

THE ESSENTIAL ALPS – CHAMONIX, ZERMATT, GRINDELWALD

Day 1: ARRIVAL DAY – CHAMONIX MONT-BLANC

Transfer to Chamonix from Geneva International Airport or other destinations.
Overnight in Les Praz, Chamonix.



Hotel in Chamonix

Dinner included

Day 2: CHAMONIX: AIGUILLE DU MIDI - MONTENVERS

A short transfer by train will bring us to the bottom station of the Aiguille du Midi, one of the most impressive cable car systems in the world. Two cable cars take us to 3807m, where the domain of the mountaineer begins. Stunning views out to Mont Blanc, Les Grandes Jorasses, the Matterhorn, Monte Rosa and many more giants of the Alps.

After taking the cable car down to the mid-station, we begin a gentle hike under the famed Chamonix Needles, jagged spires of granite, which have been coveted prizes for climbers over the centuries. This warm-up hike will allow us to soak up the views, with ample time to stop for photographs or to simply contemplate the beauty at hand. We take lunch at the Montenvers train station, a majestic hotel sitting on the edge of the Mer de Glace, one of Chamonix' most impressive glaciers. After lunch, we head back to Chamonix via the cog railway built in 1909 and still one of the highlights of any visit to Chamonix.



Hotel in Chamonix

Breakfast, Dinner included

Distance: 6km (3.75m), 2-3 hours, up: 150m (500ft)

Day 3: CHAMONIX: LAC BLANC

An Alpine start as we head to the Flégère cable car and take a short lift up to the mid-station, where we begin a gentle ascent to one of the best vantage points in the Chamonix valley: Lac Blanc.

Today's walk takes place opposite the Mont Blanc Range, giving us some of the classic views of Mont Blanc and the other peaks in the area, meandering along hillsides covered in rhododendron and skirting alpine lakes.

Our lunch spot is the Refuge du Lac Blanc, where hearty meals of Crôte Savoyarde (baked cheese and bread casserole, drowned in white wine) are served up fresh, along with fruit tarts and other delicious desserts. We return via the same trail, using the cable car to save nearly 1000m of descent.

Hotel in Les Praz, dinner in Chamonix.



Hotel in Chamonix



Breakfast, Dinner included



Distance: 6km (3.75m), 4-5 hours, up 475m (1570ft), down 475m (1570ft)

Day 4: TRANSFER TO ZERMATT

We have an early start, as we transfer to Zermatt.

Leaving directly from our hotel in Chamonix, we will need roughly 4,5 hours to make our way to Zermatt, first taking the spectacular Mont Blanc Express, then the St. Bernard Express, which allow us to reach the Rhône Valley.

From Martigny, we head towards the Mattertal, and eventually Zermatt, Switzerland's most photographed village.



Hotel in Zermatt



Breakfast, Dinner included



Transfer to Zermatt, 2.5 hours



ALPINE INTERFACE

Day 5: ZERMATT: HÖHBALMEN, TRIFT

Leaving right from the hotel's front door, we begin one of the more arduous hikes of the trip, with nearly 1100 metres of vertical gain. Our hike takes us steeply up the Trift Gorge where at the top, a lovingly restored hotel and refuge welcomes the weary climber and hiker alike.

Hugo, mountain guide and owner of the Trift Hotel serves wonderful home-made pies and other delights. With the sound of his Alphorn echoing in the distance, we carry on along the Höhbalmen trail with some of the best views in the Alps.

Monte Rosa, the second highest peak in the Alps unfolds before us, as do some of the other giants such as the Breithorn, Liskam, and of course, the huge North Face of the Matterhorn itself, symbol of the Alps.

Our trail winds back down to the valley floor through pleasant haying fields. If the weather is good, we will have a drink in the tiny hamlet of Zmutt, before heading back to Zermatt's main street. Dinner on your own in Zermatt.



Hotel in Zermatt



Breakfast included



22km (13m), 6-7 hours, up/down 1125m (3690ft)

Day 6: ZERMATT - GÖRNERGRAT

Today, most of the climbing will be done by the Görnegrat Bahn (cog train). Its maiden voyage was made in 1898 and this electric train has hardly changed since. Taking about an hour to reach the top station, you will have ample time to admire the staggering beauty of the Alps above Zermatt, as they unfold before you.

Our walk will begin with a short climb, lasting about two hours as we hike along the lateral moraine of the Görnér Glacier, stopping just short of the glacier's snout. Time for a snack and then a descent on a well-marked trail back to the train station below the Görnegrat. Lunch will be taken along the way on one of our preferred picnic spots looking out towards the Breithorn. Train ride back to Zermatt and the remainder of the afternoon free for you to explore the town.

ALPINE INTERFACE



Hotel in Zermatt

Breakfast, Dinner included

Distance: 13km (8m), 4 hours, up 300m (1500ft)

Day 7: TRANSFER TO GRINDELWALD

An early morning train ride out of Zermatt, as we head to the Bernese Oberland and the charming town of Grindelwald. Getting into Grindelwald at about 12:30 pm will give us time to take in the views, have lunch on your own, and explore this very Swiss town.

Dinner at our hotel, overnight in Grindelwald.



Hotel in Grindelwald

Breakfast, Dinner included

Transfer to Grindelwald, 2.5 hours

Day 8: GRINDELWALD: JUNGFRAUJOCH

If the morning sky is clear and the forecast good, we will head up to one of the most magnificent vantage points in all of the Alps: The Jungfrauoch at 3454 metres. From Grindelwald, we take a cog train to Kleine Scheidegg and then change trains to head up to the Jungfrauoch. If clouds do not obscure our views, there is no reason to head down quickly, and lunch will be taken at the top, where the beauty and majesty of the Bernese Oberland unfolds.

Afternoon train ride back to Grindelwald, Dinner on your own and overnight in Grindelwald.



Hotel in Grindelwald

Breakfast, Dinner included

Distance: 1.6km (1m), 3hours, up / down 260m (858ft)

ALPINE INTERFACE

Day 09: GRINDELWALD: THE EIGER TRAIL

The Eiger Trail, one of the newest trails in the area, was inaugurated in 1996 and winds its way beneath the impressive Eiger North Face. This is our destination for the day. We once again take the cog train from Grindelwald and then change trains, stopping at the Eigergletscher Station, the starting point for mountaineers attempting the awesome North Face. Hiking beneath this face can only enhance the respect we all have for the early climbing pioneers who helped push the limits of modern mountaineering. Once we leave the mineral world of the high mountains, our trail winds gently down, crossing pastures and slowly making its way back to Grindelwald.



Hotel in Grindelwald

Breakfast, Dinner included

Distance: 6 km (3.75m), 2-3hours, up 140m (460ft) / down 800m (2640ft)

Day 10 - DEPARTURE

All guests will depart from Grindelwald depending on their own schedule. We can, of course, help with pre- and post-arrangements.



Breakfast included
