



CLOUD 9 ADVENTURE



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Tour of the Monte Rosa - TMR

- 9 day trek: experience some of Europe's wildest mountain scenery, within sight of the iconic Matterhorn and Swiss 4000m peaks
- The real high Alps - away from the crowds, with unspoilt views and remote passes
- 5 nights in mountain refuges, and 5 charming village hotels
- A night in the world-famous Zermatt.
- A full circuit of the famous Monte Rosa (4634m), Western Europe's 2nd highest mountain.
- All evening meals included

Grade 9 - Extremely Tough

An unmissable high mountain trek around Monte Rosa in the Swiss and Italian Alps. Experience the very best of Alpine scenery from lush forests to

rocky cols, all the while surrounded by snow-capped 4000m peaks. Trekking high in these untouched mountains, we'll enjoy some spectacular and rugged terrain, as well as several nights staying up high in authentic mountain refuges. An experience to remember forever!

Our journey starts and ends in the Swiss village of Saas Gruund, looping through Switzerland, into Italy and back again. Passing charming villages, high cols and the historic alpine town of Zermatt.

Graded 9 - Extremely Tough - the reason for the grade is due to: having some days with more technical terrain (never climbing or scrambling - but for 2 days it will be important to be happy crossing boulders, and having exposed sections of path. Also having to carry one's own pack (there is no luggage delivery), and due to many of the days being long with considerable height gain. The short glacier crossing is not technical and should pose no problems: no prior glacier experience is necessary, and we do not need crampons. Fit walkers who are used to long days in the mountains should be absolutely fine. People who have never done a multi-day trek before should consider doing an easier trip such as the Tour du Mont Blanc, Walker's Haute Route or Alta Via 1 before embarking on this harder trip.

Trip Summary

Day 1 - Arrive in Saas Gruund

Arrive in Saas Grund - Saas-Grund

Day 2 - Lake Mattmark to Macugnaga

Bus from Saas Grund to Lake Mattmark

Trek from Mattmark to Macugnaga - Macugnaga

Day 3 - Macugnaga to the Rifugio Pastore

Trek from Macugnaga to the Rifugio Pastore

Rifugio Pastore - Rifugio Pastore

Day 4 - Rifugio Pastore to the Gabiet hut

Trek from the Rifugio Pastore to the Rifugio Gabiet

Rifugio Gabiet - Rifugio Gabiet

Day 5 - Rifugio Gabiet to Resy

Trek from the Rifugio Gabiet to Resy - Resy

Day 6 - Resy to the Theodul hut

Trek from Resy to the Rifugio Teodulo

Rifugio Teodulo - Rifugio Teodulo

Day 7 - Theodul hut to Zermatt

Trek from the Rifugio Teodulo to Zermatt - Zermatt

Day 8 - Zermatt to the Europahütte

Trek from Zermatt to the Europahütte

Europahütte - Europahütte

Day 9 - Europahütte to Grächen

Trek from the Europahütte to Grächen - Grächen

Day 10 - Grächen to Saas Grund

Trek from Grächen to Saas Grund - Saas-Grund

Day 11 - Depart Saas Grund

Depart Saas Grund

Day 1 - Arrive in Saas Gruund



Arrive in Saas Grund

We begin our journey in the Swiss Alpine town of Saas Gruund, situated just below the better-known ski resort of Saas Fee). Surrounded by impressive 4000m peaks, Saas Gruund is home to some of Switzerland's most inspiring trekking, with trails taking us straight from our doorstep to the heart of the mountains.

You should aim to arrive in time for a 6pm briefing in your hotel.

The nearest airports are Zurich, Geneva or Basel. See the Travel Information section later in these Trip Notes for further details.

Accommodation: Hotel



Saas-Grund

Saas-Grund, Valais, CH, 3910

Day 2 - Lake Mattmark to Macugnaga



Bus from Saas Grund to Lake Mattmark

We begin our trip with a short bus journey up the valley to Lake Mattmark, the starting point of the Tour of the Monte Rosa.



Trek from Mattmark to Macugnaga

Day 1 of the Tour of the Monte Rosa starts with an easy warm-up along the shore of Lake Mattmark, with its bright turquoise water. Once our legs and lungs are acclimatised to the mountain air, we'll begin our first major ascent to the Monte Moro Pass. It's a relatively short but steep climb, with stunning views of the classic 4000-ers, including the Weissmeiss (4023m) and the Rimpfischhorn (4198m).

Once we reach the col, we'll be rewarded with our first proper sighting of the Monte Rosa herself. With almost Himalayan proportions, it's an impressive view! Trekking for the day doesn't end here, as we descend into Italy and pass the Rifugio Citta di Malante. If time allows, we'll have a quick stop for a coffee or hot chocolate, before we make our way down through the technical boulder fields and granite slabs to the charming Piedmont village of Macugnaga - our home for the night.

Distance: 15 km / 9.3 miles

Ascent: 750m / 2460ft

Descent: 1600m / 5249ft

Approximate walking time: 6-7 hours

Accommodation: Hotel



Macugnaga

Piedmont, IT, 28876

Day 3 - Macugnaga to the Rifugio Pastore



Trek from Macugnaga to the Rifugio Pastore

Leaving Macugnaga on foot, we'll warm up with a gentle meander along the river Anza towards the lake at Quarazza. Enjoy the views but don't relax too much into this mellow start, as today is one of our most challenging! From the lake, we'll start the long ascent through spruce forests to Alpe Plana, a picture-perfect Alpine scene with green pastures and waterfalls, set against the backdrop of snow-capped peaks. Our highest point of the day is the rugged and rocky Colle del Turlo (2738m), which takes us out of sight of the Monte Rosa but is overlooked by the popular 4000m mountaineering peak, the Weissmeis. From the col, we descend down to the lovely Rifugio Pastore, where we'll experience our first night sleeping in a real mountain hut.

Distance: 23 km / 14.3 miles

Ascent: 1510m / 4954ft

Descent: 1300m / 4265ft

Approximate walking time: 8 hours

Accommodation: Mountain Refuge





Rifugio Pastore

A lovely Italian rifugio in a fantastic setting at the foot of the Monte Rosa. The food is colourfully prepared, fresh and tasty. There's a lovely grassy area and terrace, perfect for a post-trek beer. Sleeping is in simple dormitory accommodation, and there are hot showers here.



Rifugio Pastore

Località Alpe Pile, Alagna Valsesia, Piemonte, IT, 13021
+390163 91220

Day 4 - Rifugio Pastore to the Gabiet hut



Trek from the Rifugio Pastore to the Rifugio Gabiet

After yesterday, today will be a slightly shorter trek, although no less climbing!

We have 2 choices today: either via the Vallon delle Pisse, or via the delightful hamlets of the Valle dell'Olen.

If we do the more rugged option, our first ascent will take us straight out of the refuge and up into the Vallon Delle Pisse, a not-so-pretty name for a very beautiful spot. From here, we'll follow the Cascade of the Piramide Vincent (one of the lesser peaks in the Monte Rosa Massif) to the old cable car at Alpe la Balma. Our trek continues upwards from here, following a steep and rocky path that winds over the Bocchetta Delle Pisse (2396m), before a welcome descent to Alpe Pianlunga. The final section of our day is a long, but steady, uphill through the Valle dell'Olen before a short descent to our next mountain refuge, the impressive Gabiet Hut, above Gressoney.

There is a 2nd, more scenic route option for this day, and our trek leader may decide to take a shuttle bus from just below the Rifugio Pastore down to the village of Alagna. From here, we'll trek up through spectacular mountain hamlets via an alternative route in the Valle d'Ottro - a hidden gem and really off the beaten track, before rejoining the route in the Valld dell'Olen. Whichever option we take, we'll enjoy some of the week's best scenery and trekking.

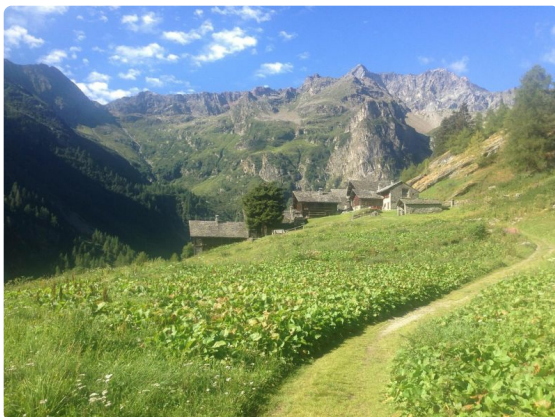
Distance: 15 km / 9.3 miles

Ascent: 1800m / 5905ft

Descent: 650m / 2132ft

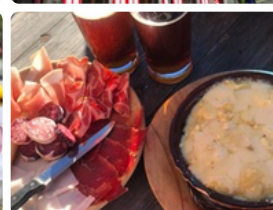
Approximate walking time: 7-8 hours

Accommodation: Mountain Refuge



Rifugio Gabiet

A charming hut in the heart of the Gressoney ski area (so the hut can be reached by ski lift if necessary), with small rooms of 2-4 people. We love staying here, the food is great and the atmosphere friendly.



Rifugio Gabiet

Tache, Valle d'Aosta, IT, 11020

+39 0125 366258

Day 5 - Rifugio Gabiet to Resy



Trek from the Rifugio Gabiet to Resy

Today will give our legs a bit of welcome relief, as from the Gabiet hut we have a pleasant descent through Alpine forests and meadows to the village of Staffal, part of the ski resort of Gressoney. From the valley floor, we then climb to Alpe Sitten - the first and only significant ascent of the day, over the Colle Bettaforca (2646m).

Conditions depending, there are several route options and our guide may instead decide to take the Passo del Rothorn. Both offer equally spectacular views! The day ends with a descent along a gentle track to the charming hamlet of Resy, which is perched high above the Ayas Valley. Tonight's accommodation is in another authentic mountain refuge.

Distance: 16 km / 9.9 miles

Ascent: 970m / 3182ft

Descent: 1200m / 3937ft

Approximate walking time: 6-7 hours

Accommodation: Mountain Refuge



Resy

Resy, Valle d'Aosta, IT, 11020

Day 6 - Resy to the Theodul hut



Trek from Resy to the Rifugio Teodulo

This is one of the highlights of the week, with maximum variety and effort combined! Starting with a short downhill towards Alpe Varda and Alpe Mase, we'll soon be under the spell of the Breithorn (4164m) and her impressive glaciers. Inevitably, being surrounded by big peaks means big uphill and today's first climb is over the Colle Superieur delle Cime Blanche (2982m), which looks down over the green waters of Gran Lago. This section of the trek is one of the most beautiful, untouched areas we've ever seen.

From the top of this pass, we'll get our first glimpse of the iconic Matterhorn (4478m). The Cervinia ski area is a stark contrast to the hidden valley we have just been trekking in. Our route contours under the western flanks of the Kleine Matterhorn, before we begin the final effort of the day, in time for dinner - and bed. A steep push up rough, glacial moraine brings us to the high point of the week - and our sky-lounge for the night in the rustic Rifugio Teodulo (3317m).

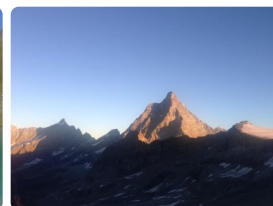
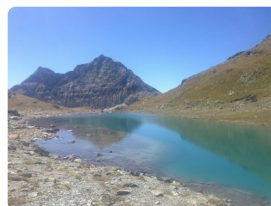
Distance: 18 km / 11.2 miles

Ascent: 1550m / 5085ft

Descent: 300m / 984ft

Approximate walking time: 7-8 hours

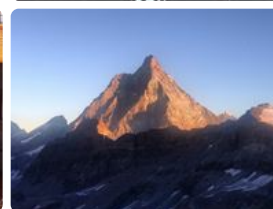
Accommodation: Mountain Refuge



Rifugio Teodulo

We're not going to lie - the Theodul hut is pretty basic. But what it lacks in luxury, it makes for in atmosphere - at an altitude of 3317 m, it's pretty high, and watching the sun set behind the Matterhorn is one of life's special moments.

In fairness it has had a renovation in recent years, so the dorms and dining area are a vast improvement on previous years, but unfortunately they didn't make it as far as the bathrooms.....which are very basic. No showers here.



Rifugio Teodulo

Loc. Cervinia, Valtournenche, Valle d'Aosta, IT, 11028

+39 0166 949400

Day 7 - Theodul hut to Zermatt



Trek from the Rifugio Teodulo to Zermatt

Today's route brings a new twist as we enjoy a guided glacier crossing with an IFMGA guide. No specialist equipment or previous experience is required, other than our normal trekking boots and walking poles. On the glacier we will move together, roped up, across the easy-angled Theodule Glacier and back into German-speaking Switzerland. Our panorama continues to be spectacular, with the Matterhorn in full view, alongside the Alphubel, Dom, Obergabelhorn, Zinalrothorn, Weisshorn, and of course, the Monte Rosa.

Our IFMGA guide will say goodbye at the foot of the glacier, where we'll continue the long descent into the famous Swiss of Zermatt for the night. We'll enjoy an evening beneath the Matterhorn in this charming, car-free town that is steeped in hundreds of years of mountaineering history.

Distance: 16 km / 9.9 miles

Ascent: 460m / 1509ft

Descent: 2070m / 6791ft

Approximate walking time: 4-5 hours

Accommodation: Hotel



Zermatt

Zermatt, Valais, CH, 3920

Day 8 - Zermatt to the Europahütte



Trek from Zermatt to the Europahütte

Leaving Zermatt, we begin the day with a pleasant stroll downhill towards the Rhone Valley, through larch forests and meadows and along the river. From Tasch, we head to the village of Randa before the hard work begins. A steady climb takes us back up into the high mountains, zig-zagging under the jagged peaks of the Taschorn (4491m) and the Dom (4545m). The route is long and tough-going but the view from the Europahütte makes the effort all the more rewarding. This newly re-built mountain hut offers relative luxury and prime views of the Weisshorn, ideally enjoyed with a beer in hand as the sun sets behind the peaks.

Please note that the original TMR route takes a higher route than described above, but this has been prone to rockfall in previous years.

In July 2017 the route re-opened with a new suspension bridge - the longest pedestrian bridge in the world. The bridge is 100m above the valley floor and is around 500m long. Our guide will decide which route is more appropriate - in bad weather we will not be able to take the bridge route.

Distance: 16 km / 9.9 miles

Ascent: 890m / 2920ft

Descent: 300m / 984ft

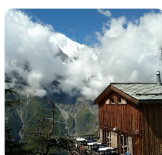
Approximate walking time: 4-5 hours

Accommodation: Mountain Refuge



Europahütte

The Europahütte is a simple mountain hut perched above Randa, with dramatic views directly across to the Weisshorn. There are no private rooms here, but we do always try to book the smaller dorms rather than the large dorms. There are a couple of showers (not segregated into male / female), and there are shared bathrooms.



Europahütte

Randa, Valais, CH, 3928

+41 27 967 82 47

Day 9 - Europahütte to Grächen



Trek from the Europahütte to Grächen

From the Europahütte we normally take the stunning Europaweg to Grächen. It's an exciting and challenging trail with fantastic views that will keep us alert throughout the day. Although most of the trail is relatively easy and accessible, there are some steep drops and sections that have been eroded or re-routed due to rockfall. If the conditions are not optimum then our guide will have the final decision on whether to take this route. In bad weather we will always head down the valley on a lower path, which will also reward us with stunning views. Today's destination is the beautiful, car-free mountain village of Grächen, where we stay in a lovely, village hotel.

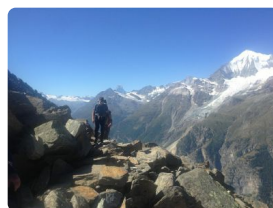
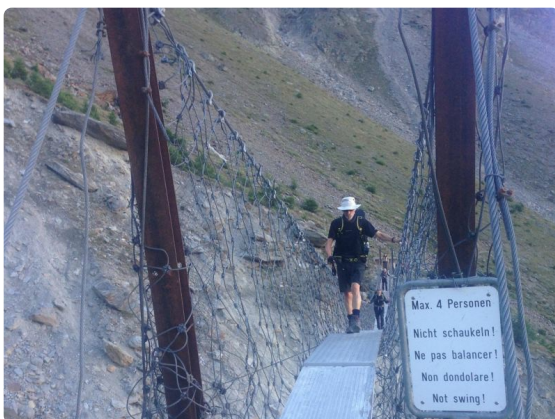
Distance: 17 km / 10.5 miles

Ascent: 600m / 1968ft

Descent: 1180m / 3871ft

Approximate walking time: 7-8 hours

Accommodation: Hotel





Grächen

Grächen, Valais, CH, 3925

Day 10 - Grächen to Saas Grund



Trek from Grächen to Saas Grund

This final day of our circuit around Monte Rosa is one of the most stunning days of trekking you can do. We'll trek from Grächen up to Hannigalp and then onto the Hohenwegg path, which sits high above the Saastal. Although it's the final stretch home, we're still trekking on exposed mountain trails so we do need to take care. The countryside here has a more lush and green feel than previous days, and we will feel the excitement looming as we trek back towards Saas Grund and the end of our journey. The mountain scenes do not disappoint, with the snow-capped Weissmies (4017m) and rocky Lagginhorn (4010m) dominating the views during this last part of the trek back into Saas Grund. Our week finishes with a well-earned celebratory meal and the comfort of our hotel.

Distance: 21 km / 13 miles

Ascent: 1220m / 4002ft

Descent: 1270m / 4166ft

Approximate walking time: 7-8 hours

Accommodation: Hotel



Saas-Grund

Saas-Grund, Valais, CH, 3910

Day 11 - Depart Saas Grund



Depart Saas Grund

Our trip ends after breakfast. From here, there are a choice of buses from Saas Grund, to take you either back to the airport, or to extend your stay with a visit to other parts of Switzerland. Please let us know if you would like us to help organise anything for you.

Trip Information & Documents



What's Included - TMR

- All accommodation (including arrival day and final evening)
- All breakfasts and evening meals
- Bus from Saas Grund to Mattmark at the start of the trek
- Fully qualified and expert trekking guide (International Mountain Leader)
- Fully qualified UIAGM guide for the glacier crossing



Not included - TMR

- Flights
- Airport transfers
- Lunches
- Personal drinks and snacks
- Any transport, accommodation or additional expenses due to a participant being unable to complete the itinerary
- Cable cars
- Luggage delivery
- Mountain rescue / travel insurance (we can organise mountain rescue insurance if required)
- Tips



Tour of the Monte Rosa - Travel Arrangements

IMPORTANT: Please do not book your flights or transport until we have confirmed to you via email that the trip is guaranteed to run.

We will meet at Pension Heino in Saas Grund at 6pm of Day 1 of the trip itinerary for a trip briefing.

The nearest airports are Geneva, Zurich or Basel. The best way to travel is by train from any of the airports to either Visp or Brig, followed by a bus to reach Saas Grund.

For all travel in Switzerland, book in advance on the [SBB website](#). It is well worth downloading the SBB app for timings. Note that the SBB site defaults to the concessionary fare (which is half the normal fare), so you should un-tick the 'Reduced fare' box before making your purchase if you don't have a half-price card (if you are extending your stay in Switzerland, it can often be worth purchasing the half-price card, especially if you are using any cable cars or mountain railways). If you book in advance, you can often buy a "Supersaver ticket" which will entitle you to travel anywhere in Switzerland on a given day, which is much more flexible and often cheaper than a standard ticket.

Travelling from Geneva Airport

There is a train station at Geneva airport, and there are hourly trains to Visp, followed by a bus to Saas Grund. The journey takes just under 4 hours.

Travelling from Zurich Airport

There is a train station at Zurich airport (Flughafen), and there are at least hourly trains to Visp (usually more), followed by a bus to Saas Grund. The journey takes just over 3 hours.

Travelling from Basel Airport

From Basel airport (Basel EuroAirport), take the airport shuttle bus to the central railway station (Basel Bahnhof SBB). This runs every 10 minutes and takes 18 minutes. From here, you can pick up an hourly train to Visp. The total journey takes just under 4 hours.

Arriving in Saas Grund

We usually stay in the Pension Heino, which is very near the Saas Grund Post bus stop. From the bus stop, walk back in the direction you have just come, down the main road (Gasse Dorf), passing the Hotel Roby on your right. Pass the co-op supermarket, and after 100 metres take a left onto Untere Gasse (near Hotel Tenne) - Pension Heino is at the end of this street.



Tour of the Monte Rosa - What to Expect

The Trekking

We grade this trek 9: Extremely Tough. It is suitable for fit hikers with experience of hiking on technical mountain terrain (and by that we mean crossing boulder fields, using occasional chains, trekking on paths with some drops next to them, and being able to move fluidly over such conditions). You need to be used to multi-day trekking. We walk at a steady pace and are mostly on good quality mountain trails, but each day will also include some strenuous ascents or descents on high, rocky and uneven paths. There are some sections that may feel exposed. This trip also includes a roped glacier crossing with a fully qualified UIAGM mountain guide; no additional equipment or experience is required for this (no need for crampons or ice axes: it is a dry glacier with small crevasses. We do rope up, and at least 1 walking pole would be useful for this section alone).

We will reach moderately high altitudes during the trip, with one night at 3317m. Most people will have no difficulty with this level of altitude, but it is important to check your insurance policy. Some trekking policies might cover you up to 2500-3000m, so you should ensure that you are covered up to 3400m (see our note about insurance in the General Information section at the end of these Trip Notes).

Accommodation

We spend two nights in a good-quality hotel in Saas Grund at the start and end of the trek: all rooms have en-suite bathrooms. During the trek itself, we will stay in mountain refuges and village hotels. In the refuges this generally means dormitory-style rooms (mixed male and female) with shared facilities, and limited washing facilities. In Macugnaga, Zermatt and Grächen we are in village hotels with twin rooms and usually with en-suite facilities. In Grächen, we usually stay in a spa hotel and it can be worth bringing a swimsuit just for this.

Food

All breakfasts and evening meals are included. The Italians and Swiss definitely know how to eat well and the food on this trek is excellent: simple, wholesome mountain food. Please be aware that there may not be a huge choice, especially in the mountain refuges, but a vegetarian option will be available (please do confirm this in advance of the trek). Packed lunches are not included and we will either order these in the mountain huts, or we will have an opportunity to stop in a shop or bakery to top up our snacks on some days. Drinks are not included, but you can normally order beer, wine and soft drinks at all hotels including the mountain refuges. Breakfasts in the mountain huts & simpler hotels tend to be more basic and usually consist of tea, coffee, bread, jam and cereal.

Luggage Delivery

There is no luggage delivery on this trek, so please do be aware that you have to carry everything you need for the 9 days and make sure you pack as lightly as possible. You can leave a bag in the hotel at Saas Grund.

Laundry

As you are carrying your own kit, you don't want to bring too much, so we usually recommend bringing quick-dry items that can be hand-washed easily. There is also a laundry facility in Zermatt where you can drop off clothes and then pick them up washed and dried several hours later, as long as you drop it off as soon as you've arrived. This is located near the junction of Hoffmattstrasse and Seilerwiesenstrasse, not far from the hotel.

Money and Tipping

All accommodation, guiding and meals are included in this trek, but please bring additional cash for snacks, drinks and tips. Beer, wine and soft drinks are available every night and you will also need to purchase bottled water in some of the mountain refuges.

We spend 5 nights Switzerland and 5 nights in Italy, so you will need a mix of Swiss Francs and Euros (approximately 250 Swiss Francs and 120 Euros should be enough to cover your spending but it does depend on how many wines and coffees you might like to consume!). There are ATMs in Geneva, Zurich or Basel airports (CHF), Saas Grund (CHF only), Macugnaga (€) - 15 min walk from hotel, Zermatt (€ and CHF) and Grächen (CHF).

Tipping: Tipping your guide is the accepted way of saying 'thank you' for excellent service. But do remember that tipping is voluntary and should only be done if you were pleased or delighted with the service. The amount is entirely up to you. Our staff are all paid fairly.

Weather

In mountainous terrain the weather can vary a lot! Temperatures can reach to over 30°C in the height of summer (July/August), but can be as low as 5°C on the passes. It is often sunny with good weather, but it can rain - or snow (even in July or August) so you should be prepared for any eventuality. The average temperatures range from 15-25°C in the valleys, to 5-15°C on the passes.

Recommended Reading & Maps

'*Trekking the Tour of Monte Rosa*', Hilary Sharp, Cicerone

The 1:50,000 Suisse Rando 5028T Monte Rosa Matterhorn map shows an overview of the whole route. If you wanted more detail, then the following 1:25,000 maps cover the route: please note that you are not expected to carry maps, it's just in case you are interested

IGC 108 Cervino Matterhorn

IGC 109 Monte Rosa

Swisstopo 2515 Zermatt Gornergrat

Swisstopo 2526 Saas Fee

Electric Supply - Switzerland and Italy

The electricity sockets in Switzerland and Italy are both slightly different from other European plugs.

Switzerland uses "Type J" with 3 pins (1st picture) - careful, a round plug won't usually fit into these sockets.

Italy uses "Type L" with 3 horizontally-aligned pins (2nd picture) - again, a round plug with wide pins won't usually fit.

Both countries are 220-240V.

With both the Swiss & Italian sockets you need to make sure that the pins are slightly thinner than normal: round European adaptors (a type C plug will not fit a Swiss or Italian socket). An adaptor that is the same shape as the Swiss socket will be your best bet (3rd picture).

There are usually some plug sockets available in mountain huts but they are limited. Bringing a separate booster charger for your phone may be a good solution.



Summer Kit List - Guided Groups without Luggage Delivery

Please remember that there is no luggage delivery on this trek so we will be carrying everything ourselves. Make sure your rucksack is comfortable and pack light!

Essential items :

Rucksack approx. 35-40L - for you to carry each day

Rucksack approx. 33-40L - for you to carry each day

Kit bag or suitcase - for your main luggage to be left at the start hotel (for a circular trek only!)

Hiking boots - you need to have a pair of waterproof hiking boots with ankle support and a good sole. Hiking trainers would not be appropriate in really bad weather, on rougher terrain, or when there is snow, so if you are thinking of bringing hiking shoes, you'll need boots as well for the more rugged days - and as you're carrying your own kit, proper hiking boots are recommended for this trip

Waterproof jacket and trousers - both essential items, should be as light as possible (not insulated: your other layers should provide the insulation). Please ensure that you do not need to remove your walking boots in order to put on your waterproof trousers.

Socks

Underwear

Trekking trousers - bring something lightweight.

Shorts

T-shirts -wicking t-shirts are better than cotton as they are lighter and dry faster.

Mid layer - fleece jacket is good

Warm jacket - We recommend bringing a really lightweight synthetic belay jacket (eg. Rab Photon / Arcteryx Atom / Patagonia Nano) - just in case it gets cold. Remember, you are carrying this in your rucksack so it should be as light as possible. You don't normally need to bring a down jacket because it won't be much use if it gets wet.

Warm hat - lightweight woolly hat is fine

Gloves - we recommend bringing 2-3 pairs. A light liner pair are good for most of the trip. Then a pair of waterproof gloves such as Seal Skinz can be very useful in bad weather. And a warmer pair of gloves can be essential if it snows.

Sun Hat

Sunglasses (essential as we may spend some time walking on snow)

Suncream (small bottle to save weight)

Lip protection (with sun protection)

Water bottles / camelback - you should have the capacity to carry at least 2 litres of water, but on very hot days you could need 3L.

Walking poles - These often go in the "optional" section, but if there is snow, they are essential.

Sheet sleeping bag - needed for any nights in a mountain refuge (duvets or blankets are provided). Silk is best, it's lighter than cotton.

Travel towel - needed for the mountain refuges: the hotels provide towels.

Wash kit - Bring whatever you like for wash kit - but as you are carrying it, small bottles will be perfect: you would normally just take a toothbrush, travel size toothpaste, travel shampoo, mini contact lens solution if applicable, a couple of wet wipes and a tiny travel soap.

Head torch - just a lightweight torch, such as a Petzl Tikka / Zipka is fine for this trip.

Plastic bags / dry sacks to keep essentials dry.

Passport - to be carried whilst trekking. Make sure you keep it dry.

Cash - for any drinks whilst on the trip

Credit card - for emergencies

Basic first aid kit - your leader will carry a large first aid kit, but you should bring a small first aid kit containing plasters, blister treatment, painkillers & diarrhea treatment (rehydration sachets & immodium)

Optional items:

Thermal base layer

Long johns / leggings

Buff - can be useful for extra warmth if it's cold, or sun protection for your neck on a hot day

Camera

Book

Lightweight sandals / flip flops - whilst these are provided at the mountain refuges, they aren't provided in the hotels, so it's really nice to have footwear to change into in the evening

Mobile phone - there is phone reception for the majority of the trip. It is a good idea to have a phone in case of emergency or if you need to leave the group for any reason.

Umbrella

Earplugs

Snacks - not essential as we do provide all meals, but you might want to bring something you know you like

Antibacterial handwash

Insect repellent

Swimwear - some of the hotels have swimming pools or saunas

A note about the kit:

Most of the time the weather is warm, usually fairly stable, and most people don't need too much extra kit to see them through the trip.

However, **you must bring all of the items on our essential list**. At least once per summer we experience unseasonal conditions that really do make every item on the above list *essential*. **If you do not have the correct kit, you can put yourself and others at risk of hypothermia**, and our guide may ask you to leave the trip until you have purchased the necessary kit.

Every year we experience unseasonal snow at least once. It can also rain very heavily and temperatures can go from being in the mid 30s celcius (96 F) one week, to below zero (32 F) the next.

So, if it rains, you *will* need waterproof jackets AND trousers, and will be glad of several pairs of gloves. If it snows, you will need decent hiking boots (NOT hiking trainers), walking poles, warm clothes and warm hat and gloves. It's also essential that you can put your waterproof trousers on without removing your boots.

It is also possible to experience several weeks of heatwave at a time - if this happens, you will likely get through numerous sachets of rehydration salts and will need to be carrying 3-4L of water, and a sun hat will be absolutely essential.

Note that this is not meant to alarm you - most of the time we enjoy stable weather and are in shorts and t-shirts - we just want to make sure that your trip isn't ruined if you come unprepared - we'd far rather you have extra kit and don't need it, than the other way round.



General Information - TMR

Insurance

It is a condition of booking this holiday that you must be insured against medical and personal accident risks (this must include helicopter rescue and repatriation costs). You may find that your annual multi-trip insurance covers this trip, but you should check that you are covered for trekking up to 3400m, and that you are covered for a guided glacier crossing. We would also recommend that you take out holiday cancellation insurance: your deposit is non-refundable once you have booked, and the full balance is usually non-refundable (see our Terms and Conditions for further details).

We recommend The BMC www.thebmc.co.uk or Snowcard www.snowcard.co.uk for UK residents, or Travelex www.travelexinsurance.com for US citizens or residents.

We can organise mountain rescue insurance for EU residents for £4.90 per day, or £8.95 per day for US and the rest of the world. You can book it online here: <https://www.cloud9adventure.com/online-store/Mountain-rescue-insurance-p101294506>

Note: if your standard trekking insurance covers you for most of the trip, but just not the 2 days where you are above 3000m or the 1 day where you do the glacier crossing, then many people choose to just take out the above insurance for just those 1-2 days which can work well.

In addition to travel insurance, UK citizens should also obtain or renew the EHIC card from www.ehic.uk.com. This is not a replacement for insurance but it does mean you are entitled to the same treatment as any EU citizen, and unlike insurance it includes treatment of a pre-existing condition. You would normally have to pay for treatment at the time and then make a claim on return to the UK.

Please remember to bring a credit card with you on the trip: in the event of a medical problem or injury, you may be unable to complete the trek. You would normally need to pay for treatment, and would often have additional transport and accommodation costs. Although you can claim this back on your insurance, you usually have to pay at the time and make the insurance claim afterwards, so you must have a means of paying for this if necessary.

Responsible Travel

We care about the places we visit, and our philosophy is simple: that each and every one of our trips has a positive impact on the local community and environment. We use family-run hotels, gîtes and restaurants in order to support the local communities. And it's a small step but we also recommend carbon off-setting. Visit www.climatecare.org.

Adventure Travel

Please note that we specialise in Adventure Travel, the nature of which means that we cannot always follow our itinerary for a variety of reasons. All of our holidays can be subject to unexpected changes and you should be prepared to be flexible to accommodate these where necessary.

We update our itineraries on a regular basis to take into account such things as changes to trekking routes and the conditions of footpaths, but it is not always possible to guarantee that any of our holidays will run exactly according to the proposed itinerary. If during your holiday the itinerary is affected by immediate or local circumstances, the leader will make any changes that are necessary.

As a reputable tour operator, Cloud 9 Adventure supports the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office “Know Before You Go” campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas, and we recommend that all our clients take a look at the FCO Travel Advice for their chosen destination on the official FCO website www.fco.gov.uk. North Americans can also check out the US Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

Cloud 9 Adventure treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss alternatives. We have a local office in Chamonix, and our expert team monitor the conditions regularly to ensure that our trips are run safely, and are on hand to help if we need to change arrangements.

Group Size and Holiday Status

For each of our group adventures, there is a minimum number of participants required in order for the trip to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from “Available” to “Guaranteed”. In order to achieve minimum numbers, we run the trips in conjunction with several other small companies. We find that this means almost all of our trips become “Guaranteed”. We are a small company with a high level of customer service, and we make sure that we only run trips in conjunction with companies who share our ethos. We know them well and have worked with them for years, and only use leaders who we know and trust to do an excellent job. We steer clear of large groups and cap our group size at 10 people for summer hiking trips, and 8 people for winter snowshoe or cross country ski trips, whilst many of the larger operators take up to 16 people.

Preparing for your holiday

We have tried to grade the holiday as accurately as we can, with the intention of attracting people of similar abilities to each trip. As a general guideline, if we have described a trek as being tough or challenging, then you need to be fit and capable of the challenge. If you don't arrive in good shape for your trip, then you could be putting yourself and others in danger: if you're taking too long each day, at best it cuts into the time you have to relax and shower before dinner, and at worst, it can be the difference between the whole group being caught in an afternoon storm. As we are as accurate as we can be writing our trip notes, we do tend to be pretty good at making sure that the right people book each trip, but we do require a certain amount of personal responsibility for arriving fit and ready for your trip. We're not on a route-march so we are never expecting to be going too fast - we try to walk at a slow, steady pace, without the need to stop too frequently for rests. If you're worried about this, then please start with one of our easier trips graded Easy or Moderate, and you can build up to a Challenging trip. If you've booked an Extremely Tough trip, then you definitely need to be an experienced and fit hiker, used to long days in the hills.

Rather than hoping your trek will make you fitter (it will definitely help!), it makes a lot of sense to spend some time before your trip getting some additional exercise and preparing properly. The fitter you are, the more enjoyable your trip will be. The best preparation is long day hikes in the run-up to your trip.

We would also recommend that you adopt a weekly exercise regime leading up to your trip. Jogging, circuit training, squash and swimming are good for developing better stamina. Before departure, we also suggest that you try to fit in a number of long hikes in hilly terrain.