

THE FULL TOUR DU MONT BLANC – SELF-GUIDED IN 9 DAYS

The Tour du Mont Blanc circles the massif and the rooftop of Europe, which towers at 4,810 meters!

It is one of the most popular hiking trails in Europe and also one of the most beautiful treks in the world. This route offers a chance to explore the French, Italian, and Swiss sides of the Mont Blanc massif. It brings you close to the world of high mountains and the breathtaking spectacle of nearby glaciers.

From the Chamonix Valley to Courmayeur, from the Fenêtre d'Arpette to the wild Val Ferret, the trail winds through alpine meadows, glaciers, and jagged peaks, crossing mountain passes and deep valleys. The Tour du Mont Blanc is a demanding hike, but remains accessible to experienced hikers.

With this full 9-day itinerary, you can be sure not to miss any of the must-see sections of this iconic trek.

 Region	Northern Alps : around Mont blanc
 Activity	Summer
 Duration	9 days
 Code	FTOU9LIB
 Price	From €895
 Level	3/5
 Comfort	3/5

ITINERARY

Day 1 Les Houches - Les Contamines-Montjoie



Meet in Les Houches at 8:00 AM at the base of the Bellevue cable car. From the top, enjoy a panoramic view of the Mont Blanc massif, the Aiguilles Rouges, the Fiz range, and the Aravis mountains. The hike begins along a scenic balcony trail at 1,800 meters and leads you to the foot of the Bionnassay Glacier before descending to Les Contamines-Montjoie. You may also cross the Col du Tricot at 2,120 meters, weather permitting!

Elevation gain: Approx. 665 m

Elevation loss: Approx. 1,300 m

Maximum altitude: 2,120 m

Accommodation: Mountain hut (refuge)

Day 2 Contamines- Montjoie - Vallée des Glaciers



You will leave your accommodation to reach Notre-Dame de la Gorge, a renowned site of baroque romanticism.

A long ascent leads you to the Col du Bonhomme (2,329 m). This pass has been crossed for centuries by shepherds and their flocks, armies and soldiers, pilgrims, itinerant traders, and Tour du Mont Blanc hikers.

From here, the view opens up over the Beaufortain region at your feet. You'll then head toward the Crête des Gittes, before descending through alpine pastures filled with Tarine and Abondance cows.

The milk from these breeds offers a delicious variety of cheeses, especially

Beaufort, which we highly recommend you try during the week.

Elevation gain: Approx. 1,550 m

Elevation loss: Approx. 900m

Maximum altitude: 2,665 m

Accommodation: Mountain hut (refuge)

Day 3 Vallée des Glaciers - Col de La Seigne - Val Veny



After an included transfer to Ville des Glaciers, today you will cross your first border, from France into Italy, via the Col de la Seigne (2,516 m).

Used since Antiquity, this pass is marked by a large cairn and lies on the watershed between the Mediterranean and Adriatic seas.

The view is simply breathtaking: a stunning array of snow-capped peaks rises on the Italian side of Mont Blanc.

You enter the Val Veny, where the Aosta valleys unfold before your eyes.

Tonight, you'll stay in a mountain hut in this valley, at the foot of the Brenva Glacier, beneath the imposing Aiguille Noire de Peuterey.

Elevation gain: Approx. 1,000 m

Elevation loss: Approx. 1,150 m

Maximum altitude: 2,537 m

Accommodation: Mountain hut (refuge)

📍 Day 4 **Val Veny - Val Veny - Courmayeur - Val Ferret**



This morning, you descend to Courmayeur, where you can enjoy a little ice cream before continuing your hike up the Italian Val Ferret, beneath the impressive Grandes Jorasses. After La Vachey, you will reach either the Walter Bonatti Refuge (2,025 m) or the Elena Refuge (2,061 m) for your last night on the Italian side. If you stay at the Bonatti Refuge, you won't have to carry your bag, as vehicles do not go up to the refuge, allowing you to better appreciate nature in its raw state. This passage through Val Ferret will deeply move you with the history of our great mountain guides... Subject to availability at the refuges at the time of final confirmation. An alternative will be proposed if necessary.

Alternative:

Ascent +900 m / Descent -740 m

Maximum altitude: 2,537 m

Elevation gain: Approx. 1,415 m

Elevation loss: Approx. 590 m

Maximum altitude: 2,537 m

Accommodation: Mountain hut (refuge)

📍 Day 5 **Val Veny - Val Ferret italien - Grand col Ferret - La Fouly**



Today, you continue your ascent of the Italian Val Ferret to reach the Grand Col Ferret, which marks the border between Italy and Switzerland. As you walk, admire the Pré de Bar Glacier and Mont Dolent—the summit that borders all three countries. You then descend towards the village of Ferret, where you'll stop at a guesthouse/inn and enjoy a stunning setting in the heart of Switzerland!

Elevation gain: approximately 900 m

Elevation loss: approximately 740 m

Maximum altitude: 2,537 m

Accommodation: Mountain refuge

📍 Day 6 **La Fouly - Champex**



Starting from this charming guesthouse, you will begin the descent along a stream. You will pass several picturesque and stunningly beautiful hamlets. A final effort will be required to reach Champex and its magnificent little lake.

Elevation gain: approximately 790 m

Elevation loss: approximately 750 m

Accommodation: Mountain refuge

Day 7 Champex - Trient



You leave Champex to start the ascent leading you to the Bovine alpine pastures, surrounded by Hérens cows — those beautiful black cattle that are a source of pride for the Valais locals. This balcony trail offers panoramic views over the Rhône valley and the Rhône bend on the Swiss side, as well as the Grand Combin massif to the southeast. The descent follows a lovely forest path down to the Forclaz Pass. Then, along the Bisses path (a Valais term for water channels carved into rock or wood), you reach the village of Trient where you will spend the night.

Alternative (Fenêtre d'Arpette): Elevation gain +1110m / Elevation loss -

1190m. Max altitude: 2201m.

Elevation gain: approximately 850 m

Elevation loss: approximately 900 m

Maximum altitude: 2,005 m

Accommodation: Mountain refuge

Day 8 Trient - Col de Balme - Tré le Champ



Today, you return to France by crossing the border at the Col de Balme (2191m). You will hike up to the Col des Posettes before following a balcony traverse to Tré-Le-Champ. Finally, you descend to Argentière where you will spend your last night.

Elevation gain: approximately 900 m

Elevation loss: approximately 1000 m

Maximum altitude: 2,195 m

Accommodation: Mountain refuge

Day 9 Argentière - Lac Blanc - Chamonix



For this last day, you will explore the Aiguilles Rouges massif and nature reserve, which face Mont Blanc. You will climb to the Chéserys Lakes, then to Lac Blanc, where the panoramic view is breathtaking. The descent follows a balcony trail via Flégère and Brévent down to Chamonix (or you can take the cable car down from Flégère). The day ends in Chamonix around 4:30 pm. If you parked your vehicle at Les Houches, bus No. 1 will take you back to the Bellevue cable car station (approximately one bus every 30 minutes).

Elevation gain: approximately 1,150 m

Elevation loss: approximately 1,450 m (if you choose not to take the cable cars down to the valley)

Maximum altitude: 2,355 m

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

Gîte/Refuge Package

Without luggage transfer assistance:

- Based on 2 to 3 people: **€945 per person**
- Based on 4 to 5 people: **€925 per person**
- From 6 people or more: **€895 per person**

With luggage transfer assistance:

- Based on 2 to 3 people: **€1165 per person**
- Based on 4 to 5 people: **€1125 per person**
- From 6 people or more: **€1095 per person**

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 refuges, gîtes or hotels depending on the chosen package
- **Luggage transport** if you selected this option
- **Breakfasts from Day 2 to Day 9**
- **Dinners from Day 1 to Day 9**
- **Roadbook** for a group of 2 to 8 people

Not included

- **Luggage transfer** if not selected at the time of booking
- **Travel to the starting point** of the tour
- **Lunches**
- **Drinks and personal expenses**
- **Transportation using public transit and lift fees**

Notes

- **Travel insurance** (see details of our insurance options below)
- **Additional nights:** please contact us
- **Option to include a certified mountain guide:** please contact us **Note:** This tour is also available in a 7-day version

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

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

Self-guided tour with a roadbook (provided before your departure).

Your roadbook includes:

- A day-by-day itinerary description
- Vouchers for accommodations
- Map extracts for the hiking days

A welcome meeting will be organized in Les Houches with our local partner, at the foot of the Bellevue cable car.

Altai France is part of the Altaï Group, a network of local nature and adventure travel agencies operating in 30 countries. Based in Chamonix, at the foot of Mont Blanc, for many years, our agency guarantees a successful active travel experience thanks to our local team and logistical infrastructure.

Food

Meals:

- Breakfasts and evening meals are provided at the various accommodations.
- Be sure to bring your own snacks based on your preferences before departure: cereal bars, chocolate bars, dried fruits, etc.
- Lunch picnics are not included: throughout the trek, you'll have opportunities to buy supplies in small grocery stores, cheese shops, or directly in the mountain huts.

Drinks:

Personal drinks are not included in the trip price — we recommend bringing some cash for coffee, fruit juices, beer or soda during your breaks.

Accommodation

Classic version – Mountain Huts / Gîtes:

Overnights are spent in shared dormitories. Be sure to bring the usual items to help defend against the common issue of snoring! Dormitories are equipped with blankets. Please bring a sleeping liner and a pillowcase to ensure a more comfortable night. Today, nearly all huts have showers (some may require payment via tokens), so bring your own toiletries (soap, towel, etc.). Toilets are shared and usually located on the same floor.

Comfort version – Hotels / Inns:

When booking, we reserve double rooms in hotels wherever possible, or small shared rooms in inns. In hotels, bathrooms are private and located in the room. In gîtes or inns, bathrooms may be shared depending on the accommodation.

Whenever possible, we select accommodations that meet at least one of the following criteria: eco-labeled (Ecogîte, European Ecolabel for tourist accommodation, Green Key, Green Globe, local label, or equivalent), or actively engaged in efforts to reduce their environmental impact.

Transportation

Depending on the chosen version, your luggage may either be transported for you and delivered directly to each accommodation, or you will carry all your belongings in your backpack for the full 9-day trek.

Various transfers such as shuttles, cable cars, and local buses are at your own expense if you choose to use them (indicative rates for summer 2025):

- **Day 1:** Bus from the Chamonix valley to Bellevue (Line 1 / €2)
- **Day 1:** Cable car from Les Houches to Bellevue (€18)
- **Day 2:** Shuttle between Les Contamines-Montjoie and Notre-Dame-de-la-Gorge (available late June to end of August – *free*)
- **Day 4:** Swiss rail (CFF) bus between Ferret and Champex (via Orsières)
- **Day 9:** Cable car descent from Flégère to the valley (€18)
- **Day 9:** Local bus from Le Tour to Chamonix or Bellevue (€2)

Access:

Please inform us whether you will be arriving by **train** or **car**. If traveling by train, kindly provide your arrival schedule.

1) By Train:

Arrive at *Saint-Gervais-les-Bains-le Fayet* station (served by TER and TGV), then transfer to the scenic TER train (*Le Fayet - Vallorcine* line) and get off at **Les Houches** station. From there, it's a 20–25 minute walk to Bellevue. Alternatively, get off at **Les Bossons** and take **bus line 1** to Bellevue (*check summer schedules carefully*).

For schedules and more information, visit www.voyages-sncf.com or call 3635 (within France).

2) By Car:

Direct access via the *Autoroute Blanche* (A40), which connects to the European highway network and leads straight to Chamonix.

We recommend parking at the **Planards car park** (free), then taking **bus line 1** from *Chamonix – Place du Mont Blanc* to *Bellevue*.

Budget & exchange

France and Italy are in the **Eurozone**, so the currency used is the **Euro (€)**.

In **Switzerland**, the currency is the **Swiss Franc (CHF)**, but most shops will also accept Euros.

Credit cards are very useful when traveling (just don't forget your PIN code!).

Cash machines (ATMs) are available in most of the towns and villages you'll pass through, but there is no guarantee your card will work everywhere.

Also, **refuges rarely have electronic payment terminals (TPE)**, so we recommend **carrying cash** for these places.

Be sure to check with your bank about any **international fees or charges** for using your card abroad.

Vital equipment

Hiking Gear – The 3-Layer Principle

For your **comfort and safety**, the 3-layer clothing system is strongly recommended while hiking:

- A short- or long-sleeved **breathable base layer** (synthetic hollow-fibre material)
- A **fleece jacket** (thermal insulation layer)
- A **waterproof and breathable windbreaker jacket** (e.g. Gore-Tex)

Depending on the weather and your level of physical effort, you can adjust accordingly:

- In calm, warm weather, a light base layer may be enough.
- In rain, snow or wind, add your waterproof jacket.
- In cold conditions or during breaks at higher altitudes, a fleece under your windbreaker becomes essential.

Choose **quick-drying fabrics** and **avoid cotton**. Opt for **wool, silk, or synthetic fibres** that help keep you warm and dry.

Sweat is the hiker's enemy—it wets your clothes and can cool you down dangerously during rest stops.

Clothing & Personal Gear Checklist

- A cap or sun hat
- A pair of sunglasses
- A beanie or headband
- T-shirt (quick-drying, technical fabric such as Carline)
- Warm shirt or fleece
- Insulated jacket (fleece or down)
- Waterproof windbreaker jacket (K-Way or Gore-Tex type)
- Full rain cape with sleeves (no snap buttons, made of polyamide)
- Lightweight hiking pants
- Windproof pants (K-Way or Gore-Tex type)
- Shorts or capris
- Hiking socks: 100% wool: warm, moisture-wicking, prevents blisters Synthetic: durable and moisture-wicking (watch out for overheating if 100% synthetic) Cotton: not recommended – absorbs moisture but doesn't wick it well

Footwear

Your **hiking boots are your best friend!** They must be:

- Durable
- Offer **good ankle and foot support** (high-top)
- Be **waterproof**
- Have **non-slip, lugged soles**, preferably **Vibram** or similar

Additional Equipment

- Long gaiters
- Warm gloves
- Spare underwear and socks
- Extra pair of lightweight pants/shorts
- Light sandals or trainers for the hut
- Toiletry kit (earplugs recommended)

- Towel
- **Sleeping bag liner** – blankets are provided in huts and gîtes
- **Nightwear**

Material

- A small **flashlight** (with spare batteries)
- **Telescopic trekking poles** (recommended)
- A **water bottle** with a minimum capacity of 1 litre / plus a **thermos** (0.75 L) is also great to have hot tea during breaks
- A **knife, spoon, and fork**
- An individual **plastic Tupperware** container for your lunch salads
- **Sunscreen** (for skin and lips) + **after-sun lotion**
- **Toilet paper + lighter** (to burn the paper)
- Optional: **camera, binoculars**, etc.

Note:

Mountain weather can be unpredictable and sudden. We have tried to anticipate all the different weather situations you might encounter. This equipment list will help you comfortably adapt to the changing moods of Mother Mountain!

Helpful equipment

A **plastic waterproof pouch** for your personal documents: passport or ID card, driver's license, vaccination record, European health insurance card, travel insurance/assistance leaflet, cash, credit card, personal papers (emergency numbers).

- A medium-sized **plastic box** with plastic cutlery and cup if you want to prepare some of your own meals.
- **Plastic bags** to keep your belongings, camera, and clothes waterproof.
- **Earplugs**, always useful!
- A **notepad and pen**, a good book, a deck of cards...
- **Trekking poles** (optional): very helpful to save your knees on descents (up to 30% of your weight plus your backpack's weight is supported by the poles) and to support your effort on climbs (arms help along with legs).
- A **mini pair of binoculars** (optional).
- A **camera** (optional).
- **Gaiters** (highly recommended, especially early in the season when there may still be snow on some trails).
- An **emergency survival blanket**.
- A **mobile phone**.

Luggage

In the mountains, you will carry all your belongings and equipment in a 30/35-liter backpack.

- The second luggage that follows you to the refuges: instructions from the carrier:

Maximum weight: 9 kg; avoid suitcases. Any excess weight may be charged to the owner by the carrier.

On the morning of your departure, you must leave your luggage on the ground floor of the refuge for collection by the driver.

The inside of the bags must be accessible to Swiss customs officers — do not use locks.

It is forbidden to have the following items in these bags:

- Computers, tablets, or other electronic devices
- Cameras

Medicine

It is recommended to prepare your own personal first aid kit including:

- Hydrating sunscreen for body and lips
- Adhesive bandages (Elastoplast) and scissors
- Vitamin C
- Eye drops
- Pain relievers such as paracetamol (Doliprane) and/or aspirin
- Anti-diarrheal medication
- Intestinal antiseptic (e.g., Intetrix)
- Healing and antiseptic ointment
- Common antibiotics (optional)

Also, don't forget your ongoing prescription medications and your health insurance card.

Passport

Please ensure that your passport and other travel documents are valid.

Health information & recommendations

Before your departure, it is important to have a level of physical fitness appropriate for the planned activity. Regular practice of an endurance sport is mandatory for mountain activities. This sport can be jogging, cycling, swimming, or brisk walking. If you are not trained at all, it will be difficult to undertake mountain activities without risking facing physical difficulties that could hinder you.

Endurance training is essential to fully enjoy this circuit. Three months before departure, plan to do, if possible, 2 to 3 endurance training sessions of at least one hour per week, and a weekend hike of at least 6 hours with an elevation gain of 350m per hour. The best training for a trek is, of course, hiking itself. Knee problems remain the main issue encountered on this type of trek; please consult your doctor before departure. Kindly inform the agency promptly of any relevant medical information: food allergies, diabetes, past or recent cardiac or vascular incidents, asthma, etc.

Hygiene

In the mountains, water often flows abundantly but is not always drinkable! Fill up at drinking water fountains in villages or at private basins (after asking permission beforehand!). Also consider carrying a thermos with hot water for tea breaks during the hike.

Electricity

There will be electricity available in most of the places where you will be staying. If you're worried about running out of battery, we recommend bringing a portable power bank.

Electrical outlets in France are unique in that they have both male and female parts: they have 2 pins and a receptacle. If you need an adapter, please make sure to get one before your departure. In France, the plugs are type E. The voltage is 230 V, and the standard frequency is 50 Hz.

Electricity in Italy conforms to European standards of 220 V to 230 V, with a frequency of 50 Hz. Wall sockets typically accept plugs with 2 or 3 round pins.

The electrical current in Switzerland is 230 V, 50 Hz. Swiss sockets are recessed, with 3 hexagonal holes and are incompatible with many plugs from other countries. However, they generally accept standard European plugs with 2 pins.

Local time

Standard Time (CET: Central European Time): UTC +1

Daylight Saving Time (CEST: Central European Summer Time): UTC +2

Sustainable tourism

We do our best to offer trips that respect the principles of sustainable and responsible tourism. Our goal is to allow visitors to discover the many facets of a country by taking you off the beaten path and connecting you with nature and its inhabitants, while ensuring that your visit has no negative impact on the natural environment.

Most of our accommodations are managed by locals. Therefore, the majority of the income generated during your stay remains within the region.

The art of cooking and the joy of tasting local food are part of everyday life. Each region has its specialties, and you will surely enjoy discovering them!

Water is a precious and scarce resource. Our team and travelers are strongly encouraged to use it considerately and avoid excessive consumption whenever possible.

Please try to recycle your waste whenever you can, even though recycling may not be widely practiced everywhere in the world. Be thoughtful and respectful while hiking. Make sure to wear suitable footwear for your activity, avoid picking flowers, moving stones, or lighting fires.