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**TRIP DETAILS**

8 days ~ France, Italy & Switzerland

6 days easy to strenuous hiking (your choice!), 1 day glacier walking, optional multisport activities (extra fee)

7 nights chalet

**2009 DATES**

Jun 13–Jun 20  
Jun 20–Jun 27  
Aug 8–Aug 16\*

\*Includes an extra day to attend the Fête des Guides. (For details see “Giving Back”.)

**2009 LAND COST**

\$3,595 per person (14-16 members)

\$3,995 per person (10-13 members)

\$4,295 per person (4-9 members)

\$800 single supplement

\*See pg. 5 for Aug. departure pricing.

# CHAMONIX: EXPLORE THE ALPS

**A 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Chalet-Based Adventure**

TRIP LEVEL  
EASY TO STRENUOUS

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- Celebrate MTS' 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the return of one of our first-ever European trips, and discover adventure in the Alps “chalet style”!
- Choose your own activities each day, with the help of expert local guides
- Experience outdoor adventure from the quintessential comfort of a European chalet—a new adventure every day, the same restful bed each night



# CHAMONIX: EXPLORE THE ALPS

*A 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Chalet-Based Adventure*

Join us on this very special re-creation of the first trip we ever offered in Europe. Of course, we've made some minor tweaks since 1970—back then, the trip lasted 21 days and cost a grand total of \$400—but much is the same, mainly a flexible itinerary that allows you to explore this classic destination your own way.

Surrounded by the dramatic peaks and sparkling glaciers of the Alps, the Chamonix Valley is Europe's premier playground for hiking and mountain pursuits. Each day, one of our experienced mountain guides—accredited, certified members of the prestigious Compagnie des Guides—will lead a trek based on the weather and preferences of the group, culminating with a guided traverse of the Vallée Blanche, an ice field that reaches 11,800 feet! You'll hike past rolling meadowlands with lazy cow bells clanking in the distance, wind through virgin pine forests, and negotiate rocky nooks and crannies, all the while taking in the most stunning panoramas of this storied mountainscape as our accomplished guides bring a wonderful dimension of history, geology, and local color to every aspect of the trip. Their flawless guiding skills and intimate knowledge of the area create a can't-be-beat adventure.



With every imaginable adventure at your feet, you don't have to settle for just one activity on this trip. Daredevils can opt for more adrenaline-pumping alternatives, including white-water rafting on the Arve, paragliding through the Chamonix "Needles," mountain-biking down hidden single-track trails, and summiting Western Europe's highest peak of Mont Blanc (15,771'). A Volkswagon minivan is at your disposal for jaunts to the nearby villages of Annecy, Aoste, Martigny, and Zermatt or ask for a 'pique-nique' and strike out on your own with your Mont Blanc multi-pass, valid on all the lifts in the valley.

After all that fresh mountain air, you'll reconvene every evening at our comfortable "base camp," Chalets Les Mazots, for a hearty dinner of regional fare and wine in the company of newfound friends. This classic chalet, in the old, secluded quarter of Les Moussoux, is equidistant from the the Brévent lift and the Chamonix city center, making a perfect base for everything. There are even two garden *mazots* (cozy wooden retreats) on the grounds for when there are just too many for the main chalet, a truly flexible location with charming Savoyard details. With 40 years of experience in the Alps, MTS knows the region better than any U.S. tour company. We know the best accommodations in town and the best places to visit, including off-the-beaten-path trails that others simply haven't discovered yet.

It's easy to be dizzied by all the options here, so don't forget to just simply relax beneath the stunning scenery and wander the charming streets of the mountain village.

## CHAMONIX: EXPLORE THE ALPS

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*Note*—The August trip includes an extra day for the Fête des Guides, an annual celebration of mountain guides, created with the aim of providing financial assistance to injured or deceased guides and their families. See pages 5 & 6 for details and pricing.



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FOR INFORMATION OR RESERVATIONS, CALL TOLL-FREE | 888 MTSOBK (687 6235)

## ITINERARY

☞ This trip begins with a rendezvous at the airport in Geneva, Switzerland on Day 1. Actual hiking times and miles may vary with weather conditions and/or the recommendations of your guide.

### **DAY 1 ~ Arrive Geneva, Transfer to Chamonix**

Arrive at the airport in Geneva, Switzerland. You will be picked up *promptly* at 2:00 p.m. for a group transfer by private van to the mountain-ringed resort town of Chamonix, France. We suggest you arrive early enough (by 1:00 p.m.) to allow time to get through customs and immigration before the scheduled pickup. Once at the chalet, you'll have time to rest a bit or explore the town before meeting your guide and the rest of the group for a welcome drink and orientation.

*D... Chalet Les Mazots*

### **DAYS 2-7 ~ Choose Your Own Adventure**

Pick your own activities each day or strap on your hiking boots for the daily trek offered by your guide, based on the group's preferences and the weather. You'll be in good hands while accompanied by an exemplary guide with extensive knowledge of flora, fauna, and geology. The pièce de résistance will be traversing the Vallée Blanche (11,800'). Starting from the top of Aiguillie di Midi (9,842'), you'll cross the ice field on foot, arriving on the Italian side of the mountain range, and return via gondola to soak in the breathtaking views.

Your guide will advise you on other options, arrange the activity, and guide you through renting the appropriate gear. Take it easy by grabbing a picnic and hiking along Le Grand Balcon Nord or challenge yourself to one of the extreme alpine sports Chamonix is famous for: summit Mont-Blanc (advance notice required); catch the thermals paragliding above the valley for an up-close views of the Aiguilles Rouges; rock-climb with one of the oldest mountain outfitters in the world; raft or kayak down the frothy whitewater of the Arve; mountain bike on trails that snake through lush meadows or more technical terrain; or try *via ferrata* ('way of the iron'), a method of ascending alpine routes with iron ladders, cables, and handrails.

Please note—Optional activities are “extra” and paid on arrival (to the guide). We will provide a “menu” of choices and their costs in the pre-trip information.

On the last day, we'll have the opportunity to recap adventures with new friends at a festive farewell dinner.

*B,L,D each day (Choose 1 night for dinner on your own.)...Chalet Les Mazots*

*Note*—The 9-day August trip spends an additional day at the chalet to attend the Fête des Guides. There will be no activity with your guide or other members of the Compagnie des Guides on Aug. 15.

### **DAY 8 ~ Return to Geneva and Fly Home**

After breakfast, we transfer back to Geneva airport. There will be one group departure for the airport at 8:30 a.m.\* Please schedule your flight after 11:00 a.m. for inter-European destinations, after 12:00 p.m. for all transcontinental destinations. If you would like to depart earlier or later, the transfer is on your own.

*B...*

\*Due to Switzerland's commercial transportation laws, we are only able to provide one group taxi service to the Geneva Airport on Day 8, included in the cost of your trip. This transfer will be at 8:30 a.m. and will arrive at the Geneva Airport at 10:00 a.m. Private transfers can be arranged at an additional cost, and range between 43 Euros to 275 Euros (shared/solo).

## 2009 LAND COST

### 8-Day Trips (June)

\$3,595 per person (14-16 members)

\$3,995 per person (10-13 members)

\$4,295 per person (4-9 members)

Rates quoted are per person, based on sharing double accommodations.

Single Supplement—\$800 for “requested” singles; \$400 for “forced” singles. If you prefer single accommodations, you must pay the Single Supplement Fee (due to a limited number of rooms available at each hotel, we can only allow one requested single on each departure). If you're traveling alone and wish to share accommodations, we'll try our best to find you a roommate. If that's not possible, we will only charge you half of the single supplement.

### 9-Day Trip (August)

\$4,095 per person (14-16 members)

\$4,495 per person (10-13 members)

\$4,895 per person (4-9 members)

Rates quoted are per person, based on sharing double accommodations.

Single Supplement—\$1,000 for “requested” singles; \$500 for “forced” singles. If you prefer single accommodations, you must pay the Single Supplement Fee (due to a limited number of rooms available at each hotel, we can only allow one requested single on each departure). If you're traveling alone and wish to share accommodations, we'll try our best to find you a roommate. If that's not possible, we will only charge you half of the single supplement.

### What's Included

- ◆ expert leadership
- ◆ accommodations
- ◆ meals as noted (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- ◆ group airport transfer from Geneva to Chamonix and return
- ◆ sightseeing as noted in the itinerary
- ◆ ground transportation by van
- ◆ local group transfers by bus or cable car
- ◆ additional guides where necessary
- ◆ basic medical and evacuation insurance

### What's Not

International airfare to Geneva and return; insurance other than basic medical and evacuation insurance noted above (we strongly recommend you purchase the supplementary trip insurance offered by Mountain Travel Sobek,

which includes trip cancellation insurance); individual transfers for early arrivals or late departures; optional activities on Days 2-7 while in Chamonix; optional tipping to leader, guides and local staff; excess baggage charges; airport taxes; cost of medical immunizations; items of a personal nature (sodas, alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.).

### **Air Travel**

Airfare is not included in the cost of our trips. For air reservations, we recommend you contact the airlines directly, either by phone or the Internet. In addition, many travelers elect to use their “frequent flyer” miles when traveling with us. **But please check with our staff before purchasing or obtaining your tickets.** We need to verify your arrival and departure schedule and ensure we have enough participants to operate the trip.

### **How We’re Giving Back**

**Trust for Fallen Climbers:** The Fête des Guides (Guide Festival) was created with the aim of providing financial assistance to injured or deceased guides and their dependant families via the Caisse de Secours (Emergency Fund). Every year, hundreds of volunteers, guides and non-guides, give their time and their energy to help organize the event with the Compagnie des Guides de Chamonix, in order to maximize proceeds for this emergency fund.

## WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

### **Expert Leadership**

Expert leadership is the key to an exciting, unforgettable experience. Our trips feature gifted leaders for whom leading trips is a true vocation. Besides showing you wonders you’d never find on your own, they make sure everything runs smoothly and safely without a hitch. They are knowledgeable about all aspects of your trip, and take great pleasure in sharing their insights with you. More than just guides, they positively elevate your experience by being informative teachers and great companions. You’ll be in good hands with them every step of the way. Although trip leader assignments may change, the following people regularly lead this trip:

**Laurent Langoisseur** arrived in Chamonix nearly 20 years ago after working for the national railroad system. Upon his arrival in the valley, he immediately fell in love with the mountains. After passing all his qualifying tests to become a hiking guide, he was awarded the coveted patch of the Compagnie des Guides, and has now guided well over 100 trips to the mountains. An avid sports enthusiast and inexhaustible hiker, Laurent’s knowledge of flora, fauna, and geology are a good complement to his guiding skills. During the winter, he’s a ski patrol monitor in the mountains above Chamonix.



**Jean Marc Vaillant**, a member of the Compagnie des Guides, began guiding for MTS several years ago. Jean Marc is what the French call *polyvalent* (“able to do many things”). His talents range from being a licensed pyrotechnic specialist, snowboard manufacturer, journalist, musical group crew, and theater worker. If this weren’t enough, in addition to his passion for hiking, he also teaches children the skills of mountain biking, skiing, and snowshoeing. Jean-Marc has led over 60 trips to the Alps and proudly carried the Olympic torch to the 2008 Ticino winter games.



**Florence Simond**, a native of Chamonix, is a descendant from two of the area's oldest families. After growing up in the Chamonix Valley, "Flo" spent several years in the south of France, and then traveled abroad to South America and Asia. She returned to her ancestral home, where the mountains now form an integral part of her life. She has led nearly 50 trips to the Alps, not counting how many times she has done this trip for her own fun! In addition to being an accomplished hiking guide, Flo is a skier and climber. As a member of the Compagnie des Guides, she follows in the footsteps of her forefathers.



**Stéphane Berger** is a true man of the mountains, with a Savoyard father and Swiss mother. He grew up in Chamonix, then left the valley to follow his first love, architecture. But the call of the wild proved too strong: numerous travels in North Africa, Siberia, and the Himalaya opened a new door to him—the profession of hiking guide. Nowadays Stéphane lives in a chalet in Chamonix from where he escapes frequently to travel the mountain areas of the world. "Steph" has now been a member of the Compagnie des Guides for many years, with over 100 trips to the Alps under his belt.



All are certified by the Union of International Mountain Leader Association and members of the prestigious "Compagnie des Guides de Chamonix," a professional guide association that dates back to the first climb of Mont Blanc over 200 years ago. (They are part of a larger team of experienced guides who have worked consistently with Mountain Travel Sobek.) Other equally accomplished people make up our list of MTS guides. Leader assignments will be confirmed in the Final Bulletin sent to you three weeks prior to departure.

### **Activity Level**

Mountain Travel Sobek trips are designed for flexible, energetic people who like to be active and intellectually involved, and have a spirit of adventure and a positive attitude. You should be an experienced hiker in excellent physical condition, with adequate cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, and excellent balance. This trip is as challenging as you want it to be; you must be prepared and capable of walking an average of five to seven hours a day on trails with steep ascents and descents averaging 2,500 to 3,000 feet up and 2,000 to 3,000 feet down each day for the most strenuous options.

We recommend that you start a moderate training program *several months* before departure, then slowly build up to a more strenuous level. Since training is highly sport-specific, include some hiking or running in your program. Hiking up and down steep trails with a daypack, mountain biking, running, jogging, and other aerobic exercise for at least one hour four or five times a week is very important if you want to enjoy the hike. Remember, the best way to train for a hike is to go hiking. Wear your boots and go up and down as many hills as you can to strengthen your leg muscles and build up your stamina.

Consult your physician if you have questions concerning your underlying health. We can answer questions for you or your physician concerning required levels of fitness, health conditions, and what to expect. If you have concerns about your ability to do this trip, we can suggest appropriate trip alternatives.

## THE NEXT STEP

### **Ready to go? Signing up is easy!**

Just call us at 1-888-MTSOBEK (687-6235) and reserve your spot! You can also book a reservation online at our website ([www.mtsobek.com](http://www.mtsobek.com)). If you prefer to use a travel agent, he or she can book your trip at no extra cost and provide other helpful assistance.

### **Then Leave the Rest to Us**

Before you go, we provide you with extensive pre-departure information, including clothing recommendations, suggested reading lists, and other details.

### **Why Mountain Travel Sobek is Your First Choice for Adventure**

Mountain Travel Sobek is the pioneer in active adventure travel. No other adventure travel company can lay claim to that title. We were the first to take Americans trekking in Nepal, raft the wild rivers of Africa, and open up many previously inaccessible corners of the world to curious travelers. We set the standard for adventure travel and have a strong reputation for excellence that we do everything we can to maintain. Since we are the leading adventure company, we have a lot to live up to, so we make sure we provide safe, quality trips and the best customer service to our passengers.

With Mountain Travel Sobek, you'll see the Alps as only an insider can, with friendly, hospitable guides who know the region intimately. They'll accompany you throughout the day, lending support and insights about where you are and what you see. Their close familiarity with the local geography, history, culture and traditions (plus their entertaining stories and great jokes) are the key to a superb, informative experience—one you just can't get on your own.

### **References**

Don't take our word for how great our trips are. We'll be happy to provide you with references of satisfied past travelers.

### **Questions?**

Feel free to call us at 1-888-MTSOBEK (687-6235) if you still have any questions or concerns. We're here to help you. You can also check out our award-winning website at [www.mtsobek.com](http://www.mtsobek.com).

### **Note on Itinerary**

Although we will do our best to adhere to the itinerary schedule as listed, it is subject to change. Please read the Limitation of Liability and Booking Conditions in the four-page Participant Information Form. You can find all this information on our website at [www.mtsobek.com/faq](http://www.mtsobek.com/faq) and the form itself at [www.mtsobek.com/pdf/participant\\_info.pdf](http://www.mtsobek.com/pdf/participant_info.pdf).

### **Terms & Conditions**

Once you have made a deposit for a trip, you agree to be bound by all our terms and conditions including the Limitation of Liability Clause. The full Terms and Conditions can be found at [www.mtsobek.com/faq/#liability](http://www.mtsobek.com/faq/#liability) or call 1-888-MTSOBEK (687-6235) for a copy. These are partial conditions. Your participation is contingent on your signature on the full list of terms specified in the four-page Participant Information Form ([www.mtsobek.com/pdf/participant\\_info.pdf](http://www.mtsobek.com/pdf/participant_info.pdf)). Any dispute concerning, relating or referring to the Terms and Conditions, to any literature concerning this trip, or the trip itself, shall be resolved exclusively by

binding arbitration in San Francisco, California, according to the then existing commercial rules of the American Arbitration Association. Such proceedings will be governed by substantive California law (but not procedural law) without regard to the California Arbitration Act.

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