



SWISS TREKKING FAQs

HOW LARGE WILL OUR GROUP BE?

Our groups are limited to 12, so it is always cozy and intimate. Small groups create a fun, flexible dynamic that's just not possible with a larger number of people. Just as importantly, we also believe that when you make a commitment to take your vacation with Rubicon Outdoors, we've made a commitment to you to lead the tour. You become our guest. There is no minimum size, and our tours will never be canceled due to low enrollment, so you can plan your vacation confidently.

WHAT WILL OUR ACCOMMODATIONS BE LIKE?

Whether you're hiking all day or traveling by train, our inns are more than just a place to sleep—they are an integral part of the experience and are among the highlights of our trip. We look for comfort, spectacular settings, friendly service, and a cozy and authentic atmosphere. The inns we've selected are generally small and family-run, and they all feel good to come home to after a day of hiking. Our inns set high standards for themselves, and everywhere we stop you will find utmost cleanliness and comfort. You honestly won't find better accommodations anywhere. Our tours are marked by excellent accommodations at reasonable prices, and you'll agree the intimacy and ambiance of these inns adds immeasurably to the quality of our tours. Our inns are listed on the detailed tour itineraries, and we invite you to compare them with other options.

On our inn-to-inn hiking tours (Bernese Oberland Traverse and Tour du Mont Blanc) we stay in a combination of village hotels, mountain huts, and quiet country inns. Country inns (*Berghaus* in German) are a tradition in the mountains, many dating back to the 1800s. They can be described as simple alpine B&Bs, set in remote and beautiful locations. Each one is unique—its atmosphere shaped by the house, the location, and the personality of the owner—and they all share unforgettable character and charm. They have private rooms, and bathrooms and showers are shared. Country inns are a great place to meet other hikers and locals alike, and will likely turn out to provide some of your favorite memories of the tour.

Our inn-to-inn combo tours (Bernese Oberland Highlights, and Dolomites Val Gardena Traverse) combine short 2–4 day inn-to-inn stretches with dayhikes from comfortable village hotels. They offer more opportunities for relaxation at 3 and 4-star hotels in the villages while including adventurous stretches to remote huts and inns.

On our village-based tours (Jungfrau and Matterhorn and Great Alpine Classics) we stay in 3 to 4-star hotels, and take

dayhikes. These inns also tend to be small, family-run, and filled with traditional alpine-style ambiance. Many of our hotels are known locally for their excellent cuisine, and the comfort level is high. You will have your own bathroom and be pampered by the highest standards of service and comfort.

Our most luxurious tours (The Grand Tour and Gemmi to the Matterhorn) are village-based tours that each take you to three classic hiking destinations in Switzerland. You'll stay in absolute luxury, in the best 4 and 5-star hotels these regions have to offer. The hotels are unforgettable, the spas are impeccable, the cuisine is world-class, and—combined with some of the best hiking on earth—both are truly memorable!

WHAT ABOUT OUR MEALS?

You'll be exercising all day, pleasantly tired, and ravenously hungry! So we'll treat ourselves to some fabulous food. Our meals are carefully prepared, beautifully presented, and wonderfully satisfying. We might enjoy classic cheese fondue or raclette one night, and the best local specialties the region has to offer the next. With few exceptions (noted on the tour itinerary), all meals are included in the price of our tours. We'll start with a continental breakfast each morning, and finish with a multi-course feast in our hotel or a local restaurant every night. For lunch we like to get creative. Each day we prepare a picnic lunch—and take a lot of pride in making it something to look forward to as well!

WHAT ABOUT KIDS?

Switzerland is a huge playground for children, and they are very welcome on our tours. Many of our guided tours, especially the village-based and inn-to-inn combo tours, are particularly suited to families. Self-guided tours are a great option for families as well, and we can plan short walks, family-friendly hotels, and an array of activities that will be memorable for kids of all ages!

ISN'T EUROPE EXPENSIVE RIGHT NOW?

The published prices at the time you sign up are guaranteed for this year, so lock up your trip early and you don't need to worry about prices or exchange rates. Group discounts and reduced prices for children are available. We also offer a \$300 discount to returning hikers and on the second of two tours taken in one season. We are committed to offering first-class tours at reasonable prices. We do a lot behind the scenes to keep costs down—we keep our staff minimal, use our own pictures, and answer our own phone, among other things. What we will never do is skimp on the tours or on your experience. The result is a combination of quality and price that is unmatched in Switzerland.



SWISS TREKKING FAQs (CONTINUED)

I'M TRAVELING ALONE . . . CAN I BOOK A SINGLE ROOM?

The published prices are per person based on double occupancy. Singles are very welcome, and we do have a limited number of single rooms, available on a first-come basis, with a single supplement fee. If you are traveling alone and would like to share a room with another hiker, we will do everything we can to match you up with a traveler of the same sex. If that is not possible, however, the single supplement will apply. This fee is due with the balance of your tour. Please note that on our inn-to-inn tours, we sometimes stay in huts or lodges with shared rooms, and single rooms are not available for those nights. We can also accommodate families with children who wish to share a room.

DO YOU OFFER GROUP DISCOUNTS?

Group discounts are always a possibility, even with a group of just 5–6 people, for either our self-guided tours, scheduled guided tours, or a private trip. We also offer a referral program for past hikers that results in discounts for both you and for new travelers that you refer. See our client referral program for details.

HOW MUCH LUGGAGE ARE WE ALLOWED?

One piece of luggage per person will be transported between our inns on our inn-to-inn tours. Additional pieces may be brought for an extra \$50 charge. Extra luggage should not be necessary though—please try to travel light. Many hotels in Europe, especially on our inn-to-inn tours, have many floors but no elevators, and when we travel between villages by train, we will carry our own bags on the journey.

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?

Guided tour prices and per person and include lodging, all breakfasts, all lunches, all dinners, baggage transport between inns (if applicable), ground transport during the tour, selected entrance fees, gratuities and taxes, and daily guided hikes. Unlike many tour companies, we don't expect you to pay for cable cars, buses or trains we take during the course of our hikes, tip the hotel and restaurant staff (we do that), or provide any of your own meals (although you're always welcome to explore on your own). The only things the tour price does not include are drinks with your dinners, personal items, extras charged to your room (like minibar or phone calls), transportation to and from our meeting and departure points, tips for your guides, or insurance of any kind.

CAN YOU HELP US GET TO OUR MEETING POINT?

Most of our guided tours do not include travel to and from our meeting and departure points. For those who need it, we offer

a Swiss Card 2nd-class rail pass at subsidized prices. Extra travel days and 1st-class passes are also available. The Swiss Card is a great pass for most of our tours, or if you're planning any travel in Switzerland outside of the tour. Please ask if you have questions and we can help you choose the right pass for your tour.

HOW ABOUT OUR PLANE TICKETS AND OUR EXTRA TIME IN EUROPE?

The tour price does not include the cost of air travel. If you're flying from the US, you will need to leave a day early for arrival the next morning in Europe. For your return flight, plan to depart Europe the day after your tour ends, to allow for travel time to the airport. Most people will need to spend a night in their departure city when the tour ends and fly home the next day. If you would like help with this night, we have great choices for 3 and 4-star hotels in Zurich, Geneva and Lucerne. Ask about adding a final night when you're signing up. These hotels are some of the best we've found in these cities. They're well-run, affordable, and in great locations. We book these last nights with breakfast only. They're not guided, and you'll be able to explore on your own for dinner before flying home. We are also happy to help with pre- and post-tour plans. Although Switzerland is our specialty, we have years of experience with other European destinations, and can research and arrange independent travel to nearby countries. We can book hotels and rail passes, and help come up with an overall plan that makes the most sense for you.

WHAT KIND OF CONDITION SHOULD I BE IN?

A good level of physical fitness is required to enjoy hiking in the Alps. With that said, the Alps and their wonderful infrastructure provide us with a lot of flexibility. Everywhere we go there will be plenty of beautiful places to stop and rest, and most segments can be made longer or shorter by using the trains and lifts that crisscross the countryside. With small groups, and 2 guides (tours of 6 or fewer may have only 1 guide), we can easily tailor our hikes to fit the fitness level and desires of our hikers. Remember though, this is very steep, mountainous terrain—the trails are consistently steeper than most people expect—and flat walks are few and far between. Prior aerobic conditioning is very important and will greatly enhance your trip. On the inn-to-inn tours, we will be crossing high alpine passes and sometimes staying far away from public transportation. If you are not already in good condition, for your own happiness and safety, and for the smooth procession of the tour, you should start a program of walking and conditioning before joining the tour. Please ask if you have any questions regarding the appropriate tour for you.