

# France & Switzerland

## HAUTE ROUTE HIKING

ALPINE HIKING ADVENTURE | 9 DAYS

August 1-9, 2021

September 5-13, 2021



### TRIP ITINERARY



1.800.941.8010 | [www.boundlessjourneys.com](http://www.boundlessjourneys.com)

*How we deliver*

# THE WORLD'S GREAT ADVENTURES

**A passion for travel.** Simply put, we love to travel, and that infectious spirit is woven into every one of our journeys. Our staff travels the globe searching out hidden-gem inns and lodges, taste testing bistros, trattorias, and noodle stalls, and discovering the trails and plying the waterways of each remarkable destination. When we come home, we separate wheat from chaff, creating memorable adventures that will connect you with the very best qualities of each destination.

**Unique, award-winning itineraries.** Our flexible, hand-crafted journeys have received accolades from the world's most revered travel publications. Beginning from our appreciation for the world's most breathtaking and interesting destinations, we infuse our journeys with the elements of adventure and exploration that stimulate our souls and enliven our minds. Whether you are looking for a challenging physical expedition or a leisurely cultural exploration, Boundless Journeys has exceptional itineraries to match your sense of adventure.

**Insider connections.** There is simply no substitute for traveling with a knowledgeable insider, and our expert local guides will open doors for you that other travelers miss, like dinner with their extended family in Peru's Sacred Valley, or meeting an art scholar in Florence. Relationships developed over many years allow you to experience our destinations through a well-connected friend.

**Small groups.** Although the camaraderie of a group of like-minded travelers often enhances the journey, there can be too much of a good thing! We tread softly, and our average group size is just 8–10 guests, allowing us access to opportunities that would be unthinkable with a larger group.

**Flexibility to suit your travel style.** We offer both scheduled, small-group departures and custom journeys so that you can choose which works best for you. Not finding exactly what you are looking for? Let us customize a journey to fulfill your travel dreams.

**Customer service that goes the extra mile.** Having trouble finding flights that work for you? Want to surprise your traveling companion with a bottle of champagne at a tented camp in the Serengeti to celebrate an important milestone? There is no request that is too big—or too small—for our staff to handle. From your first call, we guide you through choosing your trip, provide advice on preparing for your adventure, and hold your hand until you return home.



Multi-year recipient of *Travel + Leisure* magazine's "World's Best Tour Operator"; and recognized by the editors of *National Geographic ADVENTURE* magazine as one of the **Best Adventure Travel Companies on Earth**.

# France & Switzerland | HAUTE ROUTE HIKING

Thank you for your interest in this fantastic journey to the European Alps. We have hand-crafted this tour from our own experience and hope you fall in love with the area—as we have!

## THE INSPIRATION FOR THIS JOURNEY

Starting in Chamonix, France, this epic hiking journey passes through the greatest concentration of 4,000-meter peaks in the Alps and concludes in Zermatt, Switzerland, connecting two world-renowned mountaineering centers.

Our 9-day route includes the most scenic and rewarding sections of the hiker's Haute Route, covering numerous high passes with breathtaking views of glaciated peaks, meandering through meadows blanketed in wildflowers, and venturing into Swiss hamlets where we experience the charm of the region's hospitality. Our expert guides lead us from village to village as we dip down into a new valley each day and savor simple pleasures in the mountains. Picnics of local specialties taken beside scenic lakes fuel our hikes, and delicious meals await at day's end in comfortable accommodations nestled in the mountains.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Classic mountain scenery, with magnificent views of the world-class Alps
- A challenging, long-distance hiking traverse through the highest concentration of 4,000 meter peaks in the Alps
- Charming inns offer welcome places of respite following long days on the trail
- Taking in the history, culture, and ambience of two world-renowned centers of mountaineering

TOUR OVERVIEW.....	4
THE JOURNEY.....	6
ACCOMMODATIONS .....	10
WHAT TO EXPECT.....	12
OUR ALPS TEAM .....	15
NEXT STEPS .....	16
BOUNDLESS BEYOND.....	17





# TOUR OVERVIEW



## THE BASICS

Duration:	9 days / 8 nights
Tour start:	Chamonix, France
Tour end:	Zermatt, Switzerland
Accommodations:	3- and 4-star inns and hotels
Trip rating:	1      2      3 <b>4</b> 5 Easy . . . . . Strenuous (See page 12 for more information)
Land cost:	\$4,995 per person
Single Supplement:	First single per departure: \$0* Additional: \$315 (*Must reserve at least 120 days ahead)



## WHAT'S INCLUDED

Just pack your bags—we've got you covered! When you're on a Boundless Journeys adventure, every detail is taken care of for you, so you can relax and truly experience each moment. Put your wallet away, leave your travel books behind, fold up your maps, and BE there. Your Boundless Journeys adventure includes:

- Expert leadership
- All accommodations
- All meals (except two dinners, on nights 2 & 5) and daily hiking snacks
- All activities as noted in the itinerary
- Local wine and beer with included dinners
- All on-tour transportation
- All gratuities except for those for your guide(s) and driver, which are at your discretion
- Explorers Club savings on your next scheduled, small-group trip (conditions apply)

International airfare is not included in the price of your trip. Please contact your local travel agency or the airlines directly to make any arrangements you may need. If you would like assistance with booking your flights or other travel plans, please contact Boundless Journeys directly at 1.800.941.8010 for a referral to our partners who will best fulfill your needs.



*"The confidence I had with Eric, our guide, made the difference. Each day was more beautiful than the day before. We worked hard but had fun. Each town was unique and the inns were great as well as the managers. They made us feel warm and welcome. I fell in love with the country and I'm going back."*

*- P.E., Goffstown, NH*

## ITINERARY AT-A-GLANCE

### DAY 1

Meet in the mountain resort town of Chamonix, France, and discovering this quaint town.

### DAY 2

Hike from La Balme (7,095') to Col de la Forclaz (5,036'), crossing the border into Switzerland and enjoying spectacular views of Mont Blanc and impressive glaciers along the way.

### DAY 3

Hike along the western flank of Lac des Dix and ascend Col de Reidmatten (9,633') with striking views of Mont Blanc de Cheilon and Cheilon glacier. We descend on foot to Arolla, and then continue to quaint Les Hauderes for a night in a charming Valaisian inn.

### DAY 4

We hike from Villa to Lac de Moiry today, with an ascent of Col de Torrent (9,570'), gaining impressive views of the Bernese Alps and Rhone Valley.

### DAY 5

A more leisurely hike today, with moderate elevation gain and excellent views of the Zinalrothorn, the Matterhorn, and the Dent Blanche. Relax this evening in the picturesque town of Saint-Luc.

### DAY 6

Leaving French-speaking Switzerland, we climb Meidpass (9,207') and enter the German-speaking part, overnighting in the remote hamlet of Gruben.

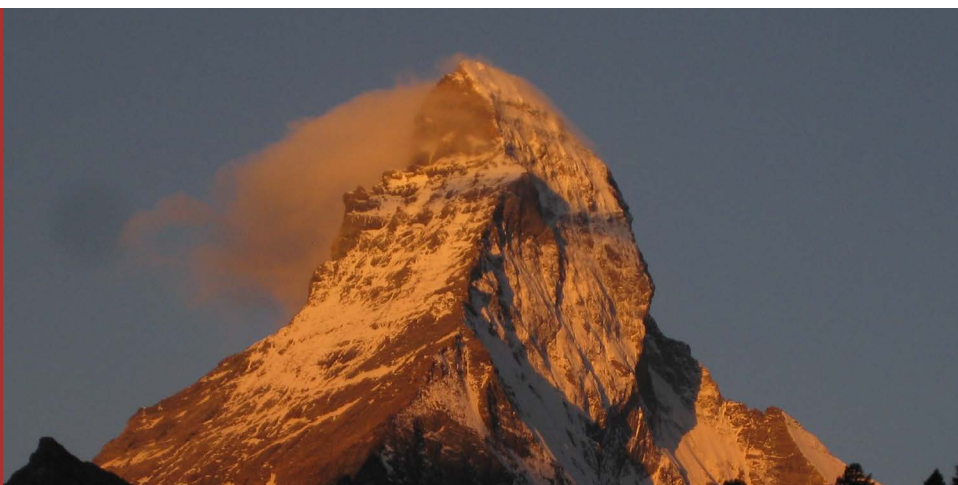
### DAYS 7-8

Our hike reaches its climax at the top of Augstbord Pass (9,494'), with dramatic views unrivaled in all of the Alps. Arriving in the bustling mountain town of Zermatt, we enjoy a day hike with spectacular Matterhorn views, before enjoying a final celebratory dinner.

### DAY 9

Departure from Zermatt, Switzerland.

# THE JOURNEY



## DAY 1: Arrival in Chamonix

We meet at our mountain hotel in Chamonix, France, a pretty town nestled under the flanks of snow-covered Mont Blanc (15,770'), the highest mountain in western Europe. Chamonix is the "mountaineering capital" of Europe and has been a climbing and skiing center for more than 100 years. This wonderful town has a charming atmosphere and is well-preserved with cobbled streets full of lively sidewalk cafés. This evening, we have a trip briefing and welcome dinner.

**Accommodation:** Hotel L'Oustalet, Chamonix, France

**Meals:** D

## DAY 2: La Balme–Col de la Forclaz

**Activity Overview:** Hiking

**Activity Level:** Moderate with 500' elevation gain and 2,800' elevation loss

**Activity Length:** 5-6 hours (about 9 miles)

This morning we set out for a short ride to the small ski village of Le Tour at the head of the Chamonix valley. Here we ride a gondola and chair lift up La Balme (7,095'). From the top, we take in the spectacular views of Mont Blanc and the Aiguille Verte before setting off through high pastureland leading us to Col de Balme (7,230'). Our trail takes us over the pass and the French-Swiss border, where mesmerizing views of the impressive Trient glacier greet us. Keeping our eyes peeled for wildlife—the ubiquitous shaggy, dun-colored chamois, and if we are lucky, the impressive ibex—we skirt the flanks of the mountains, occasionally crossing scree. As we round a bend and ascend a rocky path, the

Les Grands Glacier comes into view. A tidy stone mountain hut overlooking the glacier is an ideal spot for a picnic today.

Following our break, we descend along a narrow, man-made cow path following a natural cleft in a steep rock face. The work that went into its construction is considerable, all to allow herds safe access to their high summer grazing land. As we descend further, we enter a world of larch and pine forests, ending with an easy final stretch along a "bisse." These man-made waterways provide irrigation to the valleys below, and this one leads us to La Forclaz (5,036'). Here, we are met by our private vehicle and transferred (approximately 1 hour, 15 minutes) to our hotel for the night, tucked at the base of the imposing Barrage de la Grande Dixence, or Grand Dixence Dam. For those interested in grand feats of engineering, a late afternoon visit to the interpretive center at the dam tells a fascinating history.

**Accommodation:** Hotel du Barrage Grande Dixence, Barrage de la Grande Dixence, Switzerland

**Meals:** B, L, D

## DAY 3: Lac des Dix–Arolla

**Activity Overview:** Hiking

**Activity Level:** Strenuous with 2,500' elevation gain and 2,600' loss

**Activity Length:** 7 hours (about 13 miles)

After breakfast, we depart on foot from our hotel, ascending a trail along the side of the dam for about 30 minutes to reach the top. Along the way we stop at a small chapel dating from the 1930s and built by the workers who constructed the original Barrage du Dixence, now submerged beneath the





## THE BOUNDLESS JOURNEYS DIFFERENCE

*Well-located accommodations that offer a higher level of comfort than mountain huts and provide a welcome respite after days on the trail.*

waters of the much grander dam that stands today. As we clear the top of the dam, our hike levels out, and meanders through hand-hewn tunnels and along a flat, wide track that follows the western shore of Lac des Dix (7,887'). For the next three miles, we enjoy taking in our bucolic surroundings of high-alpine meadows, streams, and wildflowers marked by glaciated peaks in the distance. Marmots love this shore, and their furry shapes can often be seen darting among the rocks, paired with their sharp alarm call that sounds much like a hawk. After about two hours of easy walking, the trail diverges from Lac des Dix.

Our ascent up the Pas du Chat is a steep 20-minute climb before easing to a more moderate ascent through scree and glacial moraine. The impressive ridgeline of Mont Blanc de Cheillon comes into view, with the sprawling Cheillon glacier fanning out at its base accompanied by ethereal lakes—a perfect place to capture an image of the mountain's reflection on the water's surface. Soon, we begin our climb up the Col de Reidmatten (9,633'). After a short but quite steep and rocky ascent, we enter through the narrow notch marking this pass and are rewarded with a stupendous vista of snow-capped peaks, including our first view of the Matterhorn, still far enough away to seem insignificant among the other peaks.

Following a well-deserved break to take in this new vantage point, we descend through pastures and forests, with tantalizing views of Mount Collon and the lengthy Tsijiore Nouve Glacier. We arrive at the hamlet of Arolla (6,594'), one of the smallest villages along the Haute Route. We find our vehicle waiting to transfer us to Les Haudères (4,763'), a quaint village brimming with history comprised of typical Valaisian chalets and hay barns. If you have the energy,

stroll the quiet streets. If not, *c'est bon*, simply find a local pub and enjoy a cup of tea or well-earned beer before dinner at our inn.

**Accommodation:** Hotel les Melezes, Les Haudères, Switzerland

**Meals:** B, L, D

### DAY 4: Villa–Lac Moiry

**Activity Overview:** Hiking

**Activity Level:** Moderate to strenuous, 3,947' elevation gain and 2,189' loss'

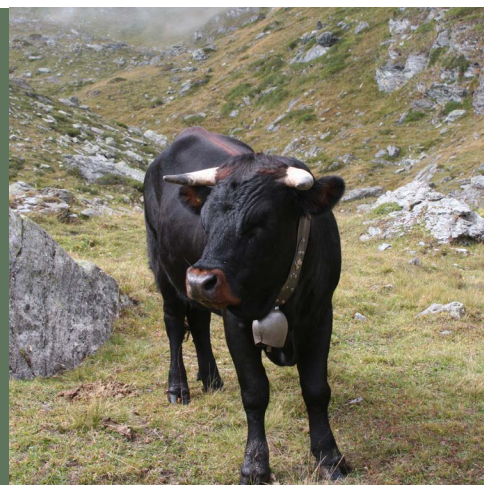
**Activity Length:** 5-6 hours (about 7 miles)

This morning, a short transfer via a switchback farm road above the valley leaves us to start our hike from the tiny hamlet of Villa (5,623'). We ascend through bucolic pastureland towards the Col de Torrent (9,570'). As the col grows nearer, the pitch steepens a bit and switches back and forth on a well-formed trail across scree for the final 20 minutes to the pass. This lovely plateau is a great spot to take in the nearly 360-degree views spanning from the distant French border to the Bernese Alps and down into the Rhône Valley. Looking east, toward Zermatt, we see the jade-green Lac de Moiry.

Heading down from Col de Torrent into rolling high pastureland, we are enchanted by the feeling of being truly immersed in the Alps. The panorama of rising peaks and glaciers over the spectacular lakes provides yet another picturesque setting for an trailside picnic, and we happily linger over our baguettes, cheeses of the region, local meats, and fruit. Of course, no proper Haute Route picnic would be complete without a bit of Swiss chocolate!

## A BOUNDLESS MOMENT IN THE SWISS ALPS

*We couldn't tell if it was the sweeping views or the wild tide of accomplishment that washed over us as we finally crested Col de Reidmatten's imposing summit, catching our first glimpse of the snow-covered Matterhorn. We didn't care. The crisp air, our heaving sides, and that white shard of a mountain, peeping up in the distance, is all the reward we needed.*



### DAY 6: Saint-Luc–Gruben

**Activity Overview:** Hiking

**Activity Level:** Moderate with 1,540' elevation gain and 3,194' loss

**Activity Length:** 4-5 hours (about 10 miles)

Today, we return to yesterday's trail by funicular and hike through high, stony pastureland toward the Meidpass (9,207'). As we navigate a scree slope to the stony saddle, we leave the French-speaking part of Switzerland and enter the German-speaking part, distinctly different both linguistically and culturally. From the top, we glimpse back to Mont Blanc, where we set out several days ago, now seemingly a world away.

From Meidpass, we wind our way down (somewhat steeply at first) through high meadows, alpine lakes, and pine forests to the tiny village of Gruben (6,013') and our historic hotel. We again enjoy an afternoon of relaxation, relishing the peaceful nature of this isolated farming settlement.

**Accommodation:** Hotel Schwarzhorn, Gruben, Switzerland

**Meals:** B, L, D

### DAY 7: Gruben–St. Niklaus, Zermatt transfer

**Activity Overview:** Hiking

**Activity Level:** Strenuous with 3,500' elevation gain and 5,800' loss (with option for 4,200' loss with lift)

**Activity Length:** 7 hours (about 12 miles)

Our penultimate day of hiking is considered to be one of the most scenic of the Haute Route, and we undoubtedly will be mesmerized by the tremendous beauty one more time. We begin with a gradual, roughly three-hour climb over a

After lunch, we continue to Lac de Moiry, and cross the dam. From here, we transfer (about 40 minutes) to Zinal for our overnight, stopping en route to briefly explore the historic center of nearby Grimentz, with its quaint cobbled streets, creperie, and small craft shop.

**Accommodation:** Hotel Europe, Zinal, Switzerland

**Meals:** B, L, D

### DAY 5: Zinal–Saint-Luc

**Activity Overview:** Hiking

**Activity Level:** Moderate with 2,500' elevation gain and 2,500' loss

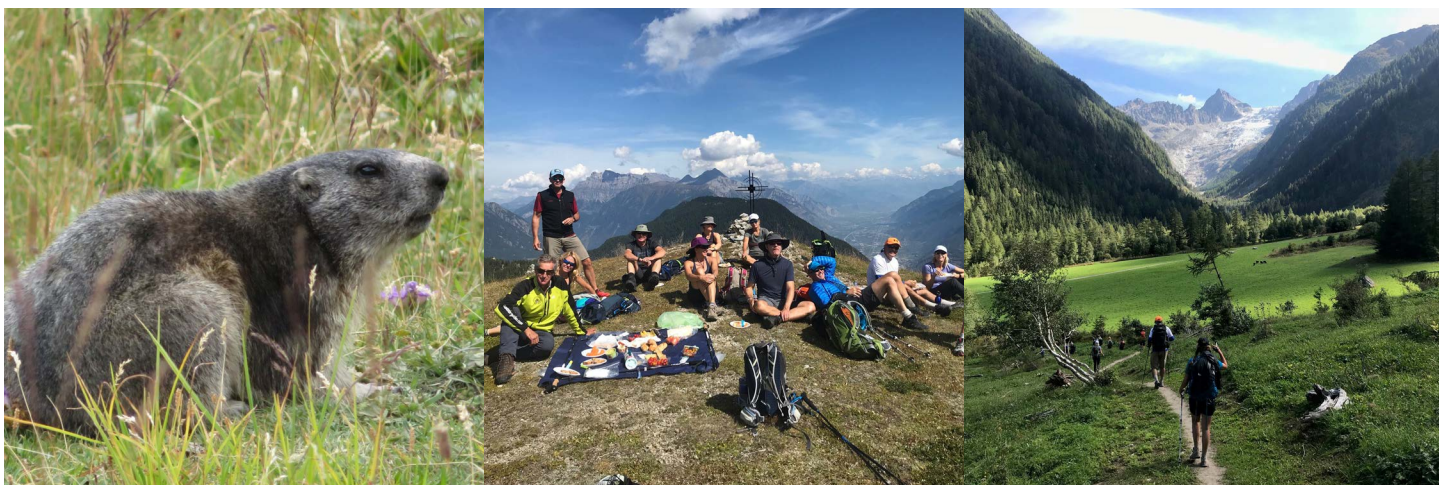
**Activity Length:** 4-5 hours (about 11 miles)

This morning, we enjoy some leisure time before departing on foot from town for our hike. Today begins with an ascent through the forests surrounding Zinal, eventually bringing us to a beautiful ridgeline trail leading to Saint-Luc. We are rewarded with panoramic views of the Zinalrothorn, the Matterhorn's summit looming high, and the Dent Blanche. There is ample time to photograph these impressive peaks with a shorter hike today, a welcome respite as we enter the final stages of our Haute Route traverse. With some gentle rising and falling, we make our way to a viewpoint above the town of Saint-Luc, at the well known (and well worn!) Hotel Weisshorn. This is a lovely place to stop for refreshments overlooking the valley, but for the evening, we'll descend either on foot or by funicular to the town of Saint-Luc, where we spend the night enjoying more comfortable accommodations in a picturesque mountain setting.

**Accommodation:** Hotel Bella Tola, Saint-Luc, Switzerland

**Meals:** B, L, D





scree slope to the Augstbord Pass (9,494'), which was used during the Middle Ages as a trading route linking the Rhône Valley and Italy. Crossing this final pass of the hiker's route from Chamonix to Zermatt is a highlight that leaves us feeling overwhelmed with a sense of accomplishment. There are few other passes in all of Switzerland that rival the views from atop Augstbord Pass.

On our descent we gain glimpses of Zermatt in the distance, while turning back to revel in the mountain wilderness we hiked through over the past week. Coming across the tiny hamlet of Jungen reminds us of the rugged nature of eking out an existence in these remote mountain, and we are left with a bittersweet feeling as the inn-to-inn portion of our Haute Route hiking tour comes to an end.

We make our way to St. Niklaus for a train transfer to Zermatt. This evening, you may enjoy dinner on your own at one of the many restaurants in town.

**Accommodation:** Hotel Matterhornblick, Zermatt, Switzerland  
**Meals:** B, L

## DAY 8: Exploring Zermatt

**Activity Overview:** Hiking

**Activity Level:** Easy to moderate with variable elevation gain and loss.

**Activity Length:** 4 hours (about 7 miles)

Today, we relish having the most challenging hikes of our trip behind us. The hiking options from Zermatt are many, and our guide will have one in mind to suit the group and the weather conditions. We may use the extensive lift system to access higher ground and do a hike in the

vicinity of Fluealp. From here, we enjoy spectacular views above the mountains forming the northern border of Italy, including Mont Rosa, and across the Zermatt valley to the unforgettable Matterhorn.

For those who prefer, one can easily relish a very pleasant day exploring the bustling streets of Zermatt. Shops ranging from crafty to couture line the traffic-free streets, sunny café patios beckon, and the mountaineering museum in the center of town provides an interesting background on past feats.

This afternoon, we gather to celebrate our accomplishments with a farewell dinner at one of our favorite restaurants.

**Accommodation:** Hotel Matterhornblick, Zermatt, Switzerland  
**Meals:** B, L, D

## DAY 9: Departure from Zermatt

Our trip ends after breakfast, and you are free to continue your exploration of Zermatt, or depart for your next destination.

**Meals:** B

**PLEASE NOTE:** This is a typical itinerary, and actual activities may vary to take advantage of weather conditions, local events and to allow serendipity to play a hand in your experience. Accommodations are as outlined in the itinerary, although we reserve the right to change these should the need arise. See our booking terms and conditions for more information about our change policy.

# ACCOMMODATIONS

The hotels we stay in are well-located for hikers and busy in the summer hiking season. These are generally three-star hotels with basic amenities. The rooms are clean and comfortable but are not always of uniform size or amenities. On at least one night (and possibly two), rooms will have shared bathrooms. There is a range of accommodations on this tour, and although they are not 5-star resorts, they are a standard above what is typically offered on this route.



## NIGHT 1

### **Hotel L'Oustalet**

330 Rue du Lyret

Chamonix, France

Tel 011-33-450-55-54-99 | Fax 011-33-450-55-54-98

infos@hotel-oustalet.com | www.hotel-oustalet.com

Located next to the pedestrian center of Chamonix, this charming inn offers hearty breakfasts, incredible views, and a great swimming pool.



## NIGHT 2

### **Hotel du Barrage Grande Dixence**

1987 Hérémente

Barrage de la Grande Dixence, Switzerland

Tel: +41-272-81-13-22 | Tel: +41-797-71-99-55

info@hotel-barrage.ch | www.hotel-barrage.ch/grande-dixence-hotel

Dramatically situated at the foot of the Grande Dixence Dam, this hotel's isolated location provides the perfect launch into the Swiss portion of our Haute Route hike. There is the possibility of shared bathroom facilities at this more simple hotel.



## NIGHT 3

### **Hotel Les Melezes**

1984 Les Haudères, Switzerland

Tel: +41-272-83-11-55

info@hotelmelezes.ch | www.hotelmelezes.ch

A quaint, family-run chalet in the historic village of Les Haudères, exuding traditional Valasian charm.





## NIGHT 4

### Hotel Europe

Zinal, Switzerland

Tel: +41-27-475-44-04

nfo@europezinal.ch | www.europezinal.ch

A spacious hotel featuring Chez Remy, regarded to be the best restaurant in Zinal.



## NIGHT 5

### Hotel Bella Tola

3961 St-Luc

St-Luc, Switzerland

Tel: +41-27-475-14-44

bellatola@bluewin.ch | www.bellatola.ch

A historic 19th-century hotel centrally located in St-Luc with a fabulous spa and swimming pool—a welcome respite providing a lap of luxury along the Haute Route.



## NIGHT 6

### Schwartzhorn Hotel

Gruben, Switzerland

Tel: +41-279-32-14-14

info@hotelschwarzhorn.ch | www.hotelschwarzhorn.ch

The only hotel in the tiny hamlet of Gruben. Rooms have shared baths on each floor, and there is a restaurant serving simple fare.



## NIGHTS 7 & 8

### Hotel Matterhornblick

Zermatt, Switzerland

Tel: +41-279-67-20-17

info@matterhornblick.ch | www.matterhornblick.ch

Situated in the center of bustling Zermatt, Hotel Matterhornblick offers friendly service and easy access to hikes, shopping, and restaurants.



# WHAT TO EXPECT



## TRIP RATING

Boundless Journeys' trips are designed for energetic and flexible individuals who like to be active and have a spirit of adventure and a positive attitude. Haute Route Hiking is rated 4, strenuous, on a scale of 1-5 (with 5 being the most strenuous). As this classic route traverses the Alps, we hike full days through spectacular mountainous terrain, "inn-to-inn" every day (except for Day 9) staying in small villages along the way. There are long elevation gains and losses ranging from 1,000 to 4,200 feet per day, hiking times range from four to seven hours per day, and mileage ranges from seven to ten miles per day. Most hiking is at altitudes between 6,000 and 9,000 feet, and the maximum elevation reached is 9,570 feet.

Although our luggage will be transported for us, each day's hike has no vehicle access (other than the start and finish) and is completed in its entirety. All trip members should be in strong physical condition and have good hiking experience; no technical climbing experience is necessary. We encourage you to call our office for further information to help determine if this trip is right for you.

## TERRAIN

Trail conditions are primarily packed dirt trails with roots or rocks throughout, and uneven terrain underfoot, thus requiring agility and stable footing. We request that you bring hiking boots with full ankle support and two trekking poles, which help provide comfort, stability, and most importantly, enjoyment. Our hikes take us through farmland, forest, rocky glacial terrain, and over mountain passes. Terrain varies greatly, including a mix of wide dirt paths, hiking trails with rocks and roots, rough, large rocky steps, loose

scree, and shallow stream crossings. Each hike includes sustained climbing and descending, sometimes steeply. The route travels through some limited exposed sections, and is not recommended for those suffering from vertigo or a fear of heights. Feel free to call our office for further details.

## A TYPICAL DAY

This trip includes full days on the trail and limited "down" time. Throughout your trip you will experience Haute Route mountain culture on the trail, in the charming huts where we may take a welcome break, and at the hotels. We highly recommend scheduling an extra day or two before or after your trip to rest after your flights, enjoy Chamonix and Zermatt, or wind down after your trip. Each day your guide will brief you on timing of the day's hike. These are full days providing a sense of accomplishment to fuel the appetite! A typical schedule looks like:

- Breakfast between 7:00-8:00 am
- Hike commences about 8:00-8:30 am.
- Arrive at the next hotel between 4:30-6:00 pm.
- Dinner around 7:00-7:45 pm.

## PREPARING FOR THIS TRIP

It is imperative that you realistically assess your physical condition with regard to the demands of this trip. The more physically prepared you are for the activities, the more you will enjoy yourself. As a general guideline, we suggest that you engage in moderate to strenuous aerobic activities (such as hiking, jogging, or cycling) for at least 45 minutes to one hour 5-6 times a week for at least 6-8 weeks before the trip. Considering this is a more strenuous hiking trip, we encourage you to consider adding longer

activities on weekends—hiking in hilly or mountainous terrain is ideal, but longer bike rides or other moderately strenuous activities will also be helpful. For those who do not regularly engage in full-day hikes in mountainous terrain, we highly recommend you experience at least two back-to-back full-day hikes before your trip, to best prepare for consecutive days of hiking. If you live in a flat area, try to incorporate some stairs into your workout, or use a treadmill with varying incline capability, in addition to as much outdoor hiking as possible (consult your doctor before undertaking any new fitness program). Please contact us if you have any doubts regarding your physical match with this tour, and/or would like to discuss your fitness level and routines relative to requirements for this trip.

**WEATHER**

Being an alpine environment, weather is variable throughout the day and by elevation. A warm, sunny day in the valley can be anywhere from delightfully refreshing to downright brisk at higher elevations. Therefore, dressing in layers will be essential to your comfort throughout the day. Rain and snow are possible at any time, and weather conditions can change rapidly in the mountains, so having rain gear and thermal layers on hand is advisable. At the same time, the sun is strong at higher elevations, and therefore adequate precautions should be taken to prevent sunburn, even on cool, sunny days.

AVERAGE TEMPERATURE		
CHAMONIX	August	September
HIGH	75°F	72°F
LOW	57°F	48°F

You may obtain more detailed weather information at [www.weatherbase.com](http://www.weatherbase.com).

**TRAVELER'S RESPONSIBILITY**

As a trip participant, you have responsibilities to Boundless Journeys, your fellow travelers and guide, and the local people you encounter. This includes understanding and preparing for the conditions described in the itinerary, ensuring it meets your interests and abilities, and following the health and safety guidelines of Boundless Journeys, local authorities, and/or the CDC. At their discretion, a guide may ask a guest to leave the trip if further participation may be detrimental to the individual or other participants.

We strongly urge any guest feeling ill shortly before departure to cancel their trip. To help cover your investment, we highly recommend purchasing travel insurance with supplemental “Cancel for Any Reason” coverage. If you feel unwell during the tour, please immediately inform your guide, who can help take the appropriate next steps. We appreciate your cooperation.

**SMALL GROUP TRAVEL**

Small group travel affords us the opportunity to seek out the most remote and exotic destinations on the planet. Often we are exploring these locales with just 6-12 guests. The nature of active group travel is such that not all participants have the same ability level or interests. Traveling at a pace that is comfortable for the entire group, with a spirit of flexibility and adventure, are all part of this shared experience.

**DRINKS WITH MEALS**

At Boundless Journeys we believe group dinners are a time to celebrate our day, while enjoying the best of local cuisine, and good company. In keeping with this spirit, we typically include local beer and wine with group dinners. If you prefer premium wine, or liquor, please feel free to order what you like, and you may settle your tab at the end of the meal.

**DRINKING WATER**

We provide purified or bottled water on all trips; however, in an effort to reduce waste, we strongly encourage you to bring a water bottle to refill where safe to do so. This will be the case in much of Europe, as well as a few other destinations, where tap water is safe to drink (please review Immunizations & Health Concerns for more information). In parts of the world where water must be purified, bottled water may be our only option. Here, we do our best to provide purified water from larger containers to refill your bottles, rather than using many small single-use bottles throughout your trip. This is just one small way we strive to travel more responsibly and we appreciate your efforts in helping us to protect the extraordinary places we visit.

Boundless Journeys has taken the Travelers Against Plastic company pledge to promote sustainable travel and encourage travelers to avoid buying bottled water when they travel. You can take the pledge, too, and learn more about TAP’s efforts at [www.travelersagainstoplastic.org](http://www.travelersagainstoplastic.org).





## CUISINE

You'll enjoy plenty of local cheeses and wines, and most menus feature soups, pasta, fish, meat, and traditional Swiss dishes, such as raclette and fondue. Breakfasts, lunches, and all but one dinner are included; your guide can make recommendations for wonderful local restaurants for the evening that dinner is on your own. Most dinners are at our hotels and consist of hearty mountain fare. Lighter dishes appear on some menus, including freshwater fish. Vegetarians can be accommodated with advance notice, though choices tend to be more limited. Please inform us of specific dietary restrictions by completing your Guest Questionnaire.

## TRANSPORTATION

While this trip is primarily an inn-to-inn hiking experience, we do use a variety of transport methods on certain days, including private passenger vans, local buses, a train, and cable cars.





# OUR ALPS TEAM

## TRIP MANAGER



### **Michelle Cournoyer**

Originally from Rhode Island, Michelle spent many years guiding cycling tours in Vermont and France before moving into a Destination Manager role. She joined Boundless Journeys in 2014 and her portfolio includes Slovenia, Scotland, the Dolomites, the Haute Route, the Tour du Mont Blanc, and Argentina. Michelle is our office Francophile and speaks fluent French. She is most at home in the mountains (no matter the continent) and runs, skis, hikes, and cycles with her family.

## GUIDES

With a Boundless Journeys guide, your experience is that of friend and local adventurer. We believe strongly in working with local guides, experts in the areas to which we travel, and they hold the keys to unlocking the hidden delights of your chosen destination. Although you will never know they are at work—the mark of a truly great leader—our guides make magical things happen and add a dimension to your trip that you could not experience on your own.

Over the years we have forged bonds with some of the best guides in the world, and we typically work with a small team of guides in each region. You will be informed of the guide for your trip one month prior to your departure.



### **Eric Thiolier**

Born and raised in Chamonix, Eric comes from a long line of mountain guides and has led long-distance hiking trips throughout Europe, especially in the Alps, since he began guiding in 1979. Eric speaks French, English, Italian, and German, is an avid skier, and has developed great relationships with local people along the route.

Eric is also involved heavily with the Valais canton, writing guidebooks and maintaining trail markings. He is very knowledgeable about all food, flora, and fauna in the region and is a great traveling companion with a lot of pride for where his roots have been for generations. Eric is warm and welcoming, and visitors can rest assured they have a fantastic leader who knows all the ins and outs of the routes.



### **Sandrine Goulmy**

Sandrine came to Chamonix many years ago after being drawn to the dramatic mountains and outdoors lifestyle. She thoroughly enjoys leading trekking in the Alps, as well as organizing nature camps for kids. She has been working as a guide since 2001, and her naturalist's eye on the trail opens our guests up to understanding the flora and fauna of mountains.

Sandrine's passion for the region's culture and easy-going nature make her a great companion on the trail. She is known for her amazing picnic lunches and her individual attention to ensure everyone's needs are met.

# NEXT STEPS



## TO MAKE A RESERVATION

You can call Boundless Journeys at 800-941-8010, request a reservation online, or contact your travel agent. We will confirm your spot with a deposit of \$500 per person and the payment of internal airfare, payable by check or credit card.

## ONCE YOU RESERVE

As soon as you confirm your adventure, we will provide you with an extensive, detailed trip planner that includes arrival and departure instructions, a complete packing list, regional information, required documents, a reading list, and other details.

## CANCELLATION & REFUND POLICY

Please check our Terms & Conditions page on our website for our comprehensive cancellation and refund policies: [www.boundlessjourneys.com/terms-and-conditions](http://www.boundlessjourneys.com/terms-and-conditions).

## TRIP CANCELLATION INSURANCE

In addition to your detailed trip planner, we will email you a quote for Travel Guard trip insurance. Please let us know if you would like us to purchase a policy on your behalf. Boundless Journeys strongly recommends purchasing Trip Insurance.

## QUESTIONS? WHICH TRIP IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

Adventure travel may involve exotic destinations, unusual levels of physical exertion, and activities that may be new to you. If you have any questions about the level of comfort, difficulty, or activities included on your trip, please call Boundless Journeys at 800-941-8010, or email us at [info@boundlessjourneys.com](mailto:info@boundlessjourneys.com). Our travel experts look forward to helping you select the perfect adventure.

### VISIT US ONLINE

[www.boundlessjourneys.com](http://www.boundlessjourneys.com) for:

- additional departures
- special promotions
- detailed itineraries
- inspiring photography
- guide bios

### ENJOY FOOD & WINE?

Check out. . .

- ITALY: Discovering Puglia
- SPAIN: Hiking the Camino de Santiago
- SLOVENIA: Julian Alps Hiking

### EXTENDING YOUR TRIP?

Consider. . .

- ITALY: The Dolomites Traverse
- THE ALPS: Tour du Mont Blanc

### PREFER A PRIVATE TRIP?

The perfect option for alumni and family reunions, birthdays and anniversaries, or just to catch up with friends in fabulous destinations. Mark your calendar and leave the planning to us! Call our travel experts today: 800-941-8010.

# BOUNDLESS BEYOND



## RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

At Boundless Journeys, our goal is to create meaningful experiences that protect the delicate ecosystems and attributes of every location we visit. We aim to educate our guests on the best responsible travel practices for each destination.

## WE ARE COMMITTED TO

**Making connections.** Our local guides offer insider knowledge of their country, including tips on etiquette and customs. They facilitate meaningful interactions with the people and places we visit, such as dinner at the home of a local family. While you may arrive in a destination as a visitor, you leave with a deeper understanding and connection to each place.

**Going local.** Boundless Journeys' small group size stems from a desire to provide a more intimate traveler experience, giving us the freedom to move through the tight alleys of old towns on foot, eat and sleep at traditional guesthouses, participate in immersive cultural exchanges, and leave a smaller footprint on all of the locales we visit. This mobility allows us to support local economies directly, forging strong relationships with our partners and friends abroad as we return year after year.

**Respecting people and the environment.** We support organizations working to protect ecosystems and improve the livelihoods of local communities. On many of our trips, we explore stunning natural landscapes where conservation is of the utmost importance. As visitors, we practice Leave No Trace ethics and actively contribute to the conservation of parks and protected areas.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

**Give back.** Instead of receiving a Boundless Journeys t-shirt or water bottle, you can opt to donate the value of your gift to our travel scholarship fund, which will be awarded to a local student for an educational or service-based travel opportunity.

**Learn more.** Visit [boundlessjourneys.com/responsible-travel](https://boundlessjourneys.com/responsible-travel) to read more about how our values are reflected in our trip offerings. We also offer a selection of Resources for the Responsible Traveler, which suggests ways to tread lightly and ensure your journey has a positive impact.

**Join us.** Boundless Journeys has taken the Travelers Against Plastic company pledge to promote sustainable travel and encourage travelers to avoid buying bottled water when they travel. You can take the pledge at [travelersagainstplastic.org](https://travelersagainstplastic.org).

## CONSERVATION IN ACTION

Boundless Journeys is a proud member of the Adventure Travel and Trade Association, a global network of adventure seekers who believe in the protection and promotion of local communities and wilderness areas.

