

# TOUR DU MONT BLANC IN MOUNTAIN HUTS ON YOUR OWN

The Tour du Mont Blanc encircles the Top of Europe. It's one of Europe's most popular trails, but it's also one of the most beautiful hikes in the world. This tour offers you the chance to discover the French, Italian and Swiss treasures of the Mont-Blanc massif, but also the world of high mountains and the show of glaciers and peaks nearby. From the Chamonix valley to Courmayeur, from the Arpette window to the wild Val Ferret, this path of adventure between pastures and glaciers, crossing passes and valleys will seduce you. The Tour du Mont Blanc is accessible to good hikers.

 Region	Northern Alps : around Mont blanc
 Activity	Hiking Summer
 Duration	6 days
 Code	RTMBA-LIB
 Price	From €595
 Level	3/5
 Comfort	3/5

## ITINERARY

### Day 1 LES HOUCHES (1008 M)- COL DE TRICOT (2120 M) - LES CONTAMINES MONTJOIE (1170 M)



We meet in Les Houches at 8:30 am at the foot of the Bellevue cable car: from the top you will enjoy a panoramic view of the Mont Blanc massif, the Aiguilles Rouges, the Fiz mountain range and the Aravis. The hike begins on a 1800m-high balcony and leads you to the foot of the Bionnassay glacier, before descending to Les Contamines-Montjoie. Passage through the Tricot Pass at 2120m, if the weather conditions allow it!

### Day 2 CONTAMINES MONTJOIE (1170 M) - COL DU BONHOMME (2329 M) - VALLÉE DES GLACIERS



You carry on our walk to Notre-Dame-de-la-Gorge, high place of baroque romanticism. A long climb takes you to the Col du Bonhomme (2329m). This pass has been crowned for ages by shepherds and their flocks, armies and soldiers, pilgrims, peddlers and hikers of the Tour du Mont Blanc. The view opens up to the Beaufortain at your feet. Ascent to Col des Fours (2665m) then descent into the pastures through bovine pastures of Tarines and Abondances breed cows.

### Day 3 VALLEE DES GLACIERS - COL DE LA SEIGNE (2516 M) - COURMAYEUR (1230 M) - LE LAVACHEY (1580 M)



Today you will cross your first border between France and Italy, through the Seigne pass (2516m): attended since ancient times, it is marked by a large cairn and is located on the watershed of the Mediterranean Sea and the Adriatic. The show is stunning: a palette of snow-capped peaks stands out on the Italian side of Mont Blanc. You join Courmayeur, then Lavachey to spend the night.

### Day 4 LE LAVACHEY (1580 M) - GRAND COL FERRET (2490 M) - CHAMPEX (1466 M)



Today, continue your climb of the Italian Val Ferret to reach the Grand Col Ferret, which borders Italy and Switzerland. You walk whilst admiring the Pré de Bar glacier and Mont Dolent: border summit between the three countries. Descent to the village of Ferret and bus transfer via Orsières to the charming village of Champex, on the edge of a pretty mountain lake.

### Day 5 CHAMPEX (1466 M) - TRIENT (1300 M)



You leave Champex to start the climb leading you to the mountain pastures of Bovine. From there, your view embraces the Rhone valley on the Swiss side and the Grands Combins massif to the South-East. You will descend through a beautiful forest to the authentic village of Trient.

📍 Day 6 **TRIENT (1300 M) - COL DE BALME (2191 M) - ARGENTIERE (1244 M) - CHAMONIX (1035 M)**



After lacing your walking boots back up, you will come back to the French border through the Col de Balme (2191m) before joining the Col des Posettes. A balcony crossing will lead you to Tré-Le-Champ. Descent on foot or by bus to Montroc or Argentière to then regain Chamonix.

The walking and transport times are given as an indication and can change according to the groups, the conditions of the ground and roads. The route may be changed for security, weather or other unforeseen reasons. Atalante and its guides will always make every effort to provide the best solution, even by changing the route.

## PERIOD & BUDGET

### When to travel?

The best period for travelling is during the following months:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
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### Price

Lodging / Refuges formula

Without baggage assistance:

-Base 2, 3 and 4 people: 495 € per person

With luggage assistance:

- Based on 2 people: 675 € per person

- Base 3 and 4 people: 640 € per person

Hotel Formula

Without baggage assistance:

Base 2, 3 and 4 people: € 740 per person

With luggage assistance:

Based on 2 people: € 935 per person

Base 3 and 4 people: 895 € per person

This budget is indicated per person, subject to availability. Your local agent will send you a personalized quote with the exact price. Indeed, the latter may vary depending on several elements (availability, levels of services, period, number of participants, reservation time and many more).

*The budget is an indication of the price per person, subject to availability. Your local agent will send you a customized quote with the exact price. The price can vary according to availability, level of services, period of travel, number of participants, booking time frame and other items.*

### Included

- Accommodation in shelters
- Luggage transfers
- Breakfast from Day 2 to Day 6
- Dinners from Day 1 to Day 5
- The road book (detailed itinerary with map and booking forms) for a group of 2 to 4 people.
- A personalized welcome on Day 1 at Les Houches by a member of our team

### Not included

- Shuttle transfers from and to Chamonix
- Application fees (18€ per person)
- Picnics
- Dinner on Day 6
- Drinks
- Travel with public transport and ski lift fees (details in the travel tab)
- Personal expenses

### Terms and conditions

## Booking conditions

By booking one of our travels, the customer bindingly accepts the general terms and conditions of sale. Each customer must fill a registration form. The booking is definitively registered when the customer has settled the payment of a deposit of 35 % of the total trip's price (subject to availability at the time of registration). In case of short term booking – within 35 days before the travel departure, the full trip's price is due immediately. Payments can be settled via bank transfer (SWIFT code/IBAN number) or online, directly from our website (available soon). You will receive an email with a booking confirmation as quickly as possible.

## Invoice procedure

Once your booking registered, we send you an email with the invoice. Full payment is required at least 35 days before your arrival. If the customer does not settle the payment of the travel's price within the period agreed upon, Altaï Alpes gets the right to cancel the booking without additional charges.

## Cancellation policy

### Cancellation by You

If, for any reason, you need to cancel your trip, the amounts you have paid will be refunded, subject to the following deductions: You must notify us of your decision to cancel in writing, using any method that provides acknowledgment of receipt. The cancellation date will be determined based on the date we receive your written notice.

In case of cancellation, for any reason, the following cancellation fees will apply:

- **More than 31 days before departure:** 30% of the total trip cost (excluding insurance)
- **30 to 21 days before departure:** 40% of the total trip cost (excluding insurance)
- **20 to 14 days before departure:** 50% of the total trip cost (excluding insurance)
- **13 to 7 days before departure:** 75% of the total trip cost (excluding insurance)
- **Less than 7 days before departure:** 100% of the total trip cost (excluding insurance)

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### Special Cases

Regardless of the cancellation or contract modification date, the following fees are added to the above scale:

- **Non-refundable fixed ground fees:** Any firm bookings made early (such as certain mountain huts) will be charged in case of cancellation.
- **Insurance and registration fees:** Whatever the insurance policy chosen, the cost of insurance and registration fees are non-refundable.

If you have taken out multi-risk insurance, the cancellation fees may be reimbursed by the insurance in specific cases (e.g., illness, accident, death, etc.).

The insurance becomes effective from the day of subscription and payment.

### Cancellation by Us

**Altaï France** may cancel a trip free of charge in the following cases:

- If the minimum number of participants required to run the trip is not met.
- In case of **exceptional and unavoidable circumstances**, especially related to mountain conditions and customer safety.

In such cases, Altaï France will propose alternative solutions. If no suitable alternative is available, any unused services will be refunded. No additional compensation can be claimed.

You will be informed of any cancellation as soon as possible, and no later than:

- **30 days** before departure for self-guided or exclusive trips
- **20 days** before departure for trips longer than 6 days requiring a minimum number of participants
- **7 days** before departure for trips lasting 2 to 6 days
- **48 hours** before departure for trips shorter than 2 days

If Altaï France is forced to cancel all or part of the trip due to circumstances that compromise customer safety (e.g., poor mountain weather), the unused services will be refunded. No additional compensation will be provided.

For safety reasons and to ensure a consistent group level as described, the guide and organizers reserve the right to terminate your participation if your technical level or physical condition does not meet the requirements. In such a case, no refund or compensation will be provided.

## Changes to travel contract

If any change is made in the travel's contract at the customer's request, any fee that might arise from this change shall be paid by the customer. In any cases, every request for changes shall be notified in writing. In case of external events that could not be foreseen, Altaï Alpes might change some aspects of the travel contract. We will endeavour to inform you of any change as quickly as possible.

### **Pricing**

All travel prices for groups on our website have been calculated for the indicated number of participants. The price list is confirmed after the booking. If the number of participants is lower than expected, an additional payment charge might be applied. For each travel and program, we mention the price per person – valid for the minimum number of participants – and we provide you with detailed explanations about the services included or not. Any change, of the currency exchange rates or on the price of travel's services in particular regarding the cost of the fuel, might entail price revision.

### **Contract transfer**

In case of transfer of the contract by the customer to an assignee, modification and cancellation conditions will be applied.

### **Insurance**

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We recommend you to get your own insurance before your departure to cover the activities undertaken by Altaï Alpes. Please email us your insurance contract information (insurance company's name, contract number, phone number) and bring this information with you during your trip.

## PRACTICAL INFO

### Staff

Unaccompanied trip with a detailed road book (handed before your departure).

Your road book is composed of :

- A described day by day
- Vouchers for accommodations
- Maps to follow the tracks

A welcome in Les Houches will be organized with us, at the foot of the Bellevue cable car.

### Food

- Breakfasts and evening meals are served in the different accommodation.
- Remember to take some snacks: cereal bars, chocolate bars, dried fruits ...
- Lunchtime picnics are your responsibility: throughout the trek you will have the opportunity to go shopping for food: small groceries, cheese in shelters...

#### WATER:

Personal drinks are not included in the price of the stay: bring some change and a few Swiss francs for coffees, juices, beers or sodas during breaks. Shelters often do not have credit card machine !

### Accommodation

The nights are spent in dormitories. For this purpose, don't forget to bring some earplugs (in case of disrupting noises..).

The dormitories are equipped with blankets. Take a sleeping sheet, and a pillowcase to make your nights much more comfortable...

Nowadays, almost every shelters have showers (sometimes paid tokens), take the necessary toiletries (soap, towel..) and sanitaries are common.

### Transportation

You will have your backpack with all your belongings for the 6 days of trekking.

The various transfers such as shuttles, cable cars, local buses are at your expense if you wish to take them (indicative rates summer 2016).

- Day 1: Possibility of Chamonix valley bus to go to Bellevue (line 1, ticket = € 1.50)
- Day 1: Cable car: Les Houches-Bellevue (14 €)
- Day 2: possibility of shuttle between the Contamines-Montjoie and Notre-Dame-de-la-Gorge (2 €), only between the end of June and the end of August.
- Day 2 + Day 3: possibility of shuttle between Ville-des-Glacières and Chapieux following accommodation (€ 3.50) only between the first weekend of July and the last of August
- Day 4 : possibility of Savda shuttle between Purtud and Courmayeur (between 2 € and 3 € according to the period)
- Day 4: Savda shuttle between Courmayeur and Lavachey or Arnava (between € 2 and € 3 depending on the period)
- Day 4: SBB bus between Ferret and Champex (via Praz-de-Fort) (3FS)
- Day 5: possibility of SBB bus between Forclaz and Trient (3.60FS)
- Day 6: local bus: Le Tour- Chamonix or Bellevue (1.5 €)

### Budget & exchange

France and Italy are in the Eurozone. Therefore, the unit of the currency is the Euro.

Switzerland uses the Swiss Franc (CHF). It is better to change money before departure, however euros are widely accepted in Switzerland.

Credit cards and debit cards are very useful for cash advances (but don't forget to bring your PIN number!).

ATMs are available in most of the towns you will cross during your stay, but there are no guarantees that your credit card will actually work in France, Italy or Switzerland. Also, refuges often don't have EPT (Electronic Payment Terminal): it is best to bring cash.



Be aware of the fees usually applied when purchasing products or services on a credit card.

Always take more rather than less, as you don't want to spend your trip constantly feeling short on funds.

As currency exchange rates can often fluctuate, we recommend to check the following website for daily exchange rates:

<https://www.xe.com/>

## Vital equipment

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- A sun cap
- A pair of sunglasses,
- A hat or a headband,
- T-shirt (carline type, fast drying material),
- Warm shirt or fleece,
- A warm jacket (polar type or down jacket),
- A windproof jacket (Kway or Gore-Tex type),
- A closed rain cape with sleeves, without pressure, in polyamide,
- Lightweight canvas pants,
- Windbreaker trousers ( Gore Tex type),
- Short, cropped
- Socks (100% wool: warm, absorbs and evacuates moisture, avoids the heating of the foot; synthetic fiber: very good resistance, absorbs and wicks away moisture, attention if 100% synthetic warming foot; cotton: absorbs moisture but rejects it badly)
- Trekking shoes: they are the best friends of the hiker ! They must combine three qualities: strength, good resistance of the foot and ankle (high stems) and impermeability. Choose shoes with non-slip soles, with crampons and relatively rigid. They must hang on the ground. "Vibram" type soles have a long reputation, give them your preference if you have a choice.
- A pair of long gaiters,
- A pair of warm gloves,
- Spare underwear,
- Lightweight canvas pants and spare shorts,
- Replacement socks,
- A pair of light sandals for the shelter or a pair of sneakers.
- A toiletry bag (Earplugs recommended),
- A fast-drying towel,
- For sleeping in a shelter or a gite: a light bag sheet, blankets are provided in shelter and lodging.
- A night outfit

## Material

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- A small flashlight/ headlamp
- Telescopic walking sticks (recommended)
- A 1L water bottle / 1 thermos
- A knife, a spoon and a fork
- An individual plastic Tupperware (for picnics)
- Sunscreen (SPF 50) + after-sun
- Biafine cream (for sunburns)
- Toilet paper (preferably biodegradable)
- Optional : camera, binoculars ...

Warning: mountain is capricious and sudden. We have tried to think of different situations that can occur, but it is best that you adapt this list of equipment to your own needs.

## Luggage

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If you chose the version with luggage transport:

- The first baggage follows you in the shelters: indications given by the carrier: 'Maximum 9 kg, no suitcases (too fragile). Any excess weight may be charged to the owner by the carrier. In the morning before your departure you must leave the luggage on the ground floor of the refuge for their support by the driver. The inside of the bags must be accessible by Swiss customs officials,



do not put padlocks.

It is forbidden to have in the bags:

- Computers, tablets, computer hardware - Camera - Valuable objects

- The 2nd bag will be your backpack with your belongings for the day and the picnic: take a bag of 30 / 35L maxim

## Medicine

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It is recommended to bring your own medicine, checked with your general practitioner:

- Personal medicine
- Painkillers (paracetamol preferred)
- Double-patching
- Elastoplast
- Bandage
- Antiseptic
- Anti-inflammatory
- Antispasmodic
- Anti-diarrhea
- Anti-vomiting
- Intestinal antiseptic
- Eyewash
- Light soporific
- Ear plugs
- Antibiotic
- C vitamin

Non-exhaustive list...

## Passport

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Please make sure your passport and travel documents are valid.

## Visa

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- Up to 90 days visit : citizens from most countries do not need a visa to visit France, Italy or Switzerland.
- Over 90 days visit : non-EU or non-EFTA citizens must have a visa to visit France, Italy or Switzerland over 90 days.

For further information, please check the following website : <https://france-visas.gouv.fr/>

## Identity card

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For EU citizens, you can use your identity card to travel to France, Italy or Switzerland.

## Mandatory vaccines

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No required vaccination.

## Health information & recommendations

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Before your departure, make sure you are in good physical conditions in accordance with the activities prospected. The regular practice of an endurance sport is compulsory for mountain activities. It could be jogging, cycling, swimming, fitness walking. If you are not trained at all, it will be hard to consider mountain activities without taking the risk of facing too important physical complications that would penalize you and your group. Practicing an endurance sport is compulsory to enjoy the tour as much as possible. Three months before departure, plan to do one to three sport sessions a week of at least one hour and trekking of at least 6 hours with an ascent of 350 meter per hour. The best training for trekking remains mountain walking. Knees problems remain the main issue during that kind of trekking: please talk to your doctor about it before departure. Please inform the agency of any medical indications such as food allergies, diabetes, recent and old cardiovascular events, asthma...

## Weather

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The weather in the Alps varies up and down the mountain chain. It is a mountainous region between 800 and 4000 meters, so altitude plays a big part in the local weather.

As you climb higher into the mountains it gets 1 degree cooler every 100 meters. It is the case all year around but other factors such as temperature inversions and winds influence the climate. The sun plays a very important role too. In the winter, when the sun is lower in the sky, some lower or north facing valleys are blocked from the sun by mountains for a large part of the day and are colder.

**Spring** can be a bit unpredictable : rain, sometimes even some snow interspersed with hot sunny days.

It can be quite hot in **summer**: around 20 to 30 degrees, but the fresh mountain air cools you down during your hike.

In **autumn**, temperatures start to cool down, but it is still perfect conditions for a walking holiday.

During **winter** time, the higher you get, the more snow you will see. Snow usually starts to fall in November and stays until April.

Keep in mind that weather conditions are unpredictable. Therefore, the trip organization can be modified for your safety.

## Electricity

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There will be electricity in most places you will stay. If you are scared to run low on battery, we advise to bring an external battery charger.

In France the power plugs and sockets are of type E. The standard voltage is 230 V and the standard frequency is 50 Hz. Power plugs in France have the particularity of being male and female at the same time : they have 2 prongs and a receptacle. If you need an adapter, please purchase it before departure.

The electrical current in Switzerland is 230V, 50Hz. Swiss sockets are recessed, three-holed, hexagonally shaped and incompatible with many plugs from abroad. They usually, however, take the standard European two-pronged plug.

Electricity in Italy conforms to the European standard of 220V to 230V, with a frequency of 50Hz. Wall outlets typically accommodate plugs with two or three round pins (the latter grounded, the former not).

## Local time

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France, Italy and Switzerland are in the Central European Time Zone. Central European Standard Time (CET) is 1 hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT+1).

Like most states in Europe, Summer Time (Daylight-Saving) is observed in France, where the time is shifted forward by 1 hour; 2 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT+2).

After the summer months, the time in France is shifted back by 1 hour to Central European Time (CET or GMT+1).

## Sustainable tourism

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We do our best to offer trips subscribed to the principles of responsible and sustainable tourism. Our aim is to allow visitors to discover the many facets of France, Italy and Switzerland by taking you off the beaten path and getting you in touch with its nature and residents, while ensuring that your visits do not have a negative effect on its natural environment and people.

- Most of our accommodations are run by locals, thus ensuring that the largest part of the revenue generated through your trip will stay within the region.
- France is known for its exquisite cuisine. The art of cooking and the joy of eating are part of everyday life. Each region has its particular foods and flavours which we would like you to explore and appreciate.
- Water is a precious and rare good. Our team and those travelling with us are thus advised to use it with consideration and avoid excessive water use where possible.
- Please try to recycle your waste whenever possible, even though recycling may not be a well-known concept in all areas.
- Be cautious and respectful when hiking. Make sure to wear suitable footwear and avoid picking flowers, moving stones or lighting fires.