



ADVENTURES
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TOUR DU MONT BLANC AND THE CHAMONIX VALLEY

JULY 18 - 26, 2021

TRIP SUMMARY

HIGHLIGHTS

- Spending a week immersed in an area of incredible natural beauty, where the mountains and glaciers are both majestic
- Riding the spectacular lift system over the Mont Blanc valley and glacial system
- Exploring the charming towns of Chamonix, France and Courmayeur, Italy - climbing and hiking villages of the world
- Circumnavigating halfway around the highest mountain in the Alps as we hike from France into Italy
- Staying at diverse Alpine accommodations, from a 3-star hotel to a classic mountain hut

Phone: 877-439-4042

Outside the US: 970-833-3132

Email: info@goodadventure.com

TRIP AT A GLANCE

Location:	Chamonix, France
Activities:	Hiking
Arrive:	Arrive in Chamonix, France before 5 p.m. on Day 1
Depart:	You are free to leave Chamonix any time on the last day

TRIP OVERVIEW

Sitting astride the borders of three different countries (France, Switzerland and Italy) the Mont Blanc massif is massive! Mont Blanc, at 15,536 feet is the highest mountain in Western Europe. The rich alpine and cultural history of the area, the panoramic peaks, glaciers and alpine meadows, the windswept passes and the friendly small mountain towns all combine to make the circuit around Mont Blanc one of the premier hiking routes in Europe. The circuit is comprised of over 120 miles of trails which originally were trade routes and now link the seven valleys that surround Mont Blanc. Not surprisingly with this topography the hiking is challenging with long ups and long downs. The rewards are well worth the effort – breathtaking views, alpine hospitality and an international hiking community of which we are a part! While we will not be completing the entire circuit the section of the route we travel is widely regarded as the best.

RATING

This trip is appropriate for women who have hiking experience, are in excellent physical condition, and have no significant knee problems or fear of heights or exposure.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Two experienced Adventures in Good Company guides (depending on group size)
- Eight nights accommodation, mostly double except for the 2 huts, which are dormitory style
- All dinners and breakfasts from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on Day 9 (water/coffee/tea included with dinners and breakfasts) plus two lunches.
- All transportation listed on the itinerary

Not included: Transportation to Chamonix (the nearest airport is Geneva, Switzerland and from there it is easy to arrange a shuttle); 3 lunches, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages (except water with meals); personal snacks; guide gratuities; emergency/evacuation/medical mandatory insurance, additional activities

OUR ITINERARY

Below is the itinerary we have planned for the trip. As is true on any adventure travel trip, plans for any specific day may be modified due to weather considerations, unforeseen circumstances, new opportunities, and group interests.

DAY 1 - Sunday, 7/18/2021

We will meet in the lobby of our lodging in Chamonix for a Welcome and Introductions before enjoying our first dinner together. While some of us may prefer an early evening to get to bed early, undoubtedly some of us may prefer to wander the streets of this wonderful mountain village. Overnight Chamonix at Hotel L'Arve or similar. (D)

DAY 2 - Monday, 7/19/2021

We'll probably be feeling a bit of jet lag today and the best cure for that is a hike in this beautiful valley! We'll head up the other side of the valley, taking the Brevant Lift to Plan Praz and then hiking up and over the ridge line. From here, we ascend contour across the mountainside to the Col de Brevent with wide ranging views to the north, before joining a brief section of the Tour du Mont Blanc (TMB) and descending into a valley. Our path then starts to climb again, including a short ascent on a fixed ladder, before reaching the top station of the cable car to Le Brevent. Our efforts are rewarded with panoramic views (and refreshments!) and we'll take a break before you decide whether you prefer to hike back into town or take the cable cars. The afternoon is free for you to explore the town or prepare for the trek, before we meet again for dinner. Hiking: 4 – 5 hours. Elevation gain: 1914 feet. (B, D)

DAY 3 - Tuesday, 7/20/2021

There is so much hiking to do right in the Chamonix Valley that we'll spend one more day before we leave for our trek. This time it's an all-day excursion to the Mer de Glace, the largest of Mont Blanc's glaciers! A perfect second day excursion and hike. We start with a visit a local bakery (or grocery) where each of us can purchase what looks good for a picnic lunch before taking the historic cog railway ride to Montevers. There we'll visit an ice grotto carved into the glacier and view this magnificent glacier up close. After time to take in this amazing landscape, we hike up from the glacier to tree line where the entire valley opens before us. While enjoying our picnic lunch, we'll gaze out over the spectacular Mer de Glace on one side and the entire Chamonix Valley on the other. We then continue our 'balcony' hike to the lower platform of the Aiguille Lift where we take the lift to the Aiguille du Midi and view Mount Blanc in all her glory! We will take the lift down to Chamonix and have the rest of the afternoon free to explore this charming town. Hiking: 4.5 – 5.5 hours. Elevation gain: 1432 feet. Overnight Chamonix (B, D)

DAY 4 - Wednesday, 7/21/2021

We begin our Tour du Mont Blanc trek today with a short bus ride to Les Houches and then a cable car to the top of Bellevue. This is where we begin our trek on the famous Tour du Mont Blanc trail. After crossing over a picturesque

railroad crossing we enter the forested side of Bellevue. Hiking along the trail we come to a gate – one of many we will encounter on this trek – just don't forget to close it! Shortly we will be at the bottom of the mountain and here our true alpine hiking begins as we pass the terminus of the huge Glacier. We continue up through alpine meadows to the Col de Tricot (6,995 feet) where we are rewarded with views of the Dome du Gouter and the entire Chamonix Valley. A steep descent brings us to the village of Miages and Truc where lunch awaits us under the inviting umbrella of the rifugio. After lunch we climb out of the valley of Miage and ascend another 'hill', heading to the village of Les Contamines, our destination for the night. Hiking: 6 – 7 hours. Elevation gain: 5,000 feet (cumulative). Overnight Les Contamines, Hotel Le Christiania or similar (B, D)

DAY 5 - Thursday, 7/22/2021

From our hotel in the village of Les Contamines we will start the morning with a short shuttle to the Notre Dame de la Gorge, a famous 15th century mountain church that is worth a stop. Our trail today is up the broad Mont Joie Valley with a total elevation gain of over 4,000 feet. Initially our route climbs steeply alongside the Bon Nant River, on a path believed to be 2,000 years old, part of a link from Gaul to the Roman empire. Crossing a small ancient Roman bridge, we continue upward approaching the Refuge la Balme where we will take a welcome lunch break amid the high mountains and local cows. From here we continue climbing until finally reaching the Col du Bonhomme for yet another spectacular view of the valleys below. We'll then continue along a ridge to the Col de la Croix du Bonhomme, our highpoint of the day. From here the path starts descending steeply and we ford several streams on our way to the charming little hamlet of Les Chapieux and the hospitable Hotel de la Nova. About 8 hours walking. Hiking: 6 – 8 hours. Elevation gain: 4,000 + feet. Overnight De La Nova, Les Chapieux. (B,L, D)

DAY 6 - Friday, 7/23/2021

Today will be a relatively shorter and easier day although we still gain over 3,000 feet as we climb from Les Chapieux to the Col de la Seigne. From the hotel De La Nova we get a short shuttle to 'the end of the road' and begin our hike at the bottom of Col de la Seigne. The climb is along a switchback trail where often enterprising locals offer donkey transports for backpacks up the trail! Arriving at the Col at 2,516 meters (8,255 feet) the view ahead is amazing. This is the Franco-Italian border and we have our first view of the Italian side of Mont Blanc, including the entire Val Veny. On our left will be the Mont Blanc massif. This side of the mountain is more angular, rockier, and the snowy peak is well in the distance. Descending from the col we head toward the Rifugio Cabane du Combal, located in the valley, directly above a beautiful glacier river for our evening destination. The Rifugio is a typical 'high mountain' hut and we will arrive in time to enjoy the atmosphere, and explore around the Rifugio and along the edges of the glacier river before enjoying their wonderful dinner. Hiking: 6 - 7 hours. Elevation gain: 3,000 + feet. Overnight Cabane du Combal or similar (B,L,D)

DAY 7 - Saturday, 7/24/2021

Today we're 'going to town'! The Italian side of Mont Blanc with its many glaciers and craggy peaks continues to be a constant and gorgeous presence. We will continue our trek from our rifugio and head (of course!) up hill. We'll arrive at Rifugio Maison Viella where you can purchase either lunch or hearty snack! After enjoying a bit of refreshment, we will take a cable car ride down to the town of Courmayeur. Courmayeur is a typical Italian mountaineering resort that

offers interesting shops, winding streets, and lots of local flavor. Our hotel for the night is in Courmayeur so spending a bit of time getting to know this quaint little city is a possibility as we will go out for dinner tonight. Overnight: Courmayeur, Edelweiss Hotel or similar. Hiking: 5 - 6 hours. Elevation gain: 1500 feet (B, D)

DAY 8 - Sunday, 7/25/2021

We'll begin today with a bit of free time – a little extra sleep and a chance to explore Courmayeur! Picking up lunch at a local bakery before meeting late morning, we'll continue our journey. If the weather is co-operative, we'll leave Courmayeur and head up the hill by public bus to the base of the cable car system that travels up the Italian side of Mont Blanc and then continues up and across the mountain back to Chamonix. The lift system (which is actually a series of cable cars and gondolas) takes you into the heart of the Mont Blanc massif. As we ride above, we can watch those below heading to some of the more famous mountaineering destinations, watch those crossing the massif by foot, view the Mer de Glace from the Italian side, and continue to marvel at this amazing mountain. If using the lift system is not possible, we will take public transportation back to Chamonix and get to go thru the tunnel! No bad alternatives! Arriving in Chamonix we will check into our hotel and the rest of the afternoon is free to enjoy Chamonix for a few hours before meeting for our last dinner together. Hours hiking will vary. Overnight Chamonix at Hotel L'Arve or similar. (B, D)

DAY 9 - Monday, 7/26/2021

The trip officially ends this morning. After breakfast (or earlier if you have a plane to catch) we say adieu to Chamonix and take one last look at the beautiful Mont Blanc Massif. You can continue on to other explorations or, if you must, take the train or a shuttle to the Geneva airport to begin your journey home. (B)

ADDITIONAL TRIP INFORMATION

GETTING THERE

The easiest way to get to Chamonix is to fly into Geneva, Switzerland and take a shuttle from there to Chamonix. Detailed instructions will be provided in the Pre-Departure.

GETTING HOME

The trip officially ends the morning of Day 9. You may schedule your flight anytime today that works for your schedule. Remember you will need to have a pre-arranged shuttle or plans to return to the airport 2 hours prior to your scheduled flight.

AIRFARE

If you would like assistance with airfare, we recommend contacting our AirDesk Partner, [Exitto Travel](#). Start by submitting this [form](#). Just fill in your dates and destinations, including any additional notes about preferred carriers, class of service, possible stopovers, etc., and an agent will typically respond via email within a few hours. If you prefer to call, the number is 800-655-4053; be sure to tell them you are traveling with Adventures in Good Company.

Please note: Most of the international airlines are in-network for Exitto, so they do not charge extra for their services (and often have access to discounted rates). When necessary, processing fees out-of-network carriers are minimal at around \$35-\$50 per ticket.

ACCOMMODATIONS

We will spend 5 nights in 3- and 4-star small tourist class hotels that offer double rooms with private baths, 1 night in a hotel in bunk rooms with shared baths, and 1 night in a high mountain hut with common shower, baths, and bunk rooms.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We recommend that you purchase a travel protection plan to help protect you and your travel investment against the unexpected. For your convenience, we offer travel protection through Travelex Insurance Services. For more information on the available plans or to enroll, visit [Travelex Insurance](#) or call 1-800-228-9792 and reference location number 06-0331.

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CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellation charges reflect the many expenses Adventures in Good Company cannot recover if you cancel, even if you must do so due to illness, injury, or personal emergencies. These fees are not meant to be punitive. The charges made reflect the expenses Adventures in Good Company has incurred in administering your reservation and planning for your participation. We recognize that the majority of those who cancel their reservations do so out of necessity. Please note that we do not make any refunds for any unused portion of your trip, not arriving, arriving late, or leaving the trip early.

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