

## Classic Haute Route

- **The complete traverse Chamonix to Zermatt**
- **Glacial walking**
- **Ascent of the Pigne d’Arolla and the Tête Blanche**
- **Spectacular view of the world famous Matterhorn**

### TREK OVERVIEW

Classed as one of the world’s greatest mountain journeys, the Classic Haute Route is a challenging, linear, high altitude trek that links two of Europe’s most famous mountains, Mont Blanc and the Matterhorn. It involves crossing numerous glaciers (training given) and ascending many high passes but the rewards are absolutely stunning and a journey to be remembered. You will be able to claim two summits, the Pigne d’Arolla and the Tête Blanche.

(We also offer a less demanding version of this classic journey that does not require any technical skills, -Walkers Haute Route).



### Participation Statement

Adventure Walks recognises that climbing, hill walking and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement.

### Adventure Travel – Accuracy of Itinerary

Although it is our intention to operate this itinerary as printed, it may be necessary to make some changes as a result of flight schedules, climatic conditions, limitations of infrastructure or other operational factors. As a consequence, the order or location of overnight stops and the duration of the day may vary from those outlined. You should be aware that some events are beyond our control and we would ask for your patience.

## PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE/FITNESS

Ideally you should have experience of doing a previous multi day walk of at least five continuous days to ensure you have the right fitness to enjoy this trek. Most days involve 5-9hrs walking at altitude.

Underfoot you will experience a variety of tracks and trails that can be rocky and steep in places. In addition there are some long sections of glacier walking (with crampons) but no rock climbing. Previous snow and ice experience is not necessary as we will teach you all that is required at the start of the week. (You are welcome to join us for one of our weekend winter skills courses in Scotland to build confidence before booking).

## OUTLINE ITINERARY

**Key to inclusions (H-hotel, G-gîte, R-refuge, B-breakfast, L-lunch, D-dinner/evening meal)**

### Day 1 Arrive Chamonix

You are met on arrival at Geneva Airport and transferred to your hotel in the Chamonix valley. Alternatively you can meet us at our hotel. A full trek briefing is given in the early evening with an opportunity to buy any additional equipment that evening or early the next morning. (H).

### Day 2 Le Tour – Albert Premier Hut

After final sorting and packing of kit we walk up to the Albert Premier hut from the village of Le Tour, covering glacier training on the Le Tour glacier en route. If you wish to avoid this first climb you are welcome to take the Le Tour/Col de Balme chair lift. Looking back we have magnificent views of Mont Blanc and Aiguille Vert. 2-6hrs. (R,B,D).

### Day 3: Albert Premier Hut – La Fouly

We start early from the Albert Premier hut to make the best use of the snow conditions as we climb up to the Col Superior du Tour (3289m) to cross into Switzerland, then crossing Trient plateau, we walk down to the Col d'Orny (3098m) and east along the Glacier d'Orny to reach a well earned rest at the Cabane d'Orny, then continuing to the beautiful turquoise Lac d'Orny. We descend steeply down the Vallon d'Arpette de Saleina to eventually pick up the Tour de Mont Blanc path which takes us to La Fouly (H,B,D) 7-8hrs.

### Day 4 La Fouly-Col Des Planards-Bourg St Pierre

We follow the road for a short while to Les Ars Dessous, (1955m). The path continues steeply up zig-zags to the Col des Planards 2737m, then descends a pleasant scramble route in a northerly direction to the Lake Gouille du Dragon to pick up a path down the left side of the Combe des Planards to La Letta and eventually a minor road that takes us to Bourg St. Pierre (H,B,D) 7hrs.

### Day 5 Bourg St Pierre – Valsorey Hut

Leaving the comfort of Bourg St Pierre we head up the lovely Valsorey valley to the Chalet d'Amont (2198m). A rising traverse takes us to our high overnight stop at the Valsorey Hut (3030m), high on the slopes of the Grand Combin! (R,B,D) 4-5hrs.

### Day 6 Valsorey Hut-Plateau du Couloir-Chanrion Hut

(Progress from the Valsorey hut to the Chanrion Hut can be restricted in poor weather, but in the worst scenario we can drop back to Bourg St Pierre and take a bus to Aosta-Ollomont -Glacier to eventually walk up to the Chanrion Hut via the Fenêtre du Durand).

Given good weather we climb the zig-zag path and take an exposed path up to the Plateau du Couloir with its outstanding views of the Grand Combin and its neighbours. We descend onto the Sanadon Glacier to traverse across to the Col du Sanadon (3504m) and descend the Mont Durand Glacier below the Grand Tête de Bay and Tête Blanche. We then have a steep climb to reach the Chanrion Hut (2462m) which is our destination for the evening. The Chanrion Hut is said to be one of the best huts on the Haute Route, situated opposite Mount Avril, it is located on summer pastures. The well known, but very rare Edelweiss can be found here. (R,B,D). 7-9hrs.



### Day 7 Chanrion Hut - Dix Hut

This is a very fine day, long and varied but with incredible views throughout. We find ourselves in more rugged mountain scenery, traversing some glacial ice and moraine before joining our path up to the Col de Lire (3115m). It is usual to see herds of ibex on the slopes. Crossing the remnant glacier between this pass and the next, the Col de Mont Rouge (3325m), we may well have to put on our crampons as there is a steep snow slope to be negotiated. Beyond this pass, we cross the upper part of the Gietro Glacier to reach the Col de Cheilon (3243m). We make a short glacial descent which takes us to our overnight stop at the Cabane des Dix (2928m) with a deserved reputation for great food. (R,B,D) 5-6hrs.

### **Day 8 Dix Hut - Vignettes Hut via the Pigne d'Arolla-Vignettes Hut**

Up before dawn today, as we head for the main summit and the highest point of our route. We make a short descent from the hut onto the Glacier de Cheilon, which is initially bare of snow. Before beginning our ascent of the Pigne d'Arolla (3796m) we rope up and put on our crampons as the start of the route crosses dramatically crevassed glacial terrain, leading up to the Col de la Serpentine. From here we cross a short, but steep, ice slope. This is the crux of the route, giving us access to the easier upper slopes of the Pigne d'Arolla. From the summit the view must rank as one of the finest in the Alps. It stretches from Mont Blanc to the Grand Paradiso, with awesome views of Matterhorn, the Dente Blanche and the Bernese Peaks. A short glacial descent takes us to the impressively situated Vignettes Hut that perches dramatically at 3160m. (R,B,D) 6hrs.

### **Day 9 Vignettes Hut – Col de L'Eveque – Bertol Hut**

Today we cross beneath the north face of the Petit Mont Collon on glaciated terrain to reach the Col de L'Eveque (3386m). This takes 3 to 4 hours. From here, we descend onto the Haute Glacier d'Arolla, traversing snow slopes and then bare glacier. At the snout of the glacier, we pick up a trail leading towards a bergerie on the eastern slopes of the valley. Beyond this, we are faced with a 600m ascent to the Col de Bertol (3268m). Our overnight halt is at the Cabane de Bertol, which is spectacularly located at the head of the col. Access to the hut is via a string of exciting ladders up a rock face, directly after a challenging snow slope, making reaching the hut even more rewarding! There are stunning views towards the Matterhorn and the Dent Blanche. (R,B,D) 7hrs.

### **Day 10 Bertol - Tete Blanche - Schonbiel Hut - Zermatt**

Weather dependent, we shall attempt the summit of the Tête Blanche. We descend the ladders from the hut, rope up and start the long, gentle ascent of the Mont Mine Glacier, heading for the easy snow peak of the Tête Blanche (3724m). This takes 3 to 4 hours and our reward is even more impressive views of the Matterhorn: surely the most generic and famed of mountain views. We descend by way of the complex and heavily crevassed Stockji (a rocky island in the middle of this glaciated terrain). Here, we pick up a narrow trail which traverses steep slopes, leading to an improving alpine path on a moraine on the north side of the valley. Finally, we cross the huge rock-covered glacier below the Zmutt Ridge of the Matterhorn and pick our way up the Schonbiel Hut. 5-6hrs. Rested, we make our final descent along good trails through the beautiful Swiss meadows to Zermatt. From the rugged mountain scenery, we soon find ourselves among pleasant woodland and pretty hamlets. This is a splendid walk with the north face of the Matterhorn and Dent d'Herens hovering above us - a time to reflect on the journey undertaken. We have the remainder of the day to explore this car-free Alpine haven before enjoying the luxuries of our comfortable hotel. 2-3hrs (H,B,L)

### **Day 11 Depart Zermatt**

After breakfast we transfer to Geneva Airport for the homeward flight.

#### **GUIDE – Trek Leader**

This trek will be led by one of our regular IFMGA Mountain Guides to meet current regulations for walks which involve glacial travel within Europe.

Maximum ratio 6:1.

#### **EQUIPMENT**

A detailed equipment list is provided on booking but you will require normal winter walking clothing, together with crampons and ice axe (both of which can be hired). For equipment purchases Adventure Walks/Peaks offers a 15% discount from our shop in Ambleside or online. During the walk you will be required to carry all your own gear but with careful packing you should be able to keep your sac to 15kg: a 50L sac would be suitable.



#### **WEATHER CONDITIONS**

The walking season begins around the middle of June. At this time there can still be a little winter snow remaining on the high passes, which lasts until the end of September. You would expect to have several days of fair weather with warm temperatures and blue skies mixed with some wet stormy days, with snow on the high passes. Valley temperatures 16-20°C, mountain temperatures could fall below zero. **Walkers should realise that weather in the high mountains is unpredictable and you should be prepared for this and as a result we may not be able to take in all the planned summits.**

#### **ACCOMMODATION**

We will use a combination of hotels, gîtes and mountain refuges, each varying in standard and facilities. In the valley we aim to provide twin rooms (occasionally triples). Couples will always be given twins or doubles. In some hotels there maybe en-suite facilities, but in others the bathroom may be shared. Singles may not be available and our flexibility reduces during the high season. Whilst in the mountain refuges, sleeping arrangements may be in mixed dormitories, which is standard for this type of accommodation. Bedding is provided, but you may wish to

bring a sheet sleeping bag (silk or cotton) for added comfort.



### MEALS

Once we leave Chamonix your breakfast and evening meals are provided. Breakfast is continental and will normally include tea, coffee or hot chocolate, bread, croissants and jam. Evening meals are taken in the hotel or refuge and will be a set menu for the group as a whole. If you wish to order separately it will not be possible to reimburse you for any set meals not taken. Drinks other than at breakfast are not included with meals and you will need to pay for these. You can buy your lunch en route at the refuge or hotel before setting off each day.

### HEALTH

All our leaders hold first aid certificates and carry a fully equipped first aid kit for medical emergencies. However you should bring your own supplies of plaster, blister prevention pads (compepe), paracetamol etc. and any medication you are taking.

### AIRPORT TRANSFERS

We will arrange a single pick up from Geneva airport between 12-2pm to coincide with the majority of flight arrivals, which will take you to your hotel in Chamonix. If you require transfers at different times a supplement will be payable.

**Trek transfers** ó should you require transfers at all during the trek this would be extra and payable in cash at the time (e.g. injury, blisters or tiredness).



### BAGGAGE

Personal belongings that you do not wish to take with you on the Haute Route, to a maximum of 5kg per person, can

be left at your hotel in Chamonix. We will arrange for them to be transferred to your hotel in Zermatt at the end of the trek.

### INSURANCE

Insurance which covers mountain rescue, helicopter evacuation and medical expenses is **essential**. We recommend Ault Insurance (0121 569 8772) or the BMC but whatever agent you choose, we will require a copy of your insurance prior to departure.

### CURRENCY AND LOCAL COSTS

We visit France, Italy and Switzerland, so you will require Euros and Swiss Francs. Credit cards are widely accepted and ATM cash machines are available in most valleys. All meals described are included so unless you wish to buy extra you will just require money for drinks and snacks, payment for cable cars (in case of bad weather or a need to save energy/time) plus of course your celebratory meal at the end of the trip!

### USEFUL TIPS

Just in case your main luggage goes missing en route, it is a good idea to wear your boots on the plane. Most other things can be replaced but comfortable, well worn-in boots are not. Pack important items in strong plastic bags.

### TIPPING

If you wish to tip our group leader/guide a suggested guideline would be approximately £1-£2 per person per day.

