

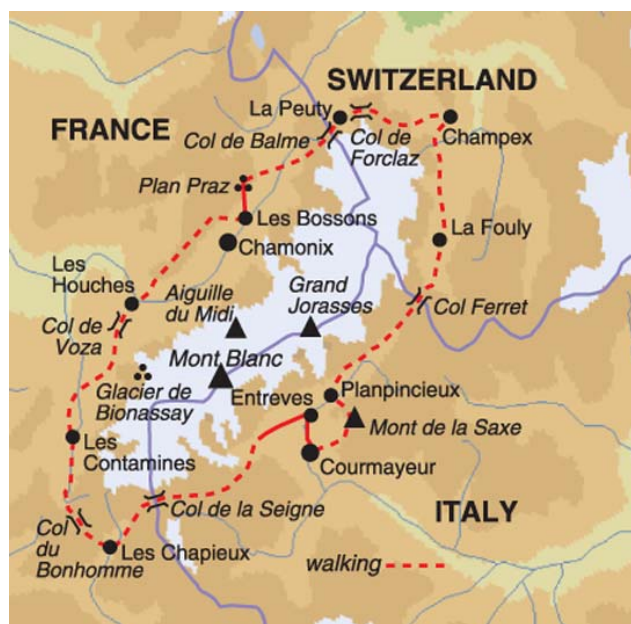
# MONT BLANC HOTEL TREK

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

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Stay in a variety of friendly small inns and guesthouses
- Walk in the shadow of Western Europe's highest mountain, Mont Blanc
- Enjoy the spectacular scenery of this world famous route

## SUMMARY



The Mont Blanc Massif stands at the junction of France, Switzerland and Italy, and is encircled by a system of seven major valleys. A tight cluster of mighty peaks - Aiguille Verte, Chardonnet, Gouter, Géant and Jorasses - help make up the massif which is dominated by Mont Blanc itself. At 4,810m this is not only Western Europe's highest mountain but also one of the best known.

The Mont Blanc Massif provides the focus for a classic walking circuit known as the 'Tour du Mont Blanc' (often abbreviated to TMB). The official circuit covers a little over 100 miles of ground together with about 10,000m of climbs and descents! Days average about seven hours of actual walking and about twelve miles in distance. Though some stretches may be tiring the overall route is moderate with reasonably well-maintained and graded paths with lots of opportunities to stop to take photographs and enjoy the view (and often a cold beer as well). Many of the passes are at over 2,400m and at least 8 of the days involve ascents and descents of 1,000m or more. The trek should

be within the capabilities of anyone who has a good level of fitness and enjoys regular walking. The route throughout requires no special skills or equipment, though treks early and late in the year may encounter some snow lying on a few of the higher passes. On this hotel trek we use simple mountain hotels/inns with shared facilities (see the Accommodation section). Baggage is transported by vehicle from hotel to hotel.

To view pictures of this trip, please visit:

[www.exodus.co.uk/picpages/two.html](http://www.exodus.co.uk/picpages/two.html)

## IS THIS TRIP FOR YOU?

Grade: B/C

10 days walking with vehicle support carrying our baggage: maximum altitude 2,537 m, average 1,525 m.

Although some of the days are long, quite often involving an ascent of 900-1000m, followed by a similar descent, the paths are well maintained and there is very little rough terrain underfoot. This trek is graded as a B/C as several days of the walking (especially the last two) are greater than walking up Scafell Pike or Ben Nevis.

## JOINING THE TRIP IN LONDON

Duration: 15 days. Depart London Saturday, return Saturday.

### 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.

### Regional Flights

Exodus can arrange flights from the majority of the UK's regional airports to connect with the group flights from London. It may also be possible to fly to the destination either direct or via alternative hubs from some regional airports. If you are arriving on different flights to those above, please see the Airport Transfers section below.

Please contact our sales team or your agent for help with regional flight requirements.

## Low cost airlines

It is possible to fly direct to Geneva with some budget airlines. It is likely that flights from regional airports will arrive at different times to the group flight from London; where this is the case a wait at the airport for the group flight, or alternative transfer arrangements at your own cost, may be necessary (see below).

Alternative flight options: Bristol - Easyjet, Flybe, Birmingham - Easyjet, Manchester - BMI baby, Gatwick - Easyjet, Glasgow - Easyjet.

## Airport Transfers

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.

## JOINING THE TRIP IN CHAMONIX

15 days, start Chamonix, end Chamonix.

### Itinerary start

Your trip normally starts at our hotel in Chamonix 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. Hotel check-in times are normally from around 3pm.

### Airport Transfers

Transfers are arranged to coincide with the arrival time of the group flight. Please note that group flights can be rescheduled and you must check the group flight details 2 weeks before departure. If you arrive before the group flight, you may (by prior arrangement only) be able to join the group transfer. If you do not take this transfer, or miss it, you must make your own way to the joining point at your own expense. The arrangement agreed will appear on your confirmation documents.

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

[www.chamexpress.com](http://www.chamexpress.com)    [www.chamonixcabs.com](http://www.chamonixcabs.com)    [www.a-t-s.net](http://www.a-t-s.net)  
[www.cham-van.com](http://www.cham-van.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 will then be able to join the group transfer to Chamonix as mentioned above (by prior arrangement only).

Alternatively it is possible to get a train direct to Chamonix and then take a short 5 minute taxi ride to the hotel in Chamonix centre.

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 in cooperation with Rail Europe.

## LAND ONLY ITINERARY

The entries in **bold** at the end of each day indicates the type of accommodation normally used and meals included (**B**=Breakfast, **L**=Lunch, **D**=Dinner).

**Day 1** Start at the designated hotel in Chamonix, France. In the evening there is an introductory briefing by your leader. **Hotel** in Chamonix (France). (**D**)

**Day 2** From Chamonix we take the télécabine to Plan Praz (1,999m). The trail today is named the 'Grand Balcon' and is on the opposite side of the valley from Mont Blanc, affording excellent views of the whole massif lying to our south. Initially we contour and then climb to reach the high point of the day, Lac Blanc (2,352m). The trail descends from the lake then contours high above the valley before dropping steeply to the Col Montets (1461m). Return to Chamonix by bus. **Hotel** in Chamonix (France). (**B,L,D**)



**Day 3** We travel back to the

Col Montets to begin our ascent to the Aiguillette de Posettes (2201m), descend to the Col des Posettes, and then ascend a little to the Col de Balme (2,191m) where we walk across the border from France to Switzerland. Excellent views all morning of Aiguille d'Argentiere and the Aiguille du Tour and its glacier. After lunch we descend past the shepherds' huts at 'Les Herbagères' to Le Peuty (1,296m) with good views of the Trient Glacier. Ascend from Le Peuty to our hotel on the Col Forclaz (1,526m). **Hotel** at Col Forclaz (Switzerland). (**B,L,D**)

**Day 4** We leave the Col Forclaz from where we can look directly down into the Rhône valley and the Swiss town of Martigny and follow the 'Bovine route' (1,986m) through high alpine pastures to the charming town of Champex (1,4686m) set beside a picturesque alpine lake. **Hotel** at Champex (Switzerland). (**B,L,D**)

**Day 5** Now on the east side of the main Mont Blanc Massif we walk south, descending through woods to the Val Ferret and on to Issert (1,055m) and other small, pretty, alpine farming villages. This is quite a good day for flowers, including orchids. We continue up the valley to La Fouly (1,593m). This is at the foot of Mt. Dolent, whose summit is at the meeting point of France, Switzerland and Italy. **Hotel** in La Fouly (Switzerland). (**B,L,D**)

**Day 6** Still following the same valley and the river 'La Drance', we climb to the 'Grand Col Ferret' (2,536m), the highest pass of the tour. Now in Italy, the valley is also called 'Val Ferret'. The mountain views from the Col are stunning with Grandes Jorasses dominating the scene. We walk down the valley to Arp Nouva (1,600 m) then travel by bus to our hotel near La Palud near Courmayeur. **Hotel** in La Palud (Italy). (**B,L,D**)

**Day 7** A static day. The nearby town of Courmayeur has picturesque older sections, which are worth a visit, especially for the keen photographer. There is a télécabine from Entrèves to Point Helbronner (3,461m) and on across the glacier to Aiguille du Midi (and in fact on down to Chamonix). This is a splendid (optional) excursion, which gives close-up views of all the big peaks. **Hotel** in La Palud (Italy). (**B**)

**Day 8** From the hotel we cross the river and climb to a mid level contouring path which we follow around the mountain. We then climb steeply to Mont de la Saxe (2,346m). The views are excellent, especially Mont Blanc and the towering rocky peak 'Grandes Jorasses' and the glaciers, which crowd the northern flank of the Val Ferret. Look for reflections of the mountains in small ponds along the ridge. We make a longish, sometimes steep descent from Mont de la Saxe, via an old mule track, to Entrèves. **Hotel** in La Palud (Italy). (**B,L,D**)

**Day 9** We travel by bus to La Vissaille (1660m) then climb gently along the Val Veny beneath the massive glacier de Miage and pass Lac Combal before the gradient becomes steeper as we follow the old Roman road and head for today's pass: the 'Col de la Seigne' (2,516m) which marks our re-entry into France. A fairly steep descent brings us through la Ville des Glaciers (1,789 m) and finally after quite a long walking day to Les Chapieux (1,553m), a small hamlet inhabited only during the summer months. **Auberge** in Les Chapieux (France). (**B,L,D**)

**Day 10** We have now reached the southwest corner of the circuit and turn north to climb once again. First we ascend to the Col de la Croix du Bonhomme (2,478m), then contour across to the Col du Bonhomme (2,328m) and then descend again on a Roman road into the Val Montjoie and the town of Les Contamines (1,175m). **Hotel** near Les Contamines (France). (**B,L,D**)

**Day 11** A well-earned rest day. There are short and long optional walks in the area or one can simply relax around the pleasant town of Les Contamines where there is a half-day market. **Hotel** near Les Contamines (France). (**B,D**)

**Day 12** From Les Contamines we ascend to the Chalets de Miage (1,560m). From here we take a trail that climbs steeply to the Col de Tricot (2,119m) before descending very close to the snout of the Glacier de Bionnassay. Good views of the north of Mont Blanc Massif. Eventually we make another ascent to reach the Col de Voza (1652m) where we re-enter the Chamonix Valley, and then descend to the village of Les Houches (993m). **Hotel** at Les Houches (France). (**B,L,D**)

**Day 13** We cross to the north side of the Chamonix Valley and climb through pine forest to reach the high point of the day at Brevent (2,525m). This is a long walking day but will probably afford the best views of the French side of Mont Blanc and its neighbours that we shall have on the whole trek. We descend to Plan Praz and take the télécabine to Chamonix (1,061m) for a well-deserved beer. **Hotel** in Chamonix (France). (**B,L,D**)

**Day 14** Free day in and around Chamonix. There are several good walks around Chamonix, and also spectacular (optional) excursions by télécabine or mountain railway. Other optional activities include

tandem paragliding, canyoning and mountain biking. **Hotel** in Chamonix (France). **(B)**

**Day 15** End in Chamonix. **(B)**

**Other Exodus trips in the Alps:** Exodus also offers an 8-day trip following the Tour de Mont Blanc (Trip Code TWP) and 15-day camping trip (Trip Code TWB) as well as a camping version of the Haute Route between Chamonix and Zermatt (Trip code TWH) and the Matterhorn Circuit (Trip code TWW).



## ACCOMMODATION

### Accommodation

Throughout the trek we use small family run hotels, village inns, pensions, and auberges that vary from unclassified, to 2 or 3-star. All are clean and well run and set up with the needs of the trekker in mind.

Please be aware that room sizes (twin, double or triple rooms) and facilities will vary from hotel to hotel and sometimes from room to room within one hotel. On 9 of the nights facilities are ensuite whilst the others have shared bathroom and toilet facilities 'on the landing'. Couples will always have their own room but we cannot say whether this will be twin or double. Single clients must be prepared to share with one or two other members of the same sex. We are unable to accept bookings for single rooms due to the small size of the hotels used and the fact that we are usually staying only one night in each hotel. The Auberge does not provide soap and you may wish to bring a towel, as those provided by continental hotels are sometimes small.

### Additional Accommodation

If you require any additional accommodation either before or after the trip, we can book this for you (subject to availability) at the Hotel Richemond in Chamonix. Please notify us at the time of booking. Payment for this must be made to Exodus or your agent, so that we can issue you with an accommodation voucher.

## FOOD & TRANSPORT

### Food Included

Included in the trip are all breakfasts, 10 picnic lunches and 12 hotel/restaurant dinners. On free days 7, 11, 14 and both transfer days lunch is not provided. On the free days 7 and 14 dinner is also not included and needs to be bought locally. We take our evening meals in the hotel in which we are staying or in a nearby restaurant. These meals are usually arranged as a 'menu' for the whole group and as they are based on special negotiations made by us represent better value than eating independently. Please note that should the times of flights change to arrive earlier, or depart later, additional meals will not be included. Please also note that no refund will be given for meals not taken or taken other than where designated.

### Typical Meals

**Continental Breakfast:** Will normally include coffee, tea, hot chocolate, French bread, croissant and preserves.

**Picnic-Style Lunch:** Generally include bread, cold meat, cheese, tinned fish, fresh salad vegetables and fresh fruit.

**Evening meal:** a first course of soup, salad or charcuterie, a main course of meat with one or two vegetables or rice or pasta, a dessert course. Beer, wine, bottled water, other drinks, coffee or tea are not included in the price of evening meals taken in restaurants.

**Vegetarians:** Although vegetarianism is not common in this part of Europe and most meals are based on meat and fish there are no problems catering for vegetarians as long as they are prepared to be flexible.

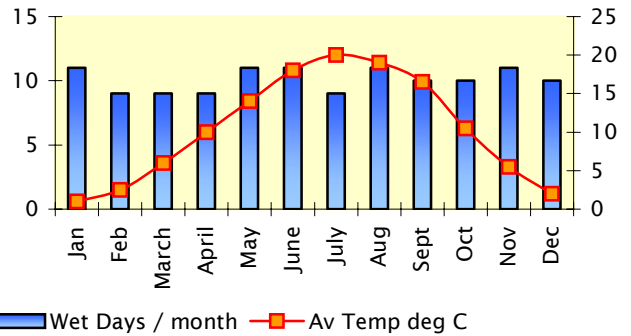
**Drinks:** Please note that drinks are not included and you will be expected to pay directly for any wine/tea/coffee taken at dinner.

### Transport

All transport mentioned in the itinerary and téléphériques (except where these are marked as optional) are included. Transport and excursions on the three static days are not included. A private coach is normally used for the transfers between Geneva airport and Chamonix, and we will use a public bus for the few journeys to and from our hotels.

## 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 the high passes it 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 15°C on the passes (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, and in September trips may find snow on the passes. Please note that on late season treks (September) the days are shorter and we will need to make early starts to make the most of the available daylight hours.

## 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. However, some EU nationals may travel to France/Switzerland/Italy using only an EU identity card. If you think this may apply to you please check with your local authorities. 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. 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

It is a condition of joining this trip that you must be insured against medical and personal accident risks. It is also strongly recommended that you have helicopter rescue included in your policy. Please see [www.exodus.co.uk/about-exodus/travel-insurance](http://www.exodus.co.uk/about-exodus/travel-insurance) for more details.

**Local Time** is GMT +1hr

### Group, Staff and Support

We provide a leader to escort the group on each walking day. In addition, your main luggage is transferred from hotel to hotel each time you move on. Please note that your baggage is not carried to your room.

Minimum group size is 1, maximum 16.

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 and Italy is the Euro, with an exchange rate of approximately 0.64 to the US\$ and 1.26 to the UK£.

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

### Extra Expenses and Spending Money

The cost of the extra lunches varies depending on whether you want to picnic or eat in a restaurant, and an average of £15 per lunch should suffice. For the free dinners allow £25 each. You will also need money for drinks in cafés or huts during the day's walk and drinks in restaurants where we take our evening meal.

Typically a large café au lait or a soft drink would cost between £2-3, and a glass of beer £2-3. A bottle of wine can be bought for approximately £8-16 in these restaurants. The téléphérique up to the Aiguille du Midi and return to Chamonix is approximately £40 for the static day, and the téléphérique from Entrèves to Helbronner and return on the Italian side is slightly cheaper.

### 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 (CHF's) and Chamonix (£'s).

For your commission free holiday currency, pre loaded cash cards and travellers cheques delivered directly to your door at very competitive rates, visit us on [www.currency-express.com/exodus](http://www.currency-express.com/exodus) and receive free delivery on orders over £300.

## 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:** Walking boots with good ankle support and a strong sole; a good quality waterproof/windproof jacket and waterproof trousers; hat and gloves (even for August); a warm 2/3 season fleece jacket; day sack with 30-40 litres capacity; towel.

**Recommended:** Walking poles; swimming costume/trunks.

Much of the equipment mentioned above is available at very competitive prices at the Exodus online shop, 'Exodus Travel Essentials' in partnership with Amazon. Please visit [www.exodus.co.uk/community](http://www.exodus.co.uk/community) for more information.

### Baggage and Baggage Allowance

All luggage is transported between the hotels by a support vehicle. Please note that we must limit you to **one** item of luggage, **weighing a maximum of 15kg**, per person to be carried in the support vehicle. Excess baggage can be left in the hotel store in Chamonix. You should pack your belongings in a sturdy kitbag or holdall; **suitcases should not be used, as they cannot be packed easily in our support vehicle.** If you are travelling with large suitcases an Exodus kitbag will be loaned to you locally for the duration of the trip. Exodus kitbags are available for purchase at £25, which includes postage, packaging and VAT. Please note that they are only available to residents of the UK.

On Swiss Air flights the baggage allowance is 20kg with a maximum of 2 bags per passenger, this will be confirmed on your tickets. If you are booking other flights please check luggage allowances shown on your tickets.

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.

## READING LIST

Exodus suggests below a series of books, guides or maps that may be useful or interesting for your trip.

If you are interested in any of these books then please visit our very own Exodus shop, 'Exodus Travel Essentials' in partnership with Amazon. Please visit [www.exodus.co.uk/community](http://www.exodus.co.uk/community) for more information.

### Reading List

Cicerone Press publish an English language guide entitled Tour of Mont Blanc written by Kev Reynolds.

### Maps

The recommended maps for this trek are the two sheets 3630 Ouest and 3531 Est issued by IGN series at a scale of 1:25,000. The best alternative is the single sheet 1:50,000 map issued by Rando-Editions 'Pays du Mont-Blanc' (sheet A1). Any other maps need several sheets to cover the area.

For further information contact Stanfords at Long Acre, London, WC2E 9LP. Tel: 020 7836 1321. Website: [www.stanfords.co.uk](http://www.stanfords.co.uk)

## 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

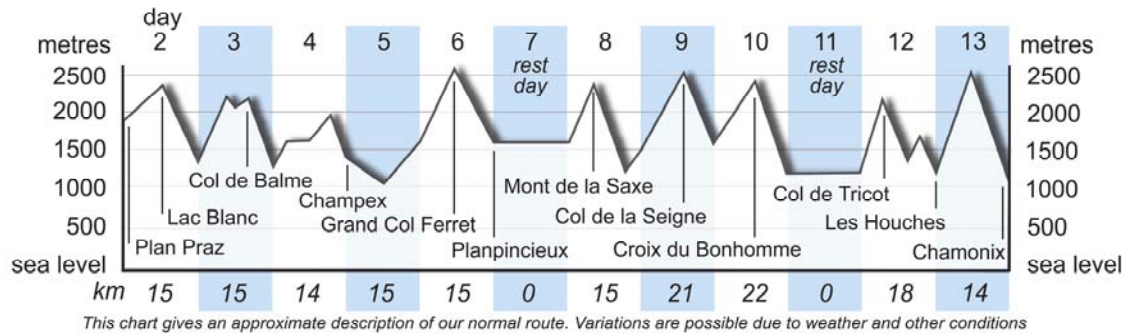
alternative arrangements possible that maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

changes; in order to enjoy them you should be prepared to be flexible where necessary.

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

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### ALTITUDE CHART



#### 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.