

THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO TREKKING THE TOUR DU MONT BLANC

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The Tour du Mont Blanc (TMB) is one of the most iconic long-distance treks in the world — a rite of passage for hikers and nature lovers alike. But for those just beginning their research into tackling this world-famous route, the details can seem a little overwhelming. That's where we come in!

At Adventure Base, we've guided countless trekkers — from first-timers to seasoned veterans — along this breathtaking alpine circuit. Whether you're looking to join one of our guided Alpine treks or prefer the flexibility and independence of our self-guided treks in the Alps (with expert logistics behind the scenes), we've got an option to suit every style of adventurer.

This beginner's guide to trekking the TMB will walk you through the basics, helping you understand what to expect, how to prepare, and why this bucket-list adventure is so unforgettable. So, let's get started — and if you have any questions for us, please just get in touch for the answers you need.

WHAT IS THE TOUR DU MONT BLANC?

The Tour du Mont Blanc is a world-renowned trekking route that circles the Mont Blanc Massif, which is home to Western Europe's highest mountain. Covering around 165 kilometres (103 miles), the trail winds its way through three countries — France, Italy, and Switzerland — showcasing the best of the Alps in all their awe-inspiring glory.

What makes the TMB so special isn't just the jaw-dropping scenery but the variety: think alpine meadows speckled with wildflowers, snow-capped peaks, charming mountain villages, and hearty regional cuisine. It's a cultural and physical journey rolled into one, with plenty of moments to catch your breath and soak it all in.



WHERE IS THE TOUR DU MONT BLANC?

Geographically, the TMB loops around the Mont Blanc massif, and, as a loop circuit, there's no official start and finish point. However, the picturesque mountain town of Chamonix, France, is widely regarded as the best place to begin this trek. In fact, Les Houches, immediately to the southwest of Chamonix, has a symbolic arch signifying the start of the TMB. A number of our own guided and self-guided treks include Les Houches on day one of their itinerary.

Along the way, the route passes through quaint hamlets like Les Contamines in France, Courmayeur in Italy, and Champex-Lac in Switzerland.

But don't be fooled by the word "tour" — this isn't a quick stroll. With daily elevation gains and descents often exceeding 1,000 metres, the trail truly immerses you in the heart of the Alps. The full circuit forms a rough oval around Mont Blanc and can be tackled in a clockwise or anticlockwise direction.

If you reach the end of this Beginner's Guide to trekking the Tour du Mont Blanc with any unanswered questions, don't worry! Our blog [Tour du Mont Blanc Trek Guided: Frequently Asked Questions](#) is packed with answers to the most common questions our guests have in the build-up to their adventure.



HOW TO GET TO THE TOUR DU MONT BLANC

If you're travelling internationally, the most convenient way to reach the trail is by flying into Geneva Airport (GVA) in Switzerland. From there, it's a 90-minute transfer to Chamonix, which, as we now know, serves as the traditional gateway to the TMB.

Transfers from Geneva Airport to Chamonix are not automatically included in our Tour du Mont Blanc packages, but we can arrange them upon request for an additional fee. We strongly recommend this as it takes the guesswork out of your arrival and departure, making everything seamless and hassle-free.

Once you're in Chamonix, everything from gear shops to great coffee is right on your doorstep.



HOW HARD IS IT TO TREK THE TOUR DU MONT BLANC?

Let's clear something up — trekking the Tour du Mont Blanc is not mountaineering. You don't need technical climbing skills or the peak physical fitness of a mountain climber to complete the TMB. But that doesn't mean it's easy! Daily trekking involves six to eight hours of walking, often on uneven or steep terrain. There's altitude to consider too, with some mountain passes reaching up to 2,500 metres. A solid level of fitness will make your experience much more enjoyable.

This is why we created the TMB Readiness Test and our handy trekking training guide. With the right preparation planned well in advance, anyone with some hiking experience and determination can do it.

Be sure to read our blog [What's the Difference Between Hiking and Mountain Climbing?](#) if you want to learn more about how these two disciplines differ.



HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO COMPLETE THE TOUR DU MONT BLANC?

The full circuit typically takes between 10 and 12 days, depending on your pace, the weather, and route variations. But the beauty of a circular path is that you don't have to do it all in one go! You can easily complete a section and come back for another adventure in the future. That's why we provide so many different Tour du Mont Blanc self-guided tours — to suit as many timescales, interests, and ability levels as possible.

And then there are our highly popular guided TMB excursions, which include:

- An [11-day Tour du Mont Blanc Guided Hike](#), ideal for those who want to complete the full route with an expert guide leading the way.
- A [four-day Tour du Mont Blanc Guided Trek](#), known as the “Highlights Tour”, that covers some of the best sights and experiences the TMB has to offer.



WHAT IS THE BEST TIME OF YEAR FOR A TOUR DU MONT BLANC TREK?

The trekking season runs from mid-June to mid-September. Outside of these months, much of the route is impassable due to snow and closed mountain huts. Each part of the season offers a slightly different flavour:

- **Mid-June to early July:** Trails are quieter, wildflowers are blooming, and some snow may linger at higher altitudes.
- **Mid-July to mid-August:** Peak season means warmer temperatures (15 to 25°C by day), longer daylight hours, and a lively mountain atmosphere.
- **Late August to mid-September:** Cooler temperatures, fewer crowds, and golden light — perfect for photography and solitude seekers.

Are you still undecided about whether to go guided or self-guided? We think you'll appreciate our blog [How Easy and Accessible is Hiking Self-Guided in the Alps?](#) It's filled with expert tips and insights into what you can expect if you opt for a more independent adventure.



WHAT DO YOU NEED TO PACK FOR THE TOUR DU MONT BLANC?

Packing smart can make or break your trek. Layers are key, as conditions can swing from sunshine to snow within a few hours. You'll need a good-quality backpack, waterproofs, trekking poles, and trail-ready footwear.

Rather than list everything you could need here, let us point you toward our detailed TMB trek kit list to help you get started, whether you're going self-guided or joining one of our guided groups.



WHAT IS ACCOMMODATION LIKE ON THE TOUR DU MONT BLANC?

Accommodation along the TMB ranges from cosy mountain refuges and auberges to boutique hotels in charming alpine towns. While some huts offer dormitory-style lodging, many also have private rooms — especially when booked well in advance.

In Chamonix, you'll find everything from laid-back lodges to luxury hotels. But managing bookings across three countries can be a headache, especially in peak season. That's why all Adventure Base trips — guided or self-guided — include hand-picked accommodation with logistics taken care of. We've walked these trails and stayed in these huts and hotels... we know exactly where to get the best hot shower and mountain views!

Looking for a deeper insight into what you can expect out on the trail? Read our blogs [Mountain Refuges: Simple Shelters, Big Adventures](#) and [A True Mountain Experience vs. Hotel Comforts!](#)



BOOK YOUR TOUR DU MONT BLANC TREK WITH ADVENTURE BASE

Trekking the Tour du Mont Blanc is more than just a physical challenge — it's an unforgettable journey through some of Europe's most awe-inspiring landscapes. Whether you're dreaming of wild alpine trails, hearty Savoyard meals, or the camaraderie of fellow trekkers, the TMB delivers all that and more. And with Adventure Base by your side, you don't have to figure it all out alone.

This guide is just the beginning. If you're ready to take the next step, browse our full range of Tour du Mont Blanc self-guided tours and our guided Alpine treks, which includes our guide-led TMB tours.

Please just get in touch with the Adventure Base team if you have any questions. Let's make your Tour du Mont Blanc dream a reality!