

Gran Paradiso

Europe | 4,061m



360 
EXPEDITIONS

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Standing tall at 4,061m, **Gran Paradiso** can be found in the Val d'Aosta of Northern Italy and takes the crown as the highest point of the entire National Park.

Soaring high above the surrounding protected landscape and thriving ecosystem, keep an eye out for the many ibex that have been saved from extinction in this very region.

First ascended in 1860, Gran Paradiso serves as one of the most accessible 4000m alpine peaks and the perfect next step for those looking to up the ante in a jaw-droppingly stunning mountainous arena.

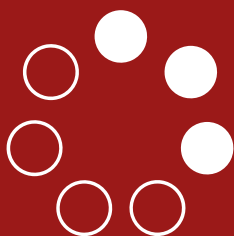
With the right training, fitness, and a good guide, you can take on this grand peak in the Graian Alps.

A **1 Guide for 4 clients** (we can take up to 12 climbers) allows us to move quickly over long glaciated trails, while allowing the Guide to safeguard everyone on more difficult sections. Previous alpine mountaineering experience is not needed for this trip, but you should wear crampons, be fit, and be ready for an adventure.

The journey begins and ends in France, with a short transfer into Italy, making the most of the excellent lift infrastructure there. Once into the mountains, we make use of the iconic Italian mountain refuges, famous among alpinists for great food and wine!

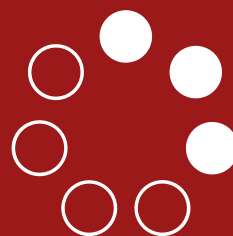
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Physical – P3

This trip is physically tough. Frequent exercise is necessary to prepare properly for this expedition. Regular walking mixed with training at the gym to build up endurance and cardiovascular fitness is key. Expect to be able to do 8 hour days in hilly and often steep terrain, carrying a pack of 6-10kg in weight with the occasional extra long day.



Technical – T3

May involve harder scrambling or some trekking and climbing with ropes. If snow is encountered then glacier travel with ropes, ice axes and crampons will be necessary. Basic climbing skills are ideal, but these will also be taught (and certainly practiced) during the expedition and pre-summit phase.

Please note that the grading system used is a rough guide only.



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ITINERARY

DAY 1 : Depart UK & briefing

You'll be met at your hotel (Hotel Prieure in Chamonix) for a briefing in the foyer around 6:30pm. Your Guide will confirm the current conditions, weather forecast and itinerary. They will also discuss clothing and equipment. Hire kit will be distributed. If you need to hire boots, you can either collect these from Snell Sports on the day you arrive, or on the morning of Day 1. If you tell them you're going to Gran Paradiso they'll know which boots to give you. You may wish to reserve your boots in advance – if so, please do so directly with the shop (<https://snellsports.com/eng>).

DAY 2 : Chamonix to Rifugio Torino (3,400m) - crampon skills training

After breakfast we will drive through the Mont Blanc tunnel into Italy, arriving in Courmayeur. We will then take the chair lift up to 3400m before a very quick walk to Rifugio Torino where we'll spend the night. After dropping off our kit, we'll head out onto the glacier for some essential crampon skills training.

DAY 3 : Climbing, Glacier hike or Rock Climbing

Depending on weather, conditions, and how the group are feeling, there are a few options for this morning. You might undertake a climb, a glacial hike, or do some valley rock climbing. In the afternoon we will take the lift back down and then drive around an hour to the National Park, before walking up to the Rifugio Chabod. The hike takes around 2-2 ½ hrs.

DAY 4 : Gran Paradiso (4,061m)

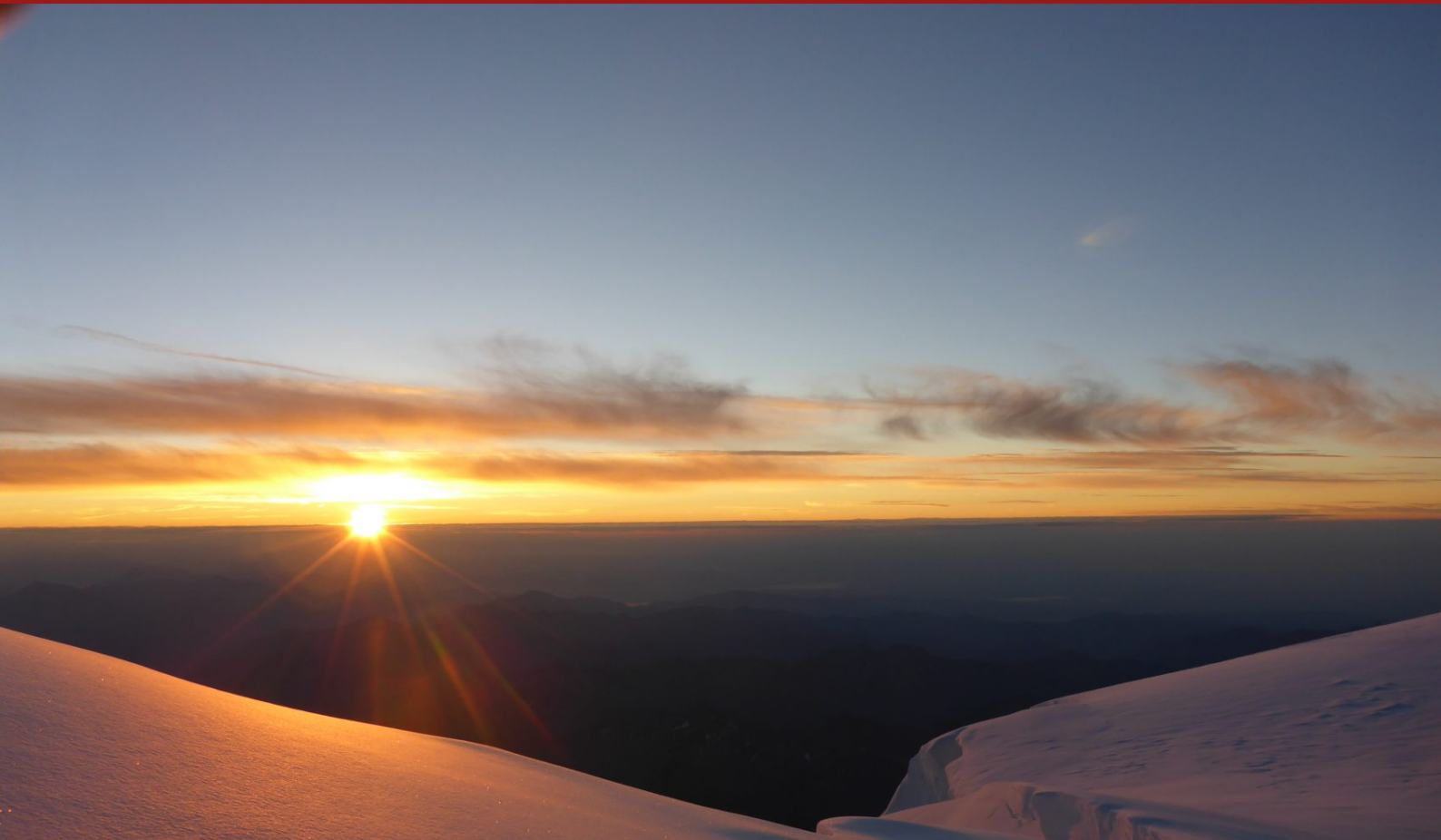
We usually get up early (around 5am), and after breakfast we will start trekking uphill. It is likely that we will start without our crampons and harnesses etc, but this all depends on the conditions at the time. After about an hour of trekking we should arrive at the glacier. From there it's around 3 hours to the summit. The summit journey involves a short scramble, and some fixed ladders up to the dramatic summit block, complete with statue of the virgin Mary. After taking photographs we will head back down onto the glacier and then make our way down to the Rifugio where we often have a pasta lunch before carrying on back down to the car park. You'll then be driven back to the hotel in Chamonix for a well-deserved shower and a meal.

DAY 5 : Departure

Breakfast at the hotel is included before departure. We recommend you book your flights for around lunchtime to avoid needing to depart too early! For transfer information between Chamonix and Geneva airport, please see our FAQ's.

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KIT LIST

Bags & Packs

Rucksack

30-40 litre maximum. If buying a rucksack get one with ice axe loops

Headwear

Warm headgear

This can be a warm hat, beanie, balaclava, anything to reduce the heat loss from your head

Wide brimmed hat

Keeps the sun off exposed areas like ears and the nape of the neck

Goggles

Low light lenses recommended as goggles most likely used in poor weather

Sunglasses

Category 4 glacier glasses by Julbo, Cebe, Vuarnet and Adidas recommended.

Upper Body

Thermal shirt/T shirt

Merino wool is best as they don't smell quite as much.

Fleece top/jacket or Softshell

Waterproof jacket

Gore Tex. Arc'Teryx Beta AR recommended

Duvet jacket

Synthetic jackets recommended as they stay warm if wet.

Thin gloves

Fleece or leather gloves recommended

Warm gloves

Black Diamond Patrol gloves recommended.

Mitts

Dachstein wool mitts recommended.
Alternatively fleece with Gore Tex shell

Lower Body

Thick socks

Smartwool or Teko recommended

Mountain trousers

Mammut "Base Jump" (Schoeller fabric) or similar recommended

Waterproof trousers

Like the jacket, an essential piece of kit to stay dry and should also be Goretex

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KIT LIST

Feet

Mountaineering boots (B2 or B3)

B2 boots will work well, La Sportiva Nepal Extreme or Scarpa Mont Blanc Pro recommended. Boots must have a rigid sole for crampons. Excellent boots can be hired in Chamonix for around €50/week.

Gaiters

In case of deep snow. Gore tex. Black Diamond recommended. Ankle length work fine.

Sleeping Gear

Sleeping bag liner (sheet sleeping bag)

These are mandatory for the refuges for hygiene reasons. Silk bags are best due to their weight. Summit to Sea recommended

Hydration

Water bottles

Nalgene style plastic bottles are the best. 0.5l-1l thermos flasks can also come in handy on very cold days! Avoid using Camel Back style systems with drinking straws. They leak, the tubes freeze, and they will always let you down when you need them most.

Toiletries

Lip salve

Sun cream and lip salve. SPF >30

Wash kit

Toothbrush, small tube of toothpaste, wet wipes, antiseptic hand gel.

Ear plugs

The mountain huts can be busy so better to be safe than sorry.

Medications

Med-kit and personal medication

Blister Kit and personal medication if required. Compeed recommended.

Technical Equipment

Head torch

Petzl Tika Plus or similar recommended

Harness

Black Diamond Alpine Bod and Beal Aero Team III recommended

Helmet

Petzl Ecrin Roc and Black Diamond Half Dome recommended

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KIT LIST

Ice axe

Grivel Air Tech recommended. The bottom of your axe should reach your shin when held in your hand standing upright

Crampons

Petzl Vasak and Grivel G12 highly recommended

Trekking poles

These can be handy when crossing glaciers, and on paths for reducing shock on your knees. Gipron recommended because they are ultra light and split down into 4 segments, meaning they can be stored inside your rucksack when climbing. Snow baskets essential. It is personal preference whether to use one pole or two.

Miscellaneous

Camera

Compact camera, fully charged

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FAQ'S

When is the best time to head out on this trip?

As Gran Paradiso are mostly snow and glacier-covered, especially in winter, the best climbing season spans from mid-June to mid-September, and we tend to take advantage of the quieter months outside of the August holidays.

How fit do I need to be for this trip?

This is a very demanding trip. You should be in excellent physical shape – think capable of jogging a half marathon in 2hr20. Our past experience has shown that those not up to this fitness level struggle may struggle.

How long are the days?

The length of days will vary when alpine climbing. Training days will usually start between 0600 and 0800, and last for 6-8 hours. Gran Paradiso will usually start very early, and can easily last 12 hours.

What experience do I need to join?

You don't *need* previous climbing experience for this trip but time spent on crampons would be a great advantage.

The climbing is all straightforward – mostly it's hiking on glaciers or steep and snowy paths. You will be taught techniques in situ.. so don't worry... BUT you will need to be physically fit.

I've done some high altitude trekking and now want to climb in the alps, is this trip suitable?

Absolutely – if you've done some high altitude trekking like Everest Base Camp and are ready to try your hand at 4000m+ alpine mountains, this is an ideal trip. We'd even go so far as to say that this trip is better than aiming to summit Mont Blanc.

Are all Mountain Guides certified?

All Guides operating in the European Alps must be internationally certified. Training and assessment takes a minimum of three years and anyone caught operating without a license will be prosecuted.

Occasionally we employ trainee guides (known as Aspirants). They are in the final stages of qualifying as Guides and are allowed to operate under the tutorage of a fully qualified Guide.

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FAQ'S

What if the conditions are too bad for our itinerary?

If conditions are really bad we will find an alternative plan. This may involve climbing in either Italy or Switzerland.

What is the hotel like?

For this trip we will be using a lovely hotel in Chamonix, ideally situated so you can stroll into town.

Rooms are on a twin-sharing basis. Single rooms may be available for a supplement of €200.

What are the mountain huts like?

Mountain huts/refuges are mostly owned by the Alpine Clubs. They are there to provide accommodation and food for mountaineers. They often cater for large numbers (>100), and hence can be quite busy. Meals are usually simple but plentiful, and anyone with special dietary requirements must let us know in advance so we can inform the hut guardian. Showers and running water are not usually available. The rooms are usually dormitory style, with large alpine bunks (up to 15 people in a row).

Should I carry shoes for the evenings in the huts?

This isn't necessary, all of the mountain huts provide indoor footwear for your comfort.

What type of food should I carry?

Everyone is different, however it is essential to eat well in the mountains. Sandwiches are hard to beat, supplemented by fruit and chocolate bars. Don't carry too much food, and remember that some foods will freeze solid unless kept in jacket pockets.

Can allergies or dietary requirements be catered for?

Definitely – huts will usually try and accommodate vegetarians etc. but they do sometimes struggle with more specialised requirements such as gluten free. If you have a food allergy or specific dietary requirement please do let the office know when you book.

Where can I get a packed lunch for each day?

You have two options, the first is to pick up food from Chamonix and Aosta before you leave to head into the mountains. The second option is to buy a packed lunch from the refuge, which you'll need confirm directly with them the night before. Once you're in the mountains, the only option for lunch is option two unless you take food up with you.

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FAQ'S

How much water should I carry each day?

Do not carry too much water – it is very heavy. As a general rule 1-2 litres is the right amount. Avoid using Camel Back style systems with drinking straws. They leak, the tubes freeze, and they will always let you down when you need them most. Nalgene style plastic bottles are the best.

If there is no water in the hut for washing, what should we do?

Take some wet wipes to give yourself a clean in the evening. A toothbrush, some wet wipes, and a small tube of toothpaste (shared between several people) is plenty. Some alcohol hand gel is also handy.

What camera should I take?

We'd recommend you avoid carrying bulky SLR style cameras. They are too heavy, and slow to use. Compact cameras that fit into a pocket are best. Cameras in rucksacks never take photographs! Digital cameras must be kept warm in a pocket or they will freeze and cease to function.

What sun cream do you recommend?

Any brand will be fine. The most important thing is the SPF – do not bother with anything under SPF 30. Creams with UVA and UVB protection are best. Any don't forget lip salve.

Can I hire kit?

You can hire equipment in Chamonix rather than buy it. We use a local shop for boot hire (allow €50 for the week).

A full kit package for 3 days includes Duvet Jacket, Mitts, Axe, Harness, Crampons, Helmet and costs €60 to rent.

Individual costs:

Ice axe – €15

Harness – €7

Helmet – €8

Crampons – €16

Duvet jacket – €16

Mitts – €6

Please be aware that these are a guide price only, prices may have varied by the time you arrive in country.

If you do want to hire kit, please let us know in advance so we can ensure you get the kit you need.

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FAQ'S

What are the transfer options between Geneva and Chamonix?

The transfer between Geneva and Chamonix takes approximately 70 minutes and is your responsibility to sort. We would highly recommend booking the transfer through Mountain Drop Offs (please use discount code **360EXPCHX** when booking).

If travelling independently we'd recommend you plan to arrive at your accommodation after 14:00, when check-in opens, but you can leave your luggage at the hotel and explore town until check-in if preferred.

At the end of the trip the transfer usually departs Chamonix around 3 hours prior to your flight departure.

What else do I need to pay for?

As part of your itinerary you will need to pay for the following:

- Flights
- Airport transfers
- Insurance
- Mountain uplift (approx. €100)
- Taxi transfers in the event that ski lifts are not open
- Any equipment you need to hire, see FAQ
- Lunches (for all days) and snacks (allow €20 per day)
- Bag storage in Chamonix (€10-15)

Is there a minimum number for this trip?

We work on a minimum number of 2 people.

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TRAINING PROGRAM

To begin 6 months prior to the expedition where possible.

1. CVS: Cardiovascular exercise which is low impact such as swimming, cycling, cross trainer, rowing.

2. Weekend walk should be done over undulating terrain. Only a light rucksack needs to be carried.

3. For specific exercises it is worth doing static squats and heel raises on a regular basis to improve leg muscles prior to the trip. Static squats are especially useful to help protect the knees. Please remember that it is still important to have a well balanced workout using a variety of muscle groups.

4. It is worth winding down and resting in the week leading up to the trip, doing several light walks to keep things going.

5. When walking going at a pace of a brisk walk with a light sweat and enough to feel breathless is recommended

6. During the program, rather than step up suddenly each month (example, going for 3 one hour walks each week during the weekdays in April to 3 one and half hour walks suddenly in May) it is better to build up gradually each week so there isn't a large transition (example, going for 3 one hour walks during week 1 in April, going for 3 one hour and ten minute walks during week 2 in April, going for 3 one hour and fifteen minute walks during week 3 in April, going for 3 one hour and twenty minute walks during week 4 in April)

6. It is important you seek medical advice prior to starting any training program, especially if you are not used to regular physical exertion

All the best with your training!

MONTH 1

OPT 1

2 x 30 mins weekday walk
1 x 1 hour weekend walk
1 x 10 mins CVS

OPT 2

1 x 30 mins weekday walk
2 x 1 hour weekend walk
1 x 10 mins CVS

MONTH 2

OPT 1

2 x 45 mins weekday walk
1 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

OPT 2

1 x 45 mins weekday walk
2 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

MONTH 3

OPT 1

2 x 45 mins weekday walk
1 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

OPT 2

1 x 45 mins weekday walk
2 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

MONTH 4

OPT 1

3 x 1 hour weekday walk
1 x 4 hours weekend walk
3 x 15 mins CVS

OPT 2

2 x 1 hour weekday walk
2 x 4 hours weekend walk
3 x 15 mins CVS

MONTH 5

OPT 1

3 x 1.5 hours weekday walk
1 x 5 hours weekend walk
3 x 20 - 25 mins CVS

OPT 2

2 x 1.5 hours weekday walk
2 x 5 hours weekend walk
3 x 20 - 25 mins CVS

MONTH 6

OPT 1

3 x 2 hours weekday walk
1 x 6 hours weekend walk
3 x 30 mins CVS

OPT 2

2 x 3 hours weekday walk
2 x 6 hours weekend walk
3 x 30 mins CVS

360[°] EXPEDITIONS



"Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty & well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out & loudly proclaiming 'Wow! What a Ride!' "

Dream it. Plan it. Live it.