

WALKING ADVENTURES INTERNATIONAL

Walking Pure Alpine Delights

Italy, Switzerland, & France 2011



DAY 1: JUL 30 & AUG 30: ARRIVE ORTA SAN GIULIO, ITALY (D)

Travelers arrive throughout the day into Milan's Malpensa Airport. As you exit customs, you'll be greeted by a representative of Walking Adventures and transferred to our hotel overlooking lovely Lake Orta, in a quiet corner of the Italian Lake District. This evening, we rendezvous for a "Get Acquainted" dinner at 7:00 pm. *NOTE: An optional excursion into Milan is available on July 29 for travelers who arrive at least a day early – see enclosed Adventure Memo for more information.*

DAY 2: JUL 31 & AUG 31: ACTIVITIES FROM ORTA SAN GIULIO (B)

Walk #1: Italian Lake District – 10 km, rating not available

Lake Orta is a gem, one of the smallest in the Lake District, its shores dotted with romantic, time-washed villages. Our walk in the vicinity is followed by an excursion to nearby Stresa, on the shores of the much larger Lake Maggiore. Here, you have the option of a relaxing boat ride to the Borromeo Islands to explore the 17th century villas and gardens, or meandering delightful shopping lanes and café-lined squares in the Old Town. *Borromeo Islands estimated price: \$30.*

DAY 3: AUG 1 & SEP 1: ORTA SAN GIULIO – ZERMATT, SWITZERLAND (BD)

This morning's coach ride takes us north along placid, picturesque Lake Maggiore to Bellinzona, Switzerland. Here, we say farewell to our coach and use the excellent Swiss train system to take us north to Andermatt. In Andermatt, we transfer to the fabled *Glacier Express*, one of the most famous railways in the world, for an unforgettable train trip east around mountains, over bridges, and through tunnels to Zermatt (5250 Feet Above Sea Level – FASL), our home in the shadow of the Matterhorn for the next two nights.

DAY 4: AUG 2 & SEP 2: ACTIVITIES IN ZERMATT (B)

Walk #2: Matterhorn Magic: Furi to Zermatt – 5 km, rated 3

Officially a car-free zone, Zermatt is perfect for a Walking Adventure. From our centrally-located hotel, we walk to one of three Zermatt gondola stations for the first of many Alpine gondola and train experiences! Our destination is Kleine Matterhorn, highest gondola station in Europe at over 12,700 FASL!

After admiring the views – this is the closest we'll be to the

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Walking Pure Alpine Delights • Italy, Switzerland & France

July 30 - August 9, 2011 | 11 Days | \$3975

August 30 - September 9, 2011 | 11 Days | \$3975

INCLUDING

- Airport to hotel group transfers on first and last day**
- Superior tourist-class (3-star) or better hotel accommodations
- Motorcoach travel as listed in the program
- **Train travel in Switzerland:**
 - Bellinzona to Andermatt
 - *Glacier Express* from Andermatt to Zermatt
 - Zermatt to Lauterbrunnen
- 15 meals: All breakfasts and 5 dinners as listed (BD)
- 7 walks as listed (IVV sanctions not yet obtained)
- Fees for walking credit
- WAI guide service throughout
- Expertise of our local guide throughout
- All tipping for local guides and coach drivers
- Single supplements are available: \$500
- **Entrance fees and guided tours of:**
 - 3 gondola segments: Zermatt to Kleine Matterhorn – Zermatt area
 - Train and gondola from Zermatt to Rothern – Zermatt area
 - Gondola from Lauterbrunnen to Grütschalp – Lauterbrunnen area
 - Gondola from Mürren to Schilthornbahn – Lauterbrunnen area
 - Lake Geneva water taxi – Geneva
 - Gondola from Chamonix to Plan Praz – Chamonix area
 - Gondola from La Flegere to Les Praz – Chamonix area
 - Montnvers train from Chamonix to Mer de Glace – Chamonix area
 - Gondola from Chamonix to Aiguille du Midi – Chamonix area
 - More fun stops than we can list!

***Details of transfers provided are listed in Adventure Advice memo sent upon receipt of tour registration.*

OPTIONAL EXCURSIONS

- Pre-tour day trip into Milan – Italy (see Adventure Memo)
- Borromeo Island excursion – Italy (DAY 2)
- Schilthorn excursion – Switzerland (DAY 6)
- Train & gondola from Lauterbrunnen on free day – Switzerland (DAY 7)
- Gondola from Aiguille du Midi (France) to La Palud (Italy) (DAY 10)

Matterhorn – and touring *inside* a glacier to enjoy the ice sculpture gallery, we disembark at Furi station (6125 FASL) on our way down. From here, we walk back into Zermatt, with the afternoon and evening free to explore this lovely town, or hop on another gondola for a different vista of Matterhorn magic.

DAY 5: AUG 3 & SEP 3: ZERMATT – LAUTERBRUNNEN, SWITZERLAND (BD)

Walk #3: Blumenweg (Flower Trail) – 4.5 km, rated 3+

A funicular (inclined train) carries us up through the living stone of a mountain tunnel this morning. Shortly after daylight breaks, we transfer to gondolas, bound for the summit at Rothorn (10,629 FASL), which provides the most breathtaking views of the Matterhorn. Starting at 8,435 FASL, the Blumenweg trail takes us through areas noted for its wildflowers, against a never-ending backdrop of the Matterhorn and the Pennine Alps. Following lunch, we return to the Zermatt train station for a ride north into Switzerland's Bernese Oberland region, and three nights in lovely Lauterbrunnen valley (2,612 FASL).

DAY 6: AUG 4 & SEP 4: ACTIVITIES IN LAUTERBRUNNEN (B)

Walk #4: Lauterbrunnen Valley Walk – 10 km, rated 2

Near our hotel in Lauterbrunnen, a gondola whisks us up the west side of the valley to Grütschalp (4,885 FASL). Here we follow an easy forest trail, often shared with dairy cows – bells a-tinkling – to the tiny hamlet of Mürren. Mürren offers a chance for a rest and a second gondola ride to Schilthornbahn on the valley floor. Alternatively, you may continue on foot to Gimmelwald before descending

by gondola to the valley floor, then return to Lauterbrunnen on foot through a quintessential Alpine setting: fields dotted by chalets, grazing herds of sheep and cows, glacier-fed waterfalls, and more. Travelers looking for more adventure may take another series of gondolas from Mürren UP to the Schilthorn (9,711 FASL), to marvel at views over the Bernese Alps in the revolving restaurant (additional gondola costs not included).



DAY 7: AUG 5 & SEP 5: ACTIVITIES IN LAUTERBRUNNEN (B)

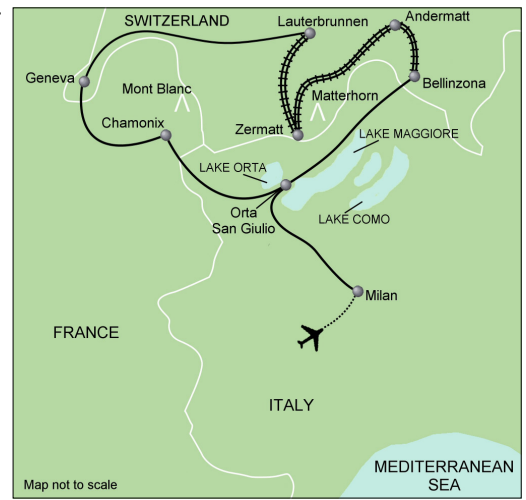
Explore this fabulous Alpine setting on your own today. Your guide will provide excursion suggestions and an optional group activity that includes a ride on the famous Swiss cog-wheeled trains to Wengen, a gondola ride to Mannlichen (7,306 FASL), a walk from there to the Kleine Scheidegg mountain train station, and a return to Lauterbrunnen either by walking through some of the Alps' most jaw-dropping scenery, or by train. Those who haven't participated in our classic Alpine tour may wish to continue from Kleine Scheidegg by train through the Eiger and Mönch mountains to the Jungfrau-joch, the highest rail station in Europe (11,333 FASL)! NOTE: Transport (train and gondola) is not included for this day.

DAY 8: AUG 6 & SEP 6: LAUTERBRUNNEN – GENEVA – CHAMONIX, FRANCE (BD)

Walk #5: Geneva – 12 km, rated 1

Back on the motorcoach today, we drive through more classic Alpine scenery toward Geneva. Landscapes change, however, as we motor west. Soon it feels as though we're in France, vineyard-covered hillsides sloping down to serene scenes along Lake Geneva,

largest body of water in Switzerland. Today's walk explores the eclectic, French-speaking city of Geneva. Our Swiss walking friends plan to join us for a walk from the first United Nations complex, along the shores of the lake, which we cross by water taxi, and into the Old Town where John Calvin established a bulwark of the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century. From Geneva, we cross the border into France to Chamonix (3,396 FASL) and our last Alpine conquest – the Mount Blanc region!



DAY 9: AUG 7 & SEP 7: ACTIVITIES IN CHAMONIX (B)

Walk #6: Chamonix Balcony – 10 km, rated 3+

Like Lauterbrunnen, all activities in Chamonix begin from our hotel on foot! Today's walk winds through the alpine village to a gondola that takes us to Plan Praz (6,562 FASL). From Plan Praz, the Grand Balcony North trail winds along the side of the mountain with non-stop views across the valley to the Mount Blanc massif. At La Flegere (6,214 FASL), we catch another gondola back to the valley floor to join a tree-lined, riverside footpath back to our hotel in the heart of Chamonix. The afternoon is free to explore the delights of this appealing mountain community.

DAY 10: AUG 8 & SEP 8: CHAMONIX – ORTA SAN GIULIO, ITALY (BD)

Walk #7: Chamonix Challenge – 7 km, rated 4+

Today's "challenge" walk begins with a trek to the train station, followed by a ride aboard the Monteviers Train to Mer de Glace glacier (6,276 FASL). A tantalizingly rugged trail then takes us along the Grand Balcony South, offering a variety of vistas including sweeping rivers of ice, jagged alpine peaks, hardy pine forests, and a welcoming array of alpine wildflowers. The trail ends at the midway station for the gondola that takes us to the Mount Blanc viewing station – Aiguille du Midi (12,604 FASL). Travelers who spent the morning in Chamonix rendezvous here to enjoy eye-popping panoramas over the rooftop of Europe and Mount Blanc, its highest peak! From Aiguille du Midi, you have the option of returning to Chamonix by gondola or, weather permitting, continuing across the rooftop of Europe by gondola for over three miles to Pont Helbronner (11,358 FASL); *Estimated price: \$75.* Changing gondolas, we cross the border on our descent to the Italian village of La Palud and meet our coach, which brought travelers the long way around from France through the tunnel. From La Palud, we return by coach to our home on the shores of Lake Orta to enjoy our final evening together at a fun Farewell Dinner!

DAY 11: AUG 9 & SEP 9: DEPART MILAN (B)

One shuttle is offered early this morning to Milan's Malpensa Airport (the *Adventure Advice*, sent to travelers after registration, will provide details). We return to North America with new walking friends and a knapsack of marvelous mountain memories from our *Pure Alpine Delights* walking adventure!



WAI is a registered seller of travel in Washington (601 677 299) and California (2039567-40). Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the state California.