



Alpine Refuge Challenge FAQ's

Travel

What time do I have to arrive in Chamonix?

Aim to be in Chamonix late afternoon on arrival day and depart after breakfast on the final day. Please note we will not have access to the chalet before or after these times

Where do we fly to?

The nearest airport is Geneva. You then take a transfer to Chamonix and will be dropped at the chalet door. The transfer from Geneva takes approximately 75 minutes.

Accommodation

Where will we be staying?

You will be staying in a 5* chalet on the first and last night and will be in a remote mountain refuge for the middle night. Please note the refuge accommodation is clean but basic.

Can I have my own room?

The accommodation is twin room sharing in the chalet and you will be in dormitory style accommodation in the refuge.

Can I leave things in the chalet?

Yes. The bedroom you are allocated is yours for the entire time you are in Chamonix and you can leave anything you don't want on the hike in your bedroom.

What are the sleeping arrangements at the refuge?

You will sleep in dormitory style accommodation in the refuge. Please note that this may include people outside of our group and may be mixed gender.

Are there showers at the refuge?

Yes in some refuges but not all. Where there are showers there are only a couple for the whole refuge so be prepared to queue. On occasion these showers are not available for use so plan for this possibility. Bear in mind if you plan to shower you will need to carry a towel.

Do I need to carry a sleeping bag?

No. The refuge will provide blankets. You will need your own sleeping bag liner.

Can I purchase items if needed in Chamonix?

The chalets we use are located outside of Chamonix, and we recommend you bring everything you need for the trip with you.

Food

What do we eat?

On arrival and the final night, the CHX chef will prepare a 3 course, buffet style meal, a large breakfast while in the chalet and picnic lunch to carry with you for the trek. The refuge provides a 3 course meal and a very basic breakfast. You may wish to carry a little extra for your breakfast after the night in the refuge.

Should I bring my own snacks?

Yes. CHX provides 3 meals but you will need additional snacks. Fruit will be available from the chalets but please bring snacks that you enjoy for trekking. You will be able to buy some chocolate / snacks in the Refuge. These will need to be paid for with cash so it may be worth carrying some Euros with you.



I have specific dietary requirements, can these be accommodated?

Yes. We have our own chef providing food in the chalet and for lunches on the trek. The night in the refuge is a little more difficult but we will ask in advance for any eating requirements and do our absolute best to accommodate these.

Kit

Do I need to carry my own kit?

Yes, plus lunch for 2 days. In limited circumstances, if you have a specific reason for not being able to carry your kit the CHX team will do what they can to assist.

What kit do I need?

CHX will provide a full kit list. Generally gym / exercise kit is sufficient. You will need a good pair of walking boots with supported ankles and a good waterproof.

What size rucksack do I need?

We recommend a 30l rucksack. You will need enough space to carry spare clothes for the refuge, a washbag, lunch for 2 days and water for one day. We recommend having a dry bag inside your rucksack to keep items dry in case of rain.

What should I wear on my feet?

A good pair of (worn in) walking boots are required with some ankle support.

Do I need walking poles?

We highly recommend you use walking poles because it takes effort from your legs both up and down hill, helps to protect the knees, and helps with balance. We do have a few spare pairs but not enough for everyone so it is a good idea to have your own and practice walking with them in advance.

How much water do I need to carry?

This will partially depend on the weather but a minimum of 1.5litres.

Can we refill water bottles?

Plan to have enough for a whole day trekking as you are unlikely to be able to refill during the day. You can refill once you arrive at the Refuge.

Fitness

How hard is the hike?

This is a challenging 2 day mountainous trek and a good level of fitness is required. It is also important to be confident on your feet because some of the trails are rocky and uneven. We may hike some 'off-piste', off the main trails.

How fit do I need to be?

A good level of fitness is required for this challenge. Fitness can be in many different forms, but strength, cardio fitness and endurance are all required. We will be hiking 8-9 hours, largely uphill, carrying a pack. We would recommend you are exercising at least 1 of the following...

- 4-5 high intensity exercise sessions per week (interval training; HITT; spin class etc)
- Experience of multi-day hiking in mountainous terrain
- Able to cycle / run for 2+ hours

Please note the fitter you are, the more enjoyable you will find this challenge.



Do I have time to get fit?

Yes. If you are starting from a low level of fitness, start gradually and build up. Please take advice from an exercise professional and always consult your doctor before starting a new exercise regime. Simply spending time walking with a weighted rucksack (assuming no pre-existing medical conditions) is a great way to enhance your fitness levels and strengthen key muscle groups.

Can you help me with a training plan?

Yes, we are happy to provide a basic training plan but also recommend you speak to an exercise professional who can tailor a plan specifically for you.

I've not hiked / done anything like this before - does that matter?

Absolutely not. The only things that are required are a good level of fitness, (or are happy to build your fitness), a smile and a desire to try something new.

On the Trek

What should I expect on the trek?

You will be hiking for 3 full days with approximately 8-9 hours of hiking but with plenty of opportunities to stop. A big percentage of this will be uphill. The majority of hiking will be on mountain trails but with some off-trail which could be challenging underfoot.

Do I have to do all of the hiking?

Yes. This is a multi day trek and once we set out, we will not be returning to Chamonix until the final evening. You will need to complete the entire trek, however there will be options during the route for more or less difficult trails. The Guides will have the final decision on which is suitable for the group.

What happens if I need the toilet when hiking?

You will need to find a bush or rock off the trail and away from water sources such as rivers. You are welcome to carry tissues or toilet roll but you must also carry a small bag to take this away with you. You are asked to place a rock over the area you have used. There are flushable toilets at the refuge.

Who will Guide us?

We will have qualified Mountain Leaders guiding the trip. They are experts and hugely knowledgeable about the area. The CHX team will also be on hand to answer any questions.

I'm afraid of heights - is this a problem?

Please speak to a member of the CHX team about this but hopefully we can manage this and it is not something that should prevent you taking part.

What height will we be hiking to and will I feel the altitude?

We will hike to over 2500m and you may experience an above usual feeling of fatigue. The Refuge is at 2000m and this may affect sleep in some people. However it is very unlikely you will experience altitude sickness at these elevations. Arriving on the trip in a good physical state, avoiding excessive alcohol will help the body adjust to the height.

What happens if I am unwell on the trip?

The Guides have full first aid training and in the first instance will do what they can to look after you. In more serious circumstances, if necessary, we would call mountain rescue to evacuate you. It is important you have suitable holiday insurance to cover this and the activity you are undertaking.

Will I have mobile phone signal?



In Chamonix you will have full signal, but not for the whole trek so do not plan any calls or expect to always be able to respond to email while trekking or overnight.

What will the temperature be?

The weather can be mixed in May with warm days but also cooler days. In the mountains it is unpredictable and there could be very high temperatures or pouring rain so you need to plan for this. We will have a more accurate idea of weather closer to the time.