

TOUR DU MONT BLANC TREK

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How fit do I need to be?

This trek is achievable for most people provided they **train well in advance**. You will be up early in the mornings and trekking for approximately 6-8 hours each day.

Distances are misleading with this type of terrain, and it's more useful when training to think about the hours you need to walk for. Try to train with your day pack on your back and get used to drinking and carrying water during your training. This trekking challenge is all about endurance fitness.

We support the group in a way that allows everyone to go at a steady and achievable pace, however for logistical and safety reasons we sometimes need to re-group, so those at the front will find themselves waiting for others. Please relax, and remember that this is a team effort that enables people to achieve their goals – it's not about how fast you can walk as an individual. Equally, it's no good for your self-confidence if you haven't prepared yourself for the challenge, so sticking to our training plan will really pay off. As a general rule of thumb, on fairly flat but uneven terrain you should be able to walk at 2-3mph without feeling as though you are pushing your limits. It goes without saying that you need to be mentally prepared too – self-belief and determination go a long way!

Keep in mind that this is a tough trek and many people will find elements of the trip difficult at times, whether it is the physical trekking, changing weather, the difference in culture or something else. It is great if you can work as a team and help each other out during any difficulties. While there are challenges, **the enjoyment and rewards that come from trekking Mont Blanc are unforgettable!**

What will the trekking be like?

The walking terrain is **varied, with valley paths and high ridge-climbs**. The trek is very hilly, with some steep rocky areas and rivers to cross. The highest altitude reached is 2665m. Several days are particularly demanding, and you will need to have trained hard or be a regular, fit walker of long distances and tough terrain to complete this challenge. Much of the area we trek through is remote, with little vehicle access, and we recommend that you have experience walking on rough, uneven terrain and confidence walking on mud, rocks and steps. If you are unsteady on your feet you will find trekking poles useful but do make sure you use these in your training exercise.

Will altitude affect me?

Our highest point is 2665m, but we do not trek for prolonged periods at this elevation and most of the trip is spent under 2000m. You may feel some effects of being at altitude, such as shortness of breath when on the move, but it is very unusual for it to have an impact on your ability to continue. Descending to a lower elevation will usually make you feel better immediately. Altitude affects people differently and being super-fit is no guarantee of being less likely to feel the effects. Our recommendations are to have **trained properly**, to go easy on the alcohol in the days leading up to the trip and to **listen to your leaders/guides** if they advise you to slow down the trekking pace.

What is the accommodation like?

You will stay in **small hotels and pensions** on a shared basis. They are wonderfully located and very hospitable, but expect fairly simple facilities. Sleeping arrangements in pensions can be dormitory-style; facilities are clean, comfy and very good considering their remote location, though do not expect spacious surroundings! We endeavour to use rooms with smaller bed configurations, and keep them single-sex, but please be aware this may not always be possible, especially at busy times. Please be prepared for fairly rustic conditions on some nights, especially if you are only used to nice hotels. Being out of your comfort zone adds to the challenge and makes your achievement all the sweeter. If you are travelling alone, you will be paired up with someone of the same sex and similar age – please let us know if you wish to share with a particular person, if you have not already done so.



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Can I request single accommodation?

There may be a limited number of single rooms in the hotels at the start and end of the trip, subject to request and at an additional cost, on a first-come, first-served basis. During the trek itself, single supplements are not feasible due to the shared nature of the pensions. Sharing a room is a really good ice-breaker if you don't know anyone else on the trip, so don't worry too much about it!

Who accompanies us on the trek from Discover Adventure?

Your trip will be led by **experienced Discover Adventure leaders**. Our leaders are selected for their experience in harsh wilderness environments, knowledge of travel in remote areas, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises. They are also trained in expedition first-aid. You are in very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader.

Will there be a doctor trekking with us also?

An expedition doctor or medic usually accompanies the group as well, dependent on group size. Our medics are there to provide first aid and promote day-to-day welfare on the trip; they carry a robust medical kit, but cannot possibly be equipped with everything needed to counter any given situation. They also provide crucial support to our leaders and, as they are usually found at the back of our groups, are also experts at encouraging you when things get tough.

Who else will accompany the group on this challenge?

Our local support crew is made up of local guides and drivers. Local guides know the area well, and are a **great source of knowledge about local customs and lifestyles**. The Discover Adventure crew work closely with the local crew to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely. Our drivers do not always speak much English but are very friendly and approachable.

What are the transport arrangements for the group and our kit?

When you arrive in Geneva you will travel on a coach or minibus, depending on the group size, which will take you to the start and pick you up at the end of the trek. Your **luggage will be transported each day by vehicle as you trek**, so you therefore cannot access your main packs during the day and will need to make sure that you carry a day-pack containing extra layers, waterproof, sun-cream, hat, camera, water and so on. Discover Adventure Kitbags are specially designed for the rigours of our challenges and are very affordable, please ask for details.

What will the weather be like?

The temperatures can vary widely on this challenge, though generally it should be warm and sunny at lower elevations, and will be colder on the higher slopes. Rain and strong winds are always a possibility and it may be blustery, cold winds are common when high up on the mountains. Average temperatures range from 11-26°C. Be prepared for any conditions in the mountains! Never under-estimate the power of the sun's rays, even when it feels cool, is cloudy or windy. Ensure that you bring minimum Factor 30 sun-cream along with a high SPF lip salve. A sun hat, which covers your neck, and quality sunglasses are also a must. It's vital that you follow the kit recommendations in our kit list and come prepared. You don't have to spend a fortune on the best kit by any means, but you should be comfortable in all conditions – it makes a huge difference to your enjoyment on the day and may even make the difference between succeeding and not.



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What will I be eating?

The food will be fresh and plentiful on this trip and it is important that you eat well to keep your energies up while trekking. You will eat in the pensions at breakfast, and dinner time, and packed lunches when trekking.

I have a specific dietary need; will there be enough for me to eat?

Being vegetarian, gluten free, dairy free or having other dietary requirements is usually not a problem provided you **let us know well in advance** (airlines need to know at least 8 weeks prior to the departure). If you feel you aren't getting enough energy because of your dietary requirements please talk to the leaders on the trip – they can't help unless they know there's a problem. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat you may wish to bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply. Please feel free to ask us for advice.

Do I need to bring snacks?

Bring enough snacks to keep you going each day - around **2-3 tasty treats a day will suffice**. We recommend a combination of slow and fast release snacks such as cereal bars (e.g. Tracker), flapjacks, salted nuts, chocolate bars, and a packet of sweets. Bringing a combination of treats will keep you interested in snacking as consistent energy levels are important.

How much do I need to drink?

Drink, drink, drink! Due to the nature of this challenge, you will need to drink significantly more than you would in the UK. You will be provided with plenty of drinking water at breakfast for the day ahead, and in the evenings at dinner, so ensure that you keep topping up your bottles and hydration systems. You will need to drink at least 2-3ltrs of water a day, and you will be carrying this in your day packs so try and get used to trekking with that amount of weight on you when training.

What is the celebration meal?

At the end of your challenge, there will be a special meal to celebrate your achievements. Please check your trip itinerary to confirm whether you will need to set aside funds to pay for this on the night.

What about toilets?

There are rarely toilet facilities during the day, so please be prepared. You will need to take baby wipes, nappy sacks and paper in order to make sure you **leave no trace** whilst out on your trek. These can then be discarded in the nearest bin.

What can I do to prevent illness during the challenge?

Illness can spread through the group very quickly when you are living closely together so it's important to bring **antiseptic hand sanitiser** for use after the toilet and before eating to minimise the spread of germs. Also, avoid sharing water bottles and sharing each other's food or sweets as this spreads germs very easily, even if you are being careful.

What if I have any issues during the trip?

Our leaders are very experienced and work very hard to ensure your trip runs as smoothly and enjoyably as possible, and we're sure that you'll have a wonderful time. If you do have any concerns or problems during the trip **please talk to the crew and give them the opportunity to explain or rectify things while they are able**. They are all very approachable!

What will happen in the case of an emergency on this challenge?

The crew will have radios and emergency satellite phones, extensive medical kit and other safety apparatus where necessary. If you are feeling unwell on this trek, tell your leaders and listen to their advice as your health and safety is our top priority.



What if this trip does not meet minimum numbers?

Every group needs a minimum number of bookings for it to be feasible to run. Cancelling a trip is rare, and we do our utmost to avoid it. You will be contacted in plenty of time if we are concerned about the group size, and we will discuss options with you.

Do I need travel insurance?

As part of your booking conditions, it is **compulsory that you ensure you have adequate travel insurance cover** to cover you for trekking. You can purchase insurance through our website with Insure2Travel if you wish to via [this link](#); otherwise you are able to source your own preferred cover with a company of your choosing.

How much money will I need to bring with me?

We usually recommend that you take approximately £100-£150 in euros for spending money but of course it depends on how much you might want to buy in the way of souvenirs. Out of this spending money, you will need to set aside approximately €30-40 for the celebration meal if this is not included as part of your itinerary.

What do you recommend for crew tips?

The support crew work incredibly hard and it is great if we can show our appreciation in the form of a tip. The recommended guideline is **€50-€60 per participant** which is split out between the local crew but this is of course at your discretion. Please do not give out individual tips to any crew who you feel have helped you personally, as they work well as a team and those out of sight will be working just as hard as those with you on the trek. Your trip leader will give you further advice.

Will there be Wi-Fi, phone reception and charging points?

The Wi-Fi in the hotels may not be as fast as you're used to at home and there won't be any internet access when on the trek itself. The phone reception will be limited and there won't be access to power for charging devices. You may wish to bring your own solar charging device for use while trekking. Treat this challenge like a **'Digital Detox'** and tell your relatives that no news is good news, as the leader will have a satellite phone for emergencies only.

When will we know the flight details and meeting point?

Discover Adventure will usually confirm the main group flight details 5 months prior to the trip departure so you will know which airport you are travelling from and can arrange suitable transport. You will be sent your **Final Joining Instructions** in the month prior to the trip departure date, within which specific details of **where and when to meet your trip leader** and fellow trekking participants will be confirmed.

Will I need my flight ticket before the trip departure date?

Unless specified otherwise, you do not need to have your flight ticket prior to the trip departure date as this will be given to you by the trip leader, doctor or a Discover Adventure representative at the airport. If there are alternative plans, your Challenge Co-ordinator will inform you.

Can I make my own flight arrangements or alter my flight from the main group?

Flights are included on this trip and you will automatically be booked on to the main group flights, unless you let us know otherwise in good time (no later than three months prior to the trip departure). It is possible to make your own flight arrangements and a land only discount will be applied to your transactions when you return the **'Flight Arrangements Form'** (sent at the time of booking). It is also possible to extend your return journey on the main group flights, but note that you will remain on the same flight path returning from the same airport. There is a flight extension request fee to deviate from the main group flight booking and you will need to return the 'Flight Arrangements Form' with your request. The earlier you return your form to us, the less likely there will be a supplement to pay if the flights are more expensive on your requested day. We will always contact you if this is the case to check whether you are happy to proceed. If you are keen to upgrade your flight, this may be possible at a supplement and you can contact us for an approximate price but please note that this is often very expensive and we will require full payment upfront.



What do I need to bring?

Refer to the **Kit List** sent to you to ensure that you have all the essentials for a comfortable trip. Make sure your walking boots are lightweight, waterproof and well-worn in. Trekking tops of a wicking nature will be more comfortable to walk in than cotton. If you intend to trek with poles, ensure that you train with them. Don't forget your charity t-shirts too! If you are still to buy some kit don't forget that Cotswold Outdoor offer all Discover Adventure participants **15% off** any purchases you make with them. Please ask us for the code if you do not have this already.

What is the luggage allowance?

Your main luggage limit on the plane is 20kg with a 5kg allowance for hand luggage. Do travel lightly and take only small bottles of toiletries. If you stick to the kit list you will manage this with no problems and don't forget that suitcases are not suitable, soft rucksacks/kitbags only (with no wheels on).

Do I need to carry my own luggage?

As your main kit bags will be transported by vehicles between each overnight stop, you will only need to carry a day-pack yourself with your trekking essentials (i.e. water, spare layers, waterproof, sun-cream, hat, camera, snacks). We require that you bring a soft bag as your main luggage and not a suitcase.

What are the passport and visa requirements?

A valid 10-year passport is essential; with at least six months remaining before expiry.

There are no visas required for France for UK nationals currently, you can refer to the foreign travel advice [given here](#) for more information if you would like to. If you do not have a UK passport, it is your responsibility to check the entry requirements with your own embassy, so please do so in good time.

How can I find out more about the requirement for vaccinations?

You will need to ensure that you have the vaccinations required for this trip prior to travel. You can find some guidance and information on the www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk website. Always consult your local GP or travel clinic for the latest health advice, as they are aware of any updates in World Health Travel requirements.

Passenger Portal

We have a **Passenger Portal** which will enable you to see any outstanding information we need, the countdown to your challenge departure, see your outstanding balance, make payments and update your contact details. You can access this via the following link - [Passenger Portal Log in](#).

Download the app!

We use the **VAMOOS travel app** that can be downloaded from the App store to your smartphone. The app can be used offline, and allows you to access all of your challenge documents from your phone. Just download the app and enter the unique code at the prompt (**please ask if you do not have this**).



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