unseen

TRIP NOTES

BELIEVE ACHIEVE INSPIRE

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE TOUR DU MONT BLANC FRANCE

Sun 12 Sep - Fri 17 Sep 2021

In aid of Unseen

12 Sep - 17 Sep 2021

unseen

6 DAYS | FRANCE & ITALY | CHALLENGING

On this tough challenge, you will be trekking on the French, Italian and Swiss sides of the Alps, amid beautiful and raw mountain scenery. You will be crossing some well-known Alpine passes such as the as the Grand col Ferret and col du Blame as well as reaching peaks such as Brevent and the Aiguillette du Posettes. Walking up to 8 hours each day (possibly more) on mountainous terrain and rough paths you will be tested physically and mentally, but the backdrop of the magnificent Alps will be a huge boost to you throughout the trek and you will have the chance to walk among Alpine wildlife such as Ibex, Chamois and the elusive Marmot.

- Wild and raw views of the Italian side of the Tour du Mont Blanc
- Bag the trekking peak Aiguillette des Posettes (2200m) with wonderful 360-degree views
- Great trekking past jagged peaks, fractured glaciers and sheer cliffs
- Up close and personal view of Mont Blanc and a gorgeous panoramic view from the Brevent peak

YOUR CHALLENGE DAY BY DAY

DAY 1 *Sun 12 Sep*

-

Travel from London to Geneva

The day is finally here to meet your fellow trekkers at London Heathrow airport and travel to Geneva. On arrival, you will be greeted by the local Charity Challenge team and enjoy a 3-hour transfer to La Fouly. Once there, you'll be able to relax and enjoy your first team dinner. (D)

Accommodation: Camp

DAY 2 *Mon 13 Sep*

-

Trek to Grand Col Ferret. Approx. 7 hours trekking (14km), 1000m up, 800m down

Today you'll climb from the village of La Fouly (1600m) to the highest point on your trip, the Grand Col Ferret (2537m). After packing up camp, the day starts with a pleasant valley walk. You then climb, at times steeply, to a high summer pasture and farm with lovely views of the valley below. The climb continues to the Grand Col Ferret and the border between Switzerland and Italy. From there, you'll experience the dual stunning views of the Italian Val Ferret and back down into Switzerland. You'll then continue along a path with a steep decent and some rocky sections to Elena mountain refuge and then onwards to the road, before happily meeting up with the bus. A short journey through the Mont Blanc tunnel, from Italy into France, takes you into the Chamonix valley and your camp for the next two nights. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Camp

DAY 3 *Tue 14 Sep*

-

Circular trek to Col du Balme via the Aiguillette des Posettes. Approx. 8hs trekking (14.4km), 1000m up, 1000m down

After a wholesome breakfast at your camp at Les Frasserands (1380m), you'll start trekking a path that climbs through forests towards the Aiguillette des Posettes (2200m). Although steep and rough in sections, the path offers stunning views down the Chamonix valley to Mont Blanc and the surrounding peaks and glaciers. From the Aiguillette des Posettes, the route descends a short distance before climbing again to the Col de Balme. This high mountain pass marks the border between France and Switzerland. At the col your efforts are rewarded with further breath-taking views of the Chamonix valley and Mont Blanc Massif. After lunch, a steady descent back to the valley brings us through the hamlets of Le Tour and Frasserands and finally back to a second night at the same camp. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Camp

DAY 4 *Wed 15 Sep*

-

The Grand Balcon sud. Approx. 8hrs trekking (14.2km), 700m up

Today, you'll experience one of the best walks in the Alps. After packing up camp, the path, which is rough under foot and rocky in sections, climbs up into the Aiguilles Rouges National Nature Reserve. Your views today will be of

Mont Blanc and the Mont Blanc Massif. An Instagram worthy scene made up of 100's of jagged rocky peaks and sprawling glaciers. After trekking to approx. 2000m, the path levels off and the afternoon passes high along the valley to Plan Praz. From here the you'll descend by gondola to the valley bottom and Chamonix before arriving at our new camp in Les Bossons. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Camp

DAY 5 *Thu 16 Sep*

-

Climb to Brevent. Approx. 8hrs trekking (10km), 500m up, 1500m down

This morning you'll retrace your steps and take the gondola back up to Plan Praz (2000m). From there, you'll start your climb to the summit of Brevent (2520m) and the high point of the day. The path is rocky and rubbly in sections, but after gaining height, the superb views across to the Aiguille du Midi and Mont Blanc will spur you on! At the summit, the 360-degree views will take your breath away; not only with beautiful views of Mont Blanc, but also of the surrounding Alps stretching out into the distance. The return to camp is all downhill to a celebration dinner to reward the achievements you have made together! (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Camp

DAY 6 *Fri 17 Sep*

-

Return to London

Proud of having conquered the Highlights of the Tour du Mont Blanc, we transfer back to Geneva for our flight back to London. Saying goodbye to new found friends and trekking partners will be tough, so be sure to exchange contact details before parting ways. (B)

NB

B = Breakfast; L = Lunch; D = Dinner

The itinerary is there as a guide and may change due to unusual weather patterns, wildlife movements, the strength of the group, and so on. We will do our very best to keep to the set itinerary; however, we cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes that might occur. In all such circumstances, your expedition leader will have the final say.

HOW TO FUND YOUR CHALLENGE

MINIMUM SPONSORSHIP

-

Registration fee of £375.00 when you book
Raise a minimum of £1865.00 for your charity.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Before you go

-

- Sponsorship forms
- Support materials (itinerary, kit list, visa information, travel tips, responsible travel policy and guidance)
- 12.5% off Cotswold Outdoor, Snow + Rock, and Runners Need
- Access to training weekends (optional and at additional expense)
- Risk assessment and emergency management planning
- Public liability insurance
- Access to your own password protected account including support materials and training schedules
- Fundraising advice
- Fitness training notes
- 16 and 20 week trek/bike training schedule
- Warm up exercise routines

On your challenge

-

- International flights to and from the UK (including all known UK air taxes, and fuel surcharges, at the time of costing)
- Drinking water on challenge days
- A donation to a community project in one of the countries in which we operate
- A contribution towards funding the reduction of carbon emissions through Climate Care's portfolio of award winning projects
- Full back-up support including first-aid qualified staff and first-aid supplies
- Three meals a day (unless otherwise stated in the itinerary)
- Entrance fees to national parks or other places of interest visited on the itinerary
- Accommodation during the challenge (usually in twin share)
- A Charity Challenge T-Shirt
- An English speaking first aid trained challenge leader and full local support team
- Equipment as per the challenge activity
- Internal transfers (unless otherwise stated in the itinerary)
- UK-based 24-hour emergency support line

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

Before you go

-

- Visa (if required)
- Travel to and from the UK airport of departure
- Vaccinations (please check Trip Notes for requirements)

On your challenge

-

- Tips
- Departure Tax (if applicable)
- Departure Tax (if applicable)

THE DETAILS

Fundraising deadlines	You will need to send your sponsorship money to the charity as you raise it. At least 80% of the minimum sponsorship required must be sent to the charity 12 weeks before departure (by 20/06/2021), and the remaining 20% within 4 weeks of completing the challenge (by 15/10/2021). If you have raised the necessary funds, the charity will then pay the balance of your challenge costs. The charity benefits by keeping the remaining sponsorship money and every pound over and above that you raise.
Prices include all known air taxes	We include ALL known air taxes (including fuel) at the time of costing. Many companies do not include air taxes at all, and clients are therefore hit with a surcharge of three or four hundreds of pounds just before departure. Our aim is to provide you with transparent pricing and clear instructions as to what is included in our prices and if applicable what isn't.
Typical group size	The typical group size is 15 - 24 participants
Small group supplement	The costs and sponsorship levels on our website are based on a minimum of 15 participants. We can run this trip with 10-14 people, but there will be a small group supplement of £30. This is payable by your charity if you book under the Minimum Sponsorship or Flexi options, and by yourself if you choose the Self Funder option. We will notify you 12 weeks before departure if this is necessary.
Optional extras	Extensions at end of trip* Single room supplements* Business class upgrades* Travel insurance (*subject to availability)

Travel insurance	Your safety when travelling with Charity Challenge is our main concern, which is why it is a booking condition that you have a suitable travel insurance policy, which covers you for the adventurous nature of your challenge, the activities you are undertaking, and the altitudes. We have chosen to partner with specialist travel insurance providers Campbell Irvine, who offer cover for an extensive number of adventurous activities. Cover is available directly from Campbell Irvine for most European residents and includes cover for emergency medical and repatriation and for your cancellation or curtailment of the challenge. Full details including costs may be found at http://www.campbellirvinedirect.com/charitychallenge.

Level of difficulty

Highlights of the Tour du Mont Blanc is graded as “challenging” and it will test you both mentally and physically. You should not undertake this challenge without significant training. You can tell your supporters that on your trek you will be:
- Trekking for around 5-8 hours per day.
- Reaching peaks of 2557m.
- Conquering the lower levels of the Alps.

Typical day

You will wake early in time for breakfast and then make a packed lunch for the day ahead. Hiking will start around 0830hrs. The number of hours spent hiking will depend on the weather conditions (which can be variable) and the size and ability of the group. There will be plenty of refreshment stops, and visits to places of natural beauty and interest. In the evening you will arrive at the campsite where you will have dinner.

Safety

Charity Challenge considers the safety of all of its participants and staff to be a top priority, and as such we have set up one of the most advanced and thorough safety management systems in the industry. In a nutshell, Our Challenge Safe brand formalises our ethos when it comes to safety, and brings together the procedures and risk management strategies that we use to audit all aspects of our challenges, from vehicles to accommodation to the activity itself. Your welfare is paramount!

In terms of your Highlights of the Tour du Mont Blanc, there are a couple of important points that you should be aware of:
- The altitude in the Alps – as you will be below 3000m there should not be any altitude problems
- Varied terrain

Responsible Tourism

At Charity Challenge we are committed to sustainable and responsible tourism, and work closely with bodies such as the International Porter Protection Group and Climate Care to ensure that our challenges benefit the local environments and communities in which they take place. We ensure that all rubbish is disposed of responsibly, and following local guidelines on cultural and environmental protection and respect, we aim to limit our impact on the natural environment. In addition to taking these practical steps to ensure that our challenges are sustainable, we also make a contribution each year to a number of local community projects, so as to give something back directly to the communities that we visit. Since 2000 we have donated almost £200,000 to such projects, supporting a range of initiatives, including schooling for children in Africa, shelter for street children in Brazil, and Orang-utan conservation in Indonesia. We recommend that any gifts brought over for children are given to the UK challenge leader and distributed where needed by them and our local Ground Agent. If you wish to do more, you should consider buying drinks, postcards and souvenirs from the local vendors. For many, it is their sole source of income. For more information, please visit our Responsible Tourism pages, where you will be able to view a list of the projects that we currently support.

Flights

You will be flying from London to Geneva. The flight will take approx 1 ½ hours. The airline and routing will be confirmed two months prior to departure. Your flight tickets will be e-mailed to you before departure.

If you choose to book your own flights you must confirm with the Charity Challenge office before paying otherwise you may be liable for your included group flights (please contact flights@charitychallenge.com for further assistance).

Visa

A full passport is required with six months to run from the end of the challenge, but no visa is currently necessary for British Citizens.

Insurance

Your safety when travelling with Charity Challenges is our main concern which is why it is a booking condition that you have a suitable travel insurance policy that will cover you for the adventurous nature of your challenge. We have chosen to partner with specialist travel insurance providers Campbell Irvine, who offer cover for an extensive number of adventurous activities. Cover is available directly from Campbell Irvine for most European residents and includes cover for emergency medical and repatriation and for your cancellation or curtailment of the challenge. Full details including costs may be found by clicking here.

For more travel insurance questions, please refer to our main FAQs page or for any specific queries, please contact us at bookings@charitychallenge.com.

Vaccinations & Medicines

For up to date vaccination information please check the Travel Health Pro page: https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/country/81/france

The Charity Challenge team are not medical experts and we would encourage you to visit your GP or travel nurse to discuss vaccination requirements. Your GP may ask questions about the specific locations that you are visiting, and as such it may be useful to take a copy of your itinerary with you.

Medication

- Carry medicines (including those bought over the counter) in their correctly labelled original packaging, as issued by the pharmacist. These should be carried in your hand luggage.
- Consider packing a spare supply of medication in the hold luggage in case of loss of hand luggage
- A letter from the prescriber detailing the medicines with the generic names for the medications can be helpful for border control checks, and in case medicines have to be replaced or medical help is required
- Carry a note from the prescribing physician on letterhead stationery for controlled substances and injection medications

- Take out an appropriate level of travel health insurance including repatriation and specific cover for any pre-existing illnesses

N.B. Some medications are banned abroad so please check. You can find further information at https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/43/medicines-abroad

Climate & Terrain

Climate
Early mornings will feel chilly at first, but warm up considerably as soon as the sun rises. Whilst we have chosen the best seasons for trekking, rain and cloud, and even hail, cannot be ruled out. Night skies are usually clear and starry. As soon as the sun sets, the temperature drops radically and may drop below zero degrees. On the mountain, you will be trekking in very clear air and will need strong UV protection in particular for your skin & eyes.

Terrain
The terrain will be varied throughout the trek, from high pastures to mountain ascents.

Training

A good level of fitness is definitely required! Anyone who leads a fairly active and moderately healthy lifestyle should be OK "as long as they train regularly over a period of a few months" leading up to the challenge. Although this is a short European trek, don't be mistaken into thinking it is not challenging as it is! The days are long, and the terrain can be rocky and rough under foot. A good physical condition and faith in your own strength are essential. In your Charity Challenge account you will find more comprehensive Fitness Training Notes. You can also look to join one of our training weekends.

Challenge Training

If you would like to get a feel for our challenges ahead of your departure, why not consider booking on a 1 or 2 day UK Challenge?

We have a variety of challenges, covering all levels of difficulty, taking place in stunning National Parks across the UK that are led by highly qualified and experienced expedition and mountain leaders. These challenges will give you the perfect opportunity to monitor fitness levels, test out your kit, meet people in the great outdoors, share fundraising stories and gain valuable advice and support for the challenge ahead. We encourage participants to make use of our highly knowledgeable leaders and ask them any questions you may have about clothing and equipment, expedition health and wellbeing, trekking skills, walking techniques and teamwork!

We are offering all participants **50% off** the registration fee when you book on one of the UK challenges listed via the link below. Just use the code **TRAINING** when booking. T&C's – you must have an active booking on a challenge to avail of this offer. Discount cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Find out more here

Luggage allowance & Valuables

Try to keep luggage to an absolute minimum – details of what to pack are provided in your kit list. Your rucksack/holdall (suitcases are not appropriate) must not exceed the maximum weight limit of the airline you are flying with (usually 20kg, however do check this with the airline or contact our flights team if in doubt). During the challenge your bags will be transported by vehicle. You will not have to carry your main pack. Whilst we will do everything to provide adequate safety for the group and security for your possessions, the general rule is that if you don't need it, don't bring it. This includes jewellery, necklaces, rings and even watches. Your passport and money should be kept on you at all times.

Leadership

We employ a number of first aid qualified challenge leaders, all of whom speak English. They will ultimately be responsible for the running of the itinerary and the safety of your group.

Group size

Each group is intended to be a minimum of 14 people in order to run and a maximum of 24 people due to the wilderness environment in which the challenge takes place. We can run this trip with groups of 10 - 13 people, but there will be a small group supplement of £30. This is payable by your charity if you book under the minimum sponsorship or flexi options, and by yourself if you are a self-funder.

Clothing & Equipment

Good quality, durable kit could mean the difference between a fantastic challenge experience and an uncomfortable one. For this challenge, waterproof, well-worn in boots will be indispensable, particularly coupled with some really good quality walking socks. You don't need a clean pair every day, but enough to make sure you have dry socks each morning. The benefits of a comfortable day sack cannot be underestimated, so make sure that you train with this. Other essentials are high quality gore-tex waterproof and windproof jackets and trousers, and technical/wicking t-shirts rather than cotton shirts. Walking poles are also recommended, as a preventative as well as for anyone with any pre-existing leg injuries or niggles. A full kit list for this challenge can be found here, once you book you will have access to kit discounts with our partners Outdoorhire and Cotswold Outdoor.

Accommodation & Toilets

Accommodation
During the challenge, your accommodation will be in 2 person tents. If you are travelling with a friend or partner who you wish to share with, please let Charity Challenge know in advance. Single tents can be provided at a supplement of £60.

Toilets
You will have clean toilets and good washing facilities in all campsites. Toilet paper is provided; however, you should also bring your own supply for during the day whilst in the mountains.

Food & drink

The food will be very filling and nutritious. Breakfast will consist of fruit, cereals and muesli, bread and jams and tea/coffee. Lunches are picnics with meat, cheese, fresh vegetables and fruit, chocolate or cookies. Dinner will be three courses: soup or salad or similar, followed by a main course and desert. Plenty of drinking water will be available to keep you hydrated. You may want to bring some extra snacks, such as tracker bars, nutrigrains, dried fruits etc. You can buy extra food or alcohol at the pensions/chalet if you wish.
Please let Charity Challenge know prior to departure if you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies.
NB: On Day 1, only Dinner is included; on Day 6, only Breakfast is included.

Money

Currency: Euros. For up to date currency exchange, go to www.xe.com. You do not need to bring Swiss francs.
Cash: There are Euro ATMs available at the airport (but be careful not to withdraw Swiss francs!) and in Chamonix.
Credit cards: ATMs and credit/debit cards are generally accepted in most places although a cash is better for drinks and snacks, especially if we stop at a cafe on the mountain. Visa and MasterCard are the most widely accepted and may be used at cash points. In smaller towns, banks do not necessarily have cash points.
Spending money: You will not need a large amount of money during this trip.
Tips: Tipping is personal and at your sole discretion. You should only tip if you feel that you have received good service. We recommend approx. GBP£5 per participant per trekking day and this should be given to the challenge leader at the end of the challenge who will distribute it amongst the local support team. In bars and restaurants tips are very common and are about 10% of the total bill.

Phone & Wi-fi

You will have a good phone reception. On trekking days, there will be some phone signal at most points. In the campsites you will be able to recharge any electrical equipment.

Emergencies

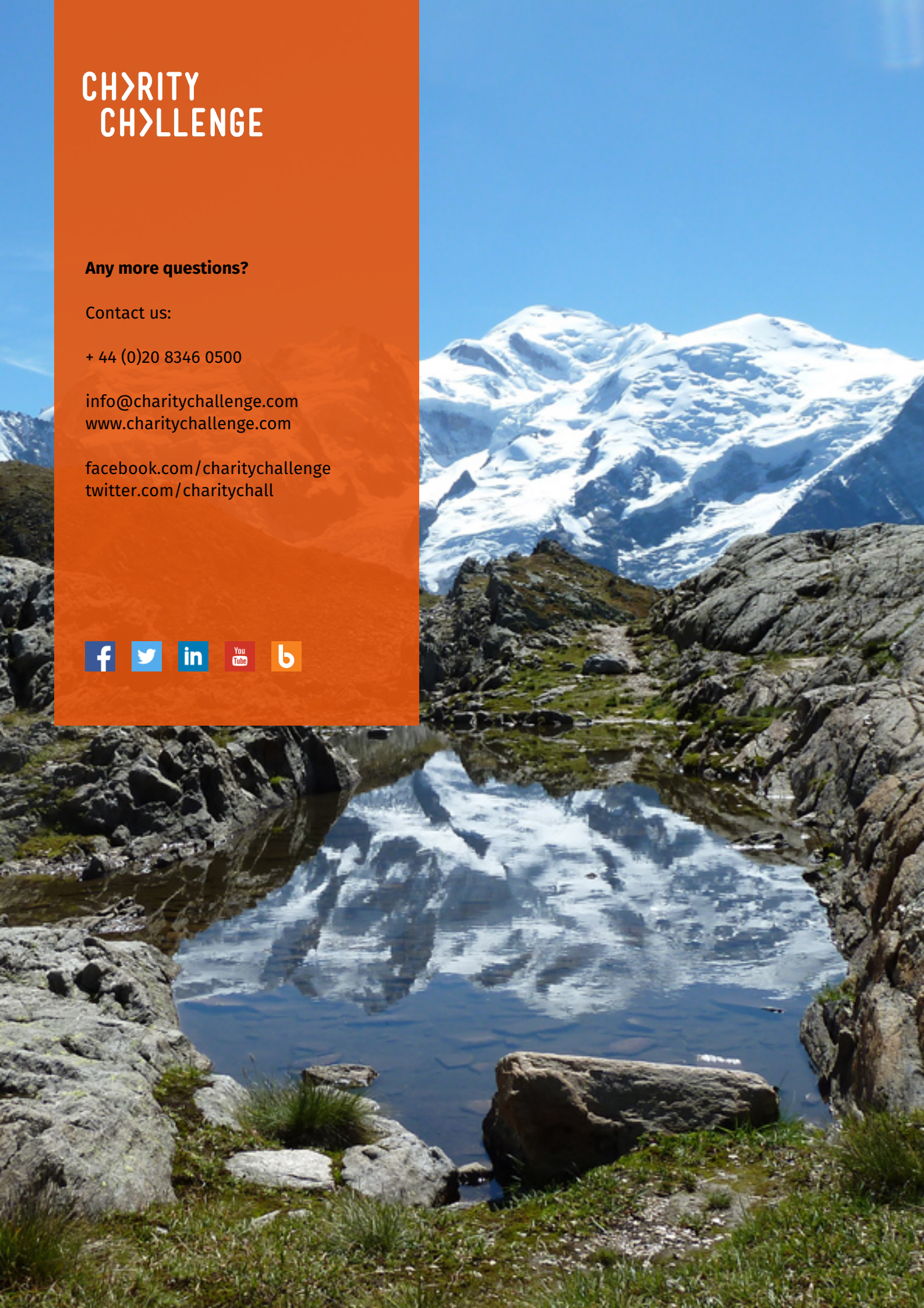
The event is not run as a race and there is always a large discrepancy in people's walking ability. We provide a leader for every 12 participants and they usually lead from the front or middle during the hikes and ensure that you are not left behind. If we find somebody is unable to walk at all, then we can transport him or her from one location to the next with the help of our staff. Throughout the challenge, back-up support will be close by.

CH>RITY
CH>LLENGE

Any more questions?

Contact us:

+ 44 (0)20 8346 0500

info@charitychallenge.com
www.charitychallenge.com

facebook.com/charitychallenge
twitter.com/charitychall