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Verdon Gorge - 5 day trek

- Hike through the heart of the Verdon Gorge, Europe's "Grand Canyon"
- 5 days' trekking through stunning Provence
- Hike next to the famous lavender fields and olive groves
- Enjoy fabulous Provençal food and wine
- Stay in charming 2* and 3* family-run hotels and guest houses
- Fully qualified and expert guide (International Mountain Leader)
- Daily luggage delivery
- All breakfasts & evening meals included

Grade 6 - moderate

As well as being the deepest canyon in Europe, the Verdon Gorge is also renowned as the most beautiful, thanks to the turquoise waters of the Verdon river carving its way through the gorge. The gorge stretches 25 km in length (we walk almost the entire length of the canyon, along the Sentier Blanc Martel which starts at the entrance to the gorge at Point Sublime, and continues all the way to the canyon rim at Chalet de la Maline).

The limestone walls of the Verdon Gorge are up to 700 m high. The narrowest section of the gorge is just 8 m across, whilst the widest section spans 1500 m at the rim.

The Verdon Regional Nature park was created in 1997 in order to protect the region's flora, fauna and fossils, and is now the largest UNESCO Global Geopark in Europe. Thanks to its immense number of high-quality fossils dating back 40 million years, this is the only geological site of its kind in the world.

Our Verdon Gorge Trek takes us on a variety of stunning walks, exploring the gorge and its surrounding villages - including the section that connects the medieval towns of Castellane and Moustiers-Sainte-Marie (where the river has cut a dramatic ravine into the limestone rock that reaches down to a depth of 700 metres in places).

On this fabulous trek we also explore the very best of Provence, with its picturesque villages, sparkling rivers, dramatic rock formations, hidden tunnels, breathtaking views, and some of the best food and wine in the world!

Trip Summary

Day 1 - Arrive in Saint-André-les-Alpes

Arrive in Saint-André-les-Alpes - Saint-André-les-Alpes

Day 2 - Saint-André-les-Alpes to Castellane

Trek from St André-les-Alpes to Castellane - Castellane

Day 3 - Castellane to Point Sublime

Trek from Castellane to Point Sublime - Point Sublime

Day 4 - Point Sublime to La Palud-sur-Verdon

Trek through the Verdon Gorge from Point Sublime to La Palud-sur-Verdon - La Palud-sur-Verdon

Day 5 - La Palud-sur-Verdon to Moustiers-Sainte-Marie

Trek from La-Palud-sur-Verdon to Moustiers-Sainte-Marie - Moustiers-Sainte-Marie

Day 6 - Hike the Basses Gorges then transfer to Gréoux-les-Bains

Basses Gorges de Verdon

Day 7 - Depart Gréoux-les-Bains

Depart Gréoux-Les-Bains

Option: Extend your stay - Verdon

Day 1 - Arrive in Saint-André-les-Alpes



Arrive in Saint-André-les-Alpes

Our trip begins in the typical Provençal town of Saint-André-les-Alpes. Not far from the famous Route de la Lavande, this quiet village was built on the site of a 12th century medieval castle built by the Knights Templar.

The nearest airports are Nice or Marseille. Nice is more convenient to reach the start.

Take a look at the Travel Arrangements section for more information on how to reach Saint-André-les Alpes - but we'd highly recommend the "Train des Pignes".

Please aim to arrive at your accommodation in time for the early evening briefing, usually around 18:00.



Saint-André-les-Alpes

Saint-André-les-Alpes, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, FR, 04170

Day 2 - Saint-André-les-Alpes to Castellane



Trek from St André-les-Alpes to Castellane

We start our journey with a steady ascent through woodland, taking the famous long distance walking path, the GR4 (this was originally used by the Romans to reach Lyon).

We emerge to find meadows and a glorious ridgeline offering fantastic views of the turquoise Lac de Castillon.

The trail meanders over a high limestone plateau, and if you're on a spring trip, we'll usually see plenty of primroses here. We then take a little-used trail and descend to join the famous *Voie Impériale*, a route used by Napoleon on his return from Elba in March 1815.

If time allows, we'll walk up to the 'Chapelle Notre Dame du Roc': the climb is well worth it for the great views of Castellane and the Verdon River.

Distance: 20 km / 12.4 miles

Ascent: 790 m / 2590 feet

Descent: 850 m / 2790 feet

Approximate walking time: 7 hours

Accommodation: Hotel (minimum 2*; shared en-suite twin rooms)



Castellane

Castellane, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, FR, 04120

Day 3 - Castellane to Point Sublime



Trek from Castellane to Point Sublime

On leaving Castellane, we continue along the GR4, initially following the Verdon river.

After a short climb our trail stretches along the Verdon valley with more stunning views, and we meander through sleepy hamlets that are so typical of the area, with their red tiles and terracotta walls.

We aim to stop for lunch in Chasteuil, where you should have time to pick up some of the local hand-made goodies, including soaps, balms and oils - all made using local lavender. Note: not always open, but we do call to say we're coming.

Once re-fueled, we climb up to a plateau at 1228 metres, where we have our first close-up views of the Verdon Gorge itself, before descending to the village of Rougon. Here we'll take a break and sample the local crêpes and ice cream. Rougon is a pretty village with cobbled streets and local artists: dare we say it, this crêpe stop is a real highlight of the trip! On a good day, we might even spot griffon and black vultures soaring overhead. These magnificent birds, with their 2.5 m wingspan, have been reintroduced as part of a conservation programme.

Then there's just a short descent to the viewpoint of Point Sublime, our base for the night, which overlooks the Couloir Samson, a narrow gorge and the traditional walking entrance to the Verdon river.

(Note: if Auberge Point Sublime is full, then we sometimes stay in Rougon).

Distance: 20 km / 12.4 miles

Ascent: 780 m / 2560 feet

Descent: 750 m / 2460 feet

Approximate walking time: 7 hours

Accommodation: Hotel (minimum 2*; shared en-suite twin rooms)





Point Sublime

Rougou, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, FR, 04120

Day 4 - Point Sublime to La Palud-sur-Verdon



Trek through the Verdon Gorge from Point Sublime to La Palud-sur-Verdon

Our trail today is spectacular, as we walk the length of the Verdon Gorge itself, following the canyon floor. We'll soon see why it's known as the 'Grand Canyon of Europe'!

After finding the entrance at Couloir Samson (for such a huge gorge, it's quite hard to find the start!), we join the "Sentier Martel" and soon enter a stunning world of limestone walls and towering cliffs. This trail was created in 1928 by the Touring Club of France, and bears the name of the French speleologist Édouard-Alfred Martel, who undertook the first complete descent into the canyon in August 1905.

After an impressive 650 metre tunnel through the rock, we make our way along the Verdon river. There are several stairways that ease our passage through the gorge (these are sturdy staircases rather than ladders and do not pose a problem for anyone with vertigo).

Be prepared, after our day in this stunning gorge, we do need to find an exit - this is achieved by a final, steep ascent: the good news is that we emerge at a bar, so we aim to stop here for a well-earned drink at the Chalet de la Maline bar before our short transfer to La Palud-sur-Verdon.

Distance: 16 km / 9.9 miles

Ascent: 700 m / 2300 feet

Descent: 700 m / 2300 feet

Approximate walking time: 7 hours

Accommodation: Hotel (minimum 2*; shared en-suite twin rooms)



La Palud-sur-Verdon

La Palud-sur-Verdon, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, FR, 04120

Day 5 - La Palud-sur-Verdon to Moustiers-Sainte-Marie



Trek from La-Palud-sur-Verdon to Moustiers-Sainte-Marie

We start the day with an ascent through pine forest to reach the Col de Plein Voir, a viewpoint with spectacular views over the turquoise Lac de Sainte-Croix.

We then continue along the Crêtes de l'Ourbes, a limestone ridgeline, reaching a height of 1213 m, and with another stunning vista over to the Sainte-Croix lake: definitely one of the best views of the trip.

A steep, rocky descent to the valley floor leads to the pretty village of Moustiers-Sainte-Marie. Moustiers is a real gem, and steeped in the history of the Knights Templar. It has an authentic Provençal character, with lovely cafés, art workshops and galleries.

Distance: 18.5 km / 11.5 miles

Ascent: 750 m / 2460 feet

Descent: 900 m / 2950 feet

Approximate walking time: 7 hours

Accommodation: Hotel



Moustiers-Sainte-Marie

Moustiers-Sainte-Marie, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, FR, 04360

Day 6 - Hike the Basses Gorges then transfer to Gréoux-les-Bains



Basses Gorges de Verdon

Today's our last day of trekking. After a 35-minute transfer we'll arrive in the old village of Quinson to begin our circular hike of the spectacular Basses Gorges du Verdon, the lower gorges of the Verdon river. In prehistoric times, humans settled in the caves here and the town's museum (which claims to be Europe's largest prehistoric museum) details their history.

We'll trek some of the route of the Verdon Canal path, made in 1865 and used until recently to channel water to Aix-en-Provence. The oak trees en route are used in the region's charcoal industry.

Expect dreamy pools with aquamarine water and peaceful little coves before we head up to the day's high point, the ancient chapel of St Maxime.

After our hike we'll transfer from Quinson to the picturesque village of Gréoux-les-Bains. Brimming with shops, cafes and life, this is the perfect place to end our memorable traverse of the Verdon Gorge.

Accommodation: Hotel, evening meal included

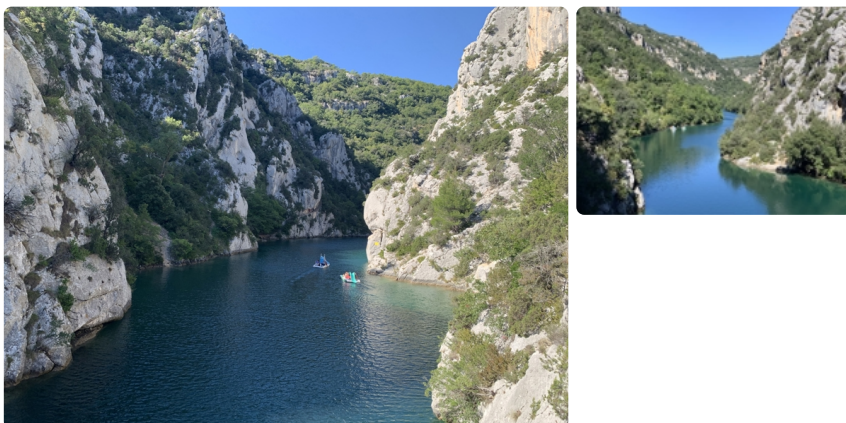
Distance: 12 km

Ascent: 300m

Descent: 420m

Approx hiking time: 5 hours

Luggage Access



Day 7 - Depart Gréoux-les-Bains



Depart Gréoux-Les-Bains

Our trip finishes after breakfast.

The nearest airports are Marseille and Nice. There are bus connections from Gréoux-les-Bains.



Option: Extend your stay - Verdon

If you would like to extend this holiday to fill the week, you could consider an extra day/night in the beautiful town of Gréoux-les-Bains to allow time for shopping or relaxing by the pool. Enjoy the quaint streets with their pavement cafes and watch the world go by, or explore the boutique shops featuring local products and produce.

If you are travelling onwards to Nice, then we highly recommend a night in this famous city on the French Riviera. The natural beauty of the Nice area and its mild Mediterranean climate came to the attention of the English upper classes in the second half of the 18th century, when an increasing number of aristocratic families took to spending their winters there. In 1931, following its refurbishment the city's main seaside promenade, the Promenade des Anglais, "Walkway of the English" was inaugurated. The clear air and the wonderful light inspired painters such as Chagall and Matisse, among others. Well worth a visit!

Trip Information & Documents



What's Included

- All accommodation on a twin-share basis
- All breakfasts and evening meals
- Daily luggage delivery
- Fully qualified and expert trekking guide (International Mountain Leader)
- All transport mentioned in the itinerary



Not Included

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



Verdon Gorge 5 day Trek - Travel Arrangments

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

The nearest airports are Nice and Marseille. Nice is certainly an easier option to reach the start of the trip, and Marseille an easier option to depart at the end of the trip, but if you had to choose the same airport to fly into and out of, we'd recommend Nice.

A popular option is to arrive in Nice a day early, to give you more time, and to explore the ancient seaside boulevards and the lovely old town. Just let us know if you'd like us to add any hotel nights to your booking.

Travelling from Nice to Saint-André-les-Alpes on the Train des Pignes

The easiest way to reach Saint-André-les-Alpes is by train on the historic Train des Pignes from **Nice CP station** (approx 400m walk from the main railway station, Gare de Nice Ville). It is a spectacular train journey, with 4 trains per day to Saint-André-Les-Alpes, and the journey time is 2 hours 20 mins. This is a private railway, so these trains do not appear on an SNCF timetable. You can find the timetables on the CP Zou website [here](#). We would say that this is a *must* for train fans, and it's particularly good value at approx 16€ per person. Do note that currently the final part of the journey may have a bus replacement service due to a landslide - check their website for updates.

Also note that from mid-May to October, a steam train operates on the section of route between Puget-Théniers and Annot. From May to October this runs on Sundays only. Then on some weeks in July and August there is an additional service on Thursdays and Fridays. This won't be useful to those arriving on a Saturday: we've only mentioned it because it's particularly hard to find information for it online, and if you were a "steam enthusiast", you might consider staying on at the end of your trip in order to coincide with the steam train back to Nice (you'd need a transfer to Digne-Les-Bains but we could help with this). It's essential to book tickets in advance for the steam train, and you can read more about it [here](#).

Travelling from Nice airport to Nice Gare CP

Take the no. 23 bus (Bella Vista / Vallon des Fleurs) from Nice airport, every 30 mins. Alight at the stop called "Libération". Journey time just over 30 mins.

Private transfer from Nice to Saint-André-Les-Alpes

Just let us know if you would like a private transfer from Nice to Saint-André-les-Alpes. The journey time is approx 1.5 hours, and the price varies depending on how many people there are. We are happy to try to help co-ordinate any guests who are arriving in Nice at similar times, so if you're interested in sharing, just let us know your travel plans and we'll arrange a vehicle for you.

Travelling from Marseille Airport to Saint-André-Les-Alpes

(Note: we do recommend reaching the start from Nice if you are flying in, as Marseille is much more expensive and less convenient than Nice)

Take the bus from Marseille Airport to Aix en Provence TGV (every 30 mins, takes 10 mins).

From Aix en Provence TGV, take the bus (every 3 hours, takes just over 1 hour) or train (every 4 hours, takes 45 mins) to Manosque, or the bus all the way to Digne-Les-Bains.

From Manosque or Digne-Les-Bains, we can organise a taxi (or, if timings work, you can take the Train des Pignes from Digne-Les-Bains to Saint-André-Les-Alpes).

Travelling from Aix-en-Provence to Saint-André-Les-Alpes

It's worth noting that Aix-en-Provence is a good hub if you are arriving from elsewhere in Europe. There are many train connections to Aix-en-Provence, and Flix Bus run a huge number of routes to Aix-en-Provence.

From Aix-en-Provence, you can take a bus to Digne-Les-Bains (details on the SNCF website), and take the Train des Pignes from Digne-Les-Bains to Saint-André-Les-Alpes.

DEPARTING AT THE END OF THE TRIP

Travelling from Gréoux-Les Bains to Marseille Airport

Take a taxi to Manosque (25 mins). Then bus to Marseille Airport (5 buses per day, 1 hr 15 mins). You can find timetables and book tickets either on the Marseille airport website [here](#), or on the Zou website [here](#).

There is also a direct bus route from Gréoux-Les-Bains to Marseille centre (2-3 buses per day). This is LER no. 27. (The line is Marseille-Castellane).

Travelling from Gréoux-Les-Bains to Nice Airport

(Note: we do recommend departing from Marseille if you have a choice).

We would recommend a taxi for this journey (2 hrs 15 mins) if there are enough of you to make it viable (it's quite expensive if there's just 1 of you).

Alternatively, you can take a taxi to Manosque, then bus or train to Aix-en-Provence (1 hour, 5 times per day), then the Flix bus from Aix-en-Provence to Nice airport.

If you didn't get the chance to do the Train des Pignes, or if you're having a night in Nice centre on the way back, then consider a taxi to Manosque, then bus to Digne-Les-Bains, then Train des Pignes to Nice CP, then bus or taxi to the airport: quite convoluted, but do-able!

Travelling from Gréoux-Les-Bains to Aix-en-Provence

Flix bus have a large range of departures from Aix-en-Provence. Take a taxi to Manosque, then the train to Aix-en-Provence (1 hour, 5 times per day). Or a taxi from Gréoux-Les-Bains to Aix-en-Provence is 50 mins.

Verdon Gorge Trek - What to Expect**The Trekking**

We grade this trek as 6: moderate. The days are moderately-paced, as we take time to stop and take in the views, but each day will typically be around 7-8 hours of hiking, so you will definitely need a good level of fitness.

We have daily luggage access, so you only need to carry day packs.

Accommodation

During the trek we will stay in authentic, characterful family-run hotels, in small Provençal villages. All the hotels are a minimum 2*, with some 3* hotels, and our prices are based on 2 people sharing a room.

Food

All breakfasts and evening meals are included.

In this beautiful area of France, we will eat traditional home-cooked food from the region. Breakfasts are usually continental-style, with French bread and pastries. Evening meals are usually locally-sourced food, wholesome and hearty, we often have fresh fish flavoured with provençal herbs.

Drinks are not included, but you can order beer, soft drinks, and of course local wine at all of the hotels.

Lunches are not included, but we have access to shops and bakeries most days, and would definitely recommend trying the different types of fougasse (a local Provençal flat bread with different fillings: olive, ham, cheese, sausage and herbs). We'll also make time for ice cream and crêpes - you certainly won't be going hungry on this trip!

Luggage Delivery

We deliver your main luggage every day. Please try to keep your main kit bag or suitcase to a sensible size (we recommend approx 15 kg).

Money and Tipping

All accommodation, breakfasts and evening meals are included in this trek, but please bring additional cash (Euros) for lunches, snacks, drinks and tips. There are ATMs at both Nice and Marseille airports, and then on the route there are cash points at all villages apart from Point Sublime. We would normally recommend bringing around 100-150 euros for our 4 day trek, or 150-250 euros for our 6 day trek.

If we stop for coffees, we normally round up the amount to leave a tip, but only if the service has been good.

Tipping your guide is the accepted way of saying thank you for excellent service but tipping is voluntary and should only be done if you were pleased with the service. Our staff are all paid fairly.

Weather

Temperatures in this area of France range from daily highs of 17°-21°C (63°-71°F) in April and May, to daily lows of 5-9°C (41°-48°F) . In September and August the daily temperature ranges from an average 24-29°C (76°-84°F), down to 11-15°C (53°-59°F).

At these times of year the days are often clear and sunny, but as is common in mountainous areas, this can mean that storms build up in the late afternoon.

Recommended Reading and Maps

'A Year In Provence', Peter Mayle

'Aspects of Provence', James Pope-Hennessy

The following IGN maps cover the route:

3541 OT Annot

3542 OT Castellane

3442 OT Gorges du Verdon

3343 ET Plateau de Valensole (6 day trip only)

3343 OT Gréoux Les Bains (6 day trip only)

If you just wanted 1 map as an overview, then IGN 13 Verdon covers most of the route. Please note that you are not expected to carry maps, it's just in case you are interested! If you would like to order any maps then just let us know and we can add it to your booking.

Electric Supply and Plug - France

The electric supply in France is a standard European 2-pin so you are likely to need an adaptor for your electronic items. 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.



General Information - Guided Group Trips 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 3000m. 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>

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.



Summer Kit List - Guided Groups with Luggage Delivery

Essential items :

- **Rucksack** – approx. 30-40L - for you to carry each day
- **Kit bag or suitcase** - for your main luggage to be transported. Max 15 kg and 1 per person (extra bags may incur a supplement).
- **Hiking boots** – you need to have a pair of waterproof hiking boots with ankle support and a good sole. Hiking trainers are okay for some days, but 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 or trainers, you'll need boots in addition to those for the more rugged days. Sandals are not appropriate for mountain walking so please do not bring these for trekking.
- **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 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**
- **Suncream** (small bottle to save weight)
- **Lip protection** (with sun screen)
- **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.
- **Wash kit** – Bring whatever you like for wash kit - but for any refuge nights where you have to carry it, small bottles will be perfect: you would normally just take a toothbrush, travel size toothpaste, 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 packed lunches and 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 / thermal 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 usually 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
- **Hiking Trainers** – it can be nice to give your feet a break from your walking boots on some days. Your leader can advise on which days this might be suitable, and if you are thinking of doing this, your shoes must be suitable for trekking in!

- **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 go past shops most days so you can top up your supply of snacks fairly regularly
- **Antibacterial handwash**
- **Insect repellent**
- **Swimwear & travel towel** - some of the hotels have a swimming pool, spa or sauna
- **Boot dryers** - not many places in the Alps have drying rooms, so since I discovered these, I don't go anywhere without them: <https://www.sidas.com/en/products/204-drywarmer.html>
- **Travel kettle, mug & tea bags / coffee** - it is unusual for hotels in continental Europe to provide tea and coffee-making facilities in the rooms
- **External battery pack** - for charging your phone in a hut
- **Flask** - we do try to have regular tea and coffee stops, but a flask can be a comfort on bad weather days

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.