

FRANCE, SWITZERLAND & ITALY Tour de Mont Blanc Trek

This is an Open Challenge itinerary; you can take part on the dates shown and raise money for a charity of your choice. Itineraries for bespoke trips (run for sole charities) may differ slightly, and will have different dates and pricing schedules.

Duration: 8 days / 7 nights

Trip Grade: Tough

Dates:

11 Jun – 18 Jun 2011 9 Jun – 16 Jun 2012
10 Sep – 17 Sep 2011 8 Sep – 15 Sep 2012

Payment Options:	2011	2012
Fundraising:		
Registration Fee	£299	£299
Min. Fundraising Target	+	+
	£2375	£2475
Self Payment:		
Registration Fee	£299	£299
Trip Cost	+	+
	£950	£990

Please note Registration Fee is in addition to Trip Cost / Fundraising Target



Open to Families – for information see below

The Mont Blanc region boasts one of the world's most renowned trekking circuits, with some of the most awe-inspiring scenery imaginable – all within a short hop from the UK! Our six-day trek takes in three countries as we circle the highest peak in Western Europe.



Our challenge is physically demanding and will test your stamina and determination, but the rewards are some of the most spectacular views Europe has to offer – an array of towering cliffs, waterfalls spilling from glaciers, forested tracks, open meadows and crystal clear lakes. Mont Blanc is our constant companion for most of the week.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Depart London

We fly to Geneva and transfer to Chamonix. Night hotel.

(Lunch not included)

Day 2: Val Ferret – La Fouly

We transfer to the head of the Val Ferret and our start point at 1770m. The path quickly rises above the tree line and becomes steeper again as we climb the back wall of the valley to the high point of the day: Grand Col Ferret

(2537m). The Val Ferret is lined by steep vertical cliffs sliced in sections by fingers of crevassed glacier spilling

with waterfalls to the valley bottom. From the Col we have wonderful views back down the valley to Courmayeur and onwards to the French border at Col de la Seigne, 25km



away. We are now on the Swiss / Italian border and we descend over the other side to the pretty Swiss village of La Fouly (1600m). Night pension.

Trek approx 7 hrs**Day 3: La Fouly – Champex**

A less taxing day today, as we follow the scenic Swiss part of the Val Ferret to Champex (1450m). Our route takes us along forested tracks and through open meadows and traditional Swiss villages. Many farmers here still tend the land and their dairy herds using long-established traditional methods. The views are as spectacular as we'd expect from the heart of the Swiss Alps – you'll be resting your legs with lots of photo stops! Champex is a picture-perfect village nestled around a crystal clear lake. Night pension.

Trek approx 6.5 hrs**Day 4: Champex – Col de la Forclaz**

A tougher day ahead, as we climb up directly out of Champex, contouring round the Fenêtre d'Arpette (2665m). The Val d'Arpette was not so long ago buried under hundreds of metres of glacier, and the sharp rocky moraine is evidence of the glacier's destructive, eroding power. This is a non-technical walk but nonetheless a challenging day in the mountains. We descend to the Col de la Forclaz at 1526m. Night pension.

Trek approx 7 - 8 hrs**Day 5: Col de la Forclaz – Col de Balme – Chamonix**

Today sees us embark on another stiff climb – our leg muscles should be used to it by now! This ascent sees us returning over the border into France on the Col de Balme (2191m). The views from the top, looking down the Chamonix Valley, are guaranteed to take your breath away. After lunch, we descend back down the French side



to the valley bottom and transfer back to Chamonix centre. Night hotel.

Trek approx 7 hrs**Day 6: Montroc – Chamonix**

We return to Montroc, at 1360m, where we finished walking yesterday. We start our climb first to the Col de Montets (1461m), and then continue up a steeper zig-zag path to approximately 1800m, where the path levels onto the Balcony Route, a mid-level contouring path running the length of the Chamonix valley. This is one of the most spectacular walks in the whole of the Alps: needle sharp spires, sheer cliffs, huge crevasse-fractured glaciers and hanging valleys with spilling, gushing waterfalls all face us on the opposite valley wall. The summit of Mont Blanc is our constant companion. The views are constantly changing as our perspective moves, and numerous narrower tributary valleys and more distant mountain peaks come in and out of view. On our side of the valley the path is well-graded and surrounded by greenery, with isolated lakes. The chances of seeing mountain ibex, marmots and chamois are high. In the afternoon we descend back down to the valley bottom. Night hotel.

Trek approx 7 - 8 hrs**Day 7: Chamonix – Le Brevent - Chamonix**

The morning starts with a short 10 min transfer to Les Bossons at 1012m, from where we start our most challenging day: a trek to the summit of Le Brevent at 2525m. The route up is again on well-graded paths snaking up through trees, and then onto a glorious broad ridge directly opposite Mont Blanc itself. Any closer and Mont Blanc would be too close to see its full scale, but from where we are we can see perfectly the detail of the glaciers, crevasses and sheer cliffs. If you look carefully

you might spot climbers making their difficult and exhausting push to the summit. Meanwhile, we will enjoy a drink in a dramatically-situated refuge before we make our final push to our summit. In the afternoon we descend back to Chamonix. It is also possible to take an optional cable car to the valley bottom. This is our final night in Chamonix and we have a slap-up evening to celebrate our achievements. Night hotel.

(Dinner not included)

Trek approx 7 - 8 hrs

Day 8: Depart Geneva

We transfer to Geneva Airport and fly home.

(Lunch not included)

Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.

GENERAL INFORMATION

TOUR COST

All accommodation is included as well as all flights, transfers, and meals other than three as specified in the itinerary (lunches are dependent on flight schedules), any entry fees to sites or regions visited as part of the itinerary.

Experienced Discover Adventure leaders are also included, along with local support of guides and drivers.

It does not include personal travel insurance, airline fuel supplement if charged by the airline, three meals as specified, any personal expenses or any optional sites or activities.

Costs in France

We recommend you budget for the following costs in-country:

- Tips for local crew: £20-30
- Meals not included: £35-45
- Optional cable-car: approx €18

Remember to allow extra for drinks, snacks, souvenirs & other personal expenses. There is plenty of opportunity to buy souvenirs. This recommendation is a guideline only.



Please note that costs may fluctuate and we have no control over any changes.

We strongly recommend you carry a credit card in case of personal emergency.

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Group flights leave from London Heathrow or Gatwick and are booked through Discover Adventure Ltd

under ATOL licence 5636. By travelling with Discover Adventure you are protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

We are most likely to fly with British Airlines. However, we don't always fly with the same airline so this is a guideline only. You will usually receive confirmed flight details several months before departure.

Our itineraries are always based on current flight schedules and are therefore subject to change by the airline.

Connecting Flights

If you book flights to Heathrow or Gatwick, it is your responsibility to allow plenty of time to connect to the group flight and to cope with any flight schedule changes. Please be aware that the best deals allow little flexibility if you need to change them. We regret that we are unable to book connecting flights for you.

Flying Separately

If you prefer to book your own flights please ask us for a land-only cost. You will be responsible for making your own arrangements for meeting the rest of the group, though we can advise you. We need to know if you do not require our group flight as early as possible; please complete the form in the information pack you'll be sent with your booking confirmation.



ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation is in a mix of family-run hotels and pensions which are all clean and comfortable; rooms in hotels are usually twin-share. Sleeping arrangements in pensions are dormitory-style. We endeavour to use smaller rooms and keep them single-sex, but please be aware this may not always be possible, especially at busy times.

FOOD

All food is included except for three meals as specified. Generous packed lunches are provided when trekking and given to you each morning. The three-course dinners in the refuge are wonderful!

ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE!

For most people, the main attraction of travelling to a different country is to see new sights and enjoy new experiences. Sometimes those new experiences can make life harder or more inconvenient than you may like, such as toilet hygiene or different food, or simply a different attitude to solving problems. This is all part of the challenge you are signing up for!

Travelling exposes us to different challenges – all of which help broaden our horizons. We can guarantee that coming face-to-face with experiences outside your normal 'comfort zone' will help you bond with your fellow trekkers and provide you with plenty of things to laugh about! A sense of humour and sense of adventure are two of the most important things to bring with you!

Dietary Requirements

Being vegetarian or having other dietary requirements is not usually a problem provided you let us know well in advance. Bear in mind that being vegetarian is not generally well-understood in France, so meals may not be as varied as you are used to. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat you may wish to bring extra snacks



from home so you can top up your energy supply. Please feel free to ask us for advice.

Other Meals

Any meals not included are listed in the itinerary and are generally when we are in towns or cities and you are free to explore and try other culinary experiences! There is always something to suit every budget.

PASSPORT, VISA & VACCINATIONS

A valid ten-year passport is essential for travel in France, Italy and Switzerland and must be valid for at least 6 months from entry. Your passport must be carried with you at all times in the mountains. There is no visa requirement for UK citizens or other EU members. Other nationalities should check entry requirements.

We insist that you have had a Tetanus injection in the last ten years, and highly recommend protection against Polio.

You should always check with a GP or travel clinic for up-to-date travel health advice as it does change.

TREKKING INFORMATION

Terrain

Walking terrain is varied, with valley paths and high ridge-climbs. The trek is very hilly, with some steep rocky areas and rivers to cross. The highest altitude reached is 2665m.

Several days are particularly demanding, and you will need to have trained hard or be a regular, fit walker of long distances and tough terrain to complete this challenge.

Trekking Distances

Because of the twisting, undulating terrain, it's impossible to give accurate daily distances. It's also much more useful

when training to think about the hours you need to walk for, and the type of terrain you will be trekking over!

We are always happy to talk through the trip in more detail with you if you are worried about your fitness at any stage.

FITNESS WARNING: DESIGNED TO BE CHALLENGING!

This trek is designed to be challenging for those of good health and fitness, and is achievable for most people provided they train well in advance. We will supply you with a thorough training guide when you have registered. Training for the challenge is all part of the preparation and requires commitment! Without it, you will find the trek less enjoyable – and we want you to have the time of your life!

Clothing & Equipment

We are travelling through remote mountains where we could be exposed to bad weather at any time. The information below gives you an idea of the climate, but be prepared for all weathers and temperatures. Weather conditions can change quickly in the mountains. We provide you with a detailed packing kit-list on registration, as well as details on useful discounts you are entitled to as a Discover Adventure customer. We are always available if you need advice.

Weather

Temperatures can vary widely, though generally it should be warm and sunny; rain is always a possibility and it may be blustery. Cold winds are common when high up on the

mountains.

Average min/max temps & rainfall (mm) for the region:

June / July	12 - 26°C	50mm
Aug / Sept	11 - 25°C	55mm

Fitness Levels

Our challenges attract people of all levels of experience and fitness, all ages and backgrounds. We expect all participants to train hard in advance to achieve this challenge, but we respect everyone's limits. We design our challenges so that everyone can go at their own pace: this is not a race.

For logistical and safety reasons we sometimes need to re-group, so the front-runners will find themselves waiting for the slower ones. Please relax, and remember that this is a team effort that enables people to achieve their personal goals and earn sponsorship.

TRAINING WEEKENDS: £119 SPECIAL OFFER!

Only when you book online at the same time as registering for your main challenge

Discover Adventure Training Weekends in Snowdonia National Park are designed help you prepare for your challenge. Whether you use the weekend to gauge your fitness, get your training back on track, boost your confidence, get advice or meet other trekkers, you're bound to find it incredibly useful!

For dates and further information see our brochure or website.



TRIP SUPPORT

Discover Adventure Crew

Your trip will be led by experienced Discover Adventure leaders. Our leaders are selected for their experience in harsh wilderness environments, knowledge of travel in remote areas, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises. They are also trained in expedition first-aid. You are in very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader.

All our leaders are from the UK or other English-speaking countries. Most work for us on an ad-hoc basis and have 'real' jobs in-between trips!

We never send our leaders to the same destination for months on end – we want them to be as enthusiastic about your trip as you are.

The number of crew looking after you will depend on the final size of your group, but at Discover Adventure we pride ourselves on our high leader: trekker ratio and believe it leads to greater trip enjoyment as well as excellent trip safety.



Luggage

Space is limited and hard-sided luggage is not recommended, so we suggest your kit is packed in a soft rucksack or expedition kitbag. Ask us about our specially-designed low-cost kitbags if you don't have one already.

You should bring a small daypack to carry for items needed during the day as you will not have access to your main luggage until the evening.

TRIP SAFETY

Your safety, and that of the rest of the group, is our highest priority. Our trips are designed and planned with safety in mind. Your crew will be equipped with radios and emergency mobile phones, medical kit and other safety apparatus where necessary. They always have access to our 24-hour emergency back-up in the UK. Our leaders are responsible for safety on the trip, and will make any changes to the itinerary they deem necessary should local conditions dictate.

Pre-trip administration – such as compulsory medical questionnaires and travel insurance – is all done with your safety in mind.



OPEN TO FAMILIES



This symbol means this challenge is suitable for young people aged 14 and over, provided they are fit and prepared to train in advance! They must be accompanied by at least one parent or legal guardian.

WORLDWIDE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Long before 'Responsible Tourism' became a recognised phrase, we designed and ran our trips to ensure they made minimum impact on the environment and a positive impact on the local communities we pass through. AITO, our Trade Association, has recognised the work we do in this area and has awarded us 4 stars as a Responsible Tour Operator.

Discover Adventure Projects

We are supporting a tree-planting project in Peru and a children's home in Tanzania on a long-term basis. If you would like to 'give something back' please consider donating £5 to our projects when you sign up. Please see our website for more details.



Carbon Offsetting

We encourage all our customers to offset emissions connected with their trip. You can offset at any time in the lead-up to departure by visiting Climate Care via our website and making a donation to a worthwhile project supported by them. Alternatively, if you wish to take more practical action in the UK you can volunteer for a day with BTCV and work on an environmental project local to you. Work may include construction footpaths, dry stone walling, creating wildlife habitats or planting trees in your community. Make your volunteer pledge by going to www.btcv.org/dapledge



Please contact the Discover Adventure office
with any queries using the contact details below.

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