

“Cloud Walking on Mont Blanc”

From France to Switzerland to Italy Atop the Alps

June 16-23, 2025



Craving adventure? Then come join AFS for some thrilling vacation therapy on an expedition like no other. We will follow a variety of alpine trails along the alps with jaw-dropping scenic beauty through 3 different countries! Our last AFS group couldn't get enough of the stunning landscapes and the charming villages, and our waitlist was so long, we knew we needed to do it again... only even better!

These world-class hiking trails draw 500,000 people each year and are known for both their classic status among hikers as well as their stunning views. To hiking aficionados, this is known as the “Tour du Mont Blanc” trek, spanning France, Italy and Switzerland. Fodor's calls it “the world's best hike.” From our base in charming Chamonix, we've combined the best day hikes possible for you. These alps are called “The Ceiling of Europe.” Marvel at glistening glaciers, chiseled peaks, crystal lakes and lush verdant valleys. Breathe in the cleanest mountain air imaginable. Late June is the prime time to do this circuit with less crowds, perfect weather and alpine meadows that bloom with wildflowers. We walk by day and then enjoy relaxing evenings in quaint alpine villages.

I decided to do this right by customizing this into a most pleasurable experience. This isn't a backpacker's slum-it-trip with 40-bed dorms. We'll stay in cozy 3-star hotels called “mountain inns.” We hired the top licensed guides to lead you. They divide us into 3 groups according to fitness. Your luggage will follow in vans and most important, we'll do our major ascents by cable cars and chairlifts!

Imagine telling your friends you hiked the iconic Tour du Mont Blanc, an experience that has long been on the bucket list of so many. Mont Blanc crowns the alps and is a mecca for mountain lovers around the world. The massif commands respect. The first few days are easy but be prepared for some challenges later. One must be fit for this active vacation which cover five to 9 miles each day. No special equipment necessary. You just need a spirit of determination and adventure... and good hiking boots!

We must limit this to only 24 participants, so it will fill quickly. Since you're in the heart of Europe, it's easy to add an extension to any surrounding country on your own. Bring out your inner explorer for a walk above the clouds. With picture postcard vistas from every vantage point, you can't get more intimate with nature than this. It's truly an AFS unforgettable journey with views to last a lifetime. Grab your boots and come join us!.



Our Glorious AFS Itinerary

16 June - Depart U.S.

Overnight flight from U.S. cities. Fly to Geneva Switzerland. Consider Delta, American, BA, Iceland Air and more. All air, packing and hotel details will be coming in your trip tips.

17 June – Arrive Geneva/Chamonix. Welcome to France

We arrive in Geneva, Switzerland, where we are met by Alpine Treks guides and taken collectively to our hotel across the border in Chamonix, France (One transfer). It is recommended that everyone arrive no later than 2pm.

The journey is about an hour and after checking in, we will hold a briefing on the week ahead. We will then do a short, optional, orientation walk around Chamonix town center. At night, we are free to explore the many bars and restaurants that Chamonix has to offer.

Overnight [Heliopic Hotel & Spa](#) (4 nights)



18 June - Walking below the Chamonix Needles B/L

Following breakfast, we take a cable car from the center of Chamonix, whizzing 6600 feet up the mountain. Up top, we traverse high above the Chamonix Valley and below the majestic peaks of the Mont Blanc massif known as the 'Chamonix Aiguilles' ('Chamonix Needles'). The 3.5 mile walk is a good test of the rugged Alpine terrain, which is so famous to the Mont Blanc region, and the views of the Chamonix valley and surrounding peaks are breath-taking.

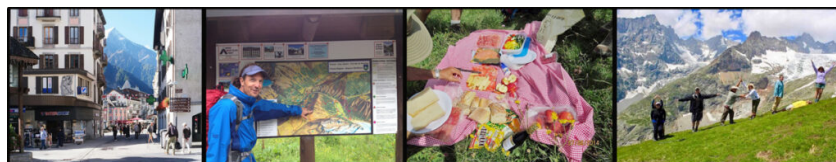
We'll enjoy a delicious picnic lunch with local specialties at a superb view-point pitched above the massive glacier known as the 'Mer de Glace' ('Sea of Ice').

After lunch we descend to the Montanvers mountain train where we can visit an ice cave dug into the glacier, exploring the 'Glaciorium' for an interactive display on the formation and geography of glaciers. We have the option of enjoying a cold drink on the terrace of the historic Montanvers Hotel, which was built in 1880 to cater for the early mountain tourists in the Victorian time. Then we descend back to Chamonix by way of the 120 year old cogwheel train and return to our hotel.

At night, we are free to explore the many bars and restaurants that Chamonix has to offer.

Overnight- Heliopic Hotel & Spa

Hiking details – approximately 6 km with 350 m ascent, around four hours.



19 June - Lac Blanc High Level Hike B/L

This morning, we make the short trip to the hamlet of Les Praz on the outskirts of Chamonix where a cable car takes us nearly 6600 feet up the mountainside. Today, we are on the sunny side of the Chamonix valley, with breathtaking, unrestricted views of Mont Blanc, the highest mountain in Europe, for the entire day! We are hiking 3. Miles through a nature reserve, and it is not uncommon to spot Ibex, chamois or marmots. Our six-mile walk takes us to the beautiful Lac Blanc (the white lake), which is actually a magical turquoise color. The views from this alpine oasis are among the best in the world.

You will love your daily picnics. At the lake, it's time to enjoy another picnic lunch prepared by our guides by the scenic shoreline. There's a mountain refuge nearby so we'll be able to finish off with a coffee and home-made blueberry tart. After lunch, we hike back to the cable car, taking in the scenery as we go.

Our evening is free to explore the many bars and restaurants that Chamonix has to offer.

Overnight Heliopic Hotel & Spa

Hiking details – approximately 10 km with 400 m ascent, around five hours.



20 June - Free day in Chamonix B



You have earned a day off! On popular request, we have a free day in Chamonix - there's just too much to do in the mountain capital of the world. The possibilities are endless, whether you are looking for spa relaxation, retail therapy, adrenaline rush, museums or more magical mountain views.

How about visiting the QC Terme spa for a bit of pampering at the foot of Mont Blanc? Or stepping into the void, a suspended glass box which will make you feel like you are floating, at nearly 4000 meters (13,000 feet) Or perhaps a paraglide jump, river rafting, climbing or mountain biking. If that all sounds too exhausting, Chamonix has a plethora of cafés, restaurants, museums and shops! At night, members are free to explore the many bars and restaurants that Chamonix has to offer.

Overnight Heliopic Hotel & Spa

21 June - From France to Switzerland. Welcome to Switzerland B

Today, we leave Chamonix behind us and start our 3-day 'expedition' from France, via Switzerland, into Italy, tracing the famous "Tour du Mont Blanc." We catch a short transfer to the top of the Chamonix valley, where a cable car saves us from walking up through the ski area. We quickly, leave the ski area and the Chamonix Valley behind as we hike over the Balme mountain pass, which forms the border between France and Switzerland.

Now in Switzerland, we hike through high mountain pastures amidst stunning alpine scenery, eventually reaching the small hamlet of Trient. In Trient, our vans are waiting for us to take us further down the mountain to the Roman town of Martigny - the gateway to the Grand Saint Bernard pass.

In Martigny, we will have time to explore the Roman amphitheater or, if you are a dog lover, a visit to the Saint Bernard dog museum, dedicated to this Swiss national dog. At night we are free to explore the bars and restaurants in Martigny.

OvernightSwitzerland: [Hotel Campanile](#)

Hiking details – approximately 6 km with 400 m ascent and 600 m decent, around 5 to 6 hours.



22 June - High Mountain Pastures to the Lakeside Village B/L

We drive to the Forclaz mountain pass with its old inn, known to for its history of hosting smugglers of goods between Switzerland and France. From here, we continue our journey by foot through the Swiss Alps on a longer trek. A narrow trail on the steep hill-side snakes steadily up through woodland and mountain pastures. As we reach the top of our ascent, we are greeted by magnificent views straight up the large Rhone valley, which is gloriously surrounded by the majestic peaks of the Swiss Alps. Just below us are the Bovine Mountain pastures, which are still in use. We'll be greeted by a farmer at his rustic guest house where we can enjoy coffee and homemade cake before commencing our descent.

We'll make our way through more woodlands, across gushing streams and, eventually, to a small valley that leads to the village Champex. Champex is a stunning Swiss alpine village dropped in the middle of a glacial bowl and located on the shores of an alpine lake. This is the perfect place to relax after a day on the trails.

This evening is free to explore the traditional restaurants in Champex.

Overnight: [Hotel du Glacier](#)

Hiking details – approximately 15 km with 600 m Ascend and 800 m descent, around six hours



23 June - From Switzerland to Italy. Welcome to Italy B/L/D

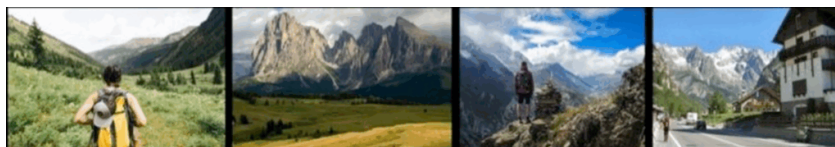
Our final hiking day awaits. We start with a scenic transfer through Swiss countryside and old farming villages until we reach the top of the Ferret valley. Today, our objective is the Grand Col Ferret mountain pass which forms the border between Switzerland and Italy. The hike to the mountain pass is straight out of The Sound of Music and a great opportunity to get up and close to some very friendly Swiss cows.

We pass through an old dairy farm, where we can stop for refreshments, which includes delicious cheese from the very same cows we met earlier. Upon reaching the Gran Col Ferret pass, we're treated to spectacular views across the Italian Alps and the dramatic Italian side of the Mont Blanc massif. So, it's farewell Mont Blanc and welcome Monte Bianco. The descend takes us via an Italian mountain hut, which gives us an opportunity for our first taste of Italian espresso - probably the best coffee we've had on our trip so far.

Almost too soon, the final descend is over and we jump on our transfer to our end destination Courmayeur. Courmayeur is the chic and charming little brother of Chamonix, with a cute pedestrian shopping street and cobblestoned square. It would be rude not to try a homemade gelato ice cream from the local gelateria, or maybe a celebratory Aperol at the historic Caffee della Posta. Either way, we will finish the trip with farewell dinner together in this charming village below Monte Bianco.

Hiking details: approximately 13 km's with 800 meters ascent and 800 meters descent. Hiking time 6 hours.

Overnight: [Hotel Walser](#)



24 June - Depart Courmayeur B

After breakfast, it's time to check out and leave Mont Blanc and the Alps behind us. Thanks to the Mont Blanc tunnel, Geneva airport is easily reached in about 1.5 hours from Courmayeur.