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The highest mountain in Western Europe, Mont Blanc dominates the skyline of three countries: France, Italy and Switzerland. This 4,810m giant stands amongst a myriad of snow-capped peaks and has captivated climbers and trekkers for centuries. Mont Blanc, or La Dame Blanche as it is often called, is a haven for outdoors enthusiasts in all seasons and hosted the first ever Winter Olympics in 1924.

In summer, the Alpine landscape is a riot of colour as the snow melts, swelling the rivers and lakes with glacial melt water and transforming the valleys into green slopes covered with wild flowers. Trekkers from all walks of life flock here to enjoy what are perhaps the finest trails in Europe. The huge variety of paths here means the Mont Blanc massif can be tailored to suit any trekker. This comprehensive guide is designed to help you pick the right itinerary for you.

For many, the iconic Tour Du Mont Blanc is the ideal way to trek this region: circumnavigating Mont Blanc, the classic route takes in the very best of the Mont Blanc massif and all three countries. For others, the challenge of the summit is too exciting to resist. The first recorded climb of Mont Blanc was on the 8th August 1786 by Jacques Balmat and Doctor Michael Paccard, and heralded a new era for the modern mountain climber: today the summit is attempted on average by 20,000 climbers per year.
Over the years more than 30 of our trekking specialists have summited Mont Blanc, trekked around it on the famous circuit or enjoyed stunning daywalks in its surrounding valleys.

"We have managed to create a selection of itineraries that make the Mont Blanc Massif accessible to all levels of trekker. Whether you are looking to take on the challenge of a lifetime reaching the very top of Mont Blanc or enjoy relaxed walking from a cosy alpine chalet, there is an itinerary for you! With knowledgeable staff both in the office and on the ground, qualified International Mountain Guides on all trips and great accommodation, you are in safe hands with Exodus."

Chloe Knott, Walking & Trekking Programme Manager at Exodus

Speak to one of our trekking experts.
Call 0845 863 9616

**Exodus:**
- is the number one operator in the Mont Blanc region.
- offers the best balance between value for money and operational quality.
- has an average of 4.5 star rating (out of 5) on our Mont Blanc trips based on 252 reviews.
- ensures all of its guides have comprehensive training and all hold their International Mountain Leader or High Mountain Guide qualification.
- maintains a client to guide ratio for the final ascent of Mont Blanc of 2:1.
Europe’s most iconic trekking route, the Mont Blanc Circuit (or the Tour du Mont Blanc) takes in 170km of exquisite alpine scenery. It became famous in Victorian times, but the route dates back as far as the mid-1700s. Following seven fertile valleys and climbing six high passes, the route circumnavigates Mont Blanc in a clockwise direction, the opposite direction to most other walkers, crossing the border through France, Switzerland and Italy on the way.

With a cumulative ascent and descent of about 10,000 metres through the three countries, completing the circuit is a real achievement. Many will try to squash the trek into a shorter space of time, but experience has taught us that 15 days gives us the perfect pace at which to tackle this trekking beast. With 10 days walking and three carefully-placed rest days, this is the optimal time frame to fully appreciate this incredible trek. Exodus offers two options, which are very similar except for the accommodation - either camping in roomy, two man tents or our using family-run 2 or 3 star hotels.

Tour du Mont Blanc Camping Trek - Trip Code: TWB
Tour du Mont Blanc Hotel Trek - Trip Code: TWO
Mont Blanc Highlights

Trip Code: TWN

For a charming alpine chalet, look no further than Chalet Chamonix. We stay here for the week, just a stone’s throw from Chamonix itself with stunning views of Mont Blanc and an outdoor Jacuzzi. Private buses whisk you away to the best walks on the celebrated Tour du Mont Blanc and home in time for afternoon tea.
Tour du Mont Blanc Week

Trip Code: TWP

Forget rest days, this is the challenging way to take on the Tour du Mont Blanc. Tick off three countries as you circumnavigate Mont Blanc, staying in a mixture of 2 and 3-star hotels and basic inns. You’ll enjoy the high passes and best bits of the trek, with a little help from local buses to keep you moving at speed.
Mont Blanc to the Matterhorn

Trekking Guide to Mont Blanc

Mont Blanc is far from the only iconic peak in Europe. Trek between two famous mountains, Mont Blanc and the Matterhorn.

Trek from the Mont Blanc towards the perfect triangle of the Matterhorn, made famous by the Toblerone chocolate bar. We take two weeks to cross from Chamonix to Zermatt, following a spectacular trekking route which runs almost parallel to one of Europe’s best known long distance ski-touring routes, the Haute Route. The high passes can be rugged and remote, scattered with glacial lakes and moraine, but are balanced out by the pleasant low-altitude walks through green valleys and flower-strewn meadows. Three nights are spent in high alpine huts and village inns; the rest of the trip is vehicle-supported camping using roomy, easy-to-erect tents and enjoying delicious meals prepared in camp. You’ll need to be confident of your fitness for this trek, but your efforts will be rewarded with dramatic vistas and an experience to remember!

Trip Code: TWH

Challenging 5
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trek Code</th>
<th>Mont Blanc Circuit</th>
<th>Mont Blanc Highlights</th>
<th>Tour du Mont Blanc</th>
<th>Mont Blanc to the Matterhorn</th>
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<tr>
<td>Trip Code</td>
<td>TwB / TwO</td>
<td>TwN</td>
<td>TwP</td>
<td>TWH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity Level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Trek</td>
<td>Point-to-point</td>
<td>Centre-based</td>
<td>Point-to-point</td>
<td>Point-to-point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average hours walking per day (approx.)</td>
<td>5-9 hours</td>
<td>5-8 hours</td>
<td>6-8 hours</td>
<td>6-8 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max trekking altitude</td>
<td>2537m</td>
<td>2525m</td>
<td>2537m</td>
<td>2965m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. trekking days</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free days</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation type</td>
<td>Camping OR 2/3-star Hotels and auberges</td>
<td>Chalet Chantel</td>
<td>Small hotels/inns</td>
<td>Mostly camping, 2 nights mountain huts, 1 night inn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meals included</td>
<td>14 breakfasts, 10 picnic lunches, 13 dinners (Camping) OR 12 dinners (Hotel)</td>
<td>7 breakfasts, 5 picnic lunches, 6 dinners</td>
<td>7 breakfasts, 6 dinners</td>
<td>14 breakfasts, 10 picnic lunches, 12 dinners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitness required</td>
<td>You should be confident of your fitness. Most days will be equivalent to walking up Scafell Pike or Ben Nevis and then descending.</td>
<td>Good level of fitness, regular hill walker.</td>
<td>Must be physically fit and used to mountain walking for several days in a row.</td>
<td>A good level of fitness needed. You should be looking for a physically challenging holiday.</td>
</tr>
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Please note that all distances, hours and altitudes given within the above table are approximate and are intended as a rough guideline only.
High Altitude Ascent

Mont Blanc Ascent
Trip Code: TWM

For a high altitude challenge, the summit of Mont Blanc beckons. At 4,810m, this is no small feat. The icy pinnacle is unforgiving, cold and harsh, and the combined altitude and fatigue will certainly take their toll. Conquering this peak is a genuine accomplishment, and will leave you feeling both drained and elated in victory.

Attempting any mountain at altitude requires previous mountaineering experience and high confidence in your ability. Whilst climbing Mont Blanc is not classified as a ‘technical climb’, snow and ice skills are taught or refreshed in the three days leading up to the summit attempt, which we spend climbing surrounding cols, including the Col Supérieur du Tour, the Col Superior and the Col du Midi des Grands (3,523m).

There are two possible routes to the summit. Weather conditions will determine which one we take.

Gouter Route
The Gouter Route, or ‘Voie Royale’ as it locally known, is the most popular route. After a short train ride, the ascent begins with a steep trek to the Refuge de Tete Rousse, before climbing to the new Gouter Refuge at 3,835m, and then on to the summit.

Cosmiques Route
Known also as ‘La Traversee’, this route is a little more demanding, and for that reason is less visited. The climb follows the route of the ‘Three Summits of Mont Blanc’, climbing towards Mont Maudit and descending to the Col de la Brenva before making the final push to the summit of Mont Blanc (4810m).

Summit Attempt
Despite our best preparations, the mountain sometimes simply cannot be climbed. A summit attempt is entirely at the mercy of the elements and will not go ahead if the leader deems it unsafe. However, if you have a clear weather window and the correct equipment and skills, all that will be required in stamina, endurance and a positive mental attitude to reach the top.
Our Leaders

Our operations on the ground are headed up by Mark and Carey Faulkner, both former leaders themselves. Their love of the Alps encouraged them to make their home here; with extensive knowledge of the climate, terrain and local communities, they are instrumental in the smooth running of our alpine treks.

Simon Conroy
As well as being an excellent leader, Simon loves a personal challenge. Last summer he decided to add an extra Tour du Mont Blanc to his leading schedule and ran the complete circuit in 32 hours and 58 minutes, in the process raising over £4,000 for the Jalia charity in Kenya: an amazing achievement.

Rupert Hutchinson
Rupert’s superb knowledge of the Alps (in particular his personal favourite subject, the night sky) ensures that those who walk with him will become enlightened by their surroundings. This, coupled with his empathetic style, makes Rupert a popular leader.

Jenny Smith
Jenny loves the Alps. Her discreet style, laced with humour and good local knowledge, is very endearing. Her groups always come away satisfied, having experienced the best that the mountains have to offer.

Frank Hibbert
Frank has been leading trips in the Alps for over 10 seasons and is soon to complete his 50th Tour du Mont Blanc! Frank’s experience and wisdom need no fanfare, but coupled with his gentle charm make him a fantastic leader.

Mark and Carey Faulkner
For the Mont Blanc Ascent we provide a professional UIAGM/IFMGA English speaking mountain guide, however their role is specifically that; a mountain guide. Their main objective is to train you in basic techniques, and to enable you to complete a safe and successful ascent. They have not been asked to act as a standard Exodus group leader, and you should not expect the same personal level of service. It is often, however, the guide who provides inspiration for that final push to the summit and often becomes a huge factor in the overall enjoyment of the climb. For the summit attempt itself there is always a 2:1 ratio of clients to guides.

“The guides were professional, supportive and extremely helpful. I owe my reaching the summit to Bernard. He was so patient with me when I couldn’t find the energy to carry on.”

The Sabahi Family
Exodus uses a variety of accommodation throughout the Mont Blanc region. Each itinerary includes a different style of accommodation, so whether you are looking to stay in a luxurious hotel or camp out under the stars we have a holiday for you.

**Hotel Richemond ★★**
Managed by the same family for three generations, this hotel offers a great combination of charm and modern convenience. We usually recommend the Hotel Richemond for pre or post-trek accommodation. Located in the heart of Chamonix town, rooms are basic, but the staff is extremely friendly, and never fail to offer you a warm welcome. It is also used for 4 nights on our Tour du Mont Blanc hotel trek (trip code: TWO). All bedrooms have en suite facilities, and there is a comfortable lounge, sun terrace and breakfast room. Single rooms are available on request.

**Chalet Chamonix**
*Mont Blanc Highlights (TWN)*
Modern and cozy Chalet Chamonix is perfectly placed just 15 minutes walk into Chamonix. It has panoramic south-facing windows, balcony commanding views of Mont Blanc and a private garden to relax in. The outdoor jacuzzi is as popular as the views.

**Les Campanules ★★★**
*Mont Blanc Ascent (TWM)*
Les Campanules is a traditional chalet with modern furnishings. The excellent cuisine and hearty breakfasts are a real highlight, perfect when preparing for a summit attempt. It also provides a relaxing place to return to after the summit. All bedrooms are light and spacious, with en suite facilities, TV and private balcony. It is possible to extend your stay here before or after the main trip.
Other Accommodation

Camping
Tour du Mont Blanc Camping Trek (TWB) & Mont Blanc to the Matterhorn (TWH)
On our camping trips we use spacious, modern, two-person pop-up tents, almost always staying in comfortable campsites with modern facilities (such as hot showers and electricity). Where this isn’t possible we will rough camp. These camps are more basic, with public toilets and cold running water, but no showers. When you arrive at camp the support leader will have erected your tent, but each morning you will be expected to pack away your own tent and load it onto the support vehicle.

Mountain Huts
Mont Blanc to the Matterhorn (TWH) & Mont Blanc Ascent (TWM)
Mountain huts have shared dormitory style accommodation with basic toilet and washing facilities only. However, they enable us to stay high in the mountains in some stunning remote locations, inaccessible even by vehicle.

The New Gouter Refuge
Mont Blanc Ascent (TWM)
At an elevation of 3817m, and built over four floors, the impressive new Gouter eco-refuge is largely self-sufficient, welcoming 120 guests with minimal environmental impact. It offers style and comfort the night before a summit attempt in a beautiful yet challenging location.

Single Accommodation
Single Accommodation is available in a single tent on the camping trips, as well as in some hotels. Please advise your sales consultant at the time of bookings as hotel rooms are limited and in high demand. Please note that single accommodation is not available on the following trips: Mont Blanc Highlights, Tour du Mont Blanc Hotel Trek, Tour du Mont Blanc Week, for the huts and village inns on Mont Blanc to the Matterhorn and for the mountain huts and refuges on Mont Blanc Ascent.

Pre and post tour accommodation
If you require accommodation before or after your trip we can organise this for you. For many of our Mont Blanc itineraries the Hotel Richemond (previous page) is the most suitable in terms of location and standard.
Climate & Environment

From late June to early October fair weather is to be expected, but all mountain ranges create their own weather patterns and the Alps are no exception. It can (and does) rain. On the high passes it can be surprisingly cold at times. Expected daytime temperatures are in the range of 15 to 25°C in the valleys (although it can sometimes reach 30°C in July/August) and 5 to 15°C on the passes (though it will feel colder if wet and windy). The summit of Mont Blanc itself is very cold: -20°C and very windy. The mountain attracts variable weather conditions which can easily disrupt a summit attempt. A clear window of weather is needed, so a degree of flexibility has been built into the itinerary for this, but no guarantees can be made and a final summit push may have to be abandoned. In the interests of safety, the guide’s decision to summit or not is final.

Snow

From late June to early October fair weather is to be expected, but all mountain ranges create their own weather patterns and the Alps are no exception. It can (and does) rain. On the high passes it can be surprisingly cold at times. Expected daytime temperatures are in the range of 15 to 25°C in the valleys (although it can sometimes reach 30°C in July/August) and 5 to 15°C on the passes (though it will feel colder if wet and windy). The summit of Mont Blanc itself is very cold: -20°C and very windy. The mountain attracts variable weather conditions which can easily disrupt a summit attempt. A clear window of weather is needed, so a degree of flexibility has been built into the itinerary for this, but no guarantees can be made and a final summit push may have to be abandoned. In the interests of safety, the guide’s decision to summit or not is final.

Responsible tourism

On all our alpine treks we visit small mountain refuges for drinks and snack-stops, helping to support the mountain community. Also, whilst trekking, our leaders and support staff work hard to ensure our groups have a minimal impact on the areas they visit, taking all litter and recycling where possible.

Here at Exodus we feel the need to offer our clients an alternative to air travel within Europe, and indeed to any destination where taking the train is a viable alternative to flying. For all trips mentioned in this guide, rail travel is an excellent option, helping to reduce your carbon footprint. Working in cooperation with Rail Europe, our sales team will be happy to reserve your seats. Tickets can be booked 3 months prior to the day of departure, subject to availability. Suggested train times and further information can be found within the Trip Notes.

For full details of our Responsible Tourism Policy please visit: www.exodus.co.uk/responsible-travel/responsible-tourism-policy
Trekking Equipment

For all alpine trekking trips (Leisurely to Challenging) we recommend the same equipment list:

- Walking boots with good ankle support (trainers are not suitable)
- Good quality waterproof and windproof jacket and waterproof trousers
- Daysack of 30-40 litre capacity
- Sunhat, sunglasses, high factor sun cream
- Hat and gloves (even in August)
- Lightweight down jacket or warm 2/3 season fleece jacket
- Casual clothes for sitting in mess tent/hotel or restaurant
- Head torch
- 2 litre water bottle
- Walking poles

For camping trips:

All camping equipment is provided except for your own sleeping bag and mat: the equipment we use is of a high standard and includes easy to erect, roomy two person tents, dining tent, stools, lighting, all pots, pans, stoves, crockery and utensils. The support vehicle carries the camping equipment, and your luggage, from campsite to campsite every day whilst on the trek. The support driver collects fresh supplies of food each day, and will normally have the dining tent up and the kettle on by the time the walkers arrive in the afternoon. We recommend a 4 season sleeping bag - it can get cold at night, and some camps are as high as 1,600m (over 5,000 feet), surrounded by snowy peaks and glaciers. A good sleeping mat or Thermarest is invaluable.

Climbing Equipment (for Mont Blanc Ascent only)

The right equipment is crucial in the mountain, never more so than at high altitude. If you do not have certain pieces of mountaineering equipment and do not wish to purchase them new, it may be possible to rent this locally.

To climb Mont Blanc you will need the following:

- Mountaineering boots
- Windproof and waterproof hooded jacket, preferably breathable, and overtrousers,
- Warm clothing (down jacket can be useful in the refuges)
- Climbing harness and 1 lockable karabiner
- Climber’s helmet
- Head torch
- Sunglasses suitable for glacier use and ski goggles useful in winds
- Gaiters (short ones are suitable)
- Lightweight gloves (wind stopper fleece)
- Ski-type leather/fabric gloves and warm mittens for summit day
- 40 litre rucksack - no bigger than 60 litres
- Ice axe and crampons
- Mountain refuges supply blankets, however a sleeping sheet is recommended. A sleeping bag is not required
- Trekking poles are useful
- A small, personal first aid kit, including blister kit
- Rehydration system and water bottle
- Ropes and safety equipment are provided by the guides

In September 2013, Exodus’ resident summiteer Alistair Grice successfully made it to the top. Below is an account of his experiences with each of the main pieces of mountaineering equipment as he ascended via the Gouter route with a full group of 6 people.

www.experts.exodus.co.uk/going-exodus-man-gone-mont-blanc-summit
Walking & Trekking Fitness Plan
To help you prepare for your trip, we have worked closely with a fitness expert to create a detailed training plan. With specific exercises and nutritional plans to suit each holiday grade, it is a great way to ensure you are in the best condition for hitting the trails. Visit our website to download your copy today:
www.exodus.co.uk/walking-holidays/walking-and-trekking-guides

The vast majority of our trips can be tailored to private group departures, on dates that suit you and with smaller or larger group sizes than those listed in the brochure. We’ll meet to discuss your requirements, offer suggestions on customising our itineraries and help present slideshows to build numbers if required. Detailed Trip Notes will then be prepared for your team of trekkers. All that’s left for you to decide is who to take with you, which itinerary you’d like to choose and when to go!

Want to find out more?
Our specialist sales team will be on hand to answer your queries.
www.exodus.co.uk/privateadventures
0845 863 9694
specialistsales@exodus.co.uk

Talk to an Expert
Exodus is, and always has been, a company of travellers, and the personal experience and specialist knowledge that comes from this is the key to giving our clients the best service and the best holiday.
Contact our experts here:
www.experts.exodus.co.uk/travel-experts/?activities=walking-trekking

exodus
www.exodus.co.uk