

FRANCE, ITALY & SWITZERLAND

The Mont Blanc Circuit

A Guided Walking Adventure





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Travel Style

This small-group Guided Walking Adventure offers an authentic travel experience, one that takes you away from the crowds and deep in to the fabric of local life. On it, you'll enjoy 24/7 expert guides, premium accommodations, delicious meals, effortless transportation, and local wine or beer with dinner. Rest assured that every trip detail has been anticipated so you're free to enjoy an adventure that exceeds your expectations.

And, with our **optional Flight + Tour Combo and Chamonix Pre-Tour Extension** to complement this destination, we take care of all the travel to simplify the journey. Refer to the attached itinerary for more details.



Overview

Boasting the highest and most spectacular mountains west of the Caucasus, the Alps are one of the classic walking destinations in Europe, if not the world. Every valley, meadow, and glacier is made accessible by the thousands of miles of well-marked paths that grace this region. There are hikes for all levels, and the Tour du Mont Blanc, a challenging circuit around Western Europe's highest peak (Mont Blanc at 15,774 feet), is the most popular.

From the international mountaineering and ski resort of Chamonix, France, you make your way along a network of meticulously tended trails into Italy and Switzerland, each with its unique language, cuisine, history, and landscape. This journey offers a wide array of scenery, and a panorama that is in constant motion. On this inn-to-inn circuit, full days of hiking start at the doorstep of your hotel and end as you reach the cobbled streets of the village that is your new home for the night. This short version of the official Tour du Mont Blanc includes a selection of its most spectacular trails. Days are spent traversing valleys replete with wildflowers, following paths that have been used since Roman times, and climbing serpentine trails alongside tumbling glaciers, with crenellated spires serving as the backdrop. Each day presents a new and astounding view of the majestic Mont Blanc massif. Evenings are spent in simple alpine inns and comfortable hotels, where you indulge in hearty cuisine and toast each day as a worthy accomplishment.



Daily Itinerary

DAY 1

Les Houches to Les Contamines-Montjoie; 10 miles (about 6 hours of walking), moderate to challenging, 700-ft. elevation gain, 3,400-ft. elevation loss

Your exploration of the legendary Mont Blanc Circuit begins in Chamonix, the mountaineering capital of the Alps. Following an early morning meeting, you transfer by bus to the nearby village of Les Houches for a cable car ascent to Bellevue (literally “beautiful view”), and the start of the hiking circuit.

Today’s hike offers exceptional views of the Aiguille (“needle”) de Bionnassay, with its dramatic glacier and soaring rock spires. The route also provides an excellent introduction to the unique flora of this region. Martagon lily, masterwort, and gentian are among the flowers that adorn the mountainsides, and are protected as an integral part of this incredible area. You traverse varied terrain, including narrow paths, rocky glacial debris, and a suspension bridge with breathtaking views of the Col de Tricot, perfectly shaped as a saddle. The trail then descends toward the small hamlet of Champel, nicely shaded by a coniferous forest.

Following lunch at a mountain cottage, you continue through tiny villages, boasting alpine architecture and lovely gardens overflowing with ripe vegetables.

Your destination is the attractive village of Les Contamines-Montjoie, once home to chamois hunters, and today a popular mountaineering and ski resort.

You are welcomed at a cozy family-run hotel nestled in the Montjoie Valley. There is time to relax before gathering again for a welcome drink and excellent dinner of local specialties served in your hotel's dining room.



Hôtel La Chemenaz, Les Contamines-Montjoie, France

A traditional Alpine inn boasting comfortable, spacious rooms with balconies, stunning views of the Mont Blanc Massif, a sauna, and Jacuzzi.

DAY 2

Les Contamines-Montjoie to Les Chapieux; 11 miles (about 7 hours of walking), challenging, 4,395-ft. elevation gain, 3,260-ft. elevation loss. *If for any reason, you wish to opt out of this walk, as it is not possible to join the luggage transfer, your guides can arrange a private transfer at your own expense (cost of approximately 250 euros for a 2.5-hour transfer).*

After an early breakfast, you transfer by minibus to the end of the valley and the start of what is the most challenging hike of the tour. The trail begins at the Baroque chapel of Nôtre Dame de la Gorge, a pilgrimage site at the foot of the Gorge du Bon Nant. From the church you walk along an old Roman road that climbs steadily through a beautiful conifer forest. Leaving the woods, you cross broad, level Alpine pasture, passing rustic chalets as you make your way to La Balme. You continue the ascent, pausing occasionally for a snack of tasty Alpine chocolate and views of the dramatic valley below.

By midday you reach the Col de la Croix du Bonhomme (8,180 feet), where you stop to take in the breathtaking panorama. With the most difficult part of the day complete, you break for a trailside picnic before meandering down to the valley.

The day's final walking destination is Les Chapieux, a summer village at the southern limit of the Mont Blanc massif. A 45-minute drive down to your hotel in a Savoyard village allows you to stroll out for dinner at a local restaurant after



perhaps unwinding in the sauna or swimming pool.

Hotel l'Autantic, Bourg Saint Maurice, France

A comfortable three-star hotel constructed of local stone and wood at the southern limit of the Massif du Mont Blanc has period and antique furnishings as well as sauna and swimming pool.

DAY 3

Les Chapieux to La Visaille and Courmayeur; 10 miles (about 6.5 hours of walking), moderate to challenging, 2,645-ft. elevation gain, 3,050-ft. elevation loss

Today you say *au revoir* to France and *buongiorno* as you enter the Aosta region of Italy, tracing the footsteps of countless Roman legionnaires. The hike begins at La Ville des Glaciers after a short transfer, and climbs eastward. After 2½ hours, you reach the Col de la Seigne (8,300 feet). This “hill” with a broad, flat landscape, represents a saddle of transfluence between the ancient glaciers that extended along the Aosta and Savoy slopes. Following a descent along an easy, winding trail, you reach the Elisabetta Refuge, a spectacularly situated stone chalet beneath the Aiguille of Combal. Lunch is in an area dominated by some of the most impressive summits of the Alps. The valley enjoys a certain regional autonomy, and French is spoken by its friendly population.

You continue on foot to La Visaille, at the base of the spectacular Glacier of Miage, whose snowcapped domes you saw for the first time two days ago. A short transfer brings you to the resort town of Courmayeur, Italy’s elegant counterpart to Chamonix, and your home for the next two nights. After settling into your comfortable in-town hotel, you are free to dine on your own at one of the town’s many lively pizzerias or trattorias.

Hôtel Berthod, Courmayeur, Italy

A three-star, family-run country-house hotel in an ideal location in the center of this charming Italian Alpine town. The inn offers 25 unique rooms with splendid views. Jacuzzi, sauna, and massages are available.

DAY 4

Free day in Courmayeur with optional walk

Today is a rest day, and you have the opportunity to explore the charming Italian resort of Courmayeur. You may choose to peruse the local shops for souvenirs, sit at a sidewalk terrace to taste a delicious gelato, or simply relax in the hotel's sauna or Jacuzzi. If you prefer to walk, your guides offer a hike in the surrounding area (the mileage and level of difficulty will vary depending upon the group's interests) with a stop for an independent lunch. Another option in Courmayeur is to ride the Skyway cable car, a new aerial lift reaching the closest point to the summit of Mont Blanc. Your guides can assist with logistics, but the cost is at your own expense.

This evening, you reunite for a dinner of Italian mountain specialties at a nearby local restaurant.

Hôtel Berthod, Courmayeur, Italy

DAY 5

Courmayeur (Arnouva) to Ferret (Champex); 8.5 miles (about 5.5 hours of walking), moderate to challenging, 2,600-ft. elevation gain, 2,830-ft. elevation loss, highest elevation: 8,370 ft.

Following a hearty buffet breakfast, a 20-minute drive takes you to Arnouva and the start of today's hike. Exploration of the Val Ferret continues along a winding footpath with a view of the Pré de Bar, the imposing granite peaks of Mont Dolent (12,543 feet), and the Grandes Jorasses. Along the way, the Rifugio Elena is a perfect rest stop for a steaming cup of rich hot chocolate. The climb continues through meadows that are home to Alpine wildlife—ranging from the talkative marmot to the agile chamois, which may be seen frolicking on the glacier after you cross the Grand Col Ferret (8,321 feet). This pass, in use for several centuries, serves as the Italian-Swiss border between Val D'Aosta and the canton of Valais. The descent brings you along a trail with a profusion of wildflowers and the sound of Swiss cowbells echoing across the hillside. This is truly *Heidi* country; its tidy chalets with geraniums spilling from the window boxes greet you as you enter the sleepy village of Ferret.



A final minivan transfer delivers you to Champex, a tranquil Swiss summer resort on a lake with the same name. Upon arrival at your comfortable family-run hotel, there is time to relax, swim, or take advantage of the Jacuzzi before dinner on site.

Hôtel du Glacier, Champex-Lac, Switzerland

A three-star family-run hotel, with Jacuzzi and sauna, ideally situated on Lake Champex with a fireside lounge and reading room.

DAY 6

Champex to Col de la Forclaz; 9 miles (about 6 hours of walking), challenging, 2,310-ft. elevation gain, 2,060-ft. elevation loss

Today's hike begins right from the doorstep of your hotel in the picturesque town of Champex. A coniferous trail winds north across Alpine pastures, providing great views of the town of Martigny and the Rhône Valley and its vineyards. You also catch your first glimpse of the highest summits in the Swiss region of Bernese Oberland. After a picnic lunch in this unparalleled setting, you walk to a charming old farm nearby for a cup of coffee or refreshment on their rustic terrace.

Re-energized, you start your afternoon hike to the Col de la Forclaz, pronounced *forcl* by the locals and meaning “fork” in Old French, as it is one of the three entrances to the Chamonix Valley, and the only one on the Swiss side. The trail ascends above the tree line and, on a clear day, you see the famous Swiss ski resort of Verbier in the distance. Farther along the trail, you might stop for a moment and watch black Hérens cows fight for the title of “Queen”—this consists of two of these strong, bull-looking females pushing each other until the weakest steps backwards. You arrive on foot at the day's final destination, a simple, family-run inn located at the top of the pass. You toast the day's accomplishment with a glass of Fendant, the fine local wine for which the area is famous, before a simple and comforting dinner.

Hôtel du Col de la Forclaz, Trient, Switzerland

A simple Alpine hotel that prides itself on serving the typical cuisine of the Valais region of Switzerland. In the same family for six generations, the hotel is located at the Swiss entrance to the Mont Blanc region. Please note: not all rooms have private baths.

DAY 7

Trient to Argentière; 8.5 miles (about 4 hours of walking with cable car descent or 6 hours of walking without cable car descent), moderate, 2,860-ft. elevation gain, 915-ft. elevation loss with cable car descent or 3,080-ft. elevation loss without cable car descent



Today starts with a short transfer as you leave Switzerland. The trail rises gradually from the secluded valley of Trient in Switzerland, where the imposing village church seems to be the only beacon in this entirely green, lush environment. You pass through a tranquil spruce forest with many switchbacks before arriving to the Col de Balme in France. This pass offers tremendous views over the whole of the Chamonix valley, flanked by the Aiguille Verte and Aiguilles Rouges (the “green” and “red” needles, or peaks) surrounding Mont Blanc. The latter is named after the distinctive reddish color of the granite in the morning sun. Upon descending to the village of Tour, you have the option of using a cable car or you may continue walking on the slopes of the Balme ski area.

Your home tonight is in the village of Argentière—literally “silver” in French, as it was once the site of a silver mine. After settling into your traditional hotel, located in the town’s center, you walk to a dinner of Savoyard specialties at a charming restaurant.

Hôtel de la Couronne, Argentière, France

A simple, old-fashioned hotel nestled in the heart of the authentic mountain village of Argentière with a welcoming bar and outdoor terrace café.

DAY 8

Col des Montets to the Chéserys lakes to Chamonix; 7 miles (about 6 hours of walking), moderate to challenging, 2,770-ft. elevation gain, 1,560-ft. elevation loss, including a cable car descent

Following a few miles’ taxi ride, you set off on the final stage of the circuit, and it’s one of the most beautiful, with the stunning Chéserys lakes being the highlight. Most people seek the famed reflection of the mountains in these secret lakes’ still waters, which often remain frozen until the end of June. By August,

though, most of these lakes are free from ice and snow, and the views of the Mont Blanc massif from this vantage point are breathtaking.

Over lunch, you work together to identify the various peaks that have been part of your journey this past week. Afterwards, you descend along a rocky trail for two hours to La Flégère cable car for a panoramic ride into the valley. It is a leisurely walk along the glacially fed Arve River to Chamonix, where an inviting, heated swimming pool awaits your arrival at an elegant four-star hotel. Reuniting for a farewell feast at your hotel's Michelin-starred restaurant, you can indulge to your heart's content after completing almost 60 miles of walking.

Hôtel Le Morgane, Chamonix, France

This elegant and environmentally friendly four-star hotel offers mountain views and a Michelin-starred restaurant. Contemporary guestrooms are tranquil and plush with wood accents and neutral tones. A spa complete with swimming pool, steam room, sauna, and treatment facilities is on site.

DAY 9

Departure from Chamonix

After a plentiful buffet breakfast, you are free to continue your exploration of Chamonix, or depart for your next destination.

ITINERARY CHANGES

Please bear in mind that this is a typical itinerary, and the actual activities, sites, and accommodations may vary due to season, special events, weather, or transportation schedules. We reserve the right to alter the itinerary, since tour arrangements are made up to a year in advance and unforeseen circumstances may arise that mandate change. Itinerary changes are made to improve the tour and your experience.

A WORD ABOUT ACCOMMODATIONS

Please note that the hotel where you spend night six of the tour is very basic. On night six, private baths are not available for all rooms. This property has been chosen to allow you to remain as close to the traditional Mont Blanc Circuit as possible and in an effort to eliminate long transfer times to more upscale accommodations. While we feel this lodging is in a unique setting and is truly part of experiencing the Tour du Mont Blanc, it may not meet everyone's expectations. If you have any questions or concerns, please call our office.

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

Country Walkers is a leader in active travel with responsible tourism an integral part of our core values. Our tours reflect our dedication to best travel practices—and to the preservation of indigenous cultures and the environment. Country Walkers has made a donation on behalf of every traveler to the CW Travelers Fund, which supports designated projects in the communities and habitats in which we travel. We invite you to learn more about our efforts and initiatives for giving back.

Here's just one example that highlights our sustainable practices:

Low Impact: Limiting our impact on the destinations we explore is a core value for us at Country Walkers. And, on this tour, this is exactly what we do! By walking an inn-to-inn circuit, we greatly minimize our transportation needs. Continuing this dedication, we reduce plastic waste by refilling water bottles directly from fresh mountain fountains. The traces we leave are only positive ones. Supporting local agriculture and artisans, we arrange picnic lunches of freshly made cheeses, breads directly from the *boulangers*, and chocolates and pastries created by local masters. Despite the availability of international resorts, we embrace small and family-owned hotels that better reflect the region's rugged character. Walking the high Alpine trails with local guides is yet another strong indication of our commitment to this magnificent region.

Tour Itinerary Overview

TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME

Hôtel Le Morgane, Chamonix, France, 8:00 a.m.

145, avenue de l'Aiguille du Midi
74404 Chamonix, France
Tel 011 33 450 53 57 15

NIGHT 1

Hôtel La Chemenaz

Les Contamines-Montjoie, France
Tel 011 33 450 47 02 44
Fax 011 33 450 47 12 73
Email info@chemenaz.com
chemenaz.com
Wireless Internet and hair dryers available. Laundry service unavailable.

NIGHT 2

Hotel l'Autantic

Bourg Saint Maurice, France
Tel 011 33 479 07 01 70
Fax 011 33 479 07 51 55
Email bonjour@hotel-autantic.fr
www.autantic.fr/
Wireless Internet and hair dryers available. Laundry service unavailable.

NIGHTS 3 & 4

Hôtel Berthod

Courmayeur, Italy
Tel 011 39 01 65 84 28 35
Fax 011 39 01 65 84 22 86
Email info@hotelberthod.com
hotelberthod.com
Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

NIGHT 5

Hôtel du Glacier

Champex-Lac, Switzerland
Tel 011 41 27 782 6151
Fax 011 41 27 782 6150
Email info@hotelglacier.ch
hotelglacier.ch
Wireless Internet and hair dryers available. Laundry service unavailable.

NIGHT 6

Hôtel du Col de la Forclaz

Trient, Switzerland

Tel 011 41 27 722 2688

Fax 011 41 27 723 1807

Email colforclazhotel@bluewin.ch

coldelaforclaz.ch

Hair dryers and laundry service available. Wireless Internet unavailable.

NIGHT 7

Hôtel de la Couronne

Argentière, France

Tel 011 33 450 54 00 02

Fax 011 33 450 54 07 23

Email info@hotelcouronne.com

hotelcouronne.com

Wireless Internet and hair dryers available. Laundry service unavailable.

NIGHT 8

Hôtel Le Morgane

Chamonix, France

Tel 011 33 450 53 57 15

Fax 011 33 450 53 28 07

Email reservation@hotelmorganechamonix.com

morgane-hotel-chamonix.com

Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

TOUR DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME

Hôtel Le Morgane, Chamonix, France, after breakfast

TRAVEL DELAY AND EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

If you are delayed while traveling, or experience any unforeseen situation en route to your tour, assistance is only a few, easy steps away:

As a Country Walkers guest, you benefit from 24-hour, toll free access to One Call Emergency Hotline and Travel Assistance. Call the numbers below from anywhere in the world to get immediate assistance (regarding everything from lost luggage, to missed connections, to health concerns or notifying your guides or our local partners of a delayed arrival).

To contact One Call, please use one of the following methods:

By Email: mail@oncallinternational.com

By Text: 603.945.0103

By Phone:

If calling from within the USA: 800.555.9095

If calling from outside the USA: 800.555.9095 or 603.894.4710

When calling from outside the USA, you will need to dial the access code for the country you are calling from (a complete list of access codes, provided by AT&T, can be found on the Country Walkers website under Travel Planning and Travel Resources: AT&T International Access Codes. If you receive an automated response, when prompted, you can then enter either of the numbers above; One Call accepts collect calls 24/7.

In the unlikely event you are unable to connect by phone with One Call, or the region you are calling from does not have an access code, you should speak with a live international operator and ask them to place a collect call to **800.555.9095 or 603.894.4710**.

Should there be any problems placing a collect call (as is occasionally the case depending on the country), dial, email, or text One Call directly and ask them to return your call immediately to minimize any out of pocket costs.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We offer guests the opportunity to purchase a Travel Protection Plan. Please contact us for details.

Tour Facts at a Glance

TOUR LENGTH (WITHOUT FLIGHT PACKAGE)

9 days, 8 nights

DEPARTURE DATES AND PRICE

Please refer to our website for the most current list of departure dates, scheduled group tour and private tour prices.

TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME

Hôtel Le Morgane, Chamonix, France, 8:00 a.m.

TOUR DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME

Hôtel Le Morgane, Chamonix, France, after breakfast

ACTIVITY LEVEL

This tour is one of our Guided Walking Adventures, rated challenging, with an average of 6 to 7 hours of hiking per day, very limited options, and only short transfers due to the inn-to-inn nature of this itinerary. There are significant ascents and descents averaging 2,600 and 2,400 feet, respectively, per day, typically sustained over 2 to 3 hours on switchback trails. The highest walking altitude on tour is 8,370 feet. The footing is uneven, with hikes on single-track trails with loose rocks, gravel, and roots that can be slippery when wet. Your guides set a steady yet comfortable pace to maximize your appreciation for this Alpine environment. Walking sticks and hiking boots (not shoes) are highly recommended. This itinerary offers limited time for non-walking activities, except for a rest day in Courmayeur, and is perfect for guests interested in day-long hikes.

INCLUSIONS

- » Two expert, local guides (for groups of 8 or more), with you 24/7
- » All meals except for one lunch and one dinner; local wine or beer included with dinners
- » All accommodations (with private bathrooms except for one or possibly two nights) while on tour
- » Transportation from the meeting point to the departure point
- » Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary
- » Destination information (weather, visa requirements, etc.) and other travel assistance available 24/7 provided by One Call International
- » The unbeatable and cumulative experience of the Country Walkers staff

LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN

Prior to your adventure you will be asked to sign a Passenger Participation Agreement and you will receive:

- » Luggage tags
- » List of travel companions and guide biographies

GRATUITIES

Gratuities for all hotels, meals, and services that are included in your tour price will be paid by Country Walkers. Should you wish to tip your Country Walkers guide(s), the standard in the industry ranges from \$10 to \$15 per person, per guide, per day (or \$20 to \$30 per couple, per guide, per day), and can be paid in USD or local currency.

Traveling To and From Your Tour

If you are interested in reserving the **optional Flight + Tour Combo and pre- or post-tour extensions**, please refer to the attached itinerary for more details.

TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME

Hôtel Le Morgane, Chamonix, France, 8:00 a.m. (after breakfast)

Your guide(s) will be wearing a Country Walkers shirt. Please be dressed for hiking.

Important luggage note: Please limit your **on-tour luggage** to one medium-sized bag and one small carry-on (as noted on page 37 below), because of a weight restriction of 15 kilograms per person (33 pounds) with our luggage carrier on narrow mountain roads. **You may leave luggage you do not need during the tour at Hôtel Le Morgane (which is the night 8 on-tour hotel) and retrieve it on the last night of the tour.**

MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORT

Geneva International Airport (GVA), Geneva, Switzerland
gva.ch/en

GETTING TO THE MEETING POINT

You may arrive at the Geneva airport and depart directly for the French town of Chamonix.

Optional stop in Geneva: If you plan on spending time in Geneva prior to the tour, from the airport you may reach the city center by train, public bus, or a taxi from the airport. The 2 ½-mile taxi journey costs 30-35 CHF (or 25-29 euros, which are also accepted).

Traveling to Chamonix:

- Chamexpress shuttles to Chamonix are available at the Geneva International Airport several times per day. Travel time is less than two hours; cost is 30 euros per person. Please visit chamexpress.com for departure times and to make advance reservations for your door-to-door transfer (highly recommended).
- Public buses also depart the airport or the Geneva Central Coach Station (*gare routière*) two to three times a day (generally early morning, midday, and

mid-afternoon, depending on the day of the week and time of year). The trip costs approximately 45 euros one way, per person. For more information on fares and schedules, please visit the Geneva Coach Station's website at gare-routiere.com or contact them via email at info@gare-routiere.ch. Advance reservations are not necessary, but can be made online. Choose the Regular Lines Region Bordercross on the menu to access the Geneva-Chamonix schedule. Pick Geneva Airport or gare routière (coach station) and Chamonix (not Chamonix Sud). Another useful website is altibus.com.

You may choose to arrange a private transfer from Geneva to Chamonix with Airport Transfer Service (A-T-S). One-way fares are approximately 165 euros per car:

A-T-S

Tel 011 33 450 53 63 97
Fax 011 33 450 55 97 06
Email sales@a-t-s.net
a-t-s.net

- You may also travel to Chamonix by train. There is service from Geneva several times a day (some trains depart from the Cornavin train station, located in the center of town, and others from the Eaux-Vives station, slightly out of the center but still easily reachable). The journey takes 2-4 hours and requires at least one connection. For the most current rail information including reservations, schedules, and fares, please call Rail Europe at 800.438.7245 or consult their website: raileurope.com. You may also consult the Swiss railway website (SBB) at sbb.ch/en. We recommend making train reservations in advance for major train routes. Reservations are required for all TGV (high speed) trains.

In Chamonix:

The coach station in Chamonix (which is also the SNCF train station) is less than a 10-minute walk from Hôtel Le Morgane. Taxis are located in front of the station. A taxi ride from the station to the hotel takes 5 minutes and costs approximately 20 euros.

Chamonix Taxi

Tel 011 33 611 27 2321
Fax 011 33 450 54 3412
Email info@chamonix-taxi.com
taxichamonix.net

Station de Taxis

Tel 011 33 450 53 13 94

PRE-TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

If you are not reserving our optional Flight + Tour Combo, you may wish to stay at the Hôtel Le Morgane, our meeting-point hotel. The Hôtel Le Morgane is an elegant four-star hotel in the heart of Chamonix.

Hôtel Le Morgane

145, avenue de l'Aiguille du Midi

74404 Chamonix, France

Tel 011 33 450 53 57 15

Fax 011 33 450 53 28 07

Email reservation@hotelmorganechamonix.com

morgane-hotel-chamonix.com

We suggest making a pre-tour reservation as soon as possible as this property fills well in advance. Please note, because of luggage restrictions on tour of one medium sized bag and one small carry-on as noted on page 37 below, you may leave luggage you do not need during the tour itself at the meeting hotel in Chamonix, Hôtel Le Morgane, which is also the last hotel on the tour (night 8).

For further hotel suggestions in Chamonix, please visit the lodging (hébergement) section of the following website: chamonix.com.

DELAYS AND LATE ARRIVALS

If you are delayed or miss the scheduled group meeting point for any reason, we kindly request that you contact our emergency assistance provider, One Call International. This service is available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week to assist you with any type of travel delay. Please refer to the emergency contact details on your Tour Itinerary Overview page for One Call International contact details.

TOUR DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME

Hôtel Le Morgane, Chamonix, France, after breakfast

Information & Policies

GUARANTEED DEPARTURES

Country Walkers guarantees the departure of every tour*—no exceptions and no disappointments! From the moment you make your deposit, you can start preparing for your adventure. We take care of all the details to ensure a seamless, small-group experience (with an average of 6 or 7 guests per guide). For best availability, reserve your trip today!

**except in cases of force majeure*

GUEST RESPONSIBILITIES

Each guest has the responsibility to select a trip appropriate to his/her abilities and interests and to prepare for the trip by carefully reading the confirmation materials. To join this trip, you must be in good health and capable of completing activities as described in the day-to-day itinerary. Our in-house experts welcome the opportunity to discuss the tour in more detail. In order to meet your needs, we ask that you please share any relevant physical limitations or health conditions when you make your reservation.

SCHEDULED GROUP INDIVIDUAL RESERVATIONS

Reservations for this tour may be made by calling Country Walkers at 800.464.9255 and providing a \$350 per person deposit. The Balance of your payment (final tour cost) is due 90 days prior to the tour departure date.

SCHEDULED GROUP CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellations received 91 days or more prior to the tour start date will incur a loss of \$150; cancellations received between 90 and 61 days prior to the tour start date incur a loss of 25 percent of the tour price; there are no refunds within 60 days of the tour start date. Up to 91 days prior to departure, you may transfer your reservation, depending on availability, from one departure to another in the same calendar year at no cost*. Please notify us in writing.

**One transfer per year; afterwards a modest per person transfer fee will apply. Please note that tours with seasonal prices may involve a higher price.*

PRIVATE ADVENTURE RESERVATION & CANCELLATION POLICIES

If you are booking a Private Adventure, a \$500 nonrefundable group deposit is required to secure hotel reservations and guides. Once these arrangements are confirmed, the deposit will be applied as the provider's deposit for the trip. If we are unable to secure the hotel and/or guides for your requested dates, this deposit will be refunded.

Once your Private Adventure is confirmed, your individual \$350 per person deposit is required within 14 days. The balance of your payment (final tour cost) is due 90 days prior to the tour departure date. Cancellations received 91 days or more prior to the tour start date will incur a loss of \$150 (plus the nonrefundable group deposit of \$500); cancellations received between 90 and 61 days prior to the tour start date incur a loss of 25 percent of the tour price; there are no refunds within 60 days of the tour start date. **Please note that Private Adventure tour pricing is based on a guarantee of a specified number of guests. Should the group decrease in size, we reserve the right to alter the per person price, if necessary.**

France at a Glance

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS



U.S. citizens: Passports are required and must be valid for at least three months beyond the dates of travel. Visas are not required for stays of up to 90 days. For more information, see travel.state.gov.

Travel Tip

Have a variety of options to start your trip: ATM card(s), credit card(s), some dollars to exchange, and some euros in small denominations.

CURRENCY

France uses the euro (EUR). For up-to-date exchange rates, see oanda.com.

Many businesses in Europe will no longer accept credit cards without PIN numbers (chip and pin cards). Always contact your bank or your credit-card company for details on fees and card use when traveling.

TIME ZONE

France is in the Central European Time Zone, Eastern Standard Time plus six hours. For more information on worldwide time zones, see worldtimezone.com.

PHONE & INTERNET



France country code: +33

Cell phone coverage throughout France is extensive but cannot be guaranteed to be accessible on all American mobile carriers or to function at all times while on the trail or in remote areas. For more information regarding international phone use, please refer to

countrywalkers.com/phones.

Internet access is generally very good in towns and villages; however, it is not guaranteed at all of the hotels used on the tour. For more details regarding Wi-Fi availability, please refer to the Tour Itinerary Overview.

LANGUAGE

The official language of France is French.

While knowledge of the local language is not necessary, you may want to learn some fun and useful phrases; see bbc.co.uk/languages/french or the enclosed Reading Guide for a suggested phrase book.

ELECTRICITY

Alternating current of 230V and 50Hz is used in France. Plugs have either two round pins and a hole, or just two round pins. For a full listing of electrical outlets worldwide, see electricaloutlet.org.

WEATHER

France has a range of climates, and—depending on the region—spring, summer, and fall are ideal for an active vacation.

Provence, in southern France, has a pleasant Mediterranean climate with daytime temperatures in the 70s during tour dates. Normandy and Brittany, on the northwest coasts, can have pleasant weather in the 50s to low 70s, and evenings in the 50s with occasional rain showers. In the French Alps, mornings and evenings can be around freezing in the morning and evening, especially at higher elevations, with daytime temperatures rising into the 70s and even low 80s.

For up-to-date forecasts, see qwikcast.com. For historical average temperatures and rainfall, see weatherbase.com.

FOOD & DRINK

French cuisine has great regional variation and, thus, is based on fresh and local ingredients from each area. In France's northern tier, the rich butter- and cream-based classics originated—and the creamy cow's milk cheeses of Normandy such as camembert. Fresh seafood, especially oysters, is served in Brittany. In the Alps, hearty mountain fare includes cheese fondue and grilled raclette cheese over steamed potatoes. The cuisine of southern France is quintessentially Mediterranean, with olive oil, herbs, fresh vegetables, and goat cheeses. Common to all regions, of course, are

Travel Tip

- Bringing your own hair dryer or other electrical device? You'll need a travel converter, available at most hardware, travel, or consumer electronic stores.
- For laptops or an electronic device with a dual voltage switch, you'll need the adapter plug but not a converter.



crusty breads, buttery croissants, and exquisite desserts, from fine pastries to rustic fruit tarts.

A meal in France—lunch or dinner—typically consists of three courses, starting with an *entrée* (appetizer), followed by a *plat principal* (main dish), and finishing with a dessert or cheese plate. First brought to Narbonne in the south by the Romans, the wines of France mirror the variation and excellence of its cuisine. Menus feature a region's local wines, as well as those from other regions. For example, In Provence, red Rhône or rosé wines pair perfectly with the cuisine. In Normandy and Brittany, local hard cider is served with crepes and Calvados, apple brandy, as an after-dinner *digestif*.

LIFE IN FRANCE

Shopping and banking hours

Shops and stores are generally open Monday to Saturday between 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m., and from 2:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.; department stores and supermarkets are open all day from 9:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Open-air markets vary by day of the week in towns and villages and generally operate from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Banks are open from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday (in Paris they are open all day).

Meal times

Breakfast is served at hotels from 7:00 a.m. to 10-10:30 a.m. In restaurants, lunch is served (almost exclusively) from noon to 2:00 p.m. (at other times, you'll have to get a sandwich) and dinner is usually served from 7:30 to 10:00 p.m.

Tipping

Gratuities in restaurants and bars are included in the total bill (*service compris*); however it is customary to leave 5 to 10 percent of the total, or to round up the total. Taxi drivers are tipped 10 to 15 percent of the total. For luggage assistance, a tip of 1 to 2 euros per bag is appropriate.





TRAVEL RESOURCES

National French tourist board official site
us.france.fr

Public holidays

To assist in travel planning, it may be helpful to be aware of French public holidays, visit the French tourist board's website:

us.france.fr/en/information/french-public-and-school-holidays.

TRAVEL IN FRANCE

Trains

SNCF: sncf.com/en, France's national train company

Rail Europe: raileurope.com or 800.622.8600: a U.S.-based company that provides schedules, reservations, and ticketing for all European train networks (their multi-day/-week/-month passes in one country or combinations of countries may be an economical and convenient choice for European train travel).

Travel Tip

Be aware that you have to validate your train ticket by "punching" it before boarding, using a small machine located on the way to the train platform, which stamps the time and date on it.

Other local transportation

Direct flights from the U.S. are only available to Paris, Nice, and Lyon, but reaching any destination is easy thanks to France's excellent rail network. Regional bus lines and internal flights (which are never more than 1½ hours) are also widely available. For information on French airports, visit www.aeroport.fr (in French only). Taxis are available at all major airports, train stations, and in smaller towns, and can be reserved in advance (your hotel can usually provide assistance). Most major car rental agencies are available at French airports and train stations.

For more information, go to us.france.fr/en/about-france/renting-car-and-driving-france.

FRENCH WINE AT A GLANCE

Each wine of France has a particular grape varietal linked to its *terroir*—the combination of local climate and soil conditions. Here is an overview of France’s main wine-producing regions: Alsace, Bordeaux, Burgundy, Champagne, Loire, Provence, and the Rhône Valley.

Region	Grape	Notes
Alsace	Gewürztraminer, Pinot blanc, Pinot gris, and Riesling	Tall, narrow <i>flûte</i> -shaped bottles contain some of the world’s driest Rieslings that pair nicely with seafood, spicy cuisines, and cheeses.
Bordeaux	Cabernet sauvignon, Cabernet franc, and Merlot	Balanced dry reds accompany meat and cheeses, and dry whites with seafood.
Burgundy	Reds are Pinot noir and whites are Chardonnay	Un-oaked white (Chablis) pairs with seafood and poultry, and reds with classic beef dishes.
Champagne	Pinot noir, Chardonnay, Pinot meunier	Champagne’s scale of sweetness from less to more is: Brut Natural or Brut Zero, Extra Brut, and Brut. Delicious as an aperitif and with raw oysters, it’s best served between 45 and 48° F in a <i>flûte</i> , of course!
Loire	Reds: Cabernet franc Whites: Sauvignon blanc, Chenin blanc, Melon de Bourgogne	To accompany seafood, look for whites from Sancerre, Vouvray, and Pouilly-Fumé.
Provence	Reds: Mourvèdre, Grenache, Cinsault, with Cabernet sauvignon and Syrah growing, and Carignan decreasing; White: Grenache blanc, Marsanne, Viognier, Chardonnay	Reds can accompany roasts and grilled dishes. Chilled rosé pairs well with the garlic-based dishes of the region.
Rhône Valley	Grenache, Syrah, and Viognier	Classic red wines, such as the southern Rhône’s Châteauneuf-du-Pape, pair well with grilled dishes, cheese, and fruit.

Italy at a Glance

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

U.S. citizens: Passports are required and must be valid for at least three months beyond the dates of travel. Visas are not required for stays of up to 90 days. For more information, see travel.state.gov.



CURRENCY

Italy uses the euro (EUR). For current exchange rates, visit oanda.com.

Many businesses in Europe will no longer accept credit cards without PIN numbers (chip and pin cards). Always contact your bank or your credit-card company for details on fees and card use when traveling.

Travel Tip

Have a variety of options to start your trip: ATM card(s), credit card(s), some dollars to exchange, and some euros in small denominations.

TIME ZONE

Italy is in the Central European Time Zone, Eastern Standard Time plus 6 hours. For more information on worldwide time zones, see: worldtimezone.com.

PHONE & INTERNET

Italy country code: +39

Cell phone coverage throughout Italy is extensive, but cannot be guaranteed to be accessible on all American mobile carriers or to function at all times while on the trail or in remote areas. For more information regarding international phone use, please refer to countrywalkers.com/phones.



Internet access is generally very good in towns and villages; however, it is not guaranteed at all of the hotels used on the tour. For more details regarding Wi-Fi availability, please refer to the Tour Itinerary Overview.

LANGUAGE

Italian is Italy's official language.

While knowledge of the local language is not necessary, you may want to learn some fun and useful phrases; see bbc.co.uk/languages/italian or the enclosed Reading Guide for a suggested phrase book.

Travel Tip

- Bringing your own hair dryer or other electrical device? You'll need a travel converter, available at most hardware, travel, or consumer electronic stores.
- For laptops or an electronic device with a dual voltage switch, you'll need the adapter plug but not a converter.

ELECTRICITY

Alternating current of 220V and 50Hz is used in Italy. Plugs have two round prongs. For a full listing of electrical outlets worldwide, see electricaloutlet.org

WEATHER

Italy has a range of climates, depending on the region. In general, spring and fall are ideal for an active vacation, with daytime temperatures in the 60s to low 70s, evenings in the 50s, and occasional short rain showers.

In the northern Alpine areas, summer through early fall is an optimal time to travel. Springtime brings

wildflowers, long days, and, on the table, early tender vegetables such as asparagus and artichokes. By late summer and fall, the warm days continue with highs in the low 80s, landscapes take on a golden hue as the grape harvest gets underway, and autumn specialties appear, such as mushrooms and truffles.

For up-to-date forecasts, see qwikcast.com. For historical average temperatures and rainfall, see weatherbase.com.

ITALIAN CUISINE & WINE



Considered one of the world's finest cuisines, Italian food is undoubtedly one of the best things about traveling in Italy. Based on fresh local ingredients, Italian cooking is consequently very regional.

Northern Italy is the home of risotto, polenta, and slow-cooked meat dishes such as *osso bucco*. The cuisine of Tuscany and Umbria in central Italy also features meat and game dishes, such as *bistecca alla fiorentina* (Florentine steak), sausages, and roast pork, as well as vegetable- and bread-based dishes such as savory bruschetta, *ribollita* (vegetable soup), and *panzanella* (bread salad).

Southern Italy and Sicily are justly known for fresh seafood—spaghetti with tiny clams, or a main course of swordfish braised in a light tomato sauce—and fresh vegetables are also prominent— spaghetti with zucchini, or the well-known *insalata caprese* of tomatoes, basil, and fresh mozzarella cheese.

Meals in Italy typically have several courses, starting with an *antipasto* (an appetizer); then a *primo* (first course), which is usually pasta or risotto; a *secondo* (main course), which is a meat or fish dish; and *dolce* (dessert).

Wine has been produced in Italy for millennia, and the country's climate and geography of coastline, foothills, and mountains allow grape growing in 20 regions from the Alps in the north to southernmost Sicily. Restaurants feature their regions' local wine.

Please see the detailed itinerary for region-specific sample menus, local delicacies, and wines.

Travel Tip

Coffee is served throughout the day in its many different ways. Italians tend to drink *caffè latte* or cappuccino until about 11:00 a.m. (a *latte* is a cup of hot milk). After 11:00 a.m., they usually drink *un caffè* (espresso). If you'd like it with a little milk you should order a *macchiato*. You'll need to specify if you want it *con latte caldo* (with hot milk), or *con latte freddo* (with cold milk), or *con schiuma* (with foam). Lastly, there's no charge to stand at the bar with a drink, but a small fee is added to the bill when you sit at a café table.

LIFE IN ITALY

Shopping hours

Shops and stores are generally open Monday to Saturday between 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m., and from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m.; department stores and supermarkets are open all day from 9:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Open-air markets generally open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., although in larger cities such as Florence, open-air markets are typically open all day, even on Sundays.



Meal times

Breakfast is served at hotels from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 or 10:30 a.m. Lunch is served in restaurants from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. and dinner is usually served from 7:30 to 11:00 p.m. (Restaurant meal times may vary by region, trending from earlier to later as you travel from north to south.)

Travel Tip

Most restaurants have a “cover charge” or *il coperto*, a per-person fee of one to three euros that is added to your final bill. It is a legitimate practice and it is considered the “fee” for the place setting, the bread, tap water (which is fine to drink), and breadsticks.

Tipping

Tipping in restaurants is not compulsory in Italy. In restaurants the menu or bill indicates *servizio incluso*, meaning “service is included.” However, locals tend to leave a small amount in coins after a meal or a coffee—roughly one to two percent of the total, or one to two euros for a meal of up to 50 euros. For a coffee or a drink in a bar or café, 20 to 50 euro cents is appropriate.

Taxi drivers aren’t generally tipped, but you could round up the total, letting the driver keep the change.

For luggage assistance, a small tip of one to three euros is appropriate.

TRAVEL RESOURCES

National Italian tourist board official sites

italia.it and enit.it

Italian public holidays

To assist in travel planning, it may be helpful to be aware of Italian public holidays, festivals, or calendars of events. Visit the Italian tourist board’s website noted above, then click on Useful Information, More Information, and National Public Holidays. For local events, visit the regional tourism websites (links can be found on the region’s page on italia.it, in the Discover Italy section).

Travel Tip

Be aware that you may need to validate your train ticket by “punching” it before boarding, using a small machine located on the train platform, which stamps the time and date on it.

TRAVEL IN ITALY

Trains

Trenitalia: trenitalia.it (Italy’s national train company)

Rail Europe: raileurope.com or 800.622.8600, a U.S.-based company that provides schedules, reservations, and ticketing for all European train networks

(their multi-day/-week/-month passes in one country or combinations of countries may be an economical and convenient choice for European train travel.)



Other local transportation

In addition to its excellent rail network, Italy also has several regional airlines, many regional bus lines, and, in coastal and lake regions, local ferries. Taxis are available at all major airports, train stations, and in smaller towns, and can be reserved in advance (your hotel can usually provide assistance). Most major car rental agencies are available at Italian airports and train stations. For more information contact Country Walkers, or go to italia.it, and click on “Useful Information.” For driving, you can further navigate to “Rules to drive in Italy.”

Museum information and online reservations

tickitaly.com

Switzerland at a Glance

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS



U.S. citizens: Passports are required and must be valid for at least three months beyond the dates of travel. Visas are not required for stays of up to 90 days.

For more information, see travel.state.gov.

CURRENCY

Switzerland uses the Swiss franc (CHF). For up-to-date exchange rates, see oanda.com.

Travel Tip

Have a variety of options to start your trip: ATM card(s), credit card(s), some dollars to exchange, and some Swiss francs in small denominations.

Many businesses in Europe will no longer accept credit cards without PIN numbers (chip and pin cards). Always contact your bank or your credit-card company for details on fees and card use when traveling.

TIME ZONE

Switzerland is in the Central European Time Zone, Eastern Standard Time plus six hours. For more information on worldwide time zones, see worldtimezone.com.

PHONE & INTERNET

Switzerland country code: +41

Cell phone coverage throughout Switzerland is extensive, but cannot be guaranteed to be accessible on all American mobile carriers or to function at all times while on the trail or in remote areas. For more information regarding international phone use, please refer to countrywalkers.com/phones.



Internet access is generally very good in towns and villages; however, it is not guaranteed at all of the hotels used on the tour. For more details regarding Wi-Fi availability, please refer to the Tour Itinerary Overview.

LANGUAGE

The official languages of Switzerland are German (north, central, and eastern Switzerland), French (western Switzerland), Italian (southern Switzerland), and Romansch (a derivative of Latin spoken in southeastern Switzerland).

While knowledge of German is not necessary, you may want to learn some fun and useful phrases; see bbc.co.uk/languages/german or the enclosed Reading Guide for a suggested phrase book.

ELECTRICITY

Alternating current of 230V and 50Hz is used in Switzerland. Plugs have either two round pins and a hole, or just two round pins. For a full listing of electrical outlets worldwide, see electricaloutlet.org.

WEATHER

The climate in Switzerland varies according to region and elevation. Late spring can be pleasant and sunny with temperatures up to the 70s, occasional showers, and some snow on the ground at high elevations. Summer days can be hot (high 80s), with local rain or thunder showers. In early autumn, the weather is often dry and sunny, although early snowfalls at elevation are not uncommon. Evenings are typically cooler in all seasons at mountainous elevations.

For up-to-date forecasts, see qwikcast.com. For historical average temperatures and rainfall, see weatherbase.com. Also see meteoswiss.ch, the Swiss official site for meteorology and climate.

FOOD & DRINK



Although a small country, Switzerland's cuisine is quite varied, according to each region's particular geography and history. Dairy products—cheese in particular—are the common thread, with each region and village producing its own cheese variety; fondue and *raclette* with potatoes are examples of cheese-based meals. Locally pastured beef and lamb are common on menus, often as roasts with savory sauces accompanied by potatoes, fresh vegetables, and salad. Many regions have

Travel Tip

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- For laptops or an electronic device with a dual voltage switch, you'll need the adapter plug but not a converter.

fresh sausages, as well as dry-cured sausages and hams. It is also the land of muesli cereal, creamy yogurts, and a variety of baked goods, from fresh breads and croissants to many types of cookies and cakes (often hazelnut-based).

Switzerland, despite its mountainous landscape, also produces wine in its southern and western regions, with a history dating back to Roman and perhaps even pre-Roman times. Wine production is just over 50 percent red, predominantly of Pinot Noir grapes, and just under 50 percent white, with many grape varieties, the most common being Müller Thurgau, Chardonnay, Sylvaner, and Pinot Gris.

Travel Tip

Cheese, Chocolate, and Watches!

Here's a quick overview of the holy trinity of Swiss products (with a note on knives):

- Cheese is almost exclusively made of cow's milk (99%, 1% production from sheep and goat's milk, Heidi notwithstanding) and comes in over 450 varieties, the most common are the recognizable "hole-ridden" hard cheeses of Emmental and Gruyère; Raclette falls in the semi-hard category.
- With the highest per capita of chocolate consumption worldwide, the Swiss enjoy their quality chocolate as much as the rest of the world! While high end chocolates from such makers as Teuscher and Sprüngli are worth splurging for, even supermarket-brand chocolate (such as Frey in Migros chains) is delicious.
- The origins of the watch-making industry lie in Jean Calvin's mid-16th century puritan reforms banning jewels; so jewelers turned to the craft of watch making, which spread from Geneva to other towns in the Jura Mountains. Known for its many luxury watch brands, most "firsts" in watch-making took place in Switzerland, such as pendant winding (19th century), wrist watches (after World War I), and quartz watches (1967).
- If you purchase a Swiss Army knife, be sure to pack it in checked luggage.

LIFE IN SWITZERLAND

Shopping and banking hours

Shops and stores are generally open Monday to Saturday between 8:30 a.m. and 12:00 p.m., and from 2:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.; in larger cities they don't close for lunch.

Banks are open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday.



Meal times

Breakfast is served at hotels from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. In restaurants, lunch is served (almost exclusively) from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., and dinner is from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Tipping

Gratuities in restaurants and bars are included (15 percent) in the total bill; for exceptional service, you could round up the total or leave two to five Swiss francs. Taxi drivers could receive two to five Swiss francs or a rounded-up total. For luggage assistance, a tip of one to two Swiss francs per bag is appropriate.

TRAVEL RESOURCES

National Swiss tourist board official site

myswitzerland.com

Public holidays

To assist in travel planning, it may be helpful to be aware of Swiss public holidays, festivals, or calendars of events. Visit the Swiss tourist board's website: **myswitzerland.com**, navigating to "About Switzerland", "General Facts", and "Public Holidays".

TRAVEL IN SWITZERLAND

Trains

Swiss Federal Railways: sbb.ch, Switzerland's national train company.

Rail Europe: raileurope.com or 800.622.8600: a U.S.-based company that provides schedules, reservations, and ticketing for all European train networks (their multiday/-week/-month passes in one country or combinations of countries may be an economical and convenient choice for European train travel).

Travel Tip

See **swisstravelsystem.com**, another official site providing ticketing, pass, and schedule information for all interconnected public transport including rail, bus, and ferries, as well as legendary rail lines such as the 7-hour-long Glacier Express from Zermatt to St. Moritz.

Other local transportation

Direct flights from the U.S. are available to Zurich, Geneva, and Basel, with short internal flights available; but once in Switzerland, reaching any destination is often easier on its excellent—and both stunningly beautiful and punctual—rail network or extensive regional bus lines. Zurich (zurich-airport.com) and Geneva (gva.ch) airports have direct rail service. Taxis are available at all major airports, train stations, and in smaller towns, and can be reserved in advance (your hotel can usually provide assistance). Most major car rental agencies are available at Swiss airports and train stations. For more information go to myswitzerland.com, and click on “Transport” or swisstravelsystem.com.



Packing List

PACKING TIPS

Pack light! Keep in mind there will be times you may have to carry your own luggage short distances, especially before and after your Country Walkers tour. Due to space constraints, we require you to limit your luggage to one medium piece (approximately 18x15x29 inches or 8,000 cu. in.) and one small carry-on, per person. We recommend packing any personal necessities, medications, your hotel itinerary/emergency contact information, your hiking boots (or shoes), and extra clothes in your carry-on luggage in the event that your baggage is delayed. We suggest leaving valuable jewelry at home. A copy of your passport or other important documents should be kept in a separate area of your luggage. Always be alert when carrying a purse, camera, money belt, or backpack in busy cities, airports, and train stations.

IMPORTANT: because of luggage-weight restrictions imposed on our luggage carrier in the Mont Blanc region with its narrow mountain roads, we must adhere to a maximum on-tour luggage weight of 15 kilograms per person (33 pounds).

You may leave luggage in excess of one medium piece (approximately 18x15x29 inches or 8,000 cu. in.) and one small carry-on per person that you do not need during the tour itself at the meeting hotel in Chamonix, Hôtel Le Morgane, which is also the last hotel on the tour (night 8).

A NOTE ABOUT VARIABLE WEATHER

Please note that the weather in the mountains is often unpredictable and can quickly switch from bright, warm sunshine to snow flurries or rain, wind, and cool temperatures, all over the course of one day. Dressing appropriately will be the key to your comfort while walking. Dressing in layers and in synthetic fiber clothing (not cotton) that wicks moisture and dries quickly is essential.

FOOTWEAR

» Waterproof hiking boots. There are many brands to choose from. Proper fit is crucial, so try on new boots while wearing socks you plan to use on tour. Be sure to break in new footwear well before your tour begins. By the time you're ready to join your walking tour, you should be able to complete 8-10 miles of walking without discomfort. We require lightweight boots (not shoes) with

proper ankle support and good tread to ensure stability and comfort on all types of terrain. Waterproof footwear keeps feet dry in heavy rain and water resistant footwear keeps feet dry in heavy dew. Country Walkers reserves the right to deny participation to any guest not wearing appropriate footwear.

- » Flip-flops or sandals (several of the accommodations require boots be left outside. Sharing of bathrooms is also required on Night 2 and possibly Night 6.)
- » Synthetic, moisture-wicking socks (cotton socks are not recommended for walking as they will quickly cause blisters)
- » Blister remedy

CLOTHING

- » Lightweight, wash-and-wear long pants
- » Long-sleeved, wash-and-wear shirt
- » T-shirts and shorts
- » Polar fleece or light wool pullover (it will keep you warm even when wet)
- » Dinner attire: people (mostly fellow hikers) tend to dress down for dinner. Casual pants or shorts and T-shirts are acceptable. The final night of the tour is the only exception in terms of dress code, as you will dine in a fine restaurant in Chamonix; dress is smart casual.

OUTERWEAR

- » Waterproof rain gear: jacket, pants, hat, or hood
- » Windbreaker with hood (your rain gear may be suitable)
- » Lightweight down jacket (multiple layers may be suitable)
- » Hat with a broad brim or visor
- » Lightweight fleece or wool hat and gloves
- » Gaiters (recommended for June departures)

EQUIPMENT

- » Pack (minimum size of 32L): large enough to carry at least two liters of water, all of your waterproof gear, snacks, packed lunch, camera, sunblock, hat, gloves, extra clothing, etc.

- » Telescopic walking sticks. (Please note that while telescopic walking sticks are highly recommended for this tour, they are not provided by Country Walkers.)
- » Waterproof cover for pack
- » Water bottle, canteen, or CamelBak-type water reservoir or hydration pack to carry your own water while walking (equivalent of two liters)
- » Sunblock and lip balm
- » Insect repellent
- » Sunglasses
- » Toilet kit for when facilities are not available on the walks. Include zip-lock baggies, tissues, and moist towelettes, which can be disposed of upon return to the hotel.
- » Personal first-aid kit including any medications you ordinarily take (in their original container)

OPTIONAL

- » Binoculars
- » Bathing suit for use in hotel swimming pools, saunas, or Jacuzzis
- » Camera and charger and/or extra batteries
- » Zip-lock bags (to keep camera and valuables dry)
- » Small notebook and pen
- » Field guides (see enclosed reading list)
- » Folding umbrella
- » Bandana
- » Washcloth and small bar of soap
- » Hanging toiletry kit (bathroom counter space is limited at some hotels on this tour)
- » Hand sanitizer and/or moist towelettes
- » Alarm clock (not all hotels have alarm clocks or provide wake-up calls)
- » Hair dryer (not all hotels provide hair dryers)