

## **TOUR DU MONT BLANC**

### **FULL CIRCUIT - GUIDED TREK**

### **ITINERARY: 13 DAYS**

This adventure combines three countries into one trip as we cross the rugged Alps from France to Italy and Switzerland then back into France. The spectacular Mont Blanc Circuit is one of the world's classic hikes and demands some respect. From the massif of Mont Blanc (4810m – the highest mountain in Western Europe), seven valleys extend into France, Italy, and Switzerland. The trek around Mont Blanc is one of Europe's best mountain walks. You'll get a chance to appreciate the different cultures, foods and people while you hike through glorious Alpine scenery.

Each valley retains its own unique culture, architecture, and landscape and it's through these valleys you will hike. Each day we hike up to the ridges and descend into valleys below, with time to enjoy views of glaciers, green mountain meadows and snow-capped peaks.

#### **Day 1**

##### **ARRIVE IN CHAMONIX**

Welcome to Chamonix! The afternoon is free for you to explore the town and its amazing mountain surroundings. Take a cable car up the famous Aiguille de Midi for spectacular views over the Alps or relax in the many street cafes offering excellent cuisine. You will meet with your leader at 5pm in the hotel for a briefing to go over the trip, you then have a chance to purchase any last-minute items for your hike. Dinner is included tonight at our hotel.

- Meals: D



## Day 2

### TREK CHAMONIX TO LES HOUCHES (13KM, 5 HOURS)

To commence our journey through the stunning landscapes of the Chamonix region, we have chosen the perfect vantage point to begin our adventure: the majestic Brevent. We get there via the picturesque Col du Brevent, with our journey commencing by ascending the cable car to Planpraz, a convenient and breathtaking start to our exploration. From the summit (2525m), the view of the grandeur of Mont Blanc is incomparable. Our day doesn't end until we have descended the Brevent and hiked via Bel Lachat and Merlet before arriving in Les Houches for our overnight stay. Today includes some steep climbing, with some ladder and cable sections where careful footing is essential. For your effort you will be rewarded with some spectacular views.

- Ascent 500m / Descent 1440m
- Meals: B, L, D

## Day 3

### LES HOUCHES. TREK LES HOUCHES TO LES CONTAMINES (14KM, 6 HOURS)

Starting by the Col de Bellevue, from where there are great views of the Aiguille du Gouter. A charming traverse passes right at the foot of the Bionnassay Glacier. A bridge across a river and we then ascend up to the Col du Tricot (2120m). From where a zigzagging path leads us down to the Chalets de Miage before descending down to the Val Montjoie. In poor weather, your guide may decide to use another route via Bionassay instead. Overnight in Les Contamines.

- Ascent 650m / Descent 1225m
- Meals: B, L, D

## Day 4

### TREK LES CONTAMINES TO LES CHAPIEUX (20.2KM, 7 HOURS)

From the village of Les Contamines, we will walk up to the Col du Bonhomme. The path at this stage leads gently up the valley to the beautiful church of Notre Dame de la Gorge, a picturesque rest stop. The track that was originally constructed by the Romans is roughly paved with large slabs and flagstones. Once past the church, the path winds steeply through pines beside a narrow gorge where the blue-tinged waters of the Torrent de Tré la Tête boil and thunder between smooth rock walls. We leave Val Montjoie to cross over to the Beaufortain Valley via the high Col de la Croix du Bonhomme. We arrive at les Chapieux via the petit Mont Blanc pasture.



*Accommodation this evening is in a basic auberge in a remote location and may be on a triple or quad share basis and bathroom facilities may be shared.*

- Ascent 1300m / Descent 900m
- Meals: B L D

## **Day 5**

### **TREK LES CHAPIEUX TO VAL VENY (15KM, 5–6 HOURS)**

A short shuttle bus transfer brings us to Ville des Glaciers (1789m). We reach the Val d'Aosta via the Col de la Seigne (2516m) and from there we see a most imposing view of the south face of the Mont Blanc. A path leads us around the Limestone Pyramids to reach the moraine of the Estelette Glacier and the nearby Refugio Elizabetta. From here we continue onwards down the valley to our overnight stop, by the glacial Lacs de Miage (a well-known local beauty spot). Transfer to Courmayeur for your overnight accommodation.

- Ascent 720m / Descent 540m
- Meals: B L D

## **Day 6**

### **VAL VENY TO COURMAYEUR (13KM, 5 HOURS)**

Today's shorter hiking day begins with a return to the trailhead where we left off yesterday. After a brief local bus ride, we'll continue our ascent towards Lac Combal before making our way up to Arp Vieille (2,420 m). The climb is moderate and rewards us with a stunning balcony viewpoint overlooking Mont Blanc, which rises majestically above the Brouillard and Freney Glaciers, as well as iconic peaks such as the Innominata and the Aiguilles de Peuterey — legendary names in the world of alpinism. From here, we descend via Col Checroui and continue into Courmayeur for our overnight stay.

*Please note dinner is not included this evening.*

- Ascent 480m / Descent 1220m
- Meals: B L



## Day 7

### REST DAY IN COURMAYEUR

Today you have a full day to explore this Italian Alpine town, enjoy an espresso in one of the street cafes or take the incredible cable car ride from Le Palud to the point Helbronner at 3470m. There is also an excellent thermal bath and spa at Pre St Didier, just 5km away (regular buses). Or you could take a trip to the provincial capital of Aosta (1 hour by bus) with its Roman remains and medieval streets. Your leader will be able to offer some suggestions.

- Meals: B

## Day 8

### TREK COURMAYEUR TO ITALIAN VAL FERRET (16.2KM, 6–8 HOURS)

Leaving from the hamlet of Villair (1340m) is a charming forested ascent to the Bertone refuge, then over a crest dominating the Val Ferret we get to Tete Bernarda (2534m), we are at the summit of one of the most beautiful lookouts on the whole Tout du Mont Blanc. There is also an alternative path which runs on the flank of the mountain to Refuge Bonatti on a glorious contouring trail with flower meadows, milky streams and clanging cowbells while descending into the Italian Val Ferret.

*Shared bathroom facilities this evening and may require a triple or quad share.*

- Ascent 970m or 1300m / Descent 550m or 950m
- Meals: B, L, D

## Day 9

### TREK ITALIAN VAL FERRET TO LA FOULY (21KM, 8 HOURS)

This day starts with an easy walk up the valley to Refugio Elena where the most demanding climb to the pass begins. The ascent to the Col Ferret (2537m) is steep but enjoyable. Crossing the Grand Col Ferret takes you out of Italy and into Switzerland along the eastern edge of the Mont Blanc Range. There are a few streams to cross today. The walk down into the Swiss Val Ferret is through pastureland and on a mixture of paths, tracks and through valaisan pastures to the charming village of La Fouly (1595m) where we will stay overnight.



*Accommodation tonight is a basic hotel and may require a triple or quad share & a shared bathroom. Luggage transfers are also not included on this day so you will need to carry a spare set of base layer clothes and basic toiletries for the night.*

- Ascent 1240m / Descent 1200m
- Meals: B, L, D

## **Day 10**

### **TRANSFER LA FOULY TO CHAMPEX, TREK TO TRIENT (18KM, 6 HOURS)**

The classic Tour du Mont Blanc takes the Bovine route. This part of the trail passes near meadows, forests and then steeply up to the high alpine pastures and simple Alp building of the working dairy farm Bovine that overlooks the Rhône Valley. An hour and a half of easy walking followed by a rapid ascent in the forest and we are hanging over the Rhone valley and the town of Martigny. You will not be disappointed with this fabulous balcony and views of far-ranging mountains.

Take a moment to enjoy spectacular views across to the Bernese Alps before a very pleasant and mostly downhill woodland walk that will take you to Col de La Forclaz. Then it's 45 minutes of steep downhill into Trient.

*Accommodation this evening is in a basic auberge in a remote location and will be on a triple or quad share basis and bathroom facilities will be shared.*

- Ascent 800m or 1200m / Descent 960m or 1140m
- Meals: B, L, D

## **Day 11**

### **TREK TRIENT TO ARGENTIERE (17KM, 6-7 HOURS)**

The walk up to the Col de Balme (213m) via les Herbageres brings us back into France. A long but gradual ascent up to the Col De Balme with its picturesque refuge on the pass that marks the border with France. Superb Views of Mont Blanc and the Chamonix Valley stretched before you. Returning to the Chamonix Valley from here is a very pleasant walk. Col de La Balme is the furthest point from the summit of Mont Blanc. Panoramic views of lovely snow domes remain in sight for most of the descent into Argentiere.



- Ascent 1020m / Descent 1020m
- Meals: B L D

## Day 12

### ARGENTIERE TO CHAMONIX (14KM, 5–6 HOURS)

From Argentiere we climb up to Cheserys, a balcony offering grandiose views – the glaciers of le Tour, Argentiere, the Mer de Glace, the Aiguille verte, the Drus, the Aiguilles de Chamonix and of course Mont Blanc. We expect to add a slice of wildlife to this day as a reward for our efforts as ibex are common here. The trek ends at Flegere, where we return to Chamonix by cable car in the afternoon. Your mountain leader may modify the itinerary if conditions necessitate.

*\*\*Please note that dinner on the final night is at your own expense. Your guide will make a booking for your group in Chamonix for dinner if you would like to have a celebratory dinner with your fellow trekkers.*

- Ascent 930m or 1125m / Descent 325m or 380m
- Meals: B L

## Day 13

### DEPART CHAMONIX

The trip finishes today and you are free to stay on or we can help arrange a transfer by private vehicle or shared transfer this morning from Chamonix to Geneva airport (not included in trip price).

- Meals: B

