



# exodus

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## Trip Notes

### MONT BLANC HIGHLIGHTS

Trip code: TWN  
 Country: Switzerland, France, Italy  
 Amended: October 2009  
 Edition No: CKT 1 2009  
 Valid from: 01 Jan 2010 - 31 Dec 2010



#### HIGHLIGHTS

- The best of the Tour du Mont Blanc in a week
- Stay in a comfortable chalet with sauna and outdoor hot tub
- Enjoy breathtaking views of the Alps

#### SUMMARY

#### IS THIS TRIP FOR YOU?

5 days walking with transport to and from walks. Maximum altitude 2525m, average 1525m.

#### Walking Conditions

Although some of the days are quite long, sometimes involving an ascent of 900/1000m followed by a similar descent, the walking paths are well maintained and there is very little rough terrain underfoot. Because of the quality of the trails, the general 'civilisation' of the area and the relative shortness of the trek we rate it as a **Grade B**.

Days average about 7 hours of actual walking and up to 9 miles in distance. The trek should be within the capabilities of anyone in normal good health, who is reasonably fit. The route throughout is non-technical and no special skills or equipment are required, though treks early and late in the year may encounter some snow lying on the higher passes.

#### JOINING THE TRIP IN LONDON

#### Itinerary start

The group flight from London is a daytime flight departing on Day 1 of the itinerary.

#### Flights from London

We normally use the scheduled services of **Swiss International Airlines** (depending on availability). As flight timings and schedules change regularly, we recommend you call one of our specialist sales staff or your agent to confirm up-to-date timings. Please note timings may change at a later date and cannot be confirmed until approximately two weeks before departure.

Please note flights are from London City Airport, for details of how to get to **London City** please check out their website: [www.londoncityairport.com](http://www.londoncityairport.com) or contact our sales team.

#### UK Regional Flights

Exodus can arrange flights from the majority of the UK's regional airports that are more flexible and convenient than if booked separately. Please contact our sales team for details.

Airport transfers are included for those on the group flights. Please note that transfers are not included for clients arriving on any other flight, even if it has been booked for you by Exodus. Those arriving from London on non-group flights should read the airport transfer section below for information on reaching the start point. Please check with the Exodus office if you are unsure whether or not a transfer is included.



The circuit of Mont Blanc is one of the finest walking routes in the Alps. It is in reality, a series of paths linking the seven valleys that surround the highest mountain in Western Europe.

To complete the whole circuit normally takes a fortnight, but for those with less time, this one-week trip takes in the outstanding sections, from Trient in Switzerland to Les Contamines in France, and Italy's Aosta region. We stay the entire week at the comfortable Chalet Savoy, situated in the quiet hamlet of Les Chavants, near Les Houches in the Chamonix Valley. Using our own transport we travel out each day to rejoin the walk; most transfers are short, and after each day's walk we return to the chalet, avoiding the need to carry luggage, or pack and unpack each day. The chalet has 9 bedrooms all with private facilities, and evening meals are taken in the rustic wood-beamed dining room or in the garden with its superb mountain views.



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## JOINING THE TRIP IN LES HOUCHES

8 days, start Les Houches 1, end Les Houches Day 8.

### Itinerary start

The trip starts at our Chalet Savoy in Les Houches on the afternoon of Day 1 of the itinerary listed below. Details of how to reach the start point are given in the Final Joining Instructions. Please note that if you are making your own way to the chalet 'check-in' will be from 16.00hrs onwards.

### Airport Transfers

If you require airport transfers, you may (by prior arrangement only) be able to join the group transfer. Transfers are arranged to coincide with the arrival time of the group flight. Joining the group transfer is free of charge.

As mentioned group flights can be rescheduled, so you must check the group flight details 2 weeks before departure. If you do not take this transfer, or miss it, you must make your own way to the joining point at your own expense.

For those arriving at different times to the group flight it is very easy to book a bus transfer with a local company and you should do this at least a week before your departure date. Try the following websites:

[www.a-t-s.net](http://www.a-t-s.net)      [www.cham-van.com](http://www.cham-van.com)      [www.chamexpress.com](http://www.chamexpress.com)  
[www.mountaindropoffs.com](http://www.mountaindropoffs.com)

### Take The Train



Both Geneva Airport and Chamonix are easy to reach by train. If you book a train to coincide with the group flight timings there is a station inside Geneva airport itself. You are then welcome to join our free group transfer to Les Houches (by prior arrangement only).

Alternatively it is possible to get a train direct to Les Houches and then take a short 5 minute taxi ride to the Chalet in Les Houches.

Approximate return price per person: **£229**. Prices are **subject to change**, please ask one of our sales team for further details.

We recommend that you allow at least 1 hour for travel across Paris by Metro.

It is only possible to reserve train seats **3 months before** your departure date and our sales team will be happy to book this for you.

## LAND ONLY ITINERARY

The entries in **bold** at the end of each day indicate the meals included (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)

### Day 1 Start Chalet Savoy, Les Houches. (D)

**Day 2** From Les Houches we drive to Trient (1340m) in Switzerland. As we start our ascent we have good views of the Trient Glacier. We continue up past the shepherds' huts at Les Herbagères to the Col de Balme (2191m), which we cross to re-enter France. We then descend to the Col des Possettes (2000 m) and skirt around the Aiguillette des Possettes to the Col des Montets (1460m) where we take transport back to the chalet. (B,L,D)

**Time 7.5 hrs** (including breaks and lunch etc).

**Alt. gain 900m**

**Alt. loss 800m**

**Day 3** We drive through the Mont Blanc tunnel to Italy. From Le Vachey (1640m) we climb up to the Bonnatti refuge where at just over 2000m, the view is one of the finest on the tour: Mont Blanc itself, the towering rocky peak of Grandes Jorasses and the glaciers that crowd the northern flank of Val Ferret are there to be admired as we traverse the slopes of Monte de la Saxe high above the Ferret Valley. A long descent takes us down to Courmayeur (1250m) to soak up some Italian atmosphere. (B,L,D)

**Time 7.5 hrs**

**Alt. gain 450m**

**Alt. loss 800m**

**Day 4** Leaving on foot from the chalet (1080m) we admire the picturesque hamlet of Charousse and quaint Savoy farm houses as we climb to the Col de Voza (1653m) where we enjoy sweeping views of the Chamonix Valley and Aravis mountains. Exploring the Bionnassay Valley, we continue via the little village of Champel to Les Contamine commune (1015m). (B,L,D)

**Time 7.0 hrs**

**Alt. Gain 690m**

**Alt. Loss 710m**

**Day 5 Free day** for optional walks or sightseeing. There are many good walks directly from the chalet – the route of the 'Tour du Pays du Mont Blanc' passes right through the garden of the chalet. Your leader will be able to advise of possible routes. Or you may choose to visit the busy Alpine resort of Chamonix, which is only 20 minutes away by bus or train and has numerous bars, restaurants and cafés. There are several télécabine excursions you can make from Chamonix, of which the most spectacular is the ascent to the Aiguille du Midi (3842m), which has fantastic views of Mont Blanc and surrounding peaks. It should also be possible to take the mountain train up to Montanvers for close up views of the glacier, Mer de Glace. For those seeking some adrenaline, there is tandem paragliding, canyoning and rafting, plus many more supervised adventure sports. Another popular option is to take a trip to nearby Annecy, the 'Venice of the Alps'. (B)

**Day 6** We drive back to Col des Montets and then climb to the beautiful Lac Blanc the highest point of the day's walk (2351m), a spectacular setting with fine views. Normally we will be able to see Ibex. We then descend and continue to La Flegere, from where we take a télécabine back down to the valley floor to join our transport. (B,L,D)



**Time 7hrs**

**Alt. gain 900m**

**Alt. loss 460m**

**Day 7** This morning we take the télécabine up to Plan Praz (at 1999m, the mid station on the way to Brevent) and then walk up to Brevent (2525m) for panoramic views across to the Mont Blanc massif and down towards the Chamonix valley. We then descend to 1370 meters where we are picked up by chalet minibus and transferred to the chalet. (B,L,D)

**Time 7 hrs**

**Alt. gain 530m**

**Alt. loss 1150m**

### Day 8 End Chalet Savoy (B)

In the unlikely event that ski lifts are not operating due to inclement weather, or early/late season closures a number of alternative options are available.

**Day 6** If the Flegere lift is closed, we will proceed as normal to the beautiful White Lake (Lac Blanc) as featured in the brochure. Then we will loop round to the Grand Balcon Sud and descend on a different route to the starting point. This will make a total climb of 950m and descent of approximately 950m but the diversion will actually enhance the walk and make the extra effort well worthwhile. According to the schedules we have received we only anticipate this happening on the first departure (May 29<sup>th</sup>) and on the final two departures of the season: (18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> September).

**Day 7** According to the schedules we have received, the Brevent lift should be operating on every tour with the exception of the last departure (25<sup>th</sup> September). However, should there be an unexpected change in scheduling or should bad weather or late snow dictate, we will enjoy a spectacular walk from the parking of the animal park (1370m) up to the Belle Lachat refuge on the classic TMB route, then cut across to the Les Houches Peak (2280m for one of the finest views in the Alps before descending a different route to La Flatiere (1370m).

**Other Exodus trips in the Alps:** Exodus also offers a 15-day hotel based trek following the Tour de Mont Blanc (Trip code TWO), or a harder 8-day point-to-point trek on the classic Tour du Mont Blanc (Trip code TWP).

## ACCOMMODATION

### Accommodation

**Chalet Savoy, Les Houches.** A homely chalet, run by Oliver and Elaine Ensor for over 15 years. The chalet is perched on the hillside above the charming village of Les Houches. There are 9 bedrooms, all with private facilities and some with balconies. There is also a sauna and hot tub that can be used after a day's walk. The chalet has a dining room, a comfortable wood-panelled lounge with leather armchairs opening onto 2 balconies, and fire place room where complementary tea and coffee can be taken and drinks are available from a self service bar. Chalet facilities include, free unlimited internet on your computer or the chalet computer, satellite TV, DVD, video and drying room. There are two friendly but fairly elusive cats that live in the chalet.



**Single Accommodation** A single room may be available on request at a supplement of £110. Please note that single rooms are limited and must be requested in advance.

## FOOD & TRANSPORT

### Food

In the itinerary we state which meals are included on each day.

All breakfasts, 5 picnic lunches and 6 dinners are included in the price of the trip.

### Typical Meals

**Breakfast:** Buffet style breakfast will usually consist of cereal, eggs, orange juice, croissant, fresh French bread, butter, jam, tea or coffee.

**Lunch:** Picnic style lunches will normally include bread, fresh salad vegetables, cold meats or tinned fish, cheese and fresh fruit.

**Evening meal:** Will normally consist of a first course of soup, salad or charcuterie, a main course of meat or fish with rice, potatoes or pasta and vegetables, followed by dessert or fruit and tea or coffee. The price of the evening meal does not include wine, beer, bottled water or soft drinks.

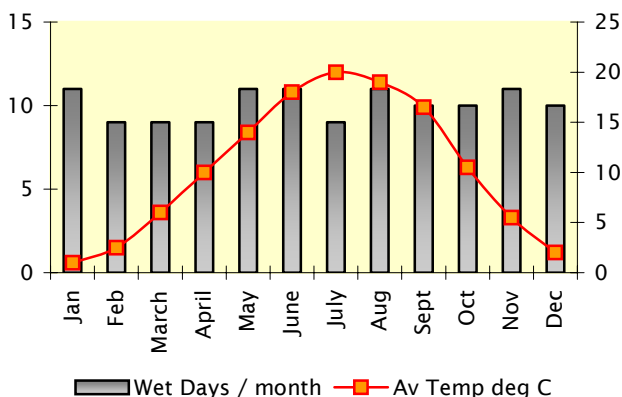
**Vegetarians:** Although vegetarianism is not common in France and most meals are based on meat or fish, it is usually possible to cater for vegetarians as long as they are prepared to be flexible. We are confident that the Chalet Savoy will provide you with balanced meals. If you are a vegetarian please inform us on booking.

### Transport

All transport mentioned in the itinerary is included, except for optional excursions or where a client may choose to curtail a group walk. Transport to and from the chalet will be by the chalet's own minibus, as will the transport to and from the start/end of walks.

## WEATHER

Weather chart for Geneva



From late June to early October fair weather is to be expected, but all mountain ranges create their own weather patterns and the Alps are no exception. It can and does rain and especially on high up can be

surprisingly cold at times. Expected daytime temperatures are in the range of 15 to 25°C in the valleys (although it can sometimes reach 30°C in July/August), 5 to 20°C at altitude (though it will feel colder if wet and windy) and 5 to 15°C in the valley at night; possibly a little lower early and late in the season. There is always the possibility of snow, even in August.

## RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

Tourism can be a real help to local communities, providing income, positive cultural exchanges and a financial incentive to protect their natural environment.

Ours is a 'total approach' to responsible tourism, covering everything from the way we plan and operate our trips to the practices of Exodus as a company. Exodus trips are designed to allow a high degree of economic benefit to the local communities; we buy local produce, eat local food and use local services, thus ensuring that as much money as possible is retained within the local economies and the host communities. With our responsible tourism policy we are continually reassessing our holidays, trying at all times to ensure that they are socially, economically and environmentally sound.



### Awards for our work on Responsible Tourism

2006. British Travel Awards: Environmentally Responsible Tourism Company.

2004. Responsible Travel Awards: Best Tour Operator.

2002. BA Tourism for Tomorrow Awards: Highly Commended.

For full details of our Responsible Tourism Policy please visit:

[www.exodus.co.uk/responsible-travel](http://www.exodus.co.uk/responsible-travel)

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### Passports and Visas

All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information offered below is to help you with that process. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

At the time of writing, visas are not required by British and other EU nationals.

Visa regulations can and do change without notice and if you are not a British passport holder please check the current regulations in good time to obtain a visa if one is required.

For information on how to obtain visas please call Travcour on 020 7223 5295 or visit their website: [www.travcour.com](http://www.travcour.com)

### Vaccinations and Health

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad.

There are no statutory vaccination requirements for France, Italy or Switzerland when travelling from the U.K. but up to date tetanus and polio immunisations are recommended. Please consult your doctor or vaccination centre for up to date information.

For additional information please visit: [www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk)

### Insurance - Are you adequately covered?

Please ask for details of the Exodus insurance policy that has been tailored to provide specific cover for our trips. It is a condition of joining any of our holidays that you must be insured against medical and personal accident risks (to include repatriation costs and air ambulance or helicopter rescue services where appropriate). If taking an alternative policy you must be sure that you are covered for any activities that are part of this trip or optional activities that you intend to take part in. For further information please see the insurance section of the Exodus Travel Advice guide or visit [www.exodus.co.uk/about-exodus/travel-insurance](http://www.exodus.co.uk/about-exodus/travel-insurance)

**Local Time** is GMT +1hr

## Group, Staff and Support

The group will generally be between 6 and 16 people. We provide an English speaking walking leader to escort the group on each walking day.

The minimum age of clients on this trip is 16 years. Please note that children aged 16 or 17 years of age, must be accompanied by (and share accommodation with) a parent or legal guardian.

### Join the Exodus Online Community:

Don't forget to visit the Community area on our website. You can view our range of Exodus videos and podcasts, read trip write-ups that have featured in the national media and take advantage of some special deals on travel gear and equipment.

In the Compass Café forum you'll find the Departure Lounge where you can discuss your trip with fellow travellers before you depart. When you get back from your holiday remember to upload your images to the relevant trip page on our website. This helps other people see what our holidays are really like and you'll be automatically entered into our monthly photo competition.

To make full use of the Compass Cafe you'll need to join My Exodus. It's free, registration is simple and easy... so what are you waiting for?

<http://www.exodus.co.uk/community>

## MONEY MATTERS

### Exodus and Local Payments

There is no local payment on this holiday. As of 1 January 2008, Exodus no longer uses local payments to cover part of the cost of the holiday. While some of the headline prices seem higher, we have not added any extra costs into the total price, apart from the local payment and any standard annual fluctuation in price.

If you are comparing prices with other operators, please check the total price paid, as we believe that Exodus offers the best balance between value for money and operational quality.

### Currency Information

The national currency of France is the Euro, with an exchange rate of approximately 0.69 to the US\$ and 1.14 to the UK £.

*Exchange rates are correct at the time of publication.*

### ATM availability/ Credit Card Acceptance

We recommend you bring your spending money in cash, but credit or debit cards may be useful for shopping/extra excursions. Cash points are available in Geneva and Chamonix.

### Extra Expenses and Spending Money

There are a number of extra excursions available, exact prices and details will be confirmed locally, but the following provides a guide to what is normally available.

Tandem paragliding flight: £100 from Brevent or Aiguille du Midi middle stations.

## WHAT TO TAKE

### Essential Equipment and Clothing

This should be read in conjunction with our 'What to Pack' section in the Travel Advice booklet.

In addition to your "normal" daily clothes, you will need the following: traditional or lightweight walking boots with good ankle support and a strong sole, waterproof/windproof jacket and over trousers (preferably Gortex), hat (preferably with ear protection) and gloves (even for August), a warm 2 season jacket or sweater/fleece or two thinner sweaters for layering, sun hat (the sun in the Alps has a very high UV factor and is very intensive), sun screen and lip salve, water containers or Thermos Flask to contain 1 ½ litres of liquid, daysack of 25/30 litre capacity, sandals or slippers for indoors (outdoor shoes aren't permitted

inside the chalet). We also advise using dry flow wicker clothing rather than cotton as it dries much quicker and more comfortable when trekking.

**Exodus believes that the safety of their guests of paramount importance. To ensure your full safety, our leaders are not allowed to take you on the walks unless you have all the equipment listed in 'Essential Equipment'.**

### Baggage and Baggage Allowance

Exodus kitbags are available for purchase at £25, which includes postage, packing and VAT. Please note that they are available within the UK only.

At time of publication - the standard weight limit for hold baggage on the recommended international carrier for this trip is 23kg.

As advice about luggage allowances for both hand and hold luggage is subject to change, we suggest you check [www.baa.com](http://www.baa.com) and/or the airline's website for the latest information prior to your departure.

Much of the equipment mentioned above is available at very competitive prices in the Exodus shop, "[Exodus Travel Essentials](#)," in partnership with Amazon.

[astore.amazon.co.uk/wwwexoduscouk-21](http://astore.amazon.co.uk/wwwexoduscouk-21)

## READING LIST

**Chamonix Mont Blanc, A Walking Guide by Martin Collins.**

Published by the Cicerone Press.

**For maps the best single sheet for this area is the IGN / Libris 1:50000 'Massif et tour du Mont-Blanc' . More detailed sheets for the area are the two IGN sheets at 1:25000 3531 ET St Gervais and 3630 OT Chamonix.**

If you are interested in any of the above or travel writing, guides and maps in general, why not browse through our very own Exodus shop, "[Exodus Travel Essentials](#)," in partnership with Amazon.

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ALL CLIENTS

Please note that Exodus operate a 24 hour duty office for emergencies, which can be contacted on 0044 (0) 1582 644 100.

Anytime that you travel abroad you should take the time to read the warnings in the essential information in the brochure or at [www.exodus.co.uk/about-exodus/essential-information](http://www.exodus.co.uk/about-exodus/essential-information)

Full joining instructions including local emergency numbers, and details of how to reach the start point, will be sent to you approximately 2 to 3 weeks prior to departure. If you do not receive these at least a week before departure, or require them earlier please contact our office or your travel agent.

Occasionally, as stated in our brochure, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned. This may be for a variety of reasons – climatic, political, physical or other. In these circumstances we will make the best alternative arrangements possible that maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith, and covers the average range of conditions likely to be found on this trip. Where differences exist in the information between these Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes are the correct version and supersede the brochure. Abnormal conditions or other events beyond our control can prevail at any time, particularly in remote or off the beaten track destinations, therefore all holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; in order to enjoy them you should be prepared to be flexible where necessary.

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## HOW TO BOOK YOUR TRIP

- 1. Check availability** Go online to check availability, or contact us by phone or email.
- 2. Secure your place** You can provisionally hold a place on this trip, usually for between three and seven days.
- 3. Complete your booking and payment** When you're ready to book, go to [www.exodus.co.uk](http://www.exodus.co.uk) for online booking, book over the phone or you can complete a booking form (available online or on request by calling us). We accept all major credit and debit cards, or you can pay by cheque.



**Book with confidence** Exodus is fully licensed and bonded as a tour operator. We hold Air Traffic Organisers Licence (ATOL) number 2582 issued and bonded with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). We are also bonded to the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and we are members of the Federation of Tour Operators (FTO) and ABTA - The Travel Association. This means you can book your Exodus holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected.