



## GREAT ALPINE CLASSICS, SWITZERLAND: VILLAGE-BASED WALKING/HIKING TOUR

- MEET:** Chamonix  
**VISIT:** Chamonix, Mürren, Zermatt, Pontresina  
**LENGTH:** 13 days, 12 nights. (Also available as a 7 day, 6 night West or East tour.)  
**HIKE RATING:** Moderate–Strenuous, 5–7 hours/day, 1000'–3500' elevation gain/loss

Hike beneath the Jungfrau, Mont Blanc and Matterhorn mountains, and ride the Glacier Express to the peaceful Engadine region. Tour Chamonix, Mürren, Zermatt, and Pontresina, four of the most scenic and historic mountain villages in the world. Along the way, we'll stay in absolute comfort in traditional, exquisite 3 and 4-star hotels. Welcoming hotels, walkable villages, and beautiful locations make this a perfect choice for non-hikers as well. Actual hikes vary from trip to trip, but our itinerary will go something like this:

### DAY ONE

The Alpine Classics tour starts with arrival in Geneva or Zurich, and transfer by shuttle or train to Chamonix, France - the world-famous resort and mountaineering center at the base of Mont Blanc. Here we'll enjoy our first impressive views of Mont Blanc, and perhaps have time for the pool and gardens at our exquisite 4-star hotel. (Hotel Morgane or Albert)

### DAY TWO

One of the classic hikes in the region takes us to Lac Blanc, high above the village. This high-mountain lake sits in the Aiguilles Rouges, across the valley from Mont Blanc, and commands one of the greatest mountain views anywhere. We'll make good use of local cablecars so we can enjoy more time hiking near the lake. Return to Chamonix for a 2nd night. (Hotel Morgane or Albert)

### DAY THREE

Another favorite dayhike in the region rises up to Mer de Glace, a long glacier slicing down in an elegant S-curve toward the valley floor. Check out the glacier from a tunnel built into the ice, and return along a pleasant wooded trail along the old moraine wall. (Hotel Morgane or Albert)

### DAY FOUR

A scenic 4½ hour train ride takes us past alpine lakes, through the vineyards of the Rhone valley, and into Mürren, our home away from home in Switzerland. Mürren is an idyllic, car-free village, perched atop a sheer 3000-foot cliff above the waterfall-filled Lauterbrunnen valley (picture Yosemite with a Swiss village on top). Take a look around this beautiful town before settling in to dinner at our friendly 3-star hotel. (Hotel Jungfrau)

### DAY FIVE

One of our favorite hikes starts in town, and gently meanders up the hills to the pastoral setting at Spielboden. Here we cross the Schiltbach stream and start a steep and invigorating ascent to the local peak of Bryndli. We'll take our lunch enjoying birds-eye views of Mürren and the Lauterbrunnen valley, perhaps with a soaring golden eagle for company. From here the trail levels off, and becomes a relaxing stroll through flowery meadows to a quiet alpine hut at Bogangen. The trail back leads over a small ridge for more great views, before dropping back down to Mürren. (Hotel Jungfrau)

### DAY SIX

The Upper Lauterbrunnen valley curls back beneath the white-capped Breithorn - considered by many to be the most perfect mountain in the region. It's also a nature pre-



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serve, and contains many wonderful hiking trails. One of our favorites takes us to the small farm at Obersteinberg, where the proprietors keep cows and make cheese by the same simple methods that have been used for centuries. This part of the valley also contains some of the area's prettiest waterfalls. (Hotel Jungfrau)

### DAY SEVEN

After breakfast, we'll say good-bye to Murren, and board the train for Zermatt. You'll have a chance to check out the historic village center and perhaps take a short walk before settling in to the lovely Hotel Europe. Enjoy wonderful views of the Matterhorn from the hotel, or spend the afternoon in their atmospheric indoor pool and spa. (Hotel Europe)

### DAY EIGHT

Taking quiet trails through fields and forest, we have a range of choices up to the wide ridge of Gornergrat, past marmots and small glacial lakes, to what has to be one of the finest viewpoints in Europe. The jumbled mass of the Gorner glacier stretches out before us, and behind that, Monte Rosa, Lyskamm, the Breithorn, and the Matterhorn form a spectacular backdrop. (Hotel Europe)

### DAY NINE

There are many peaceful trails criss-crossing the larch forests outside of Zermatt. We might take one that leads us to a suspended wooden walkway through a narrow river gorge. After a harrowing walk through the gorge, we emerge and continue on to the enchanting, centuries-old hamlets of Zum See and Zmutt. Perhaps we'll make the strenuous climb to the Schwarzsee lake, or even up to the Hornli hut (a sort of Matterhorn base camp) to enjoy fabulous, close-up views of the Matterhorn and a sweeping look back at the valley below. (Hotel Europe)

### DAY TEN

We'll spend the day crossing Switzerland on the famous Glacier Express train, an all-day journey that brings us to St. Moritz before a short transfer to the pretty town of Pontresina. The hiking here is amazingly varied, and we'll have numerous hikes to choose from. Our home in Pontresina is the friendly and classy Hotel Steinbock. Enjoy a short walk through the village or relax at the enclosed pool and an extensive hotel spa. (Hotel Steinbock)

### DAY ELEVEN

In Pontresina, the mighty Morteratsch glacier is an impressive destination. An easy, wooded walk takes us to the snout of the glacier, while a relatively moderate climb to the Boval hut rewards us with panoramic views of white-capped giants in every direction. Soft larch forests and abundant wildflowers help round out a great hike. (Hotel Steinbock)

### DAY TWELVE

From Pontresina, one of our favorite hikes anywhere is the panoramic Muragl traverse above Pontresina. Boasting quiet wooded stretches, abundant wildlife, and surprising views of the giant Piz Bernina and the pater-noster lakes of St. Moritz, this hike provides a wonderful farewell to the Engadine region. (Hotel Steinbock)

### DAY THIRTEEN

After breakfast at our hotel, we'll say our good-byes and leave for our post-trip destinations.