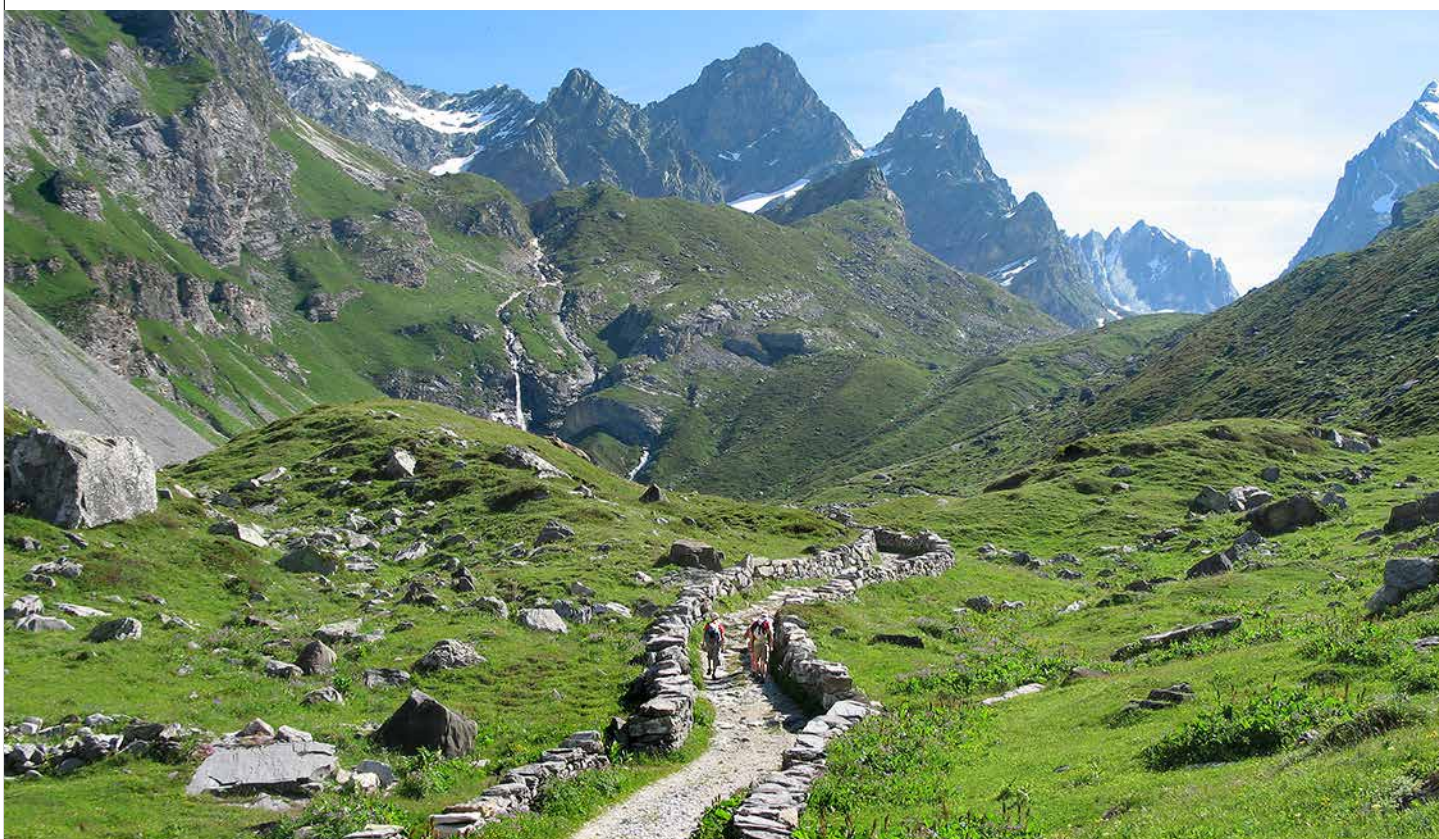


Mont Blanc to the Mediterranean

FROM THE MOUNTAINS TO THE SEA ALONG THE GR5



TRIP DATES

2024

August 4-17, 2024
September 1-14, 2024

2025

July 13-26, 2025
August 3-16, 2025
August 31-September 13, 2025

**This trip has been featured as
one of Outside Magazine's "Trips of a Lifetime"!**



Wilderness Travel

ITINERARY	3
TRIP COST, PAYMENT & INSURANCE	8
ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE	9
LODGING	10
TRIP LEADERS	13
TRIP DETAILS	14



Mont Blanc to the Mediterranean

FROM THE MOUNTAINS TO THE SEA ALONG THE GR5

Hike from mighty Mont Blanc, with its perpetual glaciers, to the palm-fringed beaches of the Côte d'Azur, where the Maritime Alps plunge into the blue Mediterranean. Setting off from Mont Blanc, we hike through age-old villages and in high alpine meadows where cowbells echo and blue gentian bloom. Heading south, we follow the legendary GR5 trail across remote national parks of singular beauty, then enter brightly colored hill villages that announce the Mediterranean is near. Arriving on the coast, we head for a celebratory dip in the sea. Our unique French adventure has been featured as one of Outside Magazine's "Trips of a Lifetime."



1102 Ninth Street, Berkeley, CA 94710

800-368-2794 • 510-558-2488

www.wildernesstravel.com • info@wildernesstravel.com

Itinerary

DAY 1

MEGÈVE, FRANCE

Arrive in Megève and transfer to our hotel in the center of town (a complimentary van transfer is available from the airport in Geneva). Megève is one of the most charming alpine resorts in Europe, full of fashionable boutiques and fine restaurants yet also offering a very well-preserved old town center of typical Savoy charm. We gather for an orientation meeting and Welcome Dinner tonight. Hotel overnight in Megève...D

Driving Time: 1.5 hours

DAY 2

MONT BLANC PANORAMA HIKE / CROISSE BAULET

Today's hike is a wonderful introduction to the splendor of the French Alps and Mont Blanc in particular. We begin right out of our hotel for a leisurely walk and a cable car ride to Le Jaillet (5,200'). From here, we follow a path through a forest and up a steep trail through alpine meadows, with breathtaking views of Mont Blanc (15,770'), highest peak in western Europe, and all its beautiful southern satellites. There are beautiful panoramas of the Savoie Pre-Alps and peaks of the Vanoise that we will be visiting in a few days. We'll make our 1,400 foot ascent to the peak of Petit Croisse Baulet, and if we wish to continue on, we can follow a short descent of 250 feet followed by another ascent of 1,000 feet to the peak of Croisse Baulet (7,336'), granting us 360-degree views of the mountains around us. We enjoy a picnic lunch en route. We hike back to the cable car for a ride down to town. Dinner and overnight in Megève...BLD

Hiking Details: 7 miles, 6 hours, 2,500 feet ascent/descent

DAY 3

COL DE BRESSON / BOURG-SAINT-MAURICE

We head to Lac de Roselend for a hike up to Col de Bresson (8,098'), with a descent to the chapel of St. Guérin. Near the top of the col, we enjoy impressive vistas of the southern flanks of the Mont Blanc range and the monolith of Pierra Menta (8,902'), site of the most prestigious ski-mountaineering competition in France. We also get our first glimpses of the summits of the peaks of the Parc National de la Vanoise. After our hike, we head for Bourg-Saint-Maurice, capital of the Tarentaise Valley. This historic town was once an important stronghold for the House of Savoy because of its location near the Little St. Bernard Pass. Overnight at hotel in Bourg-Saint-Maurice...BLD

Hiking Details: 8 miles, 6.5 hours, 2,700 feet ascent, 2,900 feet descent

Driving Time: 2.5 hours

DAY 4

VANOISE NATIONAL PARK / PRALOGNAN-LA-VANOISE

Today's hike is the longest of the trip, but is one of the most beautiful, with vistas of waterfalls, meadows, lakes, and glaciers. We begin at the entrance to Vanoise National Park, the first national park in France, created in 1963 to preserve the wild eastern section of the Vanoise massif. The park safeguards precious mountain fauna and is home to some 2,000 ibex and 5,500 chamois, yet it is also the most extensive skiing area on the planet. There are also more



TRIP DETAILS AT-A-GLANCE

Length:	14 days
Arrive:	Megève, France
Depart:	Nice, France
Lodging:	13 nights rustic hotels and inns
Meals:	All meals included except 1 lunch and 2 dinners (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
Activity:	Hiking / Trekking
Trip Level:	1 2 3 4 5 6 12 hiking days on moderate to steep trails, 5-7 hours a day, altitudes between 6,000-9,400 feet, van support (for luggage or if you wish to skip a day's hike). This is a strenuous hiking trip, read "What the Trip is Like" for more details.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Hike our unique mountain route across a spectacular range of cultures and landscapes
- Explore secluded mountain villages and less-traveled national parks
- Enjoy a small group—maximum 12 people—and expert Trip Leaders



“I loved it all. A great hike with extraordinary views, great company, delicious meals, cozy inns, and dramatic scenery changes. To end with a swim in the Mediterranean was perfection!”

Cathy C., Sonoma, CA

than 300 miles of footpaths here. Our hike brings us above treeline to Lac de la Plagne (7,035') and Col du Plan Séry (8,560'), with a descent to Champagny le Haut, a beautiful pastoral hamlet. At hike's end, we head to Pralognan-la-Vanoise, “capital” of Vanoise outdoor activities and surrounded by 10,000-foot peaks. Overnight at hotel...BLD

Hiking Details: 10 miles, 8 hours, 3,500 feet ascent/descent

Driving Time: 1 hour

DAY 5

PRALOGNAN-LA-VANOISE

There are a few options for our hike from Pralognan today. The more strenuous option is a challenging but magnificent hike that starts right from our hotel in Pralognan and leads up to the Refuge de la Valette by way of a series of steep switchbacks. It's a dramatic trail with fabulous views of the glaciated Pralognan Valley and the immense ice cap on the Dome de la Vanoise. Our return hike brings us spectacular views as well, as the whole of Vanoise National Park unfolds at our feet. For those who want a more moderate option today, a short van ride brings us to Les Prioux, where we hike a scenic balcony route through alpine meadows, returning to Les Prioux for lunch. There are views of the valley above Pralognan, and the GR5 route over the Col de La Chaviere. It's also possible to witness the old-fashioned way of making the famous Beaufort cheese. After lunch, there is another option to take a gentle downhill hike from Les Prioux back into town...BD

Hiking Details (Option 1): 5 miles, 6 hours, 3,900 feet ascent/2,800 feet descent

(Option 2): 6 miles, 4 hours, 1,500 feet ascent/descent

DAY 6

COL DE LA VANOISE / TERMIGNON

A cable car carries us up to Mont Bochor (6,635') for some of the best views in the Vanoise, including the rounded Dômes de Vanoise and the very impressive Grande Casse (12,648'). Our hiking route follows an ancient Roman road linking La Tarentaise with the Haute Maurienne valley, and we hike beneath the towering Grande Casse to Col de la Vanoise (8,274'), with beautiful reflections in three gleaming alpine lakes along the way. We continue hiking to the Refuge Entre Deux Eaux, and our van transports us to Termignon, a sleepy little village in the Haute Maurienne valley and a step back in time. Overnight at hotel...BLD

Hiking Details: 9 miles, 6 hours, 1,600 feet ascent, 1,300 feet descent

DAY 7

VALLÉE ÉTROITE / BRIANÇON

A spectacular drive brings us into Italy for today's hike. We either pass through the Fréjus Tunnel or the pass of Col du Mt Ceni to reach the Vallée Étroite (“Narrow Valley”), a remote valley that was used long ago as a passage into France from Italy. Along the way, we get a glimpse of the old fortifications of Aussois, including hilltop Fort d'Esseillon, a reminder of the wars between the French and Austrians as late as the 19th century. Our hike joins the GR5 as we

ascend a zig-zag path through a beautiful and unspoiled forest and then into high alpine meadows to Col des Thuers (7,196'). From the path we will be able to see the prominent peaks of Vallée Étroite known as the Three Magi. After a picnic lunch at a scenic spot, we branch off to the GR57, a variation of the GR5, that takes us through the woods with views of the Col de L'Echelle area and the Three Magi. Our hike ends at the tiny Chapel of Notre Dame de Bon Rencontre. Later we continue to Briançon for an overnight in a hotel...BLD
Hiking Details: 7 miles, 5-6 hours, 1,950 feet ascent, 2,150 feet descent
Driving Time: 2.75 hours

DAY 8

REST DAY / OPTIONAL HIKES / BRIANÇON

Briançon is a very pretty town with a strong medieval character, and it's a great place to take a break from hiking. We enjoy a rest day here with time to stroll ancient streets between narrow, colorful buildings. Not much has changed here over the centuries, and the many shops with local products create the atmosphere of a medieval marketplace. Outside the city ramparts, we have options for hikes in the surrounding mountains, where there are numerous fortresses, some built by Vauban during the reign of Louis XIV. An optional worthwhile hike rejoins the GR5 at Montgenevre on a balcony trail through forest and meadows that descends to Briancon. We can enter the fortified city via the spectacular Pont Asfeld bridge high above the Durance River. Along the way we may also visit Vauban forts associated with Briancon and remnants of the Maginot Line fortifications. Lunch and dinner are on your own to sample the array of local restaurants, and our Trip Leader is happy to make recommendations. Overnight in Briançon...B
Hiking Details: 6 miles, 3 hours, 1,650 feet descent

DAY 9

QUEYRAS REGIONAL PARK / JAUSIERS

From Briancon, we make our way over one of the most famous Tour de France mountain passes, the Col de l'Izoard, on our way to our trailhead. Our hike today rises gently through a forest where vistas of the regional park of Queyras open up. The Queyras is one of the most remote and sparsely populated areas of France, where people live in a self-sufficient way cut off from the rest of the country. A gentle ascent leads to Col du Tronchet (2,820') with the option to climb further to another fantastic viewpoint looking over the Queyras. From the pass, we descend through forest and flower-covered meadows to the hamlet of Souliers and continue down a jeep trail to Lac de Roue to join the GR5. After a picnic lunch, we begin a steeper descent through the forest with views of the fortress of Chateau Queyras through breaks in the trees. Time permitting, we'll explore around the chateau, which has been a



"This is the second time I've traveled with WT. I'm noting consistent high quality, excellent planning, excellent Trip Leaders, and nice clientele."

Teddie G., Pocatello, ID



Itinerary (cont'd)



"I loved everything about the trip and just wish it could have lasted longer. Thank you for making my trip so wonderful."

Carrie M., Boise, ID

defensive stronghold since the 13th century and was only vacated by the French army in the 1960s. Continue on to our alpine hotel in the Ubaye Valley near Jausiers for dinner and overnight...BLD

Hiking Details: 9 miles, 6 hours, 3,000 feet ascent, 3,300 feet descent

Driving Time: 2.5 hours

DAY 10

COL DE LA BONETTE / AURON

This morning we set off for a drive across the Route des Grandes Alpes. This morning we set off for a drive across the Route des Grandes Alpes ("Great Alpine Road"), a scenic mountain road that offers us a spectacular transition from the culture and terrain of the French Alps of the north to the Mediterranean Maritime Alps. En route, we cross two mountain passes over 7,000 feet, including Col de La Bonette (8,907'). We break up our drive with a hike in the summit area just past the Col to enjoy superb panoramas of Mercantour National Park. A steady climb on old military trails brings us to the Cime de la Pelousette (9,300') and to the remnants of a fortification built on the ill-fated Maginot Line established on the French border in World War I. We have lunch here while taking in the views, and can imagine what it must have been like for snowbound French soldiers stationed here during the winter. We descend to the ruined military buildings at Camp des Fourches and our waiting vehicle. We continue our drive, stopping along the way to enjoy the views and explore little villages, including pretty St. Etienne de Tinée. In the afternoon, we arrive at our simple hotel in Auron, located right on the GR5...BLD

Hiking Details: 5 miles, 5 hours, 800 feet ascent, 1,600 feet descent

Driving time: 2.5 hour

DAY 11

HIKING THE GR5 THROUGH MERCANTOUR NATIONAL PARK

The gateway to Mercantour National Park, Auron is a popular ski resort in the winter (it's one of the biggest ski stations in the Southern Alps), and in summer



the region offers great hiking options. Today we head to the hamlet of Bouseiyas just below Camp des Fourches to hike a section of the GR5. Our trail passes through forest, meadows, ancient fortifications, with wild and rugged scenery in all directions. We'll traverse to the pass of Col de la Colombiere (7,570'), with the option to climb another 300 feet to an abandoned French lookout post from the 1890s on the peak of the Tete de Vinaigre—the views from this vantage point are stunning. Our descent takes us through alpine meadows and terraced fields to the tiny village of St. Dalmas Le Sauvage and then we'll transfer back to Auron. Dinner is on your own this evening. Overnight at hotel...BL
Hiking Details: 9 miles, 6 hours, 1,750 feet ascent, 2,950 feet descent
Driving time: 1.75 hours

DAY 12

GR5 / ROYA VALLEY

Our hike today begins right outside our hotel in Auron, where we'll join the GR5 to cross the pass of the Col du Blainon (6,588'). Here we enter the remote Val Rôia (Roya Valley). In the summer, the valley is full of grazing sheep and we may encounter shepherds with their flocks in the meadows. Our hike veers off the GR5 to fully immerse ourselves in the splendor of the park, with views of one of the most remote sections of the entire GR5, before ending in the tiny hamlet and village of Roya. Afterwards, we'll drive to the medieval hilltop village of Levens. Overnight at hotel...BLD
Hiking Details: 9 miles, 6 hours, 1,350 feet ascent/1,700 feet descent
Driving time: 2.5 hours

DAY 13

LEVENS / NICE

We walk straight from our hotel in Levens to the GR5 trail this morning. Our last day of walking is one to savor as we follow the GR5 straight to the bustling Mediterranean port city of Nice. Much of our route is along the crests or ridges below the last of the Alps, Mont Cima (2,280') and Mont Chauve (2,296'), and we'll traverse trails along slopes, with sweeping views of the Mediterranean Sea and our first glimpses of Nice. The heat of the south, the olive groves, the grape-growing terraces, and the terracotta houses all add to our very atmospheric last day of walking. From our pickup point just north of the city of Nice, we make a short drive to our hotel on the Promenade des Anglais in Nice. Tonight we gather for a festive Farewell Dinner. Overnight at hotel...BLD
Hiking Details: 10 miles, 6 hours, 1,550 feet ascent/2,200 feet descent
Driving Time: 20 minutes

DAY 14

DEPART

Transfer to the Nice airport or the train station whenever you want after breakfast, or extend your stay on your own in Nice...B

A Special Note: This itinerary is as accurate as possible, but please note that the hiking distances and elevations listed are estimates. The mountain weather will dictate our exact hiking itinerary.



"The variety in scenery from day to day was wonderful. There was always something new to see!"
Elizabeth M., Long Beach, NY



Trip Cost, Payment & Insurance

TRIP COST

Prices are per person, valid through 2024

\$7395 (9-12 members)

\$7895 (5-8 members)

Single supplement: \$955

2025 Trip Costs: Please call for pricing

To offer the lowest possible cost, our trips are priced according to the number of participants on the trip. All costs are per person, based on double occupancy. If you wish to have a single room, you must pay the single supplement fee. Please note that Wilderness Travel staff, or guests of Wilderness Travel such as travel writers, photographers, or leaders-in-training, are not included in the tier pricing count.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATE

Due to the volatility of currency markets, we can only offer the most competitive pricing on our trips in Europe by partially tying the trip cost directly to the value of the Euro. In the late spring of 2022, when we set the rates for our 2023 program, the US Dollar equaled 0.93 Euros. While in most years, no price changes are ever necessary, if there were to be a significant change in exchange rates, we may be forced to raise or able to lower our trip cost; if so, your final invoice, sent two weeks before your final payment is due, will reflect the difference. Please note that the calculation will not be a straight proration. While most of the trip cost is paid in Euros, the remainder of our expenses are paid in US Dollars. The overall effect is to moderate any change; thus, if the Euro were to rise in value, the land price would rise less than might be expected, and if the Euro were to fall, the drop in trip cost would also be less than might be expected.

TRIP COST INCLUDES

- Expert leadership of two Wilderness Travel Trip Leaders
- Accommodations in hotels and inns
- All meals included except 1 lunch and 2 dinners as indicated in the Detailed Itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- A glass of wine or beer with dinner
- Van support and luggage transfer
- Cable cars and chairlifts to trailheads for scheduled hikes
- Land transportation during the trip, transfers between overnight stops, airport transfers

TRIP COST DOES NOT INCLUDE

International airfare, any meals not specified after each itinerary day, airport departure taxes, optional tipping or gratuities to leaders or staff, additional hotel nights that may be necessary airline schedule changes or other factors; pre-trip expenses of medical immunizations (if any), travel insurance, or passports and visas; and other expenses of a personal nature (alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.).

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

At time of reservation: \$600

90 days prior to departure: Balance

CANCELLATION AND TRANSFER FEE SCHEDULE

Up to 91 days prior to departure: No charge!

61-90 days prior to departure: 25% of trip cost

46-60 days prior to departure: 50% of trip cost

45 days or less: 100% of trip cost

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We highly recommend you purchase travel insurance. You can take advantage of a comprehensive Travel Protection Plan designed for Wilderness Travel by Travelex, or purchase other insurance on your own. See our website for details: www.wildernesstravel.com/insurance

Arrival & Departure

Upon confirming your trip reservation, we will send you a Welcome Packet that includes a list of documents (passport, visas, etc.) required for your trip. Please feel free to call if you would like this information before making your air arrangements.

If you have booked extra services before or after the trip, an Extra Services Confirmation will be sent with your Final Documents.

ARRIVAL & MEETING PLACE

Megève, France

Suggested Airport: Geneva Airport (GVA)

Suggested Date & Time: Day 1, by 4:00 pm (to transfer to Megève by the group meeting time at 6:00 pm)

Meeting Place: You will meet your Trip Leader in the lobby of the group hotel in Megève at 6:00 pm on Day 1.

We provide a convenient transfer between Geneva, Switzerland, and our hotel in Megève, France. This is a van service that will meet you at your requested flight free of charge—even if you arrive a few days ahead of the actual trip start date. Please note this is a public van transfer service and it's likely that other passengers may join the same transfer.

A driver holding a sign with your name on it will meet you near the “General Information” desk directly outside of the customs exit (arrivals) area. The journey from Geneva is approximately an hour with this service. Please let us know if you would like to book this transfer by filling out our Extra Services Request Form.

DEPARTURE

Nice, France

Suggested Airport: Nice Côte d’Azur Airport (NCE)

Suggested Date & Time: Day 14, anytime

Your Trip Leader or the hotel front desk can help you arrange a taxi from the group hotel to the Nice Côte d’Azur Airport, or the train station.

INTERNATIONAL AIR TRAVEL

You are responsible for making your own arrangements for flights to and from Europe. There are many online consolidators for booking travel, but for more personal help arranging air transport, you can contact Exito Travel at 1-800-655-4053 in the US or 1-800-670-2605 in Canada. They are very adept at putting flight itineraries together, to even the most far-flung places. More information can be found on Exito’s website at www.exitotravel.com.

Depending on your routing, it is necessary to depart from the US one or possibly two days prior to Day 1 of the trip itinerary. The name on your airline ticket must match the name on your passport exactly, and your passport must be valid for at least six months after your date of return to the US.

Please do not purchase your tickets until you are confirmed on the trip. Once your tickets have been purchased, please send us a copy of your airline schedule so we can reserve your airport transfers. It is your responsibility to ensure your flight times coordinate with the arrival and departure logistics for this trip.

Accommodations



HOTEL AU VIEUX MOULIN

Megève, France

Days 1 to 2 (2 nights)

Just steps from the pedestrian zone of the pretty mountain town of Megève, this is a chalet-type hotel, all in wood, with a friendly atmosphere and a cozy bar.



HOTEL AUTANTIC

Bourg-Saint-Maurice, France

Day 3 (1 night)

With a tranquil countryside location outside Bourg-Saint-Maurice, this modern hotel has traditional Savoyard stone-and-wood architecture and comfortable rooms. Breakfasts are simple but good (with fresh eggs from the hotel's own chickens!).



HOTELS IN PRALOGNAN-LA-VANOISE

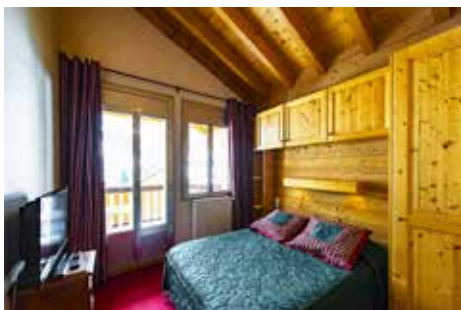
Pralognan-la-Vanoise, France

Days 4 to 5 (2 nights)

In Pralognan-la-Vanoise we stay at one of the following properties:

CHALET HOTEL LES AIRELLES

Located in the lovely area of Pralognan-la-Vanoise, Chalet Hotel les Airelles is a quaint hotel surrounded by mountain views. Guest rooms are cozy, with comfortable beds and private balconies. The hotel has a nice restaurant and breakfast buffet serving simple yet delicious meals. Be sure to take a dip in the hotel's pool if you wish to stretch your legs after a day's hike.



HOTEL LE GRAND-BEC

This welcoming hotel has rustic charm and a friendly staff. Rooms have a log cabin feel, with private balconies overlooking the town. After a day on the trail, relax in the reading room with a fireplace or have a drink at the hotel bar. If you have time, enjoy a number of outdoor activities including lawn chess, ping-pong, swimming in the indoor or outdoor pool, and there's even a private tennis court.



RELAIS DES DEUX COLS

Val Cenis, France

Day 6 (1 night)

The Relais des Deux Cols is a simple lodge with a lovely riverside location and a great view over the mountains. The restaurant has a professional chef and excellent cuisine and is popular with the local residents. There is a small seasonal swimming pool.



AUBERGE DE LA PAIX

Briançon, France

Days 7 to 8 (2 nights)

Right in the historic district of the medieval fortified town of Briançon, this hotel has modern, comfortable rooms and an on-site restaurant.



VILLA MORELIA

Jausiers, France

Day 9 (1 night)

Chateau-style Villa Morelia was built a century ago on the edge of Mercantour National Park. It offers a restaurant with terrace dining, an outdoor bar, a pool, spacious grounds, and a beautiful view of the French Alps. Guest rooms are in the original building as well as in a new annex.



LE CHALET D'AURON

Auron, France

Days 10 to 11 (2 nights)

Just steps from the village square, Le Chalet d'Auron is an inviting hotel with a cozy atmosphere. Guest rooms are comfortable and clean, there is a good restaurant on-site, the terrace is a great place to sit and enjoy the panoramic views of the mountains, and you'll be warmly welcomed by the friendly staff.

Accommodations (cont'd)



HOTEL LA VIGNERAIE

Levens, France

Day 12 (1 night)

The family-run Hotel L'Ecureuil is located in the ski resort of Auron in the heart of the Parc du Mercantour in the Southern Alps. It features a bar, restaurant, and terrace.



HOTELS IN NICE

Nice, France

Day 13 (1 night)

In Nice, we stay at one of the following properties:

HOTEL WEST END

This historic 121-room hotel was the first hotel built on Nice's legendary Promenade des Anglais in 1842—a jewel of the Belle Epoque. Well appointed guest rooms offer views of the turquoise Mediterranean, and there is a private beach area.



WESTMINSTER HOTEL AND SPA

Situated in central Nice facing the sea, the Westminster is just a few steps from the shops and historic streets of the colorful Old Town district. The restaurant is excellent and has a good view of the promenade and beach.

These are our signature accommodations for this trip. Although it is highly unlikely, we may make substitutions when necessary. To see more photos and descriptions, please visit our *Mont Blanc to the Mediterranean* webpage and click on “Accommodations.”

Trip Leaders

Wilderness Travel Trip Leaders have a passion and a joy for creating an unforgettable journey. We are extremely proud of them and the incredible travel experiences they make possible. For more information, including client comments about them and which specific trips they will be leading, please visit our webpage and click on “Trip Leaders”: www.wildernesstravel.com/trip/france-mont-blanc-mediterranean-gr5-hiking-tour/



STEPHAN RENARD

Stephan Renard was born in Grenoble in the French Alps and grew up in the wild and remote Vercors region of the Rhône-Alpes, where he gained his passion for hiking, climbing, and skiing. A professional mountain leader and ski instructor since his youth, he loves outdoor pursuits of every kind and also has an affinity for jazz music, French and American literature, and Irish culture (acquired during his years of guiding French tours in Ireland).



MARK TENNENT

A native of Bath, England, Mark Tennent quickly learned his calling was in the mountains. He completed a specialist Outdoor Education degree at Bangor Normal College in North Wales, subsequently instructed at various outdoor centers in the UK, then graduated from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and was commissioned into the British Army, which he left as a Captain. A recipient of several mountaineering and leadership certificates, Mark has worked in various parts of the world including Afghanistan, Macedonia, Kosovo, Kenya, Sudan, and India. Since 2005, he has lived in the Savoie department of the French Alps, near Albertville, where he shares his passion for the outdoors, French food, and the local culture. He's a member of the French Syndicat Interprofessionnel de la Montagne, bringing together mountain guides, climbing instructors, and mountain leaders. When not guiding, he can be found ski-mountaineering, rock climbing, and cycling.



LAURENCE FRISON

Traveler, hiker, skier, and guide by passion, and graphic designer by trade, Laurence (“Lolo”) Frison embodies the life of an adventurer. She spent a decade exploring the world from Africa to Australia, including a three-month road trip from Vancouver to Los Angeles, and has specialized in guiding groups in the French Alps, gaining her French national credential in mountain leadership. You can often find Lolo leading our groups on tasty detours through the French markets, a cultural gateway to the heart of France, she says. When not leading hiking adventures with WT, she finds new adventures through biking and beekeeping in Thonon-les-Bains in the French Alps, where she lives.



SIMONE SIMPSON

An avid wilderness and backcountry explorer, Simone Simpson taught outdoor education in the Snowdonian mountains of Wales for 13 years before moving to the southern French Alps, where she leads treks in the Alpes Maritimes in southeast France. Her leadership stints have taken her far beyond Europe—she has guided in Costa Rica, Borneo, and one year she led a month-long expedition to Botswana and Zambia with a team of 11 school girls! Alongside her adventurous career as a guide, she is also an advanced paraglider pilot and once competed at a national level. When not leading trips, Simone lives off the grid with her husband in the Alpes Maritimes in a solar-powered house that she and her husband built.

Trip Details

WHAT THE TRIP IS LIKE

This trip is rated a Level 5 (Strenuous) according to our trip grading system. You will need to be comfortable hiking 10 miles a day, being on your feet for up to 8 hours a day, and hiking significant distances for many days in a row. While no climbing or mountaineering experience is necessary, all trip members should have ample hiking experience and be able to keep up with the group as with the exception of one day, there are no alternative hiking options available. Trail conditions, weather, and the group's level of fitness can affect hiking times and pacing.

Average Hiking Day

- 7-9 miles
- 4-6 hours
- 2,000-3,000 feet gain/loss
- Altitudes range from 6,000-9,400 feet

Challenge Day

- Day 4 - 10 miles, 8.5 hours, and 3,500 feet gain/loss

TERRAIN

Trail conditions can be primitive, and there is a good bit of up-and-down (often a 2,000- to 3,000-foot gain and loss in elevation per day). We will undoubtedly encounter snow on the highest passes, and trails can be very rugged. You will need to traverse areas with loose scree, large boulders,

and sections of narrow, exposed trails. Your experienced mountain guides are there to assist you if needed.

GETTING IN SHAPE

We strongly urge you to train for your trip, as your enjoyment will be highly dependent on your level of fitness. The best training for a hike is to hike, especially over hills or rough terrain. Next best are running, swimming, bicycling, or other cardiovascular exercise. Stair climbing machines are excellent preparation for hiking uphill. Your feet should also be well prepared—make sure your hiking boots are sturdy, comfortable, and thoroughly broken-in. Altitude is generally not a problem on this trip. However, some people still experience a few problems when they first reach high altitude. Slight headache and sleeplessness are the most common symptoms.

WEATHER

The months we visit the Alps are the optimal ones, but mountain weather can be fickle. Temperatures are likely to reach the 70s°F (or even 80s°F) during the day, with cool breezes and occasional rain. At night, the temperature will drop quite a bit, depending on the altitude. We are likely to experience a full range of weather conditions, making rain gear and warm garments necessary items to carry with you on every hike.

HIKING DETAILS BY DAY				DRIVING DETAILS
DAY	HOURS	MILES	ELEV. GAIN/LOSS	HOURS
1				1.5 hours
2	6 hours	7 miles	+/- 2500'	
3	6.5 hours	8 miles	+2700' / -2900'	2.5 hours
4	8 hours	10 miles	+/- 3500'	1 hour
5	A. 6 hours B. 4 hours	A. 5 miles B. 6 miles	A. +3900' / -2800' B. +/-1500'	20 min
6	6 hours	9 miles	+1600' / -1300'	45 mins
7	5-6 hours	7.5 miles	+1950' / -2150'	2.75 hours
8	3 hours	6 miles	- 1650'	
9	6 hours	9 miles	+3000' / -3300'	2.5 hours
10	5 hours	5 miles	+800' / -1600'	2.5 hours
11	6 hours	9 miles	+1750' / -2950'	1.75 hours
12	6 hours	9 miles	+1350' / -1700'	2.5 hours
13	6 hours	10 miles	+1550' / -2200'	20 min
14				45 min to Nice

AVERAGE DAILY MAX/MIN °F												
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Bourg-St.-Maurice	43/26	47/27	55/33	60/38	70/46	76/51	80/55	80/54	71/48	62/42	49/33	42/27
Briançon	46/28	50/28	57/34	60/38	69/46	76/51	82/55	81/55	72/48	63/43	52/34	45/29
RAINFALL - INCHES												
Bourg-St. -Maurice	3.6	3.3	2.9	2.3	2.8	3.3	2.9	2.7	2.8	3.1	3.1	3.7
Briançon	1.7	1.6	1.3	2.0	2.2	1.8	1.5	1.9	2.3	3.0	2.8	1.9

ACCOMMODATIONS

Our accommodations are in small hotels and pensions with private en suite bathrooms. Our hotels have been chosen as much as possible for their ambience and local history. Please note these are hikers' hotels, not five-star resorts. The rooms are clean and comfortable, but are not always of uniform size or amenities. In some of the smaller hotels, a bathroom may have to be shared by two or three rooms. Our leaders do their best to assign rooms in a fair way so that all participants experience an equal advantage throughout the trip as a whole. Single rooms can be requested but are not always available, due to the limited space in the hotels. If you prefer a single room, please make your request as early as possible.

CUISINE

Lunch will be in a small village, at a mountain lodge, or at a picnic spot amidst the beauty of the surrounding mountains. Most evening meals will be taken at our hotels and will be hearty, nourishing mountain fare, often with the cuisine the region is known for. Please note that in Europe, the dinner hour is considerably later than what it is in the US. We do our best to secure early reservations for our groups, but most often the evening meal will be at 7:30 pm.

TRANSPORTATION

Our van will transport the group's luggage, so you only need to carry a daypack for items you need during the day (rain gear, sweater, camera, water bottle, etc.). Trip members are always free to skip a day's hike and travel to the next destination in the support vehicle (or remain at the hotel if we are not transferring that day).

CHOOSING THE RIGHT TRIP

Adventure travel often involves exotic destinations, unusual levels of physical exertion, or activities you may not have participated in previously. We work hard to help you choose the right trip for you, paying attention to your individual interests, abilities, and needs. If you have questions about the level of comfort or any of the activities described in this itinerary, please call Wilderness Travel at 1-800-368-2794 and ask for the Europe Manager or email us at europa@wildernesstravel.com.

REFERENCES

We'd be happy to put you in touch with a past client that has traveled with us on this or a similar trip.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

At www.wildernesstravel.com, you can book your trip online or find out about added departures, last-minute deals, and one-time Limited Edition adventures that aren't listed in our catalog. You can also access our complete library of detailed itineraries filled with enticing photos and videos, read bios of our Trip Leaders, find descriptions of trip accommodations, and check real-time availability of any trips that interest you.



WILDERNESS TRAVEL HAS BEEN AWARDED:

World's Best Tour Operators: *Travel + Leisure*, 2022, 11-time winner
Best Travel Specialists in the World: *Condé Nast Traveller*, 2022, 3 years in a row
Best Wildlife, Hiking & Walking Trips: *AFAR Magazine*, 3 years in a row
Best Adventure Travel Companies: *USA Today*
Trip of the Year: *Outside Magazine*, 9-time winner
50 Tours of a Lifetime: *National Geographic Traveler*, 9 years in a row
Best Adventure Travel Companies: *National Geographic Adventure*, 3-time winner

Please be advised that California has established a Travel Consumer Restitution Fund under the California Seller of Travel Law that took effect January 1, 1996. This fund is designed to protect consumers from unscrupulous practices by discount airfare ticket sellers or air charter operators. Unfortunately, this law does not cover non-California residents and, even in the case of California residents, it does not cover any foreign travel where the foreign "providers of transportation or travel services" are not in compliance with the Sellers of Travel Law (compliance being defined as registered as a Seller of Travel in California and a participant in the Travel Consumer Restitution Fund). Thus none of Wilderness Travel's tours qualify and we are required by law to advise each client that they are not covered by the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires sellers of travel to maintain a trust account or bond. This business has a trust account. California Seller of Travel #100769640

While as accurate as possible at the time of printing, this itinerary should be considered an approximate indication of the schedule and scope of activities and trip routing, rather than an inflexible schedule of events; it is subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control. This trip is subject to the Limitation of Liability and all the terms and conditions as detailed in the General Information section of the Wilderness Travel Catalog.

April 1, 2024 3:28 PM