

TOUR DU MONT BLANC IN MOUNTAIN HUTS

7 valleys, 71 glaciers, and 400 peaks: Mont Blanc is fascinating.

The historic Tour du Mont Blanc is one of the most spectacular walks of the world. Trekking around the “top of Europe” means discovering an incomparable universe of High Mountain and breath-taking show of the closest glaciers. You will discover the French, Italian and Switzerland slopes, from Chamonix to the Courmayeur valley, and from the Fenêtre d’Arpette to the wild Val Ferret. The adventure path stands between mountain pastures, glaciers and peaks, crosses High Mountain passes, lush valleys and highway sized glaciers. The amazing spectacle of nature is showing off.

After meeting in Chamonix, we take the bus to Les Houches village. The trip starts from the balcony of Saint Gervais, leading us to the end of Val Montjoie where we discover the Contamines village. We climb up from the Roman road, in the heart of the reserve of Contamines-Montjoie. Then we cross the Bonhomme pass (2439m), inhabited by the peddlers for a long time... as well as the Seigne pass (2516m), located on the border between France and Italy. From the Italian Val Ferret, we walk through the Swiss Val Ferret by the great Ferret pass (2537m): view on the Dolent (3823m), peak at the intersection between the three borders. Herens cows bells ringing out at the entrance of the villages, old house style, plenty of geraniums on windows’ borders: this path in Switzerland leaves no one indifferent to the beauty of nature. Touch wood you can discover these magnificent landscapes with the sun shining!

We end the adventure with a majestic panorama from the balcony of the Aiguilles Rouges: admiring the Mont Blanc reflected in the Lake Blanc encasing our most precious jewel!

 Region	Northern Alps : around Mont blanc
 Activity	Summer Trekking
 Duration	7 days
 Group	5 to 12 people
 Code	FTOU
 Price	From €950
 Level	4/5
 Comfort	3/5
 Language(s)	French / English

ITINERARY

Day 1 Les Houches - Les Contamines-Montjoie



We leave this morning after breakfast for our first day of hiking. We take the bus or the train to the Bellevue cable car in Les Houches village, at the entrance of Chamonix. From the top of the cable car, we enjoy a beautiful panoramic view of the Mont Blanc, the Aiguilles Rouges, the Fiz chain and the Aravis. And that's when it gets to the heart of the matter! Our trek starts in a 1800m-high balcony and leads us to the bottom of the Bionnassay glacier before heading down to the colourful village of Les Contamines-Monjoie. If general conditions allow it, we cross through the Tricot Pass (2120m). Arrive to the Gite and stop for the night for a well-deserved rest.

Ascent: around 665m / Descent : around 1300m/ Max. Alt: 2120m/ Accomodation : Lodge

Day 2 Contamines- Montjoie - Glaciers valley



We leave our lodge for a leisurely wander by the river to Notre Dame de la Gorge, famous place of Baroque romanticism. A long and steep ascent leads us to the Bonhomme pass (2329m). This pass has been used for ages by shepherds and their herds, armies and soldiers, pilgrims, hawkers and hikers of the Tour du Mont Blanc. If we look down, we can observe the Beaufortin's region. It is possible to climb up to the Fours pass (2665m), then dropping gently down to the mountain pastures to find ourselves among cows of Tarine and Abondance breeds. These cows' milk pleases us with the multiple cheese variety we can produce from it: especially the Beaufort and the Abondance, which we will surely taste during the week.

Ascent: around 1350-1550m / Descent : around 800m/ Max. Alt: 2665m/ Accomodation : Refuge

Day 3 Glaciers valley - Monte Bianco refuge



Today, we cross our first border between France and Italy by the Seigne pass (2516m).

Frequented since antiquity, it is recognisable by a large cairn and is located on the watershed of the Mediterranean and the Adriatic. The view is breath taking: a bunch of snowy peaks appears in front of the Italian side of the Mont Blanc. We will pass by picturesque glacier lakes while descending into beautiful Val Veny where you will see the Aoste valleys. We stop for a nice and hot shower in the Monte Bianco refuge at the bottom of the Brenva glacier, under the impressive Aiguille "Noire de Peutery".

Ascent: around 1000m / Descent : around 1150m/ Max. Alt: 2537m/ Accomodation : Refuge

Day 4 Monte Bianco refuge - Courmayeur - Bonatti refuge



This morning, we head down to the charming town of Courmayeur to savour the renowned and delicious Italian gelato before continuing our hike up to the Italian Ferret valley in the shadow of the impressive Grandes Jorasses peak. After La Vachey, we reach the 2025 meter-high Walter Bonatti refuge (without a doubt the greatest Italian mountain climber in the history) to spend our last night in Italy. No bags that night, vehicles are not allowed near the refuge in order to appreciate pure nature. You cannot remain unmoved by the story of our great guides after this walk in the Ferret valley...

Ascent: around 870m / Descent : around 450m/ Max. Alt : 2025m/ Accomodation : Refuge

Day 5 Bonatti refuge - Grand Ferret pass - Champex



Lace those hiking boots back up! Today, we continue our ascent towards the top of the Italian Ferret valley to reach the Grand Ferret pass bordering Italy and Switzerland. We walk admiring the scenic Pré-de-Bar glacier, while the Dolent Mount keeps an eye on us: it is the summit of which is shared by France, Switzerland and Italy. The Grand Ferret pass is a path used since Antiquity to join the Aoste valley and the Valais Canton. Descending, we will meet the mountain climbers of the Peule to enjoy the taste of regional products. There's no better ways to regain strength! Transfer with local buses from the Ferret village, crossing Osières, to the quaint village of Champex, bordering a beautiful mountain lake. Rest in the mountain Gite

and put up your weary feet!

Ascent: around 850m / Descent : around 1150m/ Max. Alt : 2537m/ Accomodation : Lodge

Day 6 Champex - Trient - Argentière



We leave Champex taking the Bovine Way, through the high meadows where the beautiful Herens cows that inhabitants of the Valais are so proud of spend their summer months. This balcony path with a panoramic view is surrounding the Rhône valley, the Coude du Rhône on the Swiss side and the Great Combins massif in the Southeast. We go down through a beautiful forest leading to the Forclaz pass. Then, following the Bisses path (Valais word representing a water channel carved in stone or wood), we reach Trient village. From that point, a private vehicle drives us to Argentières through the Montets pass where you can finally kick those feet up and relax in our sleeping nest.

Ascent: around 850m / Descent : around 850m/ Max. Alt : 1987m/ Accomodation : Lodge

Day 7 Argentière - Lac Blanc - Chamonix



Before wrapping up this unforgettable trek, we will discover the Aiguilles Rouges massif and reserve, facing the Mont Blanc. Climb to the Cheserys lakes and to the Lac Blanc, from where we can enjoy a breath taking view whilst enjoying our picnic. En route we often see ibex, chamois, and marmots. This is a great chance to get up close to some of the alpine wildlife. We head down by a balcony-like trail, crossing La Flagère and Le Brévent in Chamonix where we will spend our last night. Meals in town as you please. Treat yourself, you deserve it!

Ascent : Around 1150m | Descent : around 1400m | Max. Alt : 2355m

Not ready to leave yet? We can help with travel arrangements to extend your adventure.

Itineraries can be modified according to the weather conditions or the fitness level of the participants. As a last resort, the accompanist remains the only judge of the program that he can adapt according to the various imperatives that may arise.

DATES & PRICES

Departures for French-speaking groups:

From	To	Price per person	Guaranteed	Booking
17/06/2024	23/06/2024	€990	Yes	
24/06/2024	30/06/2024	€990	Yes	
01/07/2024	07/07/2024	€990	Yes	
08/07/2024	14/07/2024	€990	Yes	
15/07/2024	21/07/2024	€990	Yes	
16/07/2024	22/07/2024	€990	Yes	
29/07/2024	04/08/2024	€1,040	Yes	
05/08/2024	11/08/2024	€1,040	Yes	
19/08/2024	25/08/2024	€1,040	Yes	
26/08/2024	01/09/2024	€1,040	Yes	
02/09/2024	08/09/2024	€990	Yes	
09/09/2024	15/09/2024	€990	Yes	

International departures:

No departure for now

Trip code: FTOU

Included

- Technical organisation of the trekking
- Supervision by the mountain leader
- Luggage transportation
- Accommodation as described in the program (in lodges and refuges)
- Half board and picnics
- Transportation as described in the program

Not included

- Transfers to and from Chamonix, our meeting point
- Application fees (18€ per person)
- Snacks
- Insurance
- Drinks and personal expenses in the mountain lodges
- Meals for the first and the last night in Chamonix

International flights

We can plan your flight to Geneva regardless of your departure city.

We can also arrange a transfer Geneva-Chamonix and Chamonix-Geneva to facilitate your arrival on site.

Terms and conditions

Inscription

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 30 % of the total trip's price (subject to availability at the time of registration). In case of short term booking – within 30 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.

Facturation

Once your booking registered, we send you an email with the invoice. Full payment is required at least 30 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.

Annulation

For any reason, if you decide to withdraw from a trip, the amount already paid will be refunded subject to the following exceptions:

- Cancellation up to 45 days before the agreed beginning of the trip: You will be charged 20 % of the travel's price, in addition with every non-refundable expenses for additional services booked on request (internal flights, site entrance tickets, activities...)
- Cancellation between 44 and 15 days before the agreed beginning of the trip: You will be charged 50 % of the travel's price, in addition with every non-refundable expenses for additional services booked on request (internal flights, site entrance tickets, activities...)
- Cancellation less than 14 days before the agreed beginning of the journey: You will be charged 100 % of the travel's price, in addition with every non-refundable expenses for additional services booked on request (internal flights, site entrance tickets, activities...)

Any cancellation shall be notified in writing (email, letter or fax). The cancellation will be effective as soon as we receive your written statement. If we notice early that the minimum number of participants for a trip cannot be reached, Altaï Alpes will exercise its right of withdrawal immediately. In that situation, you will be informed of the cancellation of your travel no later than 21 days before the agreed beginning of the journey. Altaï Alpes can also cancel a travel in case of major circumstances such as volcanic eruption, civil disturbances, strikes, weather and climate conditions, in order to ensure traveler's security... In such cases, you will immediately be refunded of any payments. However, you will not be entitled to any compensation.

Modification du contrat

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.

Prix et révision des prix

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.

Cession du contrat

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

Insurance

We can offer you three formulas :

- Repatriation insurance : 2% of your trip's price, includes mountain search and rescue fees, disease or injury assistance during your trip.
- Cancellation insurance : 3% of the price of your trip, includes all accidents or diseases, dismissal, transfer, and any events occurring before your departure and preventing you from achieving the trip.
- Multi-risk insurance : 4% of the price of your trip, includes the same features as the cancellation insurance, as well as search

and rescue fees, hospitalisation, disease assistance, and medical fees refund during your trip.

If you are not willing to subscribe to any of our insurances, you must send us the insurance discharge and your travel subscription confirmation. If you chose any other insurance and assistance contract, please check that the search and rescue cover is suitable : cover sector, fees, risk covered. For your information, a minimal fee of 15 000€ is recommended for an appropriate search and rescue cover. Credit cards offer only a few or no guarantee at all.

PRACTICAL INFO

Staff

Our trip is supervised by a mountain guide who will give you the technical information needed for the good progress of the tour. The guide may have to modify the program in order to insure safety depending on mountain weather conditions or participants physical conditions.

Nota Bene : Extract from the ethical recommendation code (27.11.2017) of the national syndicate of mountain accompanists :

- Art. 22 : We must be aware of the physical and technical abilities of our clients according to the itinerary intended, and make sure that they are well equipped. Respecting rules of decency, politeness and discretion, the mountain accompanist has the right to exclude from the activity a participant who would threaten his own safety or the one of the group.
- Art. 23 : He must teach the people he is accompanying how to behave safely and develop their self-control and initiative spirit.
- Art. 24 : The mountain accompanist must make sure clients comply to his instructions. He also must inform them of the transfer and the responsibilities engendered by the non-respect of those instructions.
- Art. 26 : The decision of cancelling an activity or modifying the itinerary may be taken by mutual agreement between the accompanist and the clients. However, for safety reasons, the mountain accompanist is the last resort decision-maker.

Food

Lunch and diner :

- Lunch picnics are made of mixed salads, fine meat, farm cheese, crusty bread, fresh seasonal fruits and other local sweet pleasures. They are made by the accompanist at night for the day after: don't worry if he is leaving you for a short amount of time during the evening, he is certainly making you great food to give you strength the next day!
- In the evening, diners are taken in the different accommodations
- Please take provisions according to your own tastes before leaving: cereal, energy bars (chocolate bars can melt), dry fruits... And feel free to bring some specialties from your regions for aperitifs!

Drinks

Drinks are not included in the trip's price : please take some money (Swiss francs and Euros) for coffees, fruit juices, beers, cokes during breaks.. Most of the time, refuges don't have any card machines !

Accommodation

- In refuges, people will sleep in 8 to 10 persons dormitories and will be given some blankets (please bring your own sleeping bag). You can use the refuges' slippers if you want to, no need to bring shoes for refuges.
- Bring some earplugs to avoid being bothered by noises.
- Most refuges are equipped with showers, but not all of them : sometimes there is no tap water in the refuges, only water dripping from the glaciers.
- Some electrical plugs are available in the refuges, but plan to bring a battery replacement for cameras and turn your phone off during the day.

Transportation

You will carry your daily belongings, except for the day in Bonnatti where you will need to carry your belongings for two days. Vehicles cannot climb, to preserve nature and maintain peace and tranquillity.

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/>

Tips

Clients usually pay for the guides' drinks : you might find it practical to make a group kitty at the beginning of your stay (no obligation).

Supplied equipment

Equipment for the group (altimeter, compass, maps, medicine) is provided by the supervision.

Material

Technical material

- Trekking shoes with Vibram sole, that cover the ankle well. You must have already wore them for several trekking so that they are well suited to your feet. Don't ever leave for a trekking with new shoes or be prepared to face sore blisters.
- Telescopic poles
- A liner sleeping bag
- Small toilet bag with a quick-drying towel
- Solar cream (face and lips)
- Headlamp with replacement battery and bubbles
- 1.5 litter flask or Camel-back
- Clasp knife
- Toilet paper and lighter
- Two or three plastic bags (100L) to protect your backpack and your belongings if it starts raining
- A Tupperware for lunch salads, with knife, fork and spoon

Personal equipment

- Bonnet
- Hat (or cap)
- Great quality sunglasses (index 3 category)
- 1 pair of polar or warm wool gloves
- Breathable technic underclothing
- Technic breathable under-jumper (carline, light polar fur...) with long sleeves
- 2 technic breathable under-jumper with short sleeves
- Polar coat
- One anorak or coat/ down jacket
- 1 windproof and waterproof Goretex-type coat
- 1 pair of technic breathable tights
- 1 pair of comfortable trekking pants
- 1 pair of short or ¾ pants
- 1 pair of windproof Goretex-type pants
- Two pair of socks, one thin and one thick (avoid coton that engenders blisters)
- 1 night outfit

Luggage

A 30L backpack with a large chest strap. Please take a trash bag to isolate your replacement clothes from humidity.

Your guide's advise :

You will put in your backpack :

- Warm clothes (polar, pants, bonnets and gloves)
- Rain clothes
- One flask
- Camera
- Lunch picnics

As for the transferred baggages :

9kg max, avoid suitcases. Each overspending of weight can be charged to the owner. In the morning, before departure, you will have to leave your baggages downstairs, the driver will take care of it. The inside of the bags must be openable for the Swiss custom officers. Don't put any locks.

It is forbidden to bring :

- Computers, tablets, hardware
- Camera
- Valuable objects

Taxis will not take bags including any of those objects.

Medicine

Your accompanist will be carrying a first-aid kit. However, 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

Please make sure your passport and travel documents are valid.

Visa

- 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

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

Mandatory vaccines

No required vaccination.

Health information & recommendations

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

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

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

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

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.