

MONT BLANC: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

We've compiled a list of the most commonly asked questions about this trip.

Hopefully you find some of these useful but if you have a specific question that isn't covered in the FAQ's, then please do not hesitate to get in touch.

For more information please head over to our Mont Blanc trip page [here](#).

WHAT KIND OF FITNESS LEVEL DO I NEED?

You need to be able to hike comfortably with a heavy pack for up to 10 hours at a moderate pace. Mountaineering is all about having good cardiovascular endurance to be able to continue being active for long periods. As well as this you will need to have a good head for heights and good overall body balance and awareness. [Click here to check out our training advice page.](#)

DO I NEED TO HAVE PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE?

This is a hot topic and based on our extensive experience we are confident to say that you do not need any previous mountaineering experience to climb Mont Blanc, but you should have a good head for heights. Your safety is always our top priority and therefore you must have a good level of cardiovascular endurance in order to keep up with the required pace for a Mont Blanc ascent – if you are not fit enough your guide will have no option but to turn you around. See our FAQ 'What kind of fitness level do I need'.

Crucial to success you must also be able to learn new skills quickly and have an ability to develop new skills, such as walking with crampons whilst attached to your guide with a rope. These are skills your guide will teach during your first 3 days with us, prior to your Mont Blanc ascent. This training period is also an opportunity for your guide to evaluate your skills and capability to climb Mont Blanc.

HOW MANY CLIENTS PER GUIDE?

For the three training days at the beginning of the week it is a 4 client:1 guide ratio. For your Mont Blanc attempt the ratio is 2 clients:1 guide.

WHAT ARE THE GUIDES LIKE?

All of our guides are highly experienced and personable people. They have all been hand picked by us for their skills, character, and knowledge of the route up Mont Blanc and this is the most important thing when it comes down to making key decisions in the mountains and providing the safest experience for our clients. Our guides are of various nationalities and all speak a high level of English and are very attentive. Their primary role is to get you to the summit and back safely, but they add their personal touch with stories and interesting facts about the area, making for a well-rounded thoroughly enjoyable experience. They like to share their knowledge of the mountains and their experiences, so don't hesitate to ask questions and pick their brains.

WHAT ARE THE MOUNTAIN HUTS LIKE?

The mountain huts we use for our Mont Blanc course are fairly basic but comfortable. You will sleep in dormitories on a shared basis, usually 6-8 per room. Breakfast and a 3 course dinner are included. Lunch is provided at an extra charge. On Gran Paradiso you will most likely stay at the Rifugio Chabod. On Mont Blanc your first night will most likely be spent at the Refuge de Tete Rousse, followed by the Gouter Refuge on the second night.

IS THERE WIFI IN THE MOUNTAIN HUTS?

No. All mountain huts are fairly basic and do not provide WiFi. Some huts will have phone signal but we cannot guarantee this will work at all times.

CAN I STORE MY BELONGINGS WITH ADVENTURE BASE WHEN I'M IN THE HUTS?

Yes. For the duration of your trip you are able to store your belongings in your accommodation in Chamonix. Please note rooms are usually allocated on a twin share basis, in most cases sharing with others from your course.

WHAT SIZE BACKPACK SHOULD I BRING?

Your backpack should be between 35-45L. It is important that your backpack has an ice axe strap to stash your ice axe when you are not using it. Your backpack must also have a rain-proof cover. Think light-weight, remember you have to carry it!

WHICH TYPE OF BOOTS DO I NEED?

You will need B2 or B3 mountaineering boots for Mont Blanc. All mountaineering boots are graded in a B1, B2, B3 system. B3 boots are the most rigid, and therefore most suitable for walking on snow with crampons, and B2 boots are a little more comfortable but less rigid and also less warm. An example of a B3 boot is the La Sportiva Nepal Evo GTX or Scarpa Mont Blanc Pro. Boots can be rented from our partner Concept Pro in Chamonix if you don't want to invest in your own pair.

ARE SKI/SNOWBOARD TROUSERS SUITABLE?

Ski/snowboard trousers aren't suitable for the Mont Blanc trip. You'll need a pair of mountaineering specific trousers (soft shell) as well as a waterproof hard shell pair that are lightweight and not insulated. Conditions can be harsh especially on the summit days so it's important to have these two layers. We also recommend to bring lightweight thermal leggings. Read through our kit list for a full description of what you'll need to bring.

WILL I DEFINITELY MAKE IT TO THE SUMMIT?

In short, no. Whilst we will always strive to get you to the summit safely, sometimes the weather or the conditions of the mountain don't play ball. When there is precipitation, high winds and low visibility for example, we cannot guarantee reaching the summit and will sometimes recommend an alternative. Each Mont Blanc course has a lead guide. The lead guide will always conduct a meeting with the clients and other guides the day before the Mont Blanc ascent is due to begin. During this meeting the latest weather forecast, conditions of the mountain, and the clients' own abilities to reach the summit will be discussed. Clients and guides will voice their opinions and/or concerns at the time and then decide how best to proceed. We fully trust and back our guides to make the final decision based on their years of experience on the mountain. They are entrusted to make the final call and the client must accept any decision made. All decisions will have client safety as a top priority.

WHAT WILL WE DO IF THE WEATHER IS BAD?

This depends on the winds, the precipitation, and the visibility.

In the case of strong winds of 50km or higher, reaching the summit of Mont Blanc will be difficult. High winds on the final ridge to the summit are dangerous and therefore summit success is very unlikely. In the case of high winds all over the high peaks of the Alps, we will look for suitable alternatives in the mid-mountain range. It is also unlikely that a helicopter will be able to fly in a rescue situation if there are high winds, which adds to the decision-making process.

In the case of precipitation, when it snows on Mont Blanc it usually means a summit attempt will be difficult. Route finding in a snow storm is generally quite unsafe. An attempt will depend on the amount of the snowfall and it will also greatly depend on the wind.

In the case of bad visibility, such as a whiteout, a summit attempt will be difficult. It depends on the thickness of the cloud and we will most likely still attempt a summit but turn back if necessary.

In the case of high temperatures over an extended period of time, the Grand Couloir between Tete Rousse and Gouter tends to become unsafe due to regular rock fall. The local authorities are quick to issue warnings when the couloir becomes unsafe and it has been known in recent summers that the Gouter route to Mont Blanc has been briefly closed. We will always listen to and obey local warnings.

Should Mont Blanc be unsafe, we will study the conditions on other peaks in the Alps, like Mont Rosa. Should conditions be a lot better elsewhere, we will propose this to you as an option. If not, then we will propose adventures at slightly lower altitudes that keep you safe but are still lots of fun.

WHAT INSURANCE DO I NEED?

Let's face it, these types of trips don't come risk free. We're putting ourselves in amazing environments but also environments that carry an element of risk with them. In order to protect yourself adequately you will need a specialist travel insurance that caters for the types of activities you will be undertaking. It is a condition of our agreement that you are covered by adequate travel insurance for your arrangements. [Click here](#) to understand which one is for you.

CAN I CHANGE MY TRIP DATES?

You can change your trip dates subject to availability and a €100 admin fee. Please contact us if you would like to explore changing your dates.