

## CHAMONIX EXPERIENCE

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## MONT BLANC 6 DAYS COURSE

Duration 6 days    Physical level 4/5    Technical Level 3/5    Price from 4750€

Chamonix may be the classic starting point to climb Mont Blanc but there is a lesser known way that goes all the way from Val Veny in Italy to the summit of Monte Bianco, without using any uplifts at all.

Starting in the beautiful valley of Val Veny near Courmayeur, you will hike up to the Gonella Hut at 3071m where you will spend the night before striking out for the summit of Mont Blanc via the Piton des Italiens route. Spectacular scenery and breathtaking views will surround you as you reach the top of Western Europe's highest glacier at 4809m.

The descent is via the Gouter refuge, back down to Chamonix along the more traditional route to the Nid d'Aigle above Les Houches, so on this trip you get to experience both sides of this iconic mountain.

The beauty of the Italian itinerary is that it is a lot less frequented than the classic Mont Blanc route, so you will cross paths with far fewer people along the way. It is also a longer and more technical route, which is not suitable for beginners to mountaineering, but perfect for anyone looking for more of a challenge in an authentic alpine environment.

The ascent of Mont Blanc via the Italian Normal Route is longer and more technical than the french normal route. Very good crampons skills and scrambling skills are essential for safe ascent of Mont Blanc. You can expect to encounter scrambling on exposed ridges and steep and exposed passages on snow and ice in high altitude. Ropes, crampons and an ice axe will be used throughout the climb. Therefore previous experience in technical scrambling and walking on crampons is essential. If you have never used crampons before, check our [Alpine climbing L1 courses](#).

Climbing Mont Blanc, like any high-altitude ascent, is very weather and mountain conditions sensitive. By signing up for this trip, you acknowledge that the ascent may be not happen if weather or mountain conditions are unfavourable. In such a case, an alternative summit, such as one in the Monte Rosa range, will be attempted instead. No reschedule or cancellation / refund is possible.

### Mont Blanc Route

The Italian normal route to the summit of Mont Blanc (4,808 m), also known as the Gonella Route, is a challenging and less-traveled alternative to the more popular French routes. It starts from the Val Veny near Courmayeur and ascends via the Gonella Hut (3,071 m), requiring good physical condition and solid mountaineering experience.

From the Gonella Hut, the route climbs the Dôme Glacier, crosses crevassed terrain, and joins the Bosses Ridge above the Col du Dôme, merging with the French Goûter Route for the final push to the summit. This route is known for its remote alpine environment, glacier travel, and long ascent (typically over 1,800 meters from the hut), often done in one very early morning push.

**It's important to book your trip with us before the end of November to secure spots in the Goûter hut. Once online bookings open after November, availability becomes very limited.**

## ITINERARY

We will meet at the Chamonix Experience office on the evening before start of the trip. Here, we will have an informal chat about the week ahead, weather, conditions, itinerary etc. Your guide will also want to check all of your equipment. You will then have time to decide if you need to pick up any missing equipment or leave some behind to lighten your pack before setting out in the morning.

Please note that this itinerary is an example of what we can do if the weather and conditions allow. The program will be adapted if the mountain conditions or weather prevent a summit attempt. We will discuss the alternative options and re-organise the itinerary so you can climb a different summit or route that is in condition.

### DAY 1 – OVERNIGHT AT THE ALBERT 1ER HUT

Today we take the cable car from Le Tour up to the Col de Balme and hike 2-3 hours to reach the Albert Premier refuge at 2707m. The refuge is right beside the glacier and we'll spend some time practicing our snow and ice skills. Staying overnight at the Albert Premier hut is great for acclimatisation, we'll enjoy dinner at the hut and sleep in dormitories. If the weather is good the sunny terrace is an excellent place to relax of and the evening and enjoy the view.

### DAY 2 – AIGUILLE DU TOUR

Today involves a bright and early start at about 5am, in order to set out across the glacier as soon as the sun comes up. We aim to summit Aiguille du Tour, a fairly easy climb up to 3542m with a couple of technical bits towards the top, where you'll be rewarded with an amazing view that stretches all the way from Mont Blanc to the Matterhorn.

### DAY 3 – VALLEE BLANCHE TRAVERSE

Taking the cable car from Chamonix up to the summit of the Aiguille du Midi at 3842m, we will step out through the legendary ice tunnel on to the Vallee Blanche. We will hike across the glacier to Italy and take the Helbronner gondola back. As well as being a spectacular day out, this will give you the opportunity to practise your glacier safety and rope skills. At almost 4000m, it is also valuable acclimatisation training.

### DAY 4 – VAL VENY & RIFUGIO GONELLA

Leaving Chamonix behind, we drive through the Mont Blanc tunnel to Val Veny in Italy. From here we hike up to the Gonella hut at 3071m, taking about 5 hours. The rest of the afternoon is free to relax and prepare for the following summit day. The Gonella hut is in a beautiful location above the Miage and Dome glaciers, so enjoy the view and get an early night.

### DAY 5 – CLIMB MONT BLANC

The big day! Quite literally – we will make a very early start in order to manage approximately 12 to 13 hours of hiking. The ascent of Mont Blanc via the Piton des Italiens route is not particularly technical, but it is long and the high altitude will make it seem even harder. After a slow and steady climb of around 8 hours we will hopefully be standing at 4809m, at the summit of Mont Blanc, gazing at the most magnificent view in the whole of Europe. From the summit we descend to the Gouter hut (3817m) for a well earned night's sleep.

### DAY 6 – DESCEND TO CHAMONIX

The hard work is all done and we can enjoy a leisurely breakfast at the Refuge du Gouter and an easy descent down to the Nid d'Aigle above Les Houches and then back to Chamonix by mid-late afternoon, where we will meet at the Chamonix Experience office to celebrate!

## PRICE DETAILS

2026: Collective groups: from 4750€ per person for groups of minimum 2 participants

Private groups: contact us for personalised program and pricing

Included in trip package:

- 6 days of guiding
- 3 nights in mountain huts with breakfast and dinner
- Lift passes as per the itinerary
- Transport as per the itinerary
- Group safety equipment
- Office based support

Not Included in the trip package:

- Drinks, lunches and snacks in huts
- Personal equipment
- Accommodation in Chamonix
- Travel to Chamonix
- Mountain rescue and travel insurance (covering course cancellation for any reason)

## **DATES**

We can offer this course from late May through to mid -July, depending on hut opening dates.

## **EQUIPMENT**

**30 - 35 litre rucksack** (important that it fits you and is comfortable to carry even when heavily loaded)

**Harness** (with adjustable leg loops to fit over your waterproof trousers and jacket)

**Crampons** (12 point clip-on crampon recommended; anti-balling plates are a must, plus safety traps)

**Ice axe** (normal mountaineering/walking axe, should be 50-70cm depending on your height)

**Climbing helmet** (should be big enough to fit over your hat)

**Mountaineering boots**

**Walking poles**

**Headlamp** with fresh batteries

**Sunglasses** factor 4

**Ski goggles**

**Sleeping bag liner** (not a sleeping bag!)

**Water bottle** (at least 1 litre)

**Sun cream** (high factor for lips and face)

**Warm hat**

**Sun hat**

**Neck protection** (buff)

**Thermal underwear** (top preferably with long sleeves and long johns - wearing cotton next to your skin can mean you get cold as it does not dispel moisture in the same way as a thermal, wicking garment)

**Fleece layers** (better to carry several thin layers than thick bulky ones, to allow you to adjust your clothing according to temperature, weather and activity)

**Light down jacket**

**Wind & waterproof jacket** (Gore-Tex or similar breathable material with a hood, a shell jacket is good)

**Wind & waterproof trousers** (Gore-Tex or similar breathable material, preferably with leg zips to make them easier to take on and off without having to remove your boots)

**Thick gloves** (insulated warm gloves or mitts, gloves make it easier to fiddle with climbing gear but mitts tend to be warmer)

**Thin gloves** (a fleece wind stopper glove with reinforced palms gives better grip)

**Gaiters** (to keep snow out of your boots, best if they are made of a breathable material)

**Ear plugs**

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

## EARLY / LATE SEASON

Typically, the Tramway du Mont-Blanc remains closed until mid-June. When the lifts are not in operation, the descent takes an extra 1 hour and 30 minutes, making the ascent more physically demanding.

## HUTS

The high alpine huts are one of the big attractions to mountaineering or trekking in the Alps. They allow us to enjoy the mountains with only light packs and without having to worry about meals or finding somewhere to sleep! Most huts have only very basic facilities.

Sleeping arrangements are in mixed sex dormitory-style rooms with bunks. Washing facilities are limited and generally there is no running water in any of the huts although this may vary in some huts. There are basins in which you can use bottled water to wash the best you can and clean your teeth, but they are NOT generally in private cubicles and are mixed sex. Toilets are generally septic-tank type (non-flushing) and again mixed sex. You need to be prepared for simple living in the huts and appreciate they are located at high altitude and in inhospitable terrain.

Breakfasts and evening meals are served by the guardian and his team and the food is usually nourishing and filling. Beer, wine, soft drinks and snacks are also available to buy. All food and drink in the huts is delivered by helicopter and consequently prices will be high e.g. around 10€ for a 1.5litre bottle of still water.

There are a few basic hut 'rules' that you need to follow so that you (and your fellow climbers) have a pleasant stay:

1. On arriving at the hut you must take off your boots and leave these together with your ice-axe, crampons in the foyer. Be sure to store these carefully as the hut is likely to get very busy and you'll need to find all your kit in the morning rush!
2. House slippers are provided and must be worn in the hut  
Your guide will register you with the guardian and will assign you your bunk.
3. Follow the instructions of your guide and keep requests to the guardian and his team to a minimum – they are usually very busy sorting out groups, cooking meals, keeping the hut clean.
4. In the morning your guide will often want to leave early – be sure to have all your kit ready to go the night before. Be organised and everything will be much easier!
5. It is recommended to bring ear-plugs for the nights – but make sure that you get up on time!

It is very important to book your trip before November. You will need places in the Tete Rousse and Gouter huts in order to climb Mont Blanc. It will be extremely difficult to find places for you after that as the huts get fully booked very fast.

## PHYSICAL & TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

At 4810m Mont Blanc is the highest mountain in the Alps and western Europe. Climbing Mont Blanc is physically very demanding - you will spend the whole climb traveling over glaciated terrain at high altitude. Please be aware that high altitude has a profound impact on physical performance and overall wellness, therefore we stress the importance of sufficient acclimatisation as well as technical training. However fit you are, you will feel significantly less fit at altitude! It is your responsibility to prepare yourself physically for your Mont Blanc trip. You need to start several months prior the trip and it should include regular running, swimming or steep hiking are all very good forms of training. Anything that increases your stamina and your cardiovascular ability will be of benefit as you will certainly feel short of breath once you reach a certain altitude – some people even feel it in Chamonix town, a good 3800m below the summit of Mont Blanc!

Many people find that they make it to the summit without any problems but struggle on the way back down as they have expended all their energy. The descent is just as strenuous, and potentially dangerous, as the ascent so having the stamina to make it safely all the way back down is very important. A good level of fitness will significantly increase your chances of summiting Mont Blanc and make the ascent more fun - rather than just hard work.

If you have previous mountain climbing experience, such as Kilimanjaro or Aconcagua, that's a great foundation—but be prepared for a significantly greater physical and technical challenge on Mont Blanc.

While we accept beginners on this course, we strongly recommend having prior experience walking with crampons. If you're new to this, take a look at our [Alpine climbing L1 courses](#) for a solid introduction.

Our 6 day Mont Blanc course is divided into two parts: the first 3 days are dedicated to acclimatisation and alpine training, specifically tailored for the Mont Blanc climb. You'll learn essential skills such as crampon and ice axe techniques, glacier travel, and key safety practices. As long as you're fit and have good stamina, a lack of prior climbing experience won't hold you back.

The acclimatisation period also serves as a fitness and skills assessment. You'll need to climb at a certain pace to demonstrate that you have the stamina and physical readiness for a safe Mont Blanc attempt. At the end of the initial three training days, we'll hold a group briefing. This is a key moment where we assess whether you've reached the necessary level of fitness and technical ability to proceed with the Mont Blanc ascent.

Most of our clients complete the 3 training days successfully - but **please note that for safety reasons we can not allow climbers who are too weak or don't have the minimal technical level in mountain skills to go on to attempt the Mont Blanc ascent.** We have to make sure that everyone who is climbing Mont Blanc with our guides is able to reach the summit and get back to Chamonix in safety, without jeopardising themselves or the rest of the group. **Please note that there is no refund possible in this case.**

## FOOD

We recommend bringing or purchasing snack food in the resort to take into the mountains each day—items like cereal bars, dried fruit and nuts, chocolate, sugary sweets, or your favourite trail mix. When staying overnight in huts, breakfasts and dinners are included in the package price. However, it's wise to bring extra supplies for the days you'll be away, as huts do sell food but it can be expensive and stock may be limited.

If you have food allergies or specific dietary requirements—especially if you're Coeliac (gluten-free) or have a dairy allergy—we strongly advise bringing additional food to supplement your hut meals. While huts generally cater well to vegetarians, they are less equipped for other dietary needs.

Huts can provide a basic packed lunch (typically bread, salami, cheese, and chocolate), which you can order, but it's important not to rely solely on this option. You'll need to carry your own snacks each day. Expect to take short breaks about once an hour, and it's important to eat something each time to maintain your energy levels throughout the day.

## OUR GUIDES

Guiding is at a ratio of 1:4 during the first 3 days. The guiding ratio drops to 1:1 during the ascent of Mont Blanc. All the guides for this trip are IFMGA qualified and English speaking.

## DOCUMENTS

Mountain search and rescue and repatriation insurance is mandatory on all our trips. We highly advise you to also have a travel insurance policy covering the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your trip in the event of cancellation or curtailment. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary. You will need to bring your ID with you.

## SPENDING MONEY

The package price includes valley transport, cable cars and mountain railway tickets, 3 nights in mountain huts with breakfast and dinner, and guiding. You will need to allow an amount for lunches, drinks and snacks. Please note that the huts do not accept credit cards, you will need to have € in cash for your snacks, drinks and packed lunches. Your guide will advise you how much you need; there are numerous cash points in Chamonix.

## ACCOMMODATION

Please note that the accommodation is not included in the course. While there are 3 nights in mountain huts in the programme and price, we cannot guarantee that you will have place to stay on these 3 nights. If the weather or conditions are unfavourable and we cannot reach any of these huts, you may have to return to Chamonix for the night.

## TRANSPORT DURING THE COURSE

All transport during the course, as outlined in the itinerary, is included in the price. We use public transport whenever possible; when it's not available, your guides will drive the group in cars.

### **BAD WEATHER AND CONDITIONS**

If the weather forecast is poor or the conditions are not favourable, there are alternatives. From the Aiguille du Midi you can access the Cosmiques or Torino refuges. These are ideal bases to ascend classic mountaineering routes such as Arête de Cosmiques, Point Lachenal, Tour Ronde and the Aiguille du Entrèves. In poor weather we can drive to Italy or Switzerland and attempt the Grand Paradiso, Monte Rosa or the Weissmies in the Saas valley – please note there will be additional transport costs for options in Italy or Switzerland.

As the weather and conditions are variables which sometimes force climbers to change the objective of the trip – this is normal in the world of mountaineering - we do not offer reschedule or refund in these cases.

### **BOOKING AND CANCELLATION**

Send us an enquiry stating your preferred dates and your previous mountaineering experience. We will require 30% deposit to confirm your booking. Please read carefully our [terms and conditions](#) before booking your trip.