

EXPLORE!

Tour Notes



Family Adventure in the Alps (FALP 2015)



TOUR DURATION
8
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Tour Comfort: Standard

Tour Type: Centre Based

tour Code: FALP

Tour Highlights - Family Adventure in the Alps

- ✓ Les Contamines - Traditional Alpine village in the shadow of Mont Blanc with a weekly market
- ✓ Aerial assault course - Swing from the trees like a monkey on ropes
- ✓ Mountain picnics - Lunch with a view on our mountain hikes
- ✓ Cycle ride - Mountain biking on established trails
- ✓ Mountain views - wake up each day in the shadow of Mont Blanc

Tour Essentials

Accommodation: 7 nights Standard Hotel
Included Meals: 7 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 3 dinners
Start Point: Join tour: Geneva airport
End Point: Tour ends: Geneva airport
Transport: Train, Public Bus, Minibus, Bicycle, On Foot
Countries: France
Minimum Age: From 8 years

Family Adventure in the Alps

Based at our chalet-style hotel with a pool and garden, we spend a week surrounded by the giant mountains of the Mont Blanc massif in a quiet part of the Les Contamines Valley. A pass is included which allows you to use the cable cars and have unlimited entry to the adventure park where you can try archery, lake swimming, an aerial ropes course and tennis. We also go mountain biking, walk in the mountains and visit local markets.

Why Book this tour

This holiday is for families who want a range of activities plus some time to themselves to discover the beautiful Alps area all set in a traditionally designed and family run chalet. With included activities such as an adventure park, walks, mountain biking and a trip to Chamonix combined with a pass that gives access to the local cable cars and adventure park, any free time is easily taken up with self-guided family walks in the area or more time taking on the ropes course or archery in the adventure park. The chalet is of a high standard with a lovely garden area and pool to relax in.

Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Tour Comfort: Standard

Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

Your tour itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

Your Tour Leader

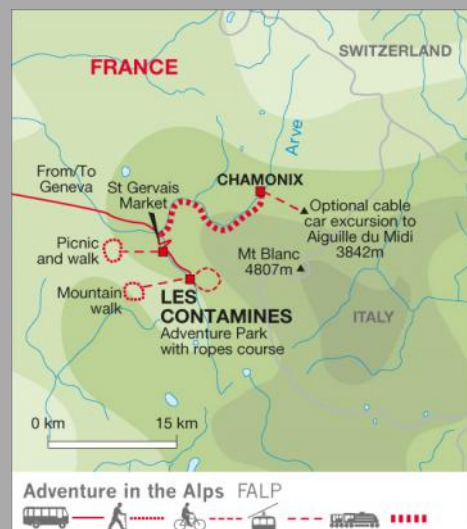
A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced Tour Leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your Tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.

DAY 1 Join tour Geneva Airport; transfer to Les Contamines

After meeting up with the tour leader at Geneva airport we transfer to our hotel in Les Contamines. Les Contamines sits under the western aspect of the Mont Blanc Massif and our hotel has good views of the mountain range and is a few minutes' walk into the local pretty village. Facilities at the hotel include an outdoor pool and garden area as well as a spa room.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Swimming Pool Available 



 **Included Meals:** Dinner

DAY 2 Full day in the adventure park with aerial ropes course

Les Contamines valley is a pretty and peaceful part of the Mont Blanc Massif with a rushing river, thick forests and an adventure park! We take a short walk from the hotel to the adventure park where we spend the day. There are many activities to take part in such as an aerial ropes course, swimming in a mountain lake, archery, mini-golf and a biathlon which involves laser guns and roller skates. The hotel is less than a 10 minute walk if you want to head back to the pool. Please note that we provide a pass for the whole week which allows unlimited entry to the park, access to lake swimming, archery, biathlon, ice skating at St Gervais and all the cable cars and lifts in the St Gervais / Les Contamines domain.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 3 Cable car and walk through the scenery of the Mont Blanc Massif

The Alps is most famous for skiing, mountaineering and trekking. Today we take a cable car high into the mountains and then walk through the beautiful scenery of the Mont Blanc Massif. We will look out for marmots and chamois and stop for a picnic en-route before returning to the valley bottom by cable car. As Les Contamines does not have many bright man-made lights, we hopefully can get the chance to watch the night sky and do some star-gazing.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 4 Day trip by train to Chamonix

Today we head to Chamonix which is justifiably known as the adventure capital of the world. Here you will find the best climbers in the world, crazy skiers and the highest mountains in Europe. The whole town is abuzz with adventurers, day-trippers and long-term vacationists who can't help gazing at the amazing mountain views. We will arrive by train and have the full day to explore the town and all it has to offer. There are also opportunities to go up in the highest cable car in Europe (the Aiguille du Midi), take a cog-railway up to 2000 metres to see a glacier or enjoy a picnic in the valley bottom. There are plenty of shops, cafés and restaurants or you could take a walk along the river. We will return to Les Contamines in the late afternoon by train and then public bus.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 5 Morning mountain biking in the valley. Afternoon free to continue cycling

We meet our mountain bike guides and pick up our bikes today. After a briefing about the bikes, we head off on well-established biking trails. The route takes us into the forest and along some quieter roads (please note that we need to take a short cycle along the main road in the town in order to start the main ride) with plenty of stops to have a drink and look at the view. We will spend approximately 2-3 hours cycling along the trails which are roughly between 10 and 15km, with a few bits of uphill! We finish in time for lunch. The afternoon is free: either head to the hotel swimming pool or take advantage of the activity card we supply that enables you to use the cable cars into the mountains for further walks and exploring.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 6 Visit the weekly market at St Gervais - use of the activity card to try ice-skating

Every Thursday there is a traditional French market at Saint Gervais - a classic Alpine town nominated as a 'ville fleurie'. Here you can browse the stalls for local cheeses, fruit and smelly sausages. We will get a picnic together and then take a cable car above the town where we walk into the hills with views of Mont Blanc and its satellite peaks. In the afternoon you can head back to Les Contamines or try ice skating at the rink in St Gervais (this is included in the activity card we give to you).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 7 A trek on the Tour du Mont Blanc and free afternoon with time in Les Contamines

In the morning, the Leader will organise a hike on the famous Tour du Mont Blanc. The hike will be about 3 hours in total and will visit a traditional mountain hut on the trail. The afternoon has been left free and there are various optional activities that you can take part

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in. You may like to try rock-climbing or more mountain biking using the lifts to get to the higher and more challenging trails. You can also head to the adventure park for a last chance to try the aerial ropes course or play a gentle game of mini-golf.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Swimming Pool Available 



Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY

8

Tour ends at Geneva airport

This morning we transfer back to Geneva airport where the tour ends.



Included Meals: Breakfast

Ability to swim required

An ability to swim is essential for your safe enjoyment of the water based activities on this trip. If you wish to participate in these activities then we insist that you are able to swim (there are no lifeguards at the hotel pool or at the lake in the adventure park).

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Rating

The hotel is very close to the ski lift which gives access to the Contamines-Hauteluce alpine region and walking routes. The hotel boasts 38 spacious en-suite bedrooms with balconies where you can view the Mont Blanc massif and is decorated in a typical Savoyard style using natural materials. Rooms have satellite TV, direct-line telephone and Wi-Fi internet access. The restaurant has an ornamental fireplace giving a real alpine atmosphere. There are plenty of sports activities to choose from in the local area, or you could stay at the hotel to enjoy the heated swimming pool or use the relaxation area with its sauna and jacuzzi. There are a number of shops within walking distance of the hotel including cafés, a patisserie and a small supermarket. Other facilities at the hotel include a library, board games, spa-room and bar area.

Food & Drink

Included meals: 7 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 3 dinners included in the price of this tour. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

France

Lunch £: 11.00

Dinner £: 23.00

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

France

Bottle of Beer £: 4.00

Water £: 1.30

Tipping - Tour Leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Foreign Exchange

France

ATM Availability: In cities and most major towns

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Credit Card Acceptance: In major restaurants (make sure you have informed your credit card company that you are travelling abroad as some companies will reject payments)

Travellers Cheques: Travellers Cheques are no longer commonly accepted and can only be changed in larger airports with a Bureau de Change.

Local Currency: Euro

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Pounds Sterling and US Dollars can only be changed in larger airports with a Bureau de Change. Please change currency into Euros prior to arriving in France.

Where to Exchange: Bureau de Change can only be found in major cities and large airports. Many French banks no longer exchange Foreign currency.

Joining your Tour

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of joining any of our tours that you must have valid travel insurance. It must indicate that you have cover for (at least) medical expenses and emergency repatriation in the event of illness or injury. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling in England and Scotland. We also strongly recommend your policy includes curtailment, personal effects and cancellation protection as all deposits paid are non-refundable. You will also need to ensure your travel policy covers you for all activities you intend to do whilst on tour.

We are delighted to include FREE travel insurance **for all qualifying customers** who book an Explore trip from 01 January 2015.

For more information about Travel insurance and to check whether you are eligible to receive free cover, please visit www.explore.co.uk/insurance. Explore Worldwide Ltd are an Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Limited, who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. The registration number can be checked by visiting the FCA's website www.fca.gov.uk or by contacting them on 0800 111 6768.

Lone Parents

France

Single parents or other adults travelling alone with children should be aware that some countries require documentation confirming that the individual has authority to travel with the minor. It is crucial that you contact the French embassy for further information on exactly what may be required.

Vaccinations & Protection

France

Nothing compulsory. Tetanus recommended. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

Preparing for your Tour

Climate

France

Across France, from April - August, weather conditions are generally warm and pleasant with moderate rainfall; Autumn temperatures are a bit lower and the winter months (though colder) remain mild. The summer months on the Mediterranean Coast in the south tend to be warmer than the rest of France and have less rainfall, and also more mild winters; freezing conditions are nearly unheard of. The mountainous areas of the Alps, Juros and Pyrenees can be quite different. During summer the morning and evening temperatures are considerably cooler and it becomes much colder in winter with heavy snowfall. Western France, along the English Channel, there can be very strong winds and frequent rain during the winter months Nov - Apr. Wine harvesting takes place in late August/early September.

Clothing

Lightweight clothing suitable for outdoor activity is advised and although you can expect to live in T-shirts and shorts for the holiday, please be aware that temperatures can change dramatically at altitude and at night so a fleece is essential. Waterproofs are recommended as the weather can change with little notice as in all mountainous areas. If you have padded cycle shorts, bring them for the mountain bike ride and although cycle helmets are available, you may wish to bring your own to ensure best fit. Don't forget your swimming things and note that French health regulations require men to wear 'proper' swimming trunks, not loose Bermuda / boxer-style trunks in all public pools.

Footwear

Trainers should be adequate for all activities on this trip, though if you have walking boots or trekking shoes they are useful for any walks. Light shoes or sandals can be brought for general travel. If you bring boots, make sure that they are worn-in and comfortable before the start of the trip and we recommend that you wear/carry your walking boots as hand luggage on the international flight: should your luggage be delayed, your well broken-in boots will be irreplaceable.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of baggage and a daypack.

Luggage allowance on tour: 20kg

General Information

Country details

France

Population: 65,821,885

Size of Country: 674,843 sq km

Major Language: French

Religion: Catholic

Time Difference to GMT: +1

Electric Supply & Plugs

France

2 Pin Round

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailor-made holidays.

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- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, elephant, or any number of unusual forms of transport . Often you will stay in family run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Our commitment to the environment

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures and traditional, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people), Dekamer (a turtle rescue centre in Turkey) and Kids Saving the Rainforest (a wildlife rescue centre in Costa Rica supported through the LATA foundation). We also care passionately about the world's wildlife. We are patrons of the Born Free Organisation and Friends of Conservation.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

The Travel Foundation

Explore are active members and supporters of the Travel Foundation which has established a variety of sustainable tourism projects in destinations and works with industry to improve practice. Visit their website www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk

Tourism Concern

Explore support the work of Tourism Concern who campaign for fairly and ethically traded tourism, and are part of its Ethical Tour Operator Group www.tourismconcern.org.uk

- For further information on responsible travel go to <http://www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/>

Know before you go

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at <http://www.explore.co.uk/essential-travel-information/travel-resources/travel-safety>

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2014 and 31st December 2015.

Tour Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2015 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2015. 2016/17 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2016.

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