

## ALPS - Classic Haute Route



### 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 Pigned'Arolla and the Tête Blanche.

### Participation Statement

Adventure Peaks 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 be a confident summer hill walker and 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 to 9 hours 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 would be beneficial but is not a prerequisite 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).



## 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 of guide to clients is 1:6. For some sections of the route, another guide may assist.

## WEATHER

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 to 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.**

## WHAT TO CARRY

This is a backpacking trip and is unsupported. Therefore you will need to carry all your belongings with you all of the time. However with careful packing and using modern lightweight clothing, your backpack should not weigh more than 12kg at the most. If you are unsure about your ability to carry this amount we suggest you join one of our -Backpacking Training weekends in the Lake District to test yourself out. One small bag per person can be sent from Chamonix to meet you at the final hotel in Zermatt if you wish.

## ALTITUDE

If you are new to altitude you may have concerns about the effects. Don't worry because our itineraries allow sufficient time to acclimatise, and altitude rarely causes anyone any problems on this trip. The best way to avoid such symptoms is to walk at a gentle steady pace and drink plenty of fluid.

## 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 where possible. 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 should bring a sheet sleeping bag (silk or cotton) for added comfort (compulsory in some huts).

## CATERING ARRANGEMENTS

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.

## LANGUAGE AND TIME

**Language:** French, Italian and Swiss

**Time:** GMT+1 (CET). No daylight saving time at present.

## HEALTH

All our UK leaders hold first aid certificates and carry a fully equipped first aid kit for medical emergencies. However you should bring your own supplies of plasters, blister prevention pads (Compeed), Paracetamol etc. and any medication you are taking. Stream water should never be drunk without first sterilizing with chlorine dioxide tablets or by boiling. Please remember that even if water comes out of a tap in the mountains, it has not passed through any purification system.



## INSURANCE

Insurance which covers mountain rescue, evacuation and medical expenses is **essential**. We will require a copy of your insurance prior to departure. Please also ensure your insurance covers you for walking and technical climbing above 4000m.

**Trek transfers** 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).

## 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 cannot. Pack important items in strong plastic bags.



## 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.

## 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.

## LOCAL COSTS

All accommodation and most meals are included; please see the itinerary page for full details. Additional costs include lunches, any drinks or snacks outside of mealtimes, tips for local staff, lifts and cable cars if used and travel between the airport and the Chamonix/Zermatt hotel.

## CURRENCY

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!

## TIPPING

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

## FLIGHTS AND JOINING ARRANGEMENTS

Flights are **NOT** included as part of this holiday. Budget airlines offer a lot of flights to Geneva from many regional UK airports, and sometimes very cheap deals can be found. As we expect clients to arrive at different times, we have not included transport between the airport and the hotel in Chamonix. Regular shuttle services are available from Geneva airport direct to your hotel. We recommend [www.chamexpress.com](http://www.chamexpress.com)

**The rendezvous for this trip is the HOTEL IN CHAMONIX at 1900 on Day 1.**

Return flights should be booked for the afternoon of Day 11 to allow time to get back to the airport from Zermatt. Trains operate hourly direct to Geneva airport and take about 4 hours.

**PLEASE ENSURE YOU DO NOT PURCHASE YOUR INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL (FLIGHTS OR OTHER) UNTIL WE HAVE GUARANTEED YOUR TRIP IS RUNNING.**



## CLASSIC HAUTE ROUTE ITINERARY

No	Today we...	We stay at...	Accommodation...	Meals...
1	Travel to Chamonix	Chamonix	Hotel	
2	Trek 1	Albert Premier	Refuge	BD
3	Trek 2	La Fouly	Hotel	BD
4	Trek 3	Bourg St. Pierre	Hotel	BD
5	Trek 4	Valsorey (3030m)	Refuge	BD
6	Trek 5	Chanrion (2462m)	Refuge	BD
7	Trek 6	Cabane de Dix (2928m)	Refuge	BD
8	Trek 7	Vignettes (3160m)	Refuge	BD
9	Trek 8	Cabane de Bertol (3268m)	Refuge	BD
10	Trek 9	Zermatt	Hotel	B
11	Travel home	Home	Own bed!	

**Day 1** Fly to Geneva and take a train or private 'door to door' shuttle to the 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.

**Day 2** 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 to 6 hours walking.*

**Day 3** 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 Vallond'Arpette de Saleina to eventually pick up the Tour de Mont Blanc path which takes us to La Fouly. *7 to 8 hours walking.*

**Day 4** 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 scrambly 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. *7 hours walking.*

**Day 5** 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, high on the slopes of the Grand Combin! *4 to 5 hours walking.*

**Day 6** 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. *7 to 9 hours walking.*

*(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).*

**Day 7** 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 with a deserved reputation for great food. *5 to 6 hours walking.*

**Day 8** 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. *6 hours walking.*

**Day 9** Today we cross beneath the north face of the Petit Mont Collon on glaciated terrain to reach the Col de L'Éveque (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) and our refuge for the night. 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. *7 hours walking.*

**Day 10** 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. 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. We have the remainder of the day to explore this car-free Alpine haven before enjoying the luxuries of our comfortable hotel. *7 to 9 hours walking.*

**Day 11** After breakfast we transfer to Geneva airport for the homeward flight.