

GRANDE TRAVERSEE DES ALPES self-guided - sections 1, 2, 3 and 4

From Lake Geneva to Menton

Reference · 259

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**DURATION**

28 days

TRAVEL STYLE

Freedom / unguided

LUGGAGE

With luggage transfer

ACCOMMODATION

Classic or comfort

LEVEL

3/4 ★★★☆

FROM

2 745 €

Travel across the Alps, meeting both the people and the mountains... The Grande Traversée des Alpes (GTA) between Lake Geneva and the Mediterranean is a long-distance journey. It's a chance to break with time and put your everyday life on hold! This route runs along the Swiss and Italian borders, crossing five French départements and some of the best-known mountain ranges in the Alps.

You will love

- A route through mountain ranges with varied geology and landscapes
- Rich ecosystems, abundant wildlife and valleys steeped in history
- Luggage transfer

Day-by-day itinerary

DAY 1

Tour departs from the Thollon-Les Mémises gondola (where your luggage will be picked up, if you have chosen this option).

THOLLON LES MEMISES - PIC DES MEMISES - ALPAGE OF NEUVA

Take the gondola up to the balcony path overlooking Lake Geneva. Cross the Mémises and Mottay mountain pastures before descending to the Novel valley. Overnight on the mountain pasture **without luggage transfer**.

3.5 - 4 hour walk / Elevation: +350m -500m

DAY 2

BISE PASS - CHAPELLE D'ABONDANCE

From the mountain pasture, climb to Lake Neuteu and 'Col de Bise'. A short detour is possible to Lake Darbon, a magnificent glacial lake - open your eyes wide, you're in Bouquetin country! Descend to the Bise mountain pasture and climb back up to the 'Pas de la Bosse' before a final descent to the picturesque village of 'La Chapelle d'Abondance'.

6 - 6.5 hour walk / Elevation: +900m -1350m

DAY 3

COL DE BASSACHAUX - LINDARETS (Goat village) - VALLÉE DE LA MANCHE

Climb to the 'Pointe des Mattes' in the 'Mont de Grange' reserve, home to the chamois. Cross some of the alpine pastures of the Abondance region to reach the Bassachaux pass overlooking the lake of Montriond. Descent to the Lindarets village, famous for its goats! A short visit is a must before being transferred to the bottom of the 'Vallée de la Manche'.

6.5 - 7 hour walk / Elevation: +1250m -750m

DAY 4

COL DE LA GOLÈSE - FOLLY REFUGE

Climb to the Fréterolles alpine farm, with its cows, goats and cheese! Cross to the foot of the 'Terres Maudites' and short ascent to the Golèse pass (1666 m), then descent to the hamlet of 'Les Allamands'. Climb back under the Tuet slabs to reach the Folly refuge. Night in refuge **without luggage transfer**, but with the lights of the valley in the background!

6 - 6.5 hour walk / Elevation: +1050m -990m

DAY 5**VOGELLE LAKE - SIXT-FER-À-CHEVAL**

Enjoy a day in the wild Dents Blanches massif. Departure for the 'Combe aux Puaires', an unusual lapiaz (eroded limestone) site. Descent to 'Lac de la Vogealle'. A beautiful descent follows to the 'cirque du Bout du Monde' and the 'cirque du Fer à Cheval' with their many waterfalls. Night in the village of Sixt-Fer-à-Cheval.

5.5 - 6 hour walk / Elevation: +700m -1250m

DAY 6**COL D'ANTERNE - REFUGE MOËDE-ANTERNE**

Climb to the Rouget waterfall, then to the Pleureuse and Sauffaz waterfalls. The trail then joins the Anterne mountain pasture in the heart of the Sixt-Passy nature reserve, a vast plateau where one of the region's most beautiful lakes nestles. Another short climb to the Anterne pass, then down to the Moëde-Anterne refuge. You can swim in Lake Pormenaz, 15 minutes from the refuge. Night at the refuge **without luggage transfer or shower**.

6 - 6.5 hour walk / Elevation: +1500m -350m

DAY 7**COL DU BREVENT - CHAMONIX**

Short descent to the Arlevé bridge. The landscape is changing, with the limestone of the Fiz giving way to the soft rock of the Aiguilles Rouges massif. Ascent to Col du Brévent (2368 m), then descent to Planpraz, where we take the gondola to Chamonix.

5 hour walk / Elevation: +800m; -800m

Extra 1.5 hour walk if descending by foot to Chamonix: -1000m added

DAY 8**LES HOUCHES - COL DU TRICOT - CONTAMINES**

Take the gondola up, then wander through valleys and forest before climbing the 'Col du Tricot', facing the Bionnassay glacier. After a coffee break at the 'Chalets du Miage', descent to the village of Les Contamines Montjoie, then on to 'Notre-Dame-de-la-Gorge'.

5 - 5.5 hour walk / Elevation: +600m -1250m

1 hour walk / Elevation: +250m from Les Contamines to Nant Borrant

DAY 9**COL DU BONHOMME - CORMET DE ROSELEND**

Climbing the Roman road to the famous 'Col du Bonhomme' on the Tour du Mont-Blanc. Cross the 'Crête des Gittes' between heaven and earth, before joining the great alpine meadows of the Beaufortain at 'Cornet de Roselend'.

6 - 6.5 hour walk / Elevation: +1350m -700m

DAY 10**COL DU BRESSON - PORTE DE ROSUEL**

Balcony trail overlooking Lake Roselend and ascent to 'Col du Bresson' at the foot of the legendary 'Pierra Menta'.

Descend through the Ormette valley, then between waterways and hamlets to reach the Tarentaise valley. Transfer by cab from the 'Chapelle St Guérin' to Peisey Nancroix and the Porte de Rosuel.

6 - 6.5 hour walk / Elevation: +950m -1170m

DAY 11**COL DE LA SACHETTE - TIGNES**

Entering the Vanoise National Park at the foot of 'Mont Pourri' and 'Dôme de la Sache'. Possible detour to 'Lac de la Plagne' before climbing to 'Col de la Sachette' (2713 m). Then down through the Sache valley and the Tignes-Champagny nature reserve to the village of Tignes-les-Boisses (alternative via the 'Col du Palet'). Night in hotel, **without luggage transfer**.

6 - 6.5 hour walk / Elevation: +1200m -850m

DAY 12**VALLEY OF LA LEISSE - COL DE LA VANOISE**

Short transfer by local bus to the Val Claret resort. The hike takes you back to the wide-open spaces of the Vanoise Park and up to the 'Col de la Leisse'. Descent of the Leisse valley dotted with lakes. The 1700 m south face of 'Grande Casse' overlooks the trail. Night in refuge **without luggage transfer**.

6.5 - 7 hour walk / Elevation: +1100m -650m

DAY 13**CIRQUES DU PETIT AND GRAND MARCHET**

After leaving the refuge, cross over to the balcony paths overlooking the Pralognan valley: Combe de l'Arcelin, Cirque du dard, Grand Marchet and Petit Marchet, Lac de la Valette, Combe des Nants. Then down to the Prioux valley (easier option via Pralognan).

6.5 - 7 hour walk / Elevation: +1000m -1800m

DAY 14**COL DE CHAVIERE - VALLEE DE LA MAURIENNE**

Climb up the Chavière valley, overlooked by the 'Dômes de la Vanoise', in a lunar world punctuated by forests of cairns. The Aiguilles de Péclet-Polset point the way to the nearby 'Col de Chavière'. Descent into the Maurienne valley through the mountain pastures towards Modane.

6 - 6.5 hour walk / Elevation: +1150m -950m to the Orgère refuge

1.5 hour walk / Elevation -880m additional descend to Modane on foot

DAY 15**MODANE - VALLEE ETROITE PASS**

Departing directly from Modane SNCF railway station, en route to the famous start of the GR5, heading for the Col de la Vallée Étroite. This is a 'real' first stage where you will need to set off early (there is the option of a transfer from the station by regular shuttle bus in the middle of the morning (www.altibus.com) or by taxi (10 mins). A gentle climb to this pass, which acts as a natural border between the Northern and Southern Alps. We enter the Hautes-Alpes, the Étroite valley is a French enclave in Italy... We descend to the hamlets of Les Granges where we spend our first night in a refuge.

7 hour walk / Elevation: +1380m ; -720m / 18km

DAY 16**VALLÉE ÉTROITE - COL DU VALLON - NÉVACHE**

Turn back on the trail to sink into the heart of the Clarée Valley. In an extremely wild area, climb to the Vallon pass (2645m) overlooking the magnificent Lake Blanc. A beautiful descent towards the Nevache village in the upper Clarée Valley. Cross the traditional village of Ville Haute.

6 hour walk / Elevation: +850m -1050m

DAY 17**FONTS DE CERVIÈRES - COL MALRIF - ABRIÈS**

Transfer to Fonts de Cervières (50 min). Reach the Queyras National Park via the Malrif pass (2830m). A beautiful climb from the Fonts de Cervières hamlet. Cross the Malrif pass with a breathtaking view of the famous Mont Viso, the Lord of the Southern Alps. A long descent to Abriès via the Malrif lakes which are among the largest in the Queyras region. Night in gîte.

6 hour walk / Elevation: +850m -1300m

DAY 18**ECHALP - LAKE VALLEY - COL VIEUX - LAKE BLANCHE**

Going up along the Italian border, the valley of Bouchouse is a biotope reserve. Passage to Egorgeou and Foréant lakes and then to "Col Vieux" (2806m) to reach "Col de Chamoussière". Descent into this wide valley of the "Aigue Blanche" to reach the refuge de la Blanche by the lake, nestled at the foot of the "Tête des Toilies". Night **without baggage**.

6 hour walk / Elevation: +1400m ; -600m

DAY 19**LAKE BLANCHE - COL DE LA NOIRE - MALJASSET**

From the refuge, in this extraordinary landscape, climb to the mineral area of Col de la Noire. Leaving behind the Queyras region to enter the wild valley of Haute-Ubaye. Gently descending into the flowered Longet Valley to the hamlet of Maljasset. Night in gîte.

7.5 hour walk / Elevation: +550m -1300m

DAY 20**MALJASSET - COL MARY - CHIAPPERA**

At the foot of the highest point of the range of Haute-Ubaye, the Chambeyron (3412m) climb via the Col Mary Valley with its multitude of lakes cheerfully dotting the pastures. From the mountain pass, enter Italy, to reach the Val Maira and the beautiful village of Chiappera. Night in gîte, **without baggage**.

5.5 hour walk / Elevation: +815 m ; -1150 m

DAY 21**CHIAPPERA - COL DES MONGE - ORONAYES VALLEY - LARCHE**

Nice traverse in the unusual Maira Valley to reach the "Col des Monges" (2542m) marking the border between France and Italy. Descend into the Montagnette Valley dominated by the fortresses of Maginot erected during the Second World War... Arrive in Larche, a small village of Haute-Ubaye.

6 hour walk / Elevation: +1150 m ; -1150 m

DAY 22**LARCHE - VALLON DU LAUZANIER - PAS DE LA CAVALE**

Depart towards the Lauzanier Valley at the gates of the Mercantour National Park. Climb via a pleasant trail to reach the Lauzanier Lake before a final slightly steeper climb up to the pass. Great view from Col de la Cavale on the Tinée and the surrounding mountains. Descend into the high valleys of the Alpes Maritimes passing via the Col des Fourches and the magnificent promontory of Mont des Fourches. Reaching the Bonnette Restefond road (the highest road in Europe) encountering poignant vestiges of the Maginot line. Night in Bousiéyas.

6 hour walk / Elevation: +1040m ; - 1100m

DAY 23**ISOLA 2000 - COL DE LA MERCIERE - LE BORÉON**

Early transfer to Isola 2000 ski resort, then climb to the Col de la Mercière (2342m). Descend and then cross through the old village of Mollière and up to Col De Salèze. Depending on the condition and the fitness level of the group a detour is possible to Lake Negere. Descend into the Vésubie to the village of Boréon. Night in gîte.

5.5 hour walk / Elevation: + 550 m ; - 1090 m

DAY 24**LE BORÉON - PAS DES LARDES - MADONE DE LA FENESTRE - LACS DE PRALS - LA GORDOLASQUE**

From Boreon, climb through the valley towards the lakes of Trécolpas to cross the Pas de Lardes (2448m) overlooked by the Gelas, highest summit of the Mercantour. Descend to the hospices of the Madone de Fenestre passing near the cheese cave. Climb up the Poncet Valley to the Baisse des lacs and then to the 5 lakes of Prals before going up to the Baisse des Prals. Beautiful descent into the Gordolasque Valley. Night in refuge.

7.5 hour walk / Elevation: + 1550m ; - 1520m

DAY 25**VALLÉE LA GORDOLASQUE - REFUGE DE NICE - BAISSE DE VALMASQUE - VALLÉE DES MERVEILLES**

Climb through the Gordolasque Valley to Lac de la Fous and Refuge de Nice which dominates. Light package for a night **without baggage** at refuge des Merveilles. From Refuge de Nice, climb to Baisse Basto to join the famous Vallée des Merveilles and its engraved caves. Be enchanted by numerous enchanting lakes in that mineral landscape.

6.5 hour walk / Elevation: + 1300m ; - 790m

DAY 26**REFUGE DES MERVEILLES - PAS DU DIABLE - COL DU RAUX - L'AUTHION - CAMP D'ARGENT**

Leave the Vallée des Merveilles by the Pas de Diable. Change of scenery starting from the Pas de Diable while crossing several mountain passes of medium altitude, through sheep pastures. At the Col du Raux, heading back to the small plateau of Authion dominated by a remarkable redoubt, a high place of confrontation during the Second World War. From Authion, on a clear day, first sighting of the Mediterranean. Descend to the small ski resort of Camp d'Argent.

5.5 hour walk / Elevation: + 625m ; - 1000m

DAY 27**CAMP D'ARGENT - MONT VENTABREN - MANGIABO - SOSPEL**

Let's go for a great day on the ridges. Leaving these landscapes rich of military vestiges of the Second World War to reach Sospel by the Mount Ventabren and Mangiabo ridges. With a continuing view on the Var and the outskirts of Nice. Charming descent to Sospel village on the Bévéra river.

7 hour walk / Elevation: +1050 m -1750 m

DAY 28**SOSPEL - COL DU RAZET - VIEUX CATSELLAR - MENTON**

Last day of the GTA, not there yet... but can you smell the sea?! Beautiful climb to the Col de Razel (1032m) on an old paved path between ruined shepherd huts. Passing flocks of sheep and goats from Rove, testifies to the arrival in Provence. The vegetation becomes much more leafy and fragrant. Chestnut trees, maples and rosemary... Enjoy the last mountain pass, Col du Berceau (1050m) and a picnic lunch overlooking the harbour of Menton... final descent of 1050m to the waters edge!

6.5 hour walk / Elevation: +1110m -1450m

End point in Menton harbour.



Dates and prices

DEPARTURES AND PRICES

Departure from 21 June to 16 August 2026

Classic version in dormitory

Without luggage transfer

3065€ per person (based on 2 people)

Single departure supplement : **490€**

With luggage transfer (except on days 1, 4, 6, 11, 12, 18, 20 and 25)

2 persons : 3990€/ person

3 persons : 3715€/ person

4 persons : 3370€/ person

5 persons : 3290€/ person

6 persons : 3110€/ person

Comfort option 2 to 3-person bedroom (except 2 nights) : +610€ per person

Drop-off and left-luggage charges in Menton (if you do not have a hotel booked in Menton on the last day): **€20** per item.

Information and bookings by telephone or email.

THE PRICE

Includes:

- Accommodation with half-board formula except the night in Modane (B&B) ;
- 1 road book file (paper) for a group of 1 to 4 people and the digital version to download for each participant; additional paper road book on request ;
- Daily luggage transfer between accommodation if you have chosen this option (except on days 1, 4, 6, 11, 12, 18, 20 and 25) ;
- Transfers on day 3, day 10, day 15, day 23 ;
- Organisation and booking fees, taxes.

The price does not include:

- Picnic lunches ;
- Dinner on Day 14 at Modane ;
- Shower tokens ;
- Personal expenses (drinks, touristic visits, etc.);
- The cable car at Thollon (around 7€/ person) and descent on cable car at Brévent (around 18€/ person);
- The cable car at Les Houches (around 18€/ person/ trip);
- Guiding : you are responsible for your own safety ;



- Travel insurance.

The price is all inclusive from departure to end point.



The journey

LEVEL ***

Elevation: +/- 600m to 1200m approximately per day.

Walking time: 5 to 7 hours per day.

Type of trek: Mountain route on signposted paths. There is one easy cable route on day 4, a traverse, which can be avoided with a little more ascent.

You need to be in a good overall physical condition. Regularly practice an endurance sport such as walking, running, swimming or cycling, 3 to 4 hours a week. Your fitness training will make your walk easier and make it all the more enjoyable. Click here for a description of the different levels: [levels of difficulty](#)

The roadbook provides sufficient information on the itinerary of your hike. However, it is essential to be able to read an 1:25,000 map and to be sufficiently autonomous in the mountains to be able to tackle the itinerary with confidence, whatever the weather (fog, snow, etc.). Guiding is not included in the self-guided package.

You will be crossing areas with no telephone network. For your own safety, you may wish to bring along a radio or the latest generation telephone with a satellite connection.

ROAD BOOK

Before departure, we send you a travel folder with :

- IGN TOP 25 maps with the route highlighted
- 1 road-book containing all the information necessary for the trek
- 1 waterproof map holder
- Accommodation list

HIKING SIGNS

In France, the Grande Randonnée trails are signposted in red and white (in both directions). It is essential to be able to read a 1:25,000 scale IGN map.

LUGGAGE TRANSFER

Two options :

Without luggage transfer : you carry all your luggage.

With luggage transfer : your luggage is delivered to your accommodation, except on days 1, 4, 6, 11, 12, 18, 20 and 25).

ACCOMMODATION

CLASSIC

25 nights in dormitory or multiple rooms, in mountain chalets, refuges and gites.

2 nights in hotel rooms for 2 to 4 people.

COMFORT

25 nights in a room for 2 to 4 people, in a refuge, gite or small mountain hotel.



2 nights in dormitory in refuge.

MEALS

Breakfast and dinner are provided in each accommodation. Picnics are not included and can be pre-ordered at each accommodation in the evening. Please inform us about your food allergies and special diets **at the time of booking**. We do our best to accommodate special diets (gluten-free, vegetarian, etc.). However, we encourage you to bring some additional products for your own picnics.

MAPS

IGN Top 25 - 3528ET/ Morzine and Top 25 - 3530ET/ Samoëns (1/25 000).

Practical information

ACCESS TO DEPARTURE POINT

Departure from Thollon-les-Mémises tourist Office.

BY TRAIN

TGV Paris/Bellegarde/Evian.

There are regular buses from Evian to Thollon Les Mémises (40mins) www.thollonlesmemises.com

Timetables must be verified at a train station or at www.oui.sncf

BY CAR

Take the A40 motorway to Annemasse, free parking.

Train or bus to Evian : ligne-141-evian-annemasse or www.oui.sncf

Bus to Thollon les Mémises: www.thollonlesmemises.com

Return: Chamonix to Annemasse by train.

Or

Taxi transfer before or after your hike. Free parking in Annemasse, Thollon-les-Mémises and Chamonix.

In Chamonix: free parking at the Biolay car park opposite the Montenvers train station, if you wish to leave your car in a covered garage, contact: Chamonix Auto Park: 04 50 53 65 71.

CLOSEST AIRPORTS

Geneva (GVA) - Lyon (LYS) - Paris (PAR)

END OF STAY

End of the hike on Saturday around 4:30 p.m. your bags will be in the hotel you have booked (if you have taken the luggage transfer option). If you leave Menton directly after the hike, we'll drop your bags off at a hotel near the station (the hotel will charge us €20 per bag if you don't stay overnight).

Return by train:

At Menton train station, you can reach Nice (Nice => Menton: 40 mins) and the trains or planes that take you back to major destinations (arriving at Nice station between 4 and 6 pm).

Night trains : Nice - Paris; TGV;

Shuttle bus to Nice - Côte d'Azur airport in front of Nice Ville station, on the right along the avenue in front of the station. You can spend the night in a hotel close to the station in Nice or Menton.

ACCOMMODATION BEFORE AND AFTER

Thollon Les Mémises : <https://ete.thollonlesmemises-tourisme.com>

Evian-les-Bains : <http://www.evian-tourisme.com/>

Thonon Les Bains

Chamonix : www.chamonix.com

If you book a night in the Chamonix valley, you can ask to your hotel reception a bus/ train pass so you can use public transports for free in the Chamonix valley. www.chamonix.montblancbus.com/en/bus-lines



TO CONTACT US

If you are late please contact the agency as soon as possible on: **+33 (0)4 50 79 09 16** or **+33 (0)6 42 49 76 07**



Equipment and luggage

EQUIPMENT LIST

Clothing

- Walking trousers
- Shorts (Bikini/swimsuit, just in case!)
- Breathable or merino wool t-shirts
- Breathable or merino wool leggings
- Fleece or jumper
- Wind stopper or Goretex jacket
- Lightweight down jacket
- Waterproof poncho + gaiters or Goretex trousers + waterproof rucksack cover
- Pair of gloves and a warm hat
- Sun hat or baseball cap
- Walking socks (1 pair per day)
- Sturdy walking boots with a good sole, already broken in
- 1 change of clothes for the evening
- A pair of comfortable shoes for the evening

Other Equipment

- Toilet bag
- Quick drying towel
- Sunglasses and sun cream
- Water bottle or Camelback (1.5 litre minimum)
- Knife, fork and spoon
- Plastic lunch box/plate for your picnic lunches (0,4 to 0,5L)
- Plastic cup for coffee
- Small First Aid kit (antihistamine, ibuprofen, Compeed type blister pads...)
- Survival blanket
- Head torch or hand torch
- Sleeping bag liner sheet and pillowcase (blankets provided at accommodation)
- Two adjustable walking poles (highly recommended)
- Identity card or passport

BACKPACK

Bring a comfortable backpack of 30 to 40 litres for your personal belongings for the day (warm clothes, waterproofs, water, plate and cutlery for your picnic, sunscreen and your identity papers) and please keep a little room to carry a picnic and snacks.

LUGGAGE TRANSFER



You are allowed **1 soft, sports type bag, with all your possessions inside, of 10kg maximum per person** . Your baggage will be transported daily between accommodation by our logistics vehicle where access is not always easy.

Baggage which is too heavy won't be accepted by the drivers, please think of their backs!

YOUR BACKPACK FOR THE NIGHTS WITHOUT LUGGAGE TRANSFER

On nights 1, 4, 6, 11, 12, 18, 20 and 25 , your luggage won't be delivered at your accommodation (you will get it back the day after). Here are the things to bring with you (about 2 kilos are enough!):

- small toiletries bag
- sleeping bag liner sheet
- change of clothes for the day after (bare necessities!) and comfortable for the evening.



Details

HOW TO REGISTER

- By internet: www.altitude-montblanc.com

- By telephone: +33 (0)4 50 79 09 16

- By post: Please provide your details

- Surname, First Name, Date of birth
- Address
- Email
- Telephone
- Mobile

If you wish to register by post, please complete the form below and return it to:

Altitude Mont-Blanc
62 Passage du nant Devant
74110 MONTRIOND
FRANCE

Please specify whether you wish to take out an optional cancellation insurance

On receipt of your registration we will email an invoice (per couple) with a request for a deposit of 35% in association with your account details at Altitude Mont-Blanc

('My Account'). Payment can be made by credit card, bank transfer or by cheque. On receipt of your deposit you will receive a registration confirmation.

The balance must be paid one month before departure without a reminder from us.

For self-guided tours, we will then send your tour pack (includes maps, descriptive book etc.)

Our terms and conditions of sale can be found on our website.

Do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.



Postal booking form

Complete this form and return it with your deposit.

Last name _____

First name _____

Birth date _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Mobile phone _____

Email _____

Requested trip **GRANDE TRAVERSEE DES ALPES self-guided - sections 1, 2, 3 and 4**

Number of days **28**

Insurance _____

Trip price **2 745 €**

Estimated deposit (30%) **823,50 €**

Signed in _____

Date _____

Signature

Return with your deposit to

Altitude Montblanc, 62 Passage du Nant Devant, 74110 Montriond
+33 (0)4 50 79 09 16 · info@altitude-montblanc.com