

ALPINE INTERFACE

TOUR DU MONT BLANC

- Circumnavigation of the Mont Blanc Range, France, Italy and Switzerland.

Day 1: ARRIVAL DAY – CHAMONIX MONT-BLANC

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



Hotel in Chamonix

Dinner included

Day 2: CHAMONIX: AIGUILLE DU MIDI - MONTENVERS

A short walk brings us to the bottom station of the Aiguille du Midi, one of the most impressive cable car systems in the world. Two cable cars bring us to 3807m, a world of ice and snow. Stunning views out to Mont Blanc, Les Grandes Jorasses, the Matterhorn, Monte Rosa and many more Alpine giants.

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: LES CHAPIEUX

A quick transfer to Les Contamines, followed by a one of the longest and more difficult hikes of the trip, as we cross two mountain passes, Col du Bonhomme and the Col de la Croix du Bonhomme, with a stop at the refuge of the same name for a picnic lunch, or a hot soup/salad combo. Freshly energized, the descent to the little hamlet of Les Chapieux awaits us, in the heart of the famous cheese-making region of the Beaufort, the Queen of the Gruyère cheeses.



Mountain Hotel in Les Chapieux



Breakfast, Dinner included



Luggage delivered



Distance: 18.5km (11.5m), 7hours, up 1270m (4160ft), down 885m (2900ft)

Day 4: COURMAYEUR

After a visit to a Beaufort cheese-making cooperative on the way, and the purchase of some cheese for our picnic lunch, we say *au revoir* to France, and *ciao* to Italy. Over the Col de la Seigne and down into the Val Veney and eventually the Rifugio Elisabetta for a well-deserved Italian coffee!

A moderate walk down to Lac Combal and La Visaille before taking a bus or taxi transfer to Courmayeur, the mountaineering capital of the Italian Alps.

Gourmet pizza dinner in great little restaurant followed by Italian gelato!



Hotel in Courmayeur



Breakfast, Dinner included



Luggage delivered



Distance: 14 km (8.75m), 5 – 6 hours, up 735m (2400ft), down 550m (1790ft)



Transfer from Lac Combal / Visaille to Courmayeur (10 min)

Day 5: RIFUGIO BONATTI

After a hearty breakfast, we begin our walk along the cobble stone streets of the old town before heading steeply up to the Mont de la Saxe ridge and the first refuge, the Bertone, gaining nearly 900m (2,700ft). A further 5-6 hours is required to reach the Walter Bonatti refuge, perched high on the lateral moraine, looking out towards the South Face of the Mont Blanc Range and the towering Grandes Jorasses.



Rifugio Bonatti, shared bathrooms



Breakfast included



Distance: 12km (13m), 6 – 7 hours, up 1050m (3465ft), down 260m (858ft)

Day 6: CHAMPEX-LAC

Continuing along the Mont de la Saxe ridge for a short time, we descend to the Val Ferret, only to climb again to the Rifugio Elena and possibly the best hot chocolate in the world!

Today's climb is short and sweet with the last views of this side of the range. Once at the Grand Col Ferret, we say ciao to Italy and bonjour to Switzerland as we make our way to Champex-Lac.



Hotel in Champex-Lac



Breakfast, Dinner included



Luggage delivered



Distance: 19km (11.8m), 6 hours, up 990m (3265t), down 1350m (4455ft)



Transfer from La Fouly to Champex-Lac, 20-25 min

Day 7: ARGENTIÈRE

Today's hike takes us along a forested path of the TMB up a steep trail to the Bovine hut for lunch, where Nathalie, the owner, produces amazing home-cooked meals on a wood stove. She's also the owner of a large herd of 'fighting cows', a breed from the Val d'Hérens called 'Reines' (Queens). They are known for their aggressive behaviour towards each other and are the centre of elaborate events at the beginning and the end of each summer season.

Two more hours of hiking bring us to the Col de Forclaz, before being taken to Argentière, in France for the night.



Hotel in Argentière



Breakfast, Dinner included



Luggage delivered



Distance: 14km (8.8m), 6 hours, up 520m (1700ft), down 660m (2170ft)



Transfer Col de Forclaz – Argentiere, 15 min

Day 8: CHAMONIX: LAC BLANC

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 of 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 Chamonix



Breakfast, Dinner included



Luggage delivered



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

Day 9: DEPARTURE DAY

All guests depart at their own leisure from Chamonix.



Breakfast included