Your Day-to-Day Itinerary

Mont Blanc Circuit
Tour du Mont Blanc

Switzerland, Italy, France
Mont Blanc Circuit Tour du Mont Blanc

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!

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 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 Brevent, 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 in the views and dining highlights, or pick up any last minute items you might need for our hike.
ACCOMMODATION: Hotel Pointe Isabelle, Chamonix (All meals)
HIKING DISTANCE: 5.4 kilometres (3.3 miles)
ASCENT: 436 metres (1430 feet)
DESCENT: 436 metres (1430 feet)

Day 3
Begin Mont Blanc Circuit hike – hike to Les Houches
This morning we’ll leave Chamonix by Gondola up to Brevent (8410 feet), one of the highest peaks in the crystalline Aiguilles Rouges range, which stands opposite the Mont Blanc massif. From here we’ll hike across the Carlaveyron Plateau overlooking the spectacular Dioz Canyon. The views of the north face of Mont Blanc, the Fiz range and the Chamonix valley are second to none! We’ll drop down to the village of Les Houches, our home for the evening, before meeting our local hosts and settle in for a hearty French mountain meal.
ACCOMMODATION: Hotel Les Campanules, Les Houches (All meals)
HIKING DISTANCE: 14.4 kilometres (9 miles)
DESCENT: 1500 metres (4920 feet)

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 it’s numerous coves and beaches along the way.
Later we’ll head back to Annecy town where you’ll have the chance to explore its 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)

**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, all against an incredible backdrop of steep snow capped peaks. Today you’re free to explore Courmayeur and the surrounding area. Over hundreds of years the local people here have perfected the “tort 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)

**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:** 815 metres (2673 feet)

**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)

**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.

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“**This was an amazing trip. Our trip leader was awesome and the local guides were amazing. We had a great group of people. The itinerary was great. I love how Active mixes in some kayaking and cycling. The hotels were good, the food was truly amazing. I was so impressed with the daily picnics. I highly recommend this trip! Thanks Active for another great experience...**”

Rob Basque (Ontario, Canada) October 2016 ‘TDMB’

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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 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)
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)
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.
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!

From USA/Canada/Australia  1.800.661.9073
From UK    0808.234.7780
From NZ    0800.234.726
From anywhere  +64.3.450.0414

Email us eu@activeadventures.com

Chat to us online   Live chat

activeadventures.com