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TMB

TOUR DU MONT BLANC TREK SELF GUIDED: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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We've compiled a list of the most commonly asked questions about this trip.

Hopefully you find some of these useful but if you have a specific question that isn't covered in the FAQ's, then please do not hesitate to get in touch.

For more information please head over to our Tour du Mont Blanc Self Guided pages [here](#).

WHAT IS THE TOUR DU MONT BLANC?

The Tour du Mont Blanc is a popular long-distance trek that circles the Mont Blanc massif, passing through France, Italy, and Switzerland. It's roughly 170kms with 10,000m elevation and you can do it in however long you like depending on your fitness. Anywhere from 11 days to the record time of 19 hours 37 mins and 43 seconds!!

WHAT IS THE DIFFICULTY LEVEL OF THE TOUR DU MONT BLANC TREK?

The Tour du Mont Blanc trek is considered a moderate to challenging trek, with a variety of terrains and altitude changes, and requiring a good level of fitness and experience in long-distance trekking. The main thing people aren't prepared for is the elevation, it's worth pre-trip trying to get in as much training with elevation gain and descent before your trek!

WHAT EQUIPMENT AND GEAR DO I NEED FOR THE TOUR DU MONT BLANC TREK?

You can find a full kit list [here](#). Best tip: don't carry too much! You'll always need less than you think. FYI – good trail shoes are fine for the TMB, big bulky hiking boots aren't necessarily needed.

WILL I HAVE ACCESS TO THE INTERNET AND CELL SERVICE DURING THE TOUR DU MONT BLANC TREK?

Access to internet and cell service during the Tour du Mont Blanc trek may be limited in remote areas. Most areas are pretty good for signal apart from Les Chapieux – which has a 14km radius of no service which is the major 'dark spot' of the trek. Refuge Bonhomme is most likely the last service point before the Col de la Seigne.

We recommend downloading your gpx tracks to FATMAP on your mobile phone app before you begin your trek. Depending on what your itinerary is, you can download half of the tracks and then once you get to Courmayeur download the rest if they take up too much space on your phone. (And it's quite the process to download the tracks – see guide on FATMAP [here](#))

HOW DO I GET TO THE STARTING POINT OF THE TOUR DU MONT BLANC TREK?

The starting point of the Tour du Mont Blanc trek varies depending on the route you book, but the most common starting points are Les Houches (France), Courmayeur (Italy), or Chamonix (France). The nearest major airport to the starting point is Geneva Airport, from which you can take a transfer, bus, or rental car to reach the starting point. See our direction page [here](#)

WHAT'S THE FOOD LIKE ON THE TOUR DU MONT BLANC TREK?

One of the great things about tackling the Tour du Mont Blanc trek is the variety of food you will be able to sample. Each country has its own specialities and each accommodation does things a little differently. The typical menu is likely to follow a Haute-Savoie feel with options like Raclettes, Tartifettes and Rostis but in certain locations, like Courmayeur (Italy) we recommend going for the pizza, naturally.

When in the huts you will be treated to a three-course meal, often sharing a table with the other guests. The meal usually consists of a starter like soup, a main course of meat and pasta and some sort of dessert. If you have a specific dietary request please let us know in advance so that we can notify the huts; please note that while vegetarian food is readily available, we cannot guarantee that more uncommon dietary requests will be able to be catered for.

Refuges along the trail are open for lunches during the day (approximately 11:30am – 2:30pm for lunch service) they will serve snacks/baking outside of these times. We recommend studying your route for the next day and seeing where you'll be passing – there is one suggested stop for lunch within Vamoos App however there are many choices depending on what time of the day you'll be passing marked as Points of Interest on the map.

The accommodations often offers a packed lunch option to take on the trails the following day, which will consist of a sandwich, fruit and snacks – this needs to be ordered the night before. If you know you get hungry or like a little pick-me-up then we recommend stocking up on snacks. Having a chocolate bar or bag of nuts stashed away for that final push up a col (pass) is always welcomed.

You will also be able to enjoy local wines and/or beers on your trip. Depending on how brave you are feeling, you can try out the local liqueur, G  n  pi.

WHAT'S THE WEATHER LIKE ON THE TOUR DU MONT BLANC TREK?

On the whole you are likely to experience temperatures in the mid 20's (Celsius) during July to September. However, in the mountains the weather can be quite unpredictable and there is always a chance that the temperature can drop very low (to freezing sometimes) or go as high as the early 30's, so come prepared. By prepared, we mean having lots of layers and plenty of suncream, a hat, sunglasses etc.

WHAT SORT OF CULTURE SHOULD I EXPECT?

You will experience the French, Italian and Swiss cultures on this trip. Think wine and croissants in France, coffee and pizza in Italy and cheese and efficiency in Switzerland. Although these three countries are separated only by mountain peaks you can see very distinct nuances between each of them.

You are also likely to encounter many different nationalities enjoying the tour alongside you. People come from all over the world to experience the Tour du Mont Blanc, which is also what makes this trip so special.

WHAT INSURANCE DO I NEED?

Let's face it, these types of trips don't come risk free. We're putting ourselves in amazing environments but also environments that carry an element of risk with them. In order to protect yourself adequately you will need a specialist travel insurance that caters for the types of activities you will be undertaking. It is a condition of our agreement that you are covered by adequate travel insurance for your arrangements. [Click here](#) to understand which one is for you.

DO I NEED TO HAVE PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE?

You don't need any previous trekking experience but it is worth having some hill-walking experience behind you. This will help prepare you for the amount of walking you'll be doing on this trek. You must be able to walk comfortably on mixed ground (plenty of ascent and descent) for long periods of time, wearing a backpack.

IS THERE WIFI ALONG THE WAY?

Mostly yes, especially in the bigger towns like Chamonix, Courmayeur and Champex, but not all refuges will have WiFi or cell-coverage.

WHAT ARE THE MOUNTAIN HUTS LIKE?

They are fairly basic but comfortable. You will sleep in dormitories on a shared basis, sometimes up to 6-8 per room (private rooms can be requested but availability is limited). The lodges offer breakfast and dinner (half board – included in your package), as well as options for buying snacks and a packed lunch for the following day. You can also stop for lunch at a refuge along your way.

WHAT WILL WE DO IF THE WEATHER IS BAD?

This depends on a few factors and how bad the weather is. You can aim to continue the trek even if it's raining/snowing as long as it's safe to do so. Please DO NOT take any variants off the classic TMB in bad weather conditions such as the Col des Fours, Col du Tricot, Fenetre D'Arpette. Take a look at the available shortcuts/transport options for that stage.

WHAT DO I DO IN AN EMERGENCY?

Whilst we have done our utmost to ensure that your trip will go according to plan, there are certain elements that are beyond our control. We recommend that you carefully read and understand the following section in case you find yourself in need of assistance.

The mountains, if not treated with complete respect, can be a dangerous place. Weather can change quickly and terrain can quickly become treacherous. Making good safe decisions based on the weather forecast and your energy levels when on a self-guided trip is paramount to making sure you have a successful trip.

We have two numbers you can call if there is an emergency but if the situation is critical and requires immediate support then please call 112. This is a European emergency number and will connect you to someone who can then redirect you to the local service you need.

- In resort phone: +33 7497 767 71 (French)
- Office: +44 20 3813 4779 (UK)

HOW WILL I NAVIGATE ON MY OWN?

Adventure Base will provide you with a map, .gpx files for navigation (using the FatMap app on your phone or on other GPS devices), and GPS waypoints for your trip. It's important you study the route before you set off, preferably the evening before each day of hiking, so that you have an idea of what your next day will entail. Take into consideration distance, elevation gain and loss, and exposure to elements (will you be up high in terrain exposed to the elements, or lower down in perhaps more sheltered terrain) when studying these.

Phone signal is not always available on the trails and battery life on your mobile device can quickly be drained when using a navigation app (especially in areas of weak phone signal, where your phone has to work harder to find signal), as well as by colder temperatures (such as in cold winds). It is a good idea to carry an external battery charger as a backup so that you can charge on the go if necessary. Putting your phone in airplane mode will help preserve its battery life.

Trails are well sign posted but they often present various options. Often there are variation routes that get you to the same place. For example there might be a high pass or a low pass. Deciding which one to take will depend on weather conditions and/or your preference on the day. Each sign will also provide a rough estimate of the time it takes to get to the next stop.

Our advice is to check the map or your device whenever you get to a junction to ensure that you are taking the correct trail to lead you to your destination. Taking these few minutes to confirm you're going in the right direction will save you time in the long run, as a wrong turn can be costly time-wise but also energy-wise.

WHAT MONEY DO I NEED?

There are two types of currencies used while on the trip: Euros and the Swiss Franc, though most if not all Swiss refuges on the TMB will accept Euros (€1=1CHF). You will need to carry some cash on the trip as not all businesses accept credit card. Along the route you will find ATM's in Les Contamines, Courmayeur, Champex and Chamonix, but we recommend planning ahead. You can expect to spend anywhere from €15-€50 per day, depending on what you order.

WHAT'S GOOD TREKKING ETIQUETTE?

It is mostly common sense but there are a few things that are good to bear in mind. It's often more exerting travelling uphill so when you're traveling downhill it is a nice courtestu to step aside to let uphill travellers pass (if the trail is too narrow to accommodate two people side-by-side).

Follow the "Leave No Trace" principle: don't leave any rubbish behind on the trails, including organic waste (such as egg shells or orange peels), and try not to disturb the natural habitat (this includes not wandering off the trail).