italy)** Meals: BL  
We continue from La Fouly along the Val Ferret and cross into Italy via the Grand Col Ferret (2537m). The descent is slightly steeper but with outstanding views of Les Grandes Jorasses and Mont Blanc or choose to shorten the walk with a public bus from Arnava to the hotel. Our hotel is in La Palud (1350m), a small hamlet just outside of the centre of Courmayeur (45 min walk / 10 min bus ride). Your main luggage is delivered to the hotel tonight. Dinner is at your own arrangements and there are plenty of local restaurants to choose from.

**Walk distance: 22km or 29km with hiking time @ 7-8 hours. Ascent 970m, Descent 1170m**

**Day 7 Rest day in La Palud, Courmayeur** Meals: B  
Courmayeur is one of Italy's premier ski resorts with shops, cafés and restaurants, the nearby Helbonner cable car, the spa at Pre St Didier and many walking options. Lunch and dinner today are at your own arrangements.

**Day 8 Courmayeur - Val Veny - Col de la Seigne - Les Chapieux** Meals: BLD  
A short bus trip to the Val Veny under the spectacular South Face and ridges of Mont Blanc. We a trek along a valley surrounded by glaciers and high peaks to the Col de la Seigne (2516m) which marks the border between France and Italy. We then descend to Les Chapieux (1549m). This is quite a long day, although not steep.

**Walk distance: 24km with hiking time @ 7 hours. Ascent 860m, Descent 970m**

**Day 9 Les Chapieux - Col du Bonhomme - Les Contamines** Meals: BLD  
A steep ascent above Les Chapieux through alpine meadows crossing two cols (2479m and 2329m) with wildflowers, marmots, weasels and chamois. We head down to Les Contamines (1167m) – a pretty ski village with an interesting church. The hotel is located a kilometre outside of the centre of Les Contamines.

**Walk distance: 21km with hiking time @ 7-8 hours. Ascent 930m, Descent 1320m**

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## Day 10 Les Contamines – Les Houches – Argentière

Meals: BLD

We follow the Bon Nant River for about 4km, then head into the hills near la Gruvaz. We cross the pretty villages of le Champel and Bionassay and our final climb to the Col de Voza (1653m) with the most outstanding views of the Chamonix Valley, the Chamonix Aiguilles and the Mont Blanc massif. We descend by cable car to Les Houches and either take the bus back to the hotel in Argentière (40 minutes) or continue on foot to Chamonix town – a further 7km – to complete the circuit. From Chamonix it is 20 minutes by bus or train to our hotel.

**Walk distance: 14km with hiking time @ 6-7 hours. Ascent 800m, Descent 200m**

## Day 11 Argentière – Geneva

Meals: B

Tour ends after breakfast. For those taking the airport transfer, we depart Argentière mid-morning and arrive at the airport around lunchtime. Those not taking the transfer can make their own travel arrangements.



**Suggested typical accommodation:** may be subject to change

**Argentière:** 3 nights (first, second and last night) in a comfortable 3-star hotel – all rooms with private bathroom.

**La Forclaz:** 1 night in a charming family-run 2 star hotel - rooms with ensuite.

**Champex:** 1 night in a cosy family-run 3 star hotel in a wonderful location – rooms with private bathroom.

**La Fouly:** 1 night in a quiet 3-star hotel with sauna - rooms with private bathroom.

**Courmayeur (La Palud):** 2 nights in a 3-star hotel at the base of Mont Blanc and about 3 - 4km from the town centre - rooms with private bathroom.

**Les Chapieux:** 1 night in a simple but comfortable auberge, rooms and dormitories, with shared facilities.

**Les Contamines:** 1 night in a 3-star hotel with views of Mont Blanc massif, cosy rooms, with separate bathrooms.

**Outdoor Travel** also offers *self-guided* walks on the Tour du Mont Blanc on set dates during summer – ask for details. We offer guided walks in France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Croatia, Greece or Norway. In England and in Scotland, Ireland and Wales there are a wide range of choices too. Guided or self-guided walks are offered along pilgrim's trails including the **Camino de Santiago** or Way of St James.

**Contact Outdoor Travel for more details and reservations:**

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