YOUR DAY-TO-DAY ITINERARY

Mont Blanc Circuit

Tour du Mont Blanc
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12 days: Geneva to Geneva
The Mont Blanc massif is one of the most iconic and dramatically beautiful mountain ranges in the world and a must–see area of the European Alps. While most trips circumnavigate this iconic mountain range by foot, we’ve taken it a step further to experience its spectacular geography and explore the history, culture and cuisine of France, Italy and Switzerland with expert local guides. In 12 days you’ll explore Chamonix and some of the region’s oldest and most beautiful towns as you circumnavigate Mont Blanc on foot, in a sea kayak and by bike – a genuine and original Active Adventure!

Day 1
Arrive in Geneva, head to Chamonix
We’ll pick you up in Geneva and head through the Swiss and French Alps to Chamonix – one of the most iconic mountain towns in the world. Nestled in the heart of a dramatic U-shaped valley, the views of the northern side of Mont Blanc are dramatic from anywhere in town, and especially from our accommodation in the heart of Chamonix. We’ll have time to rest up and explore town this afternoon, before meeting later for a welcome dinner.
ACCOMMODATION: Hotel Pointe Isabelle, Chamonix (Dinner)

Day 2
Hike Mer de Glace, Grotto de Glace experience
Today we’ll hike just above Chamonix to the Mer de Glace (Sea of Ice). As a warm up for our hike in the coming days, we’ll take a train up through the fir trees that flank the north side of the Mont Blanc massif, to Montenvers, overlooking this incredible glacier. From Montenvers we’ll hike further up through trees and boulder fields to Le Signal Forbes – a lookout point affording unsurpassed views of the Mer de Glace Glacier and huge granite spires that rise sharply from the moraine walls. On our descent we’ll have incredible views of the upper Chamonix Valley and the Aiguilles Rouges Mountains. Before boarding the train back down to Chamonix, we’ll take a gondola down to Mer de Glace’s Grotto de Glace (Ice Cave). Every year, a new ice cave is dug into the bowels of the Glacier, enabling us to walk inside the incredible sea of ice! After making our way back down to Chamonix, you’ll have this afternoon to relax in town, take
Highlights
- Experience Chamonix
- Hike Mer de Glace
- Grotto de Glace experience
- Sea kayak Lake Annecy
- Explore Annecy Old Town
- Hike the Ville de Glaciers
- Visit Beaufort cheese factory
- Experience Courmayeur and Aosta Valley
- Aiguille du Midi cable car
- Experience Upper Rhone Valley
- Bike L’Arve River Trail

Day 4
Sea kayak Lake Annecy, visit old town Annecy
This morning we’ll drive a short distance to Annecy, the capital of the Haute Savoie region and one of the most beautiful towns in Europe. To kick off our day we’ll take to sea kayaks and circle part of this stunning crystal clear lake, exploring its numerous coves and beaches along the way.
Later we’ll head back to Annecy town where you’ll have the chance to explore it’s narrow cobbled streets and 16th century gothic architecture. With an outlook to the French Alps and an unmatched elegance, Annecy is the perfect place to lose yourself or simply sit on the sidewalk and watch the world go by!

**ACCOMMODATION:** Lodgings, Saint Gervais (All meals)

**KAYAKING DISTANCE:** 11.2 kilometres (7 miles)

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**Day 5**

**Hike the Roman Road to Savoie and Beaufortain**

We’ll return to the Mont Blanc Circuit this morning after a short drive to Val Montjoie where we’ll begin our hike on an old Roman road to Plan des Dames. After a short break, we begin a gradual ascent of the Col du Bonhomme – an iconic mountain pass and the gateway to the Beaufortain region, famous for its unique cheeses. After breaking for lunch here, we’ll drop down into the sweeping wildflower meadows in the valley below to Les Chapieux where we’ll jump in our vehicle and drive a short distance to our accommodation for the evening, in the hamlet of Bourg St Maurice.

**ACCOMMODATION:** Hotel Autantic, Bourg St Maurice (All meals)

**HIKING DISTANCE:** 16 kilometres (10 miles)

**ASCENT:** 1233 metres (4044 feet)

**DESCENT:** 678 metres (2224 feet)

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**Day 6**

**Hike “Vallee des Glaciers” into Italy**

After breakfast we’ll head back to Les Chapieux where we’ll visit a local family-run Beaufort cheese factory which has been making cheese for hundreds of years, having passed down their traditional methods of production generation after generation (please note, the cheese factory is not open during the month of June, so we will select an alternative activity at that time). After our visit, we’ll begin our ascent of the “Vallee des Glaciers” (Valley of the Glaciers). Our first destination is the Col de la Seigne – the pass that straddles the border between France and Italy and an amazing place to view the southern side of the Mont Blanc range. As you stand with one foot in France and the other in Italy, you’ll be confronted with astounding views of huge glaciers, massive rock spires and the broad ‘U’ shaped valley down into the Italian countryside. We’ll make our way down the valley, passing through green pastures and alpine streams. Our home for this evening is the village of Courmayeur, a picture perfect Italian village at the head of the Aosta Valley. Welcome to Italy!

**ACCOMMODATION:** Hotel Croux, Courmayeur (All meals)

**HIKING DISTANCE:** 16 kilometres (10 miles)

**ASCENT:** 735 metres (2410 feet)

**DESCENT:** 836 metres (2742 feet)

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**Day 7**

**Explore Courmayeur and Aosta Valley**

Roman monuments, medieval castles, vineyards, and quaint villages define the Aosta Valley as one of Europe’s quintessential mountain regions. Today you’re free to explore Courmayeur and the surrounding area. Over hundreds of years the local people here have perfected the “art de vivre” (the art of living), through exquisite mountain cuisine, beautiful architecture and fine wine. A day exploring the eateries, art galleries and vineyards of Courmayeur will recharge your culture batteries well and truly! If you’re keen to stay active today, there are plenty of adventurous options available, including hiking, cycling and golf to name just a few. Enjoy!

**ACCOMMODATION:** Hotel Croux, Courmayeur (Breakfast)

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**Day 8**

**Hike Mont della Saxe**

We’ll leave Courmayeur this morning and hike up through dense larch forest and onto alpine meadows leading up to Rifugio Bertone, where we’ll make a brief stop for an espresso and soak in the jaw dropping views of Mont Blanc. From here we’ll continue on to the Mont della Saxe balcony trail overlooking the Italian Val Ferret, looking straight across to some of the highest peaks of the Monte Bianco massif and the tumbling glaciers that descend the southern side of the range into the valley below. They look so close, you’ll feel like you can throw a stone and hit the highest peaks – it’s a sight you have to see to believe. After lunch, we’ll drop down into the Val Ferret and green pastures of the Lavachey where we’ll enjoy a classic home cooked Italian/French meal prepared by our local hosts.

**ACCOMMODATION:** Hotel Lavachey, Lavachey (All meals)

**HIKING DISTANCE:** 15.2 kilometres (9.4 miles)

**ASCENT:** 974 metres (3195 feet)

**DESCENT:** 586 metres (1922 feet)

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**Day 9**

**Hike into Switzerland**

Close to our accommodation, the trail to Switzerland begins, over one of the Mont Blanc regions’ most renowned passes – the Grand Col Ferret. The massive granite spires of the south side of the Mont Blanc range are our backdrop on the ascent to the Col Ferret, followed by the astoundingly beautiful views of the Swiss Val Ferret, the Glacier de l’A Neuve and the village of La Fouly that lies beneath it. We’ll hike down to La Fouly through classic Swiss pastures, before a short drive to Champex Lac, a picture perfect lakeside village and our home for the evening.

**ACCOMMODATION:** Hotel Sporting, Champex Lac (All meals)

**HIKING DISTANCE:** 14.6 kilometres (9 miles)

**ASCENT:** 748 metres (2453 feet)

**DESCENT:** 815 metres (2673 feet)

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**Day 10**

**Hike Upper Rhone valley, Switzerland**

Today is a proper “Swiss cow day” as we hike through some of the greenest and most picturesque valleys on the planet, all accompanied by the soundtrack of cow bells ringing...
out across the meadows. As we hike to Bovine peak, we'll have great views of Wildstrubel, the hulking glaciated 9 mile wide peak that divides the Valais and Bern regions of Switzerland, and out to the north western mountain passes of the Oberland area. After our hike we’ll head down into the town of Vallorcine, nestled in a stunning mountain valley just across the French border.

**ACCOMMODATION:** Hotel du Buet, Vallorcine (All meals)

**HIKING DISTANCE:** 14.7 kilometres (9.1 miles)

**ASCENT:** 770 metres (2525 feet)

**DESCENT:** 707 metres (2319 feet)

**Day 11**

**Bike L’Arve River Trail, Aiguille du Midi experience**

This morning you’ll be fitted with a high quality front suspension mountain bike and we’ll ride all the way back down to Chamonix. The ride is spectacular as we bike through the small villages of the upper Chamonix Valley and the larch fir trees that flank the glacier-fed L’Arve River. We’ll finish our ride in Lac de Gaillands (Gailland Lake) where we’ll have a picnic lunch beside Chamonix’s iconic rock climbing wall. After lunch, we’ll take ourselves high above the valley to experience Aiguille du Midi – a cable car that leaves from Courmayeur, where we’ve found most people like to check out the local restaurants on their own.

**ACCOMMODATION:** Hotel Pointe Isabelle, Chamonix (All meals)

**BIKING DISTANCE:** 16.3 kilometres (10.1 miles)

**DESCENT:** 423 metres (1387 feet)

**Day 12**

**Head to Geneva, depart**

Today is the last day of your trip around Mont Blanc. We’ll drive back to Geneva this morning in time for afternoon flights. If you’re staying on in Chamonix or Geneva, we’re happy to book extra accommodation for you and help out with suggestions on other things you can do in the area. Either way, you’ll go home relaxed and refreshed after your active journey around one of the most beautiful mountain ranges in the world, and enjoying a quintessential European Alps experience in true Active style.

**(Breakfast)**

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**Specific Information – ‘Tour du Mont Blanc’**

**Trip Start:** If you arrive on the first day of your trip, an Active Adventures Europe representative will meet you at the Geneva Airport (GVA) at 2pm and take you through to your accommodation in Chamonix, France. If you’re already in Chamonix, you’ll meet your trip leader and the rest of your group in the lobby of our joining hotel at 6pm.

**Trip End:** On the last day of your trip we’ll drop you off at Geneva Airport in time for afternoon flights. You can book a flight home departing anytime after 12 noon on this day. If you’re staying on in Chamonix, we’ll be happy to book your extra accommodation. If you’re staying on in Geneva we’ll be happy to drop you off at the Geneva Airport, which has regular transfer departures to central Geneva.

**Accommodation:** The ‘Tour du Mont Blanc’ is an active adventure trip around the Mont Blanc region of the European Alps. We stay in clean and comfortable accommodation all with ensuite bathrooms and amazing views.

**Included:** Your ‘Tour du Mont Blanc’ trip fare includes your Active Adventures trip leader joining you for the entire trip over the 12 days from Chamonix to Chamonix. Along with your trip leader, all your transportation and accommodation from start to finish are included. All your meals are included, except for lunch and dinner in downtown Chamonix and ends at a granite needle peak building at 3841 metres (12,604 feet). Aside from marvelling at this incredible feat of engineering, you’ll be blown away when you find yourself so close to the summit of Europe’s highest peak, taking in once in a lifetime views of the Alps from a high altitude perspective. Later, we’ll head back to Chamonix to spend the final evening of your trip together.

**ACCOMMODATION:** Hotel Pointe Isabelle, Chamonix (All meals)

**HIKING DISTANCE:** 14.7 kilometres (9.1 miles)

**ASCENT:** 770 metres (2525 feet)

**DESCENT:** 707 metres (2319 feet)

**Day 12**

**Head to Geneva, depart**

Today is the last day of your trip around Mont Blanc. We’ll drive back to Geneva this morning in time for afternoon flights. If you’re staying on in Chamonix or Geneva, we’re happy to book extra accommodation for you and help out with suggestions on other things you can do in the area. Either way, you’ll go home relaxed and refreshed after your active journey around one of the most beautiful mountain ranges in the world, and enjoying a quintessential European Alps experience in true Active style.

**(Breakfast)**
General Trip Information

You can find details on recommended flights and fitness, as well as trip start and end in the ‘specific information’ section at the end of each itinerary.

Accommodation: Rooming is based on two people sharing a room with one or two beds, as you require. If you’re travelling by yourself and would like to be guaranteed your own room for the duration of the trip, a single supplement may be available.

Outdoor Experience: Our trips allow you to make the most of the back country, whether you’re relatively new to hiking or a seasoned trekker. Our highly trained and experienced trip leaders will be at your side, safely guiding you to magnificent places that you wouldn’t get to on your own. The challenges are there, if you’re looking for them, all we ask is that you be energetic and in reasonable shape and we guarantee you’ll have an incredible time. You don’t need kayaking experience to enjoy paddling out on the water and you don’t need to be a serious cyclist to enjoy most of the rides we do. In fact, we have so many options available that you don’t need to ride or paddle at all if you’d rather hike or just laze around!

We hold all relevant government licenses and permits, and have an impeccable safety record. So with all the research, logistics, safety and hospitality taken care of, you can focus on the most important thing – making the most of your vacation!

Included: Your trip includes just about everything, specifically:

- All guiding services. We have an experienced trip leader with every trip and also have a specialist guide on many of the activities to provide extra local knowledge.

- Comfortable accommodation for the entire period you are with us. We can also organise pre and post-trip accommodation for you if you like.

- Breakfast, lunch and dinner on most days, as indicated, and we cater for all dietary requirements. In some locations, where there are a wide variety of restaurants, we’ve found people prefer to check out the options on their own. Alcohol is not included, although we do spring a few drinks here and there!

- All activities described in the itineraries including hiking, kayaking, biking and via ferrata, except the optional extra activities available at additional cost.

- All transportation from trip start to end.

- The highest level of service from our guides and from our experienced team behind the scenes. We’re always here for you and we always go the extra mile!

Not Included: The trip fare doesn’t include flights before or after your trip. This is your all-inclusive vacation and there are no hidden costs. You’ll have a few meals and drinks to cover, extra activities if you choose them, and you’ll probably feel like tipping your guides at the end of a fabulous trip, though you won’t need to pull out your wallet every few minutes on your Active Adventures trip!

Flexibility: We’re really flexible and none of our itineraries are written in stone, so if you have a particular interest you’d like to include or you need to leave a trip earlier or join later (at a pro-rated fare), just let us know and we can almost always make it happen. Likewise, all adventure travel requires a certain amount of flexibility and we sometimes have to make minor changes to the accommodation or activities because of weather and availability, but we have plenty of options up our sleeve and the experience to keep your trip running seamlessly.

Itinerary Updates: We update our itineraries annually, so please check our website for the most up-to-date itineraries and pricing. We make every effort to ensure itinerary accuracy at the time of printing, though changes may occur without prior notice due to local circumstances.
Talk to us.

You’ve seen the photos and read all about us – whether you’re just starting to dream or ready to pack your bags – chat to the folks who live and breathe adventure travel ‘Active’ style!

We’re listening.

Call us toll free

Don’t worry about what time it is in New Zealand, if we don’t answer right away, you can leave us a message, day or night, and we’ll work out the time zones to call you back!

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