

Medium-altitude hiking in a high-mountain setting, with prestigious peaks and impressive glaciers. From mountain passes to alpine pastures, balcony trails criss-cross the nature reserves of three countries linked geographically by the roof of Europe and traditionally by history: the Swiss Valais, the Italian Val d'Aoste and the French Savoie.

PROGRAMME

Day 1 : Les Praz de Chamonix - Lac Blanc - Le Tour

Meet at 10:00 am at the Flégère cable car station, Les Praz de Chamonix (to collect your luggage).

Take the Flégère cable car up to the Mont Blanc balconies to reach Lac Blanc at 2300m. Descent to the Col des Montets and the Aiguilles Rouges reserve house, then on to Montroc and the village of Le Tour.

HIKING TIME: 5h30

ASCENT : + 450 m

DESCENT : - 950 m

ACCOMMODATION: in a gîte or hotel, depending on the option chosen.

LUGGAGE ASSISTANCE: with luggage transport (if you have chosen this option)

Day 2 : Le tour - Col de Balme - Trient

From the village of Le Tour, easy ascent to the Chalets de Charamillon and the Col de Balme (2200m) or ascent via the Posettes balcony. Panoramic views of Mont Blanc and the Tour and Argentière glaciers. Descent into the Swiss alpine pastures to the village of Trient.

HIKING TIME: 5 hours

ASCENT : + 840 m

DESCENT : - 920 m

ACCOMMODATION: in a gîte or hotel, depending on the option chosen.

LUGGAGE ASSISTANCE: with luggage transport (if you have chosen this option)

Day 3 : Bovine ou Fenêtre d'Arpette - Champex

Cross the Bovine mountain pastures on a balcony path overlooking the Rhône valley, or take the "Haute Montagne" variant via the legendary Arpette window (2665m). Descent to Champex.

HIKING TIME: 6h (6h30 via Arpette)

ASCENT : + 1100 m (1300 m via Arpette)

DESCENT : - 750 m (970 m via Arpette)

ACCOMMODATION: in a gîte or hotel, depending on the option chosen.

LUGGAGE ASSISTANCE: with luggage transport (if you have chosen this option)

Day 4: Val Ferret Switzerland - La Fouly

Descent to the village of Champex and crossing of the Swiss Val Ferret, dotted with typical villages of undeniable charm. Option to take the bus for a half-day break.

HIKING TIME: 5h

ASCENT : + 600 m

DESCENT : - 700 m

ACCOMMODATION: in a gîte or hotel, depending on the option chosen.

LUGGAGE ASSISTANCE: with luggage transport (if you have chosen this option)

Day 5 : Grand Col Ferret - Italian Val Ferret

Ascent via the Peule mountain pastures to the Grand Col Ferret (2537 m).
Possible detour via Tête Ferret. After crossing the border, descent into the Italian Val Ferret under the foothills of the reverse side of Mont Blanc.
Unusual view of the Grandes Jorasses.

HIKING TIME: 5h

ASCENT : + 840 m

DESCENT : - 750 m

ACCOMMODATION: in a gîte or hotel, depending on the option chosen.

LUGGAGE ASSISTANCE: with luggage transport (if you have chosen this option)

Day 6 : Mont de la Saxe - Courmayeur

Ascent to the hamlet of Sécheron and then Armina, followed by the Mont de la Saxe balcony trail facing Mont Blanc, or ascent to the Col Sapin. Descent to Courmayeur to the bus station for a short transfer by regular bus to the Monte Bianco refuge.

HIKING TIME: 5h30

ASCENT : + 650 m

DESCENT : - 1200 m

ACCOMMODATION: in a gîte or hotel, depending on the option chosen.

LUGGAGE ASSISTANCE: with luggage transport (if you have chosen this option)

Day 7 : Col de la Seigne - Les Mottets or Les Chapieux

Ascent of the Val Veny to the Elisabetta hut.
Possible detour to Lac de Miage. Ascent to the Col de la Seigne, on the border between Italy and France, with a view of the reverse side of Mont Blanc. A more alpine variant is possible, via the Chécroui balcony and Mont Fortin.
Descent to the refuge des Mottets or Les Chapieux (subject to availability).

HIKING TIME: 6h30

ASCENT : + 850 m

DESCENT : - 650 m

ACCOMMODATION: in a gîte or hotel, depending on the option chosen.

LUGGAGE ASSISTANCE: with luggage transport (if you have chosen this option)

Day 8 : Col des Fours - Col du Bonhomme - Les Contamines-Montjoie

Ascent to the Col des Fours (2665m), in a very "high mountain" setting, the highest point of the hike, then descent to the Col du Bonhomme, a famous passage for the peddlers of yesteryear.

If you spend the night at the Auberge La Nova, climb directly to the Col du Bonhomme.
Descent along the old Roman road to the Notre Dame de la Gorge chapel.
Transfer to your accommodation by regular bus (free of charge).

HIKING TIME: 6h30

ASCENT : + 850 m

DESCENT : - 1500 m

ACCOMMODATION: in a gîte or hotel, depending on the option chosen.

LUGGAGE ASSISTANCE: with luggage transport (if you have chosen this option)

Day 9: Bionnassay - Col du Tricot - Les Houches

Transfer (free) to La Gruvaz and climb up to the Bionnassay glacier, via the village of Champel or the Col du Tricot (2120m), a must-see lookout point over the Chamonix valley, beneath the Dômes de Miage and Mont-Blanc.

Descent to the village of Les Houches.

End of the hike in the afternoon at the foot of the Prarion cable car in Les Houches.

HIKING TIME: 5h via Champel (6h30 via Col du Tricot)

ASCENT: + 750 m via Champel (1100 m via Col du Tricot)

DESCENT : - 800 m (1250 m via Col du Tricot)

LUGGAGE ASSISTANCE: with luggage transport (if you have chosen this option)

FICHE PRATIQUE

ACCUEIL

Meet at 10:00 am at the Flégère cable car station, Les Praz de Chamonix.

At your request, your luggage can be picked up directly at your hotel in the Chamonix valley, in which case there's no need to arrange a meeting at the start.

For hikers who have chosen the "no luggage transport" version, there is no meeting at the start.

BY TRAIN :

Outward journey: the day before, departure from Paris-Gare de Lyon at 12:18pm (or 2:18pm), arrival in Chamonix at 7:32pm (8:32pm).

Return: departure from Les Houches at 18h20, arrival at Paris-Gare de Lyon at 23h42.

Timetables given are for guidance only and must be checked with SNCF

<https://www.oui.sncf/>

Buses and trains serve the whole Chamonix valley - regular hourly service between Les Houches and Chamonix.

www.montblancbus.transdev.com/ligne/les-horaires-de-chamonix-bus/

BY CAR :

A40 freeway to Chamonix.

You can leave your car at the free Prarion gondola parking lot in Les Houches (end of hike) and take the bus back to the meeting point in Planpraz (20 mins drive). This will make your return easier at the end of the hike.

If you wish to leave your vehicle in a covered parking lot: Chamonix Park auto in Chamonix: 04 50 53 65 71 (40 to 50€ per week).

CARPOOLING:

A few sites where drivers and passengers can get in touch to share journeys:

<https://covoiturage-libre.fr/> <https://www.laroueverte.com/> <https://www.roulezmalin.com/>

<https://www.blablacar.fr/>

NEAREST AIRPORT :

Geneva (GVA)

1h by car to Chamonix (also by train, but not very convenient)

Numerous buses and minibuses connect several times a day.

Lyon (LYS)

2h15 to Chamonix by car

Train every 2 hours to Chamonix / 4h15 journey time.

Paris (PAR)

7h to reach Chamonix by car

Train every 2 hours to Chamonix / 5 to 6 hours travel time.

DISPERSION

End of the hike in the afternoon in Les Houches.

RETURN TO DEPARTURE POINT

Transfer by bus or train from Les Houches to Les Praz de Chamonix at the end of the hike.

NIVEAU

Sporting level:

Average altitude gain: +/- 600m to 1200m per day.

Duration of stages: 5 to 7 hours per day.

Particular difficulties: mountain itinerary with no technical difficulties. Accessible to anyone in good general physical condition. Although it does not present any particular technical difficulties (no steep passages, well-marked trails, etc.), it is still a physically demanding hike, requiring the ability to cover almost 1,000 meters of vertical drop per day over the course of a full week.

The Tour du Mont-Blanc is a well-marked trail:

In France: red and white Grande Randonnée trails (in both directions).

In Switzerland and Italy: black diamonds on a yellow background at the bottom of the valley, then red and white at higher altitudes (in both directions).

HEBERGEMENT

CLASSIC :

- 8 nights in a dormitory, refuge or gîte.

COMFORT :

- 6 nights in a gîte or refuge in a 2-person room.

- 1 night in a gîte or refuge in a 2- to 4-person room.

- 1 night in a hotel in a 2-person room.

Hot showers in all accommodation.

HOTEL VERSION :

- 5 nights in a hotel,

- 2 nights in comfortable gîte with private bathroom,

- 1 night in a 2-person room with bathroom on the landing.

Meals :

Breakfast and dinner are provided in each accommodation.

Picnics are not included and can be ordered the day before in each accommodation.

You can buy supplies in small local shops (days 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8).

TRANSFERTS INTERNES

PORTAGE DES BAGAGES

Depending on the option chosen:

Without luggage transport: You carry all your personal belongings for the duration of your stay.

With luggage transport: You carry only your personal belongings for the day (small backpack). The rest of your luggage is transported between accommodations. If luggage transport is not possible in an accommodation, you can take your personal belongings with you for the night as well. You'll get your luggage back the next day.

GROUPE

ENCADREMENT

No guidebook on this trip.

Before your departure, we'll give you a road book specially designed for this tour, with precise indications that will allow you to explore and hike in complete freedom. To fully enjoy and appreciate your hiking trip, you must be able to ensure your autonomy in the field with the documents provided.

MATERIEL FOURNI

EQUIPEMENT INDIVIDUEL A PREVOIR

Clothing :

- Hiking pants
- Shorts (1 swimsuit just in case)
- Breathable or merino wool T-shirts
- Breathable" or merino wool long johns
- Fleece or sweater
- Windbreaker or Goretex jacket
- Rain cape + gaiters or Goretex pants + bag cape
- A pair of gloves and a light hat
- Hat or cap
- Hiking socks (double-layered, with loops...1 pair per day)
- Broken-in hiking boots with well-spiked soles
- 1 change of clothes for the evening
- Change of shoes for the evening

Miscellaneous equipment :

- Toiletry bag
- Towel (quick-drying, available in specialized stores)
- Sunglasses and sun cream
- Water bottle or thermos flask (1.5-liter minimum)
- Knife and cutlery
- An airtight plastic box to serve as a picnic plate
- Coffee cup
- Small personal first-aid kit (painkillers, compeed bandages, etc.)
- Survival blanket
- Headlamp or flashlight
- A sheet and pillowcase (gîtes provide blankets)
- Two telescopic poles (highly recommended)
- Valid identity card or passport

BACKPACK:

Provide a comfortable 30-40-liter backpack for your day's belongings (warm clothing, rain cape, water bottle, box and cutlery for picnic, sun protection and ID papers) and a little room to carry a picnic and snacks.

LUGGAGE TRANSPORT :

Your luggage is transported by a logistics vehicle from stage to stage each day.

Your change of clothes should be packed in 1 soft bag not exceeding 10 kg (for your comfort on the upper floors and in the dormitories, avoid rigid suitcases or bags that are too heavy or bulky).

LE PRIX COMPREND

- Travel documents,

- Half-board accommodation from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on the last day,
- Luggage transport between accommodations (if you have chosen this option),
- Transfer from Contamines-Montjoie to La Gruvaz on D9,
- Organization and registration fees,
- Tourist taxes.

LE PRIX NE COMPREND PAS

- Insurance,
- Transportation to and from departure point,
- Picnic lunches,
- Drinks, visits and personal expenses,
- Transfer by scheduled bus (approx. 5€ per person),
- Gondola lift on D1 (approx. 18€ per person).