



TRIP NOTES

BELIEVE ACHIEVE INSPIRE

TOUR DU MONT BLANC
HIGHLIGHTS
FRANCE

Mon 04 Sep - Sat 09 Sep 2023





In association with AIG

04 Sep - 09 Sep 2023



6 DAYS | FRANCE | CHALLENGING

On this tough challenge, you will be trekking in the beautiful French Alps below Mont Blanc, Western Europe's tallest Mountain, amid raw mountain scenery. You will be walking along the glorious Balcon Sud, crossing over the cold de Voza with views into Chamonix. Enjoy breath taking 360 degree panoramic views from the trekking peaks Brevent and the Aiguillette du Posettes. You will be walking along the glorious Balcon Sud, crossing over the col de Voza with views into Chamonix.

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 French 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 Mon 04 Sep

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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 1.5/2-hour transfer to Chamonix. Once there, you'll be able to relax and enjoy your first team dinner. (D)

Accommodation: Camp

DAY 2 Tue 05 Sep

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Trek from Les Contamines valley over the Col De Voza.. Approx. 7hrs trekking (13km), 800m up, 800m down

Today you will take a short transfer to the Les Contamines valley from where we will start our trek. The path meanders through a grassy valley and past traditional alpine chalets. The climb turns steeply up to the Passerelle de Bionnassay (1715m), a dramatic Nepalese style suspension bridge, spanning a white water mountain stream flowing from the Bionnassay glacier just a few 100 meters high up slope. Onwards from here, the path flattens and contours around to Col du Voza, from where we can gaze down into Chamonix valley and up towards Mont Blanc, towering directly above us. A final descent into the Chamonix valley and back to camp. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Camp

DAY 3 Wed 06 Sep

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

After a wholesome breakfast at your camp at les Bossons, we will take a local train up valley to Montroc (1358m) from where 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, via a train transfer, back to camp. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Camp

DAY 4 Thu 07 Sep

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The Grand Balcon sud. Approx. 8hrs trekking (14.2km), 800m down

Today, you'll experience one of the best walks in the Alps. The route 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. You will take a gondolier in the morning to Plan Praz at 2050m then follow an undulating path past Flegere and onwards to a steep

decent down to col des montets. Shortly after we take the local valley train back to camp. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Camp

DAY 5 Fri 08 Sep

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Climb to Brevent. Approx. 8hrs trekking (10km), 1480m up

Today's trek is a real highlight of the Alps with spectacular views of Mont Blanc. There is only one way to go and that is up. Walking directly from camp we will start on a zig zag trail through cool forests. As we gain height the trees thin and the views open to spectacular vistas. Although it is a long day with a whopping 1,480m ascent we have all day to do it and a steady pace will bring you to the summit of Brevent at 2,525m by mid afternoon. We will be descending to the valley floor by cable car and then a train back to camp from Chamonix. The day ends with a celebration dinner to reward the achievements you have made together! (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Camp

DAY 6 Sat 09 Sep

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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.

Minimum sponsorship option - You will be required to make a donation of £375 at the time of booking and raise a minimum amount of sponsorship for AIG's chosen charity – Challenging MND. The target is to raise at least £1000 through friends and colleagues at AIG, as the company will donate double that figure too, and so the charity receives £3,000. You can raise sponsorship family and friends outside of work but AIG will only match donations made by an eligible employee and/or their spouse/partner. In addition, AIG will contribute £150 towards your challenge costs.

You should send your sponsorship money to the charity as you raise it. At least 80% of the minimum sponsorship required (£800) must be sent to the charity 12 weeks before departure, and the remaining 20% (£200) within 2 weeks of the challenge departure. If you have raised the necessary funds, the charity will then pay the balance of your expedition costs. The charity benefits by keeping the remaining sponsorship money and every pound over and above that you raise.

Flexi option - You will be required to make a donation of £375 at the time of booking, and 10 weeks before departure you will be required to pay a second contribution of £345 towards your challenge costs. You will also need to raise a minimum amount of sponsorship for AIG's chosen charity – Challenging MND. The target is to raise at least £650 through friends and colleagues at AIG, as the company will donate double that figure too, and so the charity receives £1,950. You can raise sponsorship family and friends outside of work but AIG will only match donations made by an eligible employee and/or their spouse/partner. In addition, AIG will contribute £150 towards your challenge costs.

You should send your sponsorship money to the charity as you raise it. At least 80% of the minimum sponsorship required (£520) must be sent to the charity 12 weeks before departure, and the remaining 20% (£130) within 2 weeks of the challenge departure. If you have raised the necessary funds, the charity will then pay the balance of your expedition costs. The charity benefits by keeping the remaining sponsorship money and every pound over and above that you raise.

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 6-8 hours per day.
- Taking on mountain trails at height with some steep drops
- Reaching peaks of 2557m.

Typical day

You will wake early in time for breakfast and then make a packed lunch for the day ahead. Hiking will start around 0800hrs. 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
- There are sections where you will be trekking on narrow trails with steep drop offs which may alarm anyone with an issue with heights

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 info@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. A warm layer and good waterproofs must be carried on the mountain as the weather can change.

Terrain

The terrain will be varied throughout the trek, from high pastures to mountain ascents. The campsite sits at 1030m and you will be trekking upto 1000m in ascent and over 1000m descents and so walking poles are highly recommended. There are also narrow sections of the trail with steep drop offs so please take this into account if you suffer from vertigo.

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 with some steep inclines and descents. 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 20 people in order to run and a maximum of 50 people.

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, nutrirgrains, 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. **N.B** If you are unable to complete a day then we will need to take you to the nearest Gondola off the mountain. Please ensure you carry cash on you for this as you will be required to pay for your Gondola off if you depart the trek early and this will be upto EURO20.

Pre-Existing Medical Conditions

We do not professionally vet your medical details. Please assess for yourself whether you are fit and able to take on the challenge. Please review the detailed Trip Notes and itinerary to get a better idea of what is involved. Please speak to your doctor or specialist if you have any concerns about taking part. If you suffer from a severe allergy, you are required to contact us to discuss any requirements. If you think that there are things we can do to make the challenge more accessible/comfortable for you, it is your responsibility to let us know, and we will then let you know if we can accommodate your request. Whilst we will do our best to put in place appropriate measures we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

Medical Support

First Aid qualified staff will be provided with the medical details that you give on your booking form but please note that they are on the challenge to support with medical matters related to the challenge environment and terrain itself, i.e. heat/cold, high altitude and so on. They will deal with any incidents and accidents (cuts, sprains, breaks and so on). They are not intended to continue any ongoing specialist medical care that you receive in the UK for pre-existing medical conditions, and should not be assumed to have any professional experience of your specific medical condition.

If you have any specific needs around pre-existing medical conditions, you should discuss with your family doctor or specialist in advance and can discuss any advice given by them with the challenge leader or doctor.

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Any more questions?

Contact us:

+ 44 (0)20 8346 0500

info@charitychallenge.com

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