

Self-Guided Hiking tour

Tour description and distances

Day 1	Arrive Martigny	
Day 2	Argentiere	15 km
Day 3	To Chamonix	14 km
Day 4	To Les Houches	12 km
Day 5	To les Contamines	10 or 18 km
Day 6	To Les Chapieux	17 km
Day 7	To Courmayeur	15 km
Day 8	To Val Ferret	16 km
Day 9	To La Fouly	14 km
Day 10	To Champex	15 km
Day 11	To Martigny	15 km
Day 12	End of Tour	



Tour de Mont Blanc

This spectacular trip crosses three international borders and circles 15,770-foot Mont Blanc. But even armed with a handful of languages, you'll struggle for words to describe the ridiculously beautiful vistas gracing this tours as it dips into France, Italy, and Switzerland. Hike through valleys with steep, snow-frosted mountains towering 10,000 feet mountains all around you. From ancient cobblestones to dirt trails, the route tops seven alpine passes. This amazing circuit straddles three countries, so you can enjoy the cheeses in Switzerland, fine wine of France and delicious pasta of Italy. Cross over mountain passes that allow the avid hiker to enjoy the magnificent scenery on this long loop.

Mont Blanc itself, the highest peak in the Alps, needs no introduction to hikers. Our circuit begins and ends in Martigny, Switzerland.

We use 3* hotels and for two nights we use guesthouses. You pass through and stay in traditional alpine villages in three countries in twelve days. This hike is reasonably demanding and suitable for the fit experienced hiker.

Tour Details

Daily June 29 to September 15

Cost: \$2875 per person

Single Supplement: \$850

Length: 12 days / 11 nights

Grade: Challenging

Starts/Ends: Martigny Switzerland

Fast Facts

- Hiking through the Alps on a well-marked trails, through 3 countries
- Breakfasts included
- Self-guided hikes daily
- Lovely accommodations each night
- Luggage transfers included
- Each town connected by bus or train
- Take a short cut if you need to by cable car or other local transportation
- Not suitable for beginners, elevation climb and descent daily about 1000 meters or 3000 feet

ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival in Martigny

The little town of Martigny lies in an idyllic spot close to the river Rhône. Go for a walk and visit the castle La Batiatz or indulge yourself in one of the many restaurants.

Day 2: Martigny - Argentière

Take a bus to Trient early in the morning. Your first hiking day starts by hiking up the Col de Balme pass, where you can stop in a quaint mountain lodge. It offers fantastic views of Mont Blanc and the Chamonix valley. You will then descend into the grassy valley below. Follow the impressive Kammweg (ridgeway) over the summit of Aiguillette des Posettes, hiking on a rocky terrain with a magnificent vista of the surrounding glaciers. You will then descend on a steep trail, which meets a mountain stream to your destination. A fantastic day amidst the highest, gigantic mountains! Details: 15 km, ↑ 1000m, ↓ 900m, hiking time: apx 5 h

Day 3: Argentière - Chamonix

This is the most spectacular leg of the Mont Blanc tour: on well-secured ladders, you will climb steep rocks to reach the light-blue shimmering mountain lake called Lac Blanc. In the afternoon, the path across the "Grand Balcon", a great alpine path, will take you along the mountain slope and through blueberry fields to Plan Praz, which has a café at an altitude of 2000 m! Here you can take the cable car and glide down to the legendary mountaineer hub of Chamonix. A stroll through the magnificent pedestrian area with colourfully decorated houses is a treat for the eyes! These stretches can be made easier if you wish and you can leave out the adventurous climbing routes.

Details: apx. 14 km, ↑ 1050-1300m, ↓ 350 - 600 m, hiking apx 5.5

Day 4: Chamonix – Les Houches

Today, you will ride the cable car to climb up 2000 m. You are not very far from the pass Col du Brévent, from where you will trek the impressive boulders of the panorama peak of Brévent. From the platform, which is known as the "best lookout post on Mont Blanc", you can see the glaciers and snow peaks. Take a beautiful hiking trail from Lac du Brévent that descends to Bel-Lachat. You can rest here before resuming the steep climb, which will take you past the Alpen-Wildpark Merlet through the forest and into the valley. You will stay the night in one of the many small hamlets in the municipality of Les Houches situated in the valley.

Details: apx. 12 km, ↑ 500 m ↓ 1500 m, hiking time: apx 5 h

Day 5: Les Houches – Les Contamines

Experience the famous "Mont Blanc tram" from close quarters and walk along its tracks for a stretch of the hike! From Bellevue, you can view the imposing end station of the daringly constructed rack railway next to the ice field. An interesting alpine path guides you to a suspension bridge that you need to cross over a rustling glacial stream. You will then hike through mountain meadows to the Col de Tricot pass and climb down to the Miage huts.



Continued...

ITINERARY ...continued

After a further climb, you will reach the cosy destination of Truc-Alpe. Grab a bite while listening to the bells of grazing cows. Your destination, Les Contamines, is situated in the Montjoie valley, which is famous for its delicious cheeses from the surrounding alpine pastures. Don't forget to visit one of the cheese dairies and taste the Savoy cheese with red wine with a fresh baguette. Details: apx 10 - 18 km, ↑550 m - 1350 m, ↓ 1150 m, hike: apx 4-8 h

Day 6: Les Contamines – Les Chapieux - Bourg Saint-Maurice

The last leg of the tour will make your heart beat faster: you will hike on the paths tread by Romans over gurgling ravines, see stone types of varied colours, get views of glacial lakes and climb two high pass crossings! The path passes the southernmost point of the Mont Blanc massif, where you can enjoy unending vistas of the southern part of the mountain massif of the French Alps. You can first walk along the river to the baroque pilgrimage church Notre Dame de la Gorge, from where you can start with the long climb to the top of the passes: on a rocky alpine path to the pass Col de la Croix du Bonhomme. Take a well deserved break at a refuge, a traditional shelter of the French Alpine Club. The last descent across alpine pastures with mountain brooks flowing through them leads you to Vallée des Glaciers where you can toast to your successful hiking week in the small hamlet of Les Chapieux. You can now relax on the last evening of your tour and relive the week-long hike over a glass of wine!

Details: apx 17 km, ↑1300 m ↓900 m, hiking time: apx 7h

Day 7: Bourg Saint Maurice – Courmayeur

A short journey takes you up to the Vallée des Glaciers, the valley of the glacier. From there you climb up to the Col de la Seigne pass, where you cross the border from France to Italy and enjoy fantastic views. You then hike through fields studded with flowers to the Rifugio Elisabetta, a traditional Italian mountaineering lodge. A side trip to the turquoise glacier lake Lacs de Miage is enticing, before you take the bus to Courmayeur, the home of famous mountain guides and alpine mountaineers.

Details: apx 15 km, ↑ 750 m ↓850 m, Hiking time: apx 5 h

Day 8: Courmayeur – Val Ferret

Passing by Rifugio Bertone, you walk on a very scenic mountain path along the mountain flank. Take the time to sit in the terrace of the Rifugio Bonatti mountain lodge with the patio situated directly opposite the massive Mont-Blanc. The path takes you further over bridges and brooks to Arnouva, located at a height of 1800m in the valley head of the idyllic Val Ferrets.

Details: approx. 16 km, ↑1000 m ↓550 m, Hiking time: apx 5 h

Day 9: Val Ferret – La Fouly

Today you will hike over the high Col Ferret pass in Switzerland and reach beautiful Wallis. Rest in one of the mountain lodges and enjoy fresh milk products and the ringing of cow bells on your way towards your destination of La Fouly.

Details: 14 km, ↑800 m ↓1'000 m, Hiking time: apx 5 h

Day 10: La Fouly – Champex

Hike along the blue alpine river Dranse past high mountain walls towards the valley through forests and meadows. Enjoy the small traditional mountain villages with their typical stone houses and corn fields on this relaxed hike through the valley. Follow the route to Champex, with its delightful forest and crystal clear lake.

Details: apx 15 km ↑450 m ↓600 m, Hiking time: apx 4 h



Day 11: Tag: Champex – Martigny

Take the peaceful meadow trails to Alpe am Plan de l'Au, where a long ascent begins to the higher pastures. You climb up to the Bovine lodge with its magnificent views of the Rhone valley. Then hike down to Trient, famous for its rose-pink church and impressive glaciers on the surrounding mountain peaks. Take the bus down to Martigny.

Details: apx. 15 km, ↑700 m ↓900 m, Hiking time: apx.5 h

Day 12: Departure or extra nights

What to Expect

What will the weather be like?

The daytime temperature will be warm and sunny. In June and July, you can expect high 70's, maybe even 80's (high 20's C), and cooler evenings. Sunscreen is a must during the day, as is a sweater for the cooler nights. Normally it does not rain, but we recommend rain gear, just in case.

How many hours of hiking a day?

Be prepared to hike between 5 to 8 hours daily, rarely on flat terrain. The countryside is all hills. You are either going up or down almost all the time; you are ascending and descending about 1000 meters a day.

How fit do I need to be?

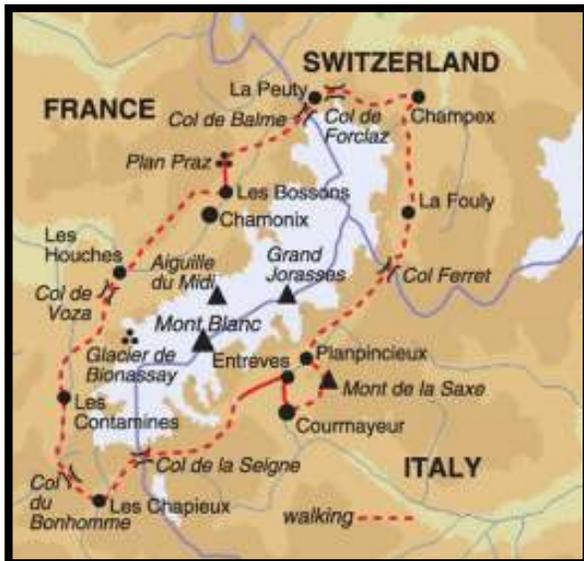
The fitter the better, and past hiking experience is required. You have the option of taking a day off and not hiking, or only doing half the route if you want. There are many short cuts available throughout the journey, such as using buses, trains, trams, cable cars and chairlifts, at your own cost.

What are the hotels like?

We use good hotels and lodges with twin-bedded rooms, all with private facilities. There are only two nights in a refuge en route that is below this standard (but the best available in the area for miles). It is primarily dormitory, but has some double rooms now.

What are the meals like?

There is a full buffet breakfast. In towns there will be plenty of choices for restaurants in the evening. In guesthouses, they will have 2-3 choices for evening meals.



Other Options:

You can do a shorter route for 7 nights either hiking the Western or Eastern Route of the Mont Blanc trek. Call us for more information, dates and pricing.

Getting There

There are numerous flights going directly to Geneva and /or Paris. From there you can take a local train to Martigny. It may be less expensive to fly to Paris and take the train directly from the airport which is about 4 to 5 hours. You can buy a rail pass which would include both countries for 3 full days at a reasonable cost.



How to book your holiday

- Contact our office to make sure there is space available. One of our travel planners will walk you through the entire booking process.
- Download the reservation form from our website and send in the completed form by fax or email. Once this is done, your space is confirmed and a pre-departure packet will be sent immediately.
- A deposit is required immediately, and final payment is due 60 days prior to departure. Terms & conditions are outlined on the back of our Reservation Form.
- Plan your air travel as soon as possible.
- We encourage you to purchase travel insurance, either through us or directly from a travel insurance provider.
- Ensure that you are in proper health for the trip. Contact us for more information on vaccinations, inoculations, and fitness requirements.