

A guide to walking the Tour du Mont Blanc (TMB)

Walk from Trient to Argentière

Quick guide

📍	Country	France, Italy & Switzerland
🕒	Time zone	CEST
💰	Currency	EUR & CHF (Swiss Francs)
💬	Language	French & Italian



An introduction

The Tour du Mont Blanc (TMB) is a renowned 170km multi-day trek that circles the Mont Blanc massif, home to western Europe's highest peak, which stands tall at 4,806 metres. Mont Blanc straddles the border between France and Italy and dominates the skyline – but the surrounding peaks and glaciers are equally heart-stirring. The route winds through three countries – France, Italy, and Switzerland – carving its way through one of the most breathtaking regions of the Alps, justifiably drawing in hikers from across the world.



Argentière Glacier

Highlights of walking the Tour du Mont Blanc



Hike one of the world's most iconic long-distance mountain trails



Cross through three different countries – France, Italy & Switzerland



Circumnavigate western Europe's highest peak, Mont Blanc



Soak up fantastic scenery over peaks and glaciers



Enjoy a sense of camaraderie and achievement on reaching the end point in Chamonix

Walk from Les Contamines
to Les Chapieux



All about the Tour du Mont Blanc

History

For centuries, travellers have circumnavigated the Mont Blanc massif, but the first 'tour du Mont Blanc' is often credited to Horace Bénédict de Saussure who, in the 1760s, went out on plant collecting expeditions into the Chamonix valley and beyond. He even put up a reward for the first person to reach the top – and he himself tried to climb it from the Courmayeur side in 1774.

After several attempts to climb Mont Blanc, Jacques Balmat, a mountain guide from Chamonix, and Michel Paccard, a doctor, also from Chamonix, finally summited on 8 August 1786. It was an amazing feat of endurance and courage, which they made un-roped, without ice axes and laden with scientific equipment. Today approximately 20,000 people climb Mont Blanc every year, despite the challenges of altitude and weather.

Notable summit dates:

1808: Jacques Balmat guided the first woman, Marie Paradis, to the top.

January 1876: Mary Isabella Charlet-Straton, with her fiancé, made the first winter ascent; Pointe Isabella was named in honour of her achievement.

1960: Henri Giraud landed a plane on the summit.

2003: seven French paragliders landed on the summit in a single day; this record was broken 9 years later when 50 paragliders landed.

September 2007: a group of 20 set up and used a hot tub on the summit.

July 2013: Spanish 'mountain athlete', Kilian Jornet, ran from Chamonix to the summit and back again in just 4hrs 57mins, a record which remains unbroken.



Did you know?

The Tour du Mont Blanc has been an official 'GR' (Grande Randonnée) since 1952.

Accommodation

Our chosen accommodation allows you to rest in comfort and privacy. We've hand-picked both stylish spa hotels, family-run guesthouses, and traditional mountain auberges, some of which have shared bathroom facilities, but none of the dormitories you might otherwise expect on the route.

Due to the popularity of the route, we work with a number of different hotels for each evening, all of them picked by us.

Dinner is included on a few evenings, allowing you to enjoy the regional fare, while on other evenings you are within easy reach of local cafés and restaurants, for which we provide recommendations on where to dine.

A note on... the terrain

This is one of our grade 3 walks involving more challenging ascents and descents with around 15km to cover each day, but the views over the surrounding peaks and valleys make every step worth it. The landscape is varied, too, taking you through lush meadows dotted with traditional dairies, passing streams, lakes and – at higher altitudes – through the dramatic terrain of this incredible landscape. It's all well-waymarked and well-maintained, with some sections wider than other Alpine paths.



Walk from Col to Flégère

Food & drink

Expect to feast on traditional Alpine food where cheese features heavily on the menu. In France, try the *tartiflette* (melted cheese over potatoes with bacon), in Italy there's polenta with melted Aosta valley fontina cheese, and in Switzerland a classic *fondue*, served with bread or potatoes, or traditional *rösti* will help maintain your energy levels. It's all hearty fare, ideal for days spent walking the high Alpine routes.

Our detailed route notes provide tried-and-tested recommendations on where you can eat or have a drink en route as well as when it's best to take a picnic.

Raise a glass

The Savoie region in France produces crisp white wines as well as reds like Gamay, while in Italy you'll find bold reds such as Petit Rouge and Fumin as well as whites, including Prie Blanc, from the Aosta valley. The Valais region in Switzerland is also renowned for its wines, including some speciality varieties.

Best time of year to walk the Tour du Mont Blanc

The season begins in June and ends in September, though July and August are the most popular months for walking the TMB as all the shuttle buses and cable cars are open during this time.

There can still be some snow at higher altitudes – at any time of the year – while at lower levels, daytime temperatures can reach 26°C, so it's important to be prepared for any type of weather.

Self-guided walking

The joy of going self-guided means you can start when it suits you, add on nights in Courmayeur, for example, and have the freedom to walk at your pace with the space to enjoy every moment.

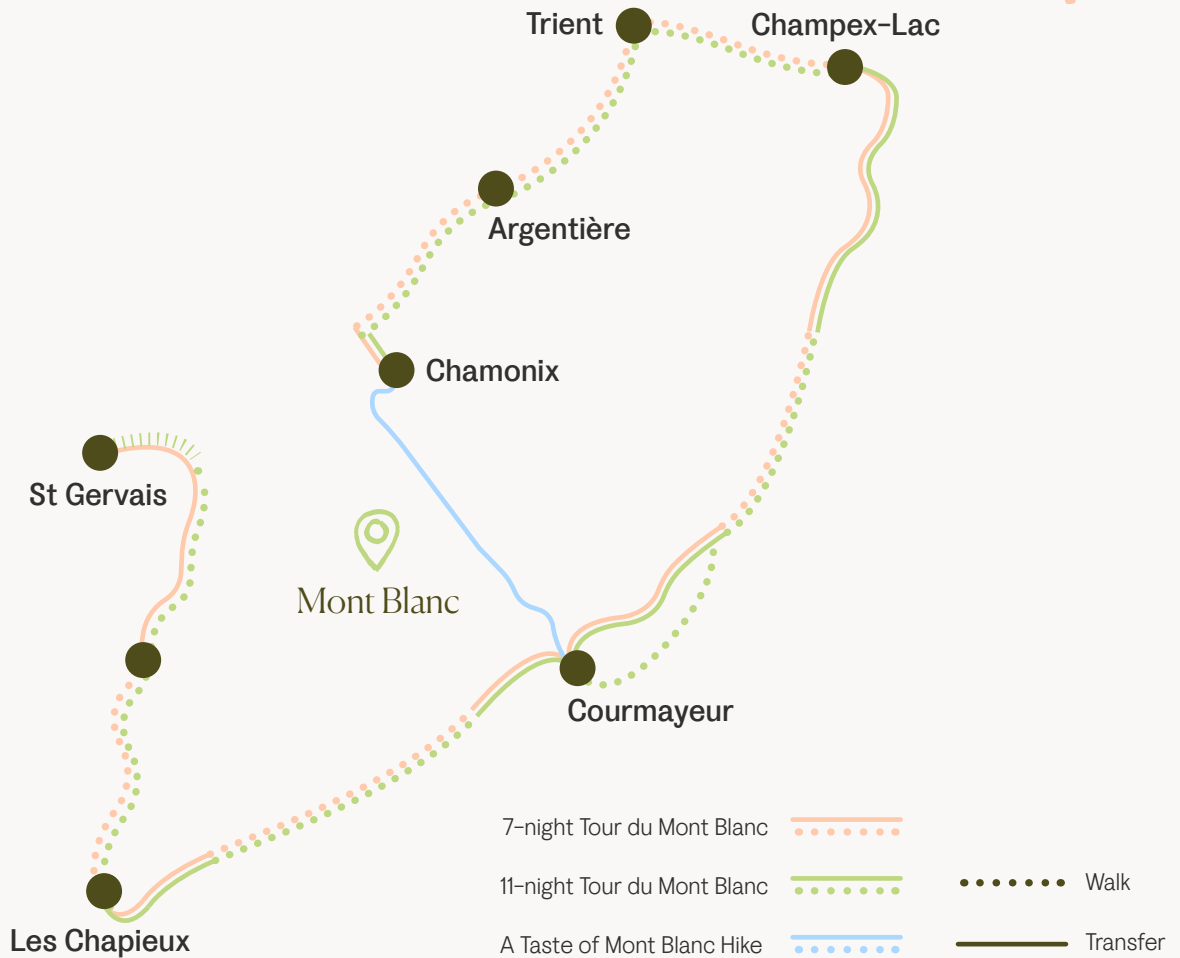
View from Lac Blanc to Mont Blanc

Did you know?

The height of the summit means it is frequently capped by a distinctive cloud, often referred to as 'Napoleon's hat'.



The route



7-night Tour du Mont Blanc

For fit & experienced walkers who want to tackle the TMB in less time, without sacrificing on comfort or scenery.

Start & end: **St Gervais to Chamonix**

Grade 3: **challenging**

Available: **June – September**

Total distance walked: **82km**

Average distance per day: **15km per day**

[View full itinerary >](#)

11-night Tour du Mont Blanc

Our classic TMB route includes a rest day in Courmayeur, allowing you time to relax or sightsee along the way.

Start & end: **St Gervais to Chamonix**

Grade 3: **challenging**

Available: **June – September**

Total distance walked: **96km**

Average distance per day: **15km per day**

[View full itinerary >](#)

A Taste of Mont Blanc Hike

Stay in Courmayeur and Chamonix making use of cable cars, buses, and mountain trains to experience the TMB's iconic hikes and unmissable moments.

6 nights

Grade 2 & 2-3: **moderate**

Available: **June – September**

Flexible: **choice of routes**

[View full itinerary >](#)

Getting to & from the start & end points

Main airport **Geneva airport**

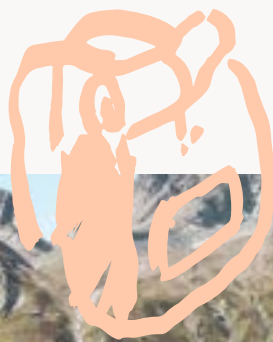
Trains and buses

From Geneva airport there's a train to **St-Gervais-les-Bains-le-Fayet** (2 hours), and for the return, there's a train from **Chamonix-Mont Blanc** to Geneva airport (3.5 hours).

How to prepare & how fit you need to be

Before you travel, make sure you build walking or other types of exercise into your routine, gradually increasing the length of the walks and hills. It's best to get used to wearing your rucksack and break in your walking boots, too, so that they don't cause discomfort while walking the Tour.

If you're worried about your level of fitness, our A Taste of Mont Blanc Hike itinerary allows you to walk sections of this bucket-list walk using a mix of cable cars, buses, and mountain trains to take some of the strain of ascents and descents.



What to pack

- We recommend taking **walking poles** as there are big climbs and descents
- Daypack with **water** & non-perishable **snacks**
- **Walking boots** suitable for all seasons
- **Crampons/micro spikes** are a good idea if going earlier in the season
- Warm, thermal **layers**
- **Waterproofs**
- **Sunglasses**
- **SPF**
- Warm **hat, sunhat, gloves & neck buff**
- **Walking trousers** (ideally zip-off ones)
- Evening **shoes and clothes**
- Quick-dry **t-shirts**
- Warm **jacket**
- **Medication** and a **first aid kit**
- Your **route notes & maps**, which we send to you prior to departure



A note on luggage transfers & weight limits

We include luggage transfers so all you need to take with you is a daypack with your food and water. As it's a popular route there's a strict policy of one luggage item per person, maximum 15kg. If you wish to store any additional luggage for the duration of the trip, this must be arranged in advance and costs around €10 per day.



Walk from Chapieux to Visaille

For more tips, hints, and what to expect, read our Alps expert's guide to walking the Tour du Mont Blanc.

[Read the guide >](#)

What Inntravellers love about walking the Tour du Mont Blanc

"The Tour of Mont Blanc holiday was everything we wanted it to be and more. The walking was challenging as every day started with a climb but the views at the top were stunning and the experiences we had were incredible. The information pack with maps and walking notes were excellent and we were able to follow these easily. We met so many wonderful people as we passed each other on the trek and then met up with them again in our hotel in the evening. All hoteliers greeted us warmly when we arrived and provided us with a delicious breakfast each morning."

Inntraveller, August 2024

"Thrilling but challenging is the best description of the TMB. Every day brought fantastic scenery and wonderful hikes. The walking is tough with lots of "high knee" ascents and steep descents, but the reward was breathtaking views, alpine meadows and gorgeous little towns."

Inntraveller, July 2024

Why choose Inntravel



Hand-picked, comfortable accommodation



Luggage transfers



Detailed route notes



24/7 support

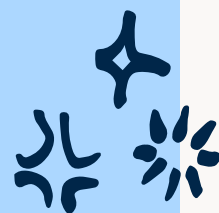


Self-guided walking



Perfectly planned

How to book or enquire



It's a popular route for good reason, so it's best to book in advance to avoid disappointment. We open reservations for the following year from March onwards, with the season starting in June and running until September.

Our expert team are happy to help answer any questions you might have, too.

Contact us on +44 (0)1653 617001 or you can book/enquire [online](#)

[Book or enquire online >](#)