



CLOUD 9 ADVENTURE



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## Snowshoe Traverse of the Chablais

- A bestselling snowshoe traverse in the French Alps
- 8 day trip, 6 days' snowshoeing
- Excellent quality, authentic hotel accommodation
- All breakfasts and evening meals included
- Fully qualified and expert guide
- Grade 5: Moderate

Join us on a best-selling snowshoe traverse of the Chablais region of France, from the charming village of Mégevette to the shores of Lac Leman (Lake Geneva). This area is well-known for its top quality snowshoeing conditions and incredible views of the Mont Blanc range. Experience the very best of French hospitality and scenery, as we explore hidden valleys, pristine Alpine landscapes and, of course, the region's excellent food and wine! Snowshoeing is rapidly growing in popularity and accessible to anyone

with some hill walking and moderate fitness. We'll travel in style and at a moderate pace, and will spend our evenings in comfortable hotels, with our luggage delivered each day.

## Trip Summary

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### Day 1 - Arrive in Mégevette

Transfer from Geneva to Mégevette

Arrive in Mégevette and Trip Briefing - Mégevette

### Day 2 - Mégevette to Hirmentaz

Snowshoe from Mégevette to La Chèvrerie - Hirmentaz

Transfer from La Chèvrerie to Hirmentaz

### Day 3 - Hirmentaz to Le Biot

Transfer from Hirmentaz to Malatraix

Snowshoe from Malatraix to Le Biot - Le Biot

### Day 4 - Le Biot to Abondance

Snowshoe from Le Biot to Abondance - Abondance

### Day 5 - Abondance to Vacheresse

Snowshoe from Abondance to Vacheresse - Vacheresse

### Day 6 - Vacheresse to Bernex

Snowshoe from Vacheresse to Bernex - Bernex

### Day 7 - Bernex to Evian-les-Bains

Snowshoe from Bernex to Evian-les-Bains - Évian-les-Bains

Transfer to Evian-Les-Bains

### Day 8 - Depart Evian

Depart Evian

## Day 1 - Arrive in Mégevette

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### Transfer from Geneva to Mégevette

We provide a group transfer from Geneva airport (in Switzerland) to the village of Mégevette (in France). This usually departs Geneva at 17:30, so please make sure you book your flight to arrive in plenty of time.



### Arrive in Mégevette and Trip Briefing

Our trip begins in the French mountain village of Mégevette, near Saint Jeoire.

Our guide will meet the group before dinner to welcome everyone and run through the week's itinerary, distribute kit, and answer any questions.



#### Mégevette

Mégevette, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, FR

## Day 2 - Mégevette to Hirmentaz

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### Snowshoe from Mégevette to La Chèvrerie

We leave the village of Mégevette on foot, and it's not long before we start our ascent past clusters of farm buildings to the Col de la Bray (1442m), beneath the Pointe des Jottis. If the weather is clear, we'll be rewarded with stunning views of the surrounding mountains. From our high point, we head down towards the valley, through enchanting forests to reach a chapel at the Lac de Vallon.

Distance: 12 km / 7.4 miles

Ascent: 1053 m / 3454 feet

Descent: 819 m / 2687 feet

Approximate snowshoeing time: 6-7 hours

Accommodation: Hotel





## Hirmentaz

Bellevaux, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, FR, 74470



## Transfer from La Chèvrerie to Hirmentaz

We take a short transfer to our hotel.

# Day 3 - Hirmentaz to Le Biot



## Transfer from Hirmentaz to Malatraix

We take a short transfer from Hirmentaz to Malatraix to resume our snowshoe traverse.



## Snowshoe from Malatraix to Le Biot

We start with a climb straight up to the Tre-le-Saix plateau (1486m). From here, we'll stay high and traverse the plateau amid tall pines. Our first stop is the Col de la Balme (1445m), before continuing up to the Col de Seytrouset (1564m). From here, in clear conditions, we'll enjoy epic views of the high mountains of the Haute Savoie and the Dents du Midi. Our descent from the col takes us to the Dranse de Morzine, before a short final climb to our overnight stop in the village of Le Biot.

Distance: 14 km / 8.7 miles

Ascent: 870m / 2854ft

Descent: 1000m / 3280ft

Approximate snowshoeing time: 7-8 hours

Accommodation: Hotel



## Le Biot

Biot, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, FR, 74430

# Day 4 - Le Biot to Abondance



## Snowshoe from Le Biot to Abondance

We leave Le Biot and head up to the alpages and farm buildings of Thex.

We ascend beneath the Pointe de Cercle to the Montagne de Drouzin (1620m) - today's highest point. Once we've enjoyed the views and got our breath back, our descent into the Abondance valley and the Alpages de Druges is both picturesque and easygoing; a perfect way to end our day. We'll spend the night in the beautiful and traditional French village of Abondance.

Distance: 14 km / 8.7 miles

Ascent: 780m / 2559ft

Descent: 700m / 2296ft

Approximate snowshoeing time: 7-8 hours

Accommodation: Hotel



### Abondance

Abondance, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, FR

## Day 5 - Abondance to Vacheresse



## Snowshoe from Abondance to Vacheresse

We'll start our day admiring architecture rather than mountain views, as we pass the 15th century cloister in Abondance with its ancient frescos. The theme continues as we snowshoe our way through the hamlet of Mont, with its enormous Chablais-style chalets. From here, our focus is back to nature with a steady climb up to the ridge of Mont Chauffe at Col de la Plagne (1546m). Our day takes a much more remote turn when we descend through the uninhabited - and truly stunning - valley of Ubine, which has no winter residents. From here, it's onwards and downwards to find life - and a warming drink - in the village of Vacheresse.

Distance: 16 km / 9.9 miles

Ascent: 780m / 2559ft

Descent: 880m / 2887ft

Approximate snowshoeing time: 6-7 hours

Accommodation: Hotel



### Vacheresse

Vacheresse, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, FR, 74360

## Day 6 - Vacheresse to Bernex



### Snowshoe from Vacheresse to Bernex

Mont Baron (1556m) is our objective for the day, and we head up the beautiful, unspoilt Replain valley to the summit ridge. From the top, we'll be looking over and down into the Ugine valley and its surrounding peaks. Our descent is beautiful, with great views of Lake Geneva. Once we reach the village of Bernex, we still have to walk to tonight's hotel, but it's well worth it - nestled under the impressive Dent d'Oche (2222m), which overlooks Evian, Thonon and Lake Geneva.

Distance: 13 km / 8.1 miles

Ascent: 900m / 2953ft

Descent: 800m / 2624ft

Approximate snowshoeing time: 6-7 hours

Accommodation: Hotel







## Bernex

Bernex, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, FR, 74500

# Day 7 - Bernex to Evian-les-Bains



## Snowshoe from Bernex to Evian-les-Bains

Our final day takes us from the hotel in Bernex on a traverse of Mont Benand (1284m). Our climbing efforts will be rewarded with stunning views of the Gavot Plateau and a chance to look down on our final destination - the famous Lac Lemman (Lake Geneva). From the summit of Mont Benand, we'll descend to the ski area of Thollon-les-Mémizes before we descend to the lake level to dip a snowshoe in the lake and mark the end of our Chablais traverse.

Distance: 11 km / 6.8 miles

Ascent: 350m / 1148ft

Descent: 950m / ft

Approximate walking time: 6-7 hours

Accommodation: Hotel



## Évian-les-Bains

Évian-les-Bains, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, FR, 74500



## Transfer to Evian-Les-Bains

We take a short transfer from the end of our snowshoe traverse to reach our hotel in Evian-Les-Bains.

# Day 8 - Depart Evian



## Depart Evian



Our trip finishes after breakfast.

Our Evian hotel is close to the railway station so it's easy to take a train to Geneva airport (or to Bellegarde-sur-Valsérine for TGV connections).

It's also possible to take the boat across Lake Geneva and then take the train from here - please see the Travel Information section for further details.

## Trip Information & Documents



### What's Included

- All accommodation in 2\* and 3\* hotels
- All breakfasts and evening meals
- Fully qualified and expert snowshoe guide (International Mountain Leader)
- Daily luggage delivery
- All transfers mentioned in the itinerary
- Fixed-time transfer from Geneva airport to our first hotel in Mégevette
- Snowshoes, walking poles and avalanche safety equipment (transceiver, shovel, probe)



### Not Included

- Flights
- Airport transfers from Evian to Geneva at the end of the trip (we can arrange if required)
- Packed lunches
- Personal drinks and snacks
- Any transport, accommodation or additional expenses due to a participant not being able to complete the itinerary
- Mountain Rescue / travel insurance (we can organise mountain rescue insurance if required)
- Tips



### Snowshoe Traverse of the Chablais Travel Arrangements

**IMPORTANT:** Please do not book your flights or transport until we have confirmed to you via email that the trip is guaranteed to run.

#### Meeting at Geneva Airport

We will meet at Geneva Airport for the group transfer to our hotel in the village of Mégevette (approximately 1 hour's drive from Geneva Airport). We usually leave Geneva Airport around 17:30, although this may be earlier if group members' flight times allow. Please arrange flights which allow you to comfortably meet this transfer.

### **Making your own way to the start of the trip at Mégevette**

It isn't easy to make your way to Mégevette via public transport, but it is possible to reach either Annemasse, Bonneville or Cluses by train or bus, and take an onward taxi to Mégevette. If you miss the group transfer due to a late flight, then we would advise taking a taxi from the airport and claiming this on your insurance.

### **Travelling from Evian to Geneva at the end of the trip**

Our holiday ends in Evian-les-Bains, on the shores of Lake Geneva.

Our hotel is near to the railway station, and you can take the train to Geneva Airport with a couple of changes. Check [www.sbb.ch](http://www.sbb.ch) or [www.sncf.fr](http://www.sncf.fr) for times. Note that there is a new rail link from Evian to Geneva opening in December 2019. We will post more information here when it opens.

It is also possible to take the ferry across Lake Geneva to Lausanne, and travel from here to Geneva Airport by train.

Ferries are run by CGN and you can find the timetables [here](#). The ferry from Evian to Lausanne takes 35 minutes.

Buy your ferry ticket to **Lausanne Gare**, as this will include the metro journey.

When you alight the ferry, cut diagonally left across a grassy park area, heading for Lausanne-Ouchy-Olympique metro station. It's around 2 minutes' walk. The metro station is in front of you and just to the left of restaurant "Le Pirate".

The metro journey to Lausanne Gare (main station) takes around 5 minutes.

From Lausanne Gare, take the train to Geneva Airport. Timetables can be found on the [SBB](http://www.sbb.ch) website - if you prefer, you can buy tickets in advance and it may be worth downloading the SBB app. Note that the SBB website defaults to the "half-price card" option, so you'll need to untick the box if you don't have a half-price card (it's unlikely to be worth buying a half-price card for this trip, unless you are going to be sightseeing in Switzerland before or after the trip: you can make savings on lift passes so in some cases it is worthwhile).

Note that due to the changes on this journey, it is definitely worth having wheels on your luggage!



## **Snowshoe Traverse of the Chablais - What to Expect**

### **The Snowshoeing**

This snowshoeing trip is Grade 6: Moderate. It is suitable for hikers with moderate fitness levels. We snowshoe at a pace that suits the group, on rolling terrain for around 6-7 hours each day. There are some significant ascents and descents during the trip, but they are generally low angle and we will be sure to take these at a steady pace. Any previous snowshoeing experience is a bonus but this trip is open to first-timers who want to find out what it's all about.

### **Accommodation**

We spend each night in comfortable hotel accommodation. Our hotels are mostly in French mountain villages and are 2\* and above; simple but comfortable and hospitable. Our luggage is delivered each day. All accommodation is on a twin-share basis, and single supplements are normally available. If you're travelling alone, you will be paired to share with another same-sex group member.

## **Food**

All breakfasts and dinners are included. Food on this trip is excellent and consists of local, traditional French food. Please be aware that there may not be a huge choice, but a vegetarian option will be available (please do confirm this in advance of the trip). Packed lunches are not included but are available from each hotel and we suggest a budget of 10-15 euros per day. We usually also have an opportunity to stop in a shop or bakery to top up on snacks on most days. Drinks are not included with the dinner, but you can order beer, wine and soft drinks at all hotels. Breakfasts are continental options with coffee, tea, cereals, breads, jams, fruit, yoghurt and usually some pastries such as croissants and pains au chocolat.

## **Luggage Delivery**

Luggage is delivered each day to our next hotel. Please allow 1 piece of moderately sized luggage per person. Please also bring a rucksack to carry each day for everything you need on the mountain: note that you should be able to attach snowshoes to this if necessary.

## **Money and Tipping**

All accommodation, guiding and breakfast and dinner are included in this trip, but please bring additional cash for packed lunches, snacks, drinks and tips. Beer, wine and soft drinks are available every night.

We spend every night in France, so you will need euros, and we recommend a budget of 200-250 euros per person. As we arrive and depart from Switzerland, a few Swiss Francs may also be useful but not a requirement. There are ATMs at Geneva airport that distribute Swiss Francs, and there is an ATM in Mégevette for euros.

Please also remember to bring a credit card in the event of a medical problem or injury, meaning you cannot complete the trek.

Tipping: Tipping your guide is the accepted way of saying 'Thank You' for good service. But do remember that tipping is voluntary and should only be done if you were pleased or delighted with the service. The amount is entirely up to you: our staff are all paid fairly.

## **Weather**

In mountainous terrain in the winter and spring, the weather can vary enormously. Temperatures may reach -15°C on cold days, but spring-like +10-15°C is also possible. If the sun is shining, we may find ourselves snowshoeing in our base layers and feeling the heat, but if it's windy or snowing, we will need adequate insulating layers, waterproofs and gloves. Staying warm and dry in the mountains is very important! Please be prepared for any eventuality and check the kit list at the end of this document.



## Electric Supply and Plug - France

The electric supply in France is a standard European 2-pin so you are likely to need an adaptor for your electronic items. There are usually some plug sockets available in mountain huts but they are limited. Bringing a separate booster charger for your phone may be a good solution.



## General Information - Guided Group Trips

### Insurance

It is a condition of booking this holiday that you must be insured against medical and personal accident risks (this must include helicopter rescue and repatriation costs). You may find that your annual multi-trip insurance covers this trip, but you should check that you are covered for trekking up to 3000m. We would also recommend that you take out holiday cancellation insurance: your deposit is non-refundable once you have booked, and the full balance is usually non-refundable (see our Terms and Conditions for further details).

We recommend The BMC [www.thebmc.co.uk](http://www.thebmc.co.uk) or Snowcard [www.snowcard.co.uk](http://www.snowcard.co.uk) for UK residents, or Travelex [www.travelexinsurance.com](http://www.travelexinsurance.com) for US citizens or residents.

We can organise mountain rescue insurance for EU residents for £4.90 per day, or £8.95 per day for US and the rest of the world. You can book it online here: <https://www.cloud9adventure.com/online-store/Mountain-rescue-insurance-p101294506>

In addition to travel insurance, UK citizens should also obtain or renew the EHIC card from the [NHS](https://www.nhs.uk). This is not a replacement for insurance but it does mean you are entitled to the same treatment as any EU citizen, and unlike insurance it includes treatment of a pre-existing condition. You would normally have to pay for treatment at the time and then make a claim on return to the UK.

Please remember to bring a credit card with you on the trip: in the event of a medical problem or injury, you may be unable to complete the trek. You would normally need to pay for treatment, and would often have additional transport and accommodation costs. Although you can claim this back on your insurance, you usually have to pay at the time and make the insurance claim afterwards, so you must have a means of paying for this if necessary.

### Responsible Travel

We care about the places we visit, and our philosophy is simple: that each and every one of our trips has a positive impact on the local community and environment. We use family-run hotels, gîtes and restaurants in order to support the local communities. And it's a small step but we also recommend carbon off-setting. Visit [www.climatecare.org](http://www.climatecare.org).

## **Adventure Travel**

Please note that we specialise in Adventure Travel, the nature of which means that we cannot always follow our itinerary for a variety of reasons. All of our holidays can be subject to unexpected changes and you should be prepared to be flexible to accommodate these where necessary.

We update our itineraries on a regular basis to take into account such things as changes to trekking routes and the conditions of footpaths, but it is not always possible to guarantee that any of our holidays will run exactly according to the proposed itinerary. If during your holiday the itinerary is affected by immediate or local circumstances, the leader will make any changes that are necessary.

As a reputable tour operator, Cloud 9 Adventure supports the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office "Know Before You Go" campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas, and we recommend that all our clients take a look at the FCO Travel Advice for their chosen destination on the official FCO website [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk). North Americans can also check out the US Department of State website: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) for essential travel advice and tips.

Cloud 9 Adventure treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss alternatives. We have a local office in Chamonix, and our expert team monitor the conditions regularly to ensure that our trips are run safely, and are on hand to help if we need to change arrangements.

## **Group Size and Holiday Status**

For each of our group adventures, there is a minimum number of participants required in order for the trip to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from "Available" to "Guaranteed". In order to achieve minimum numbers, we run the trips in conjunction with several other small companies. We find that this means almost all of our trips become "Guaranteed". We are a small company with a high level of customer service, and we make sure that we only run trips in conjunction with companies who share our ethos. We know them well and have worked with them for years, and only use leaders who we know and trust to do an excellent job. We steer clear of large groups and cap our group size at 10 people for summer hiking trips, and 8 people for winter snowshoe or cross country ski trips, whilst many of the larger operators take up to 16 people.

## **Preparing for your holiday**

We have tried to grade the holiday as accurately as we can, with the intention of attracting people of similar abilities to each trip. As a general guideline, if we have described a trek as being tough or challenging, then you need to be fit and capable of the challenge. If you don't arrive in good shape for your trip, then you could be putting yourself and others in danger: if you're taking too long each day, at best it cuts into the time you have to relax and shower before dinner, and at worst, it can be the difference between the whole group being caught in an afternoon storm. As we are as accurate as we can be writing our trip notes, we do tend to be pretty good at making sure that the right people book each trip, but we do require a certain amount of personal responsibility for arriving fit and ready for your trip. We're not on a route-march so we are never expecting to be going too fast - we try to walk at a slow, steady pace, without the need to stop too frequently for rests. If you're worried about this, then please start with one of our easier trips graded Easy or Moderate, and you can build up to a Challenging trip. If you've booked an Extremely Tough trip, then you definitely need to be an experienced and fit hiker, used to long days in the hills.

Rather than hoping your trek will make you fitter (it will definitely help!), it makes a lot of sense to spend some time before your trip getting some additional exercise and preparing properly. The fitter you are, the more enjoyable your trip will be. The best preparation is long day hikes in the run-up to your trip.

We would also recommend that you adopt a weekly exercise regime leading up to your trip. Jogging, circuit training, squash and swimming are good for developing better stamina. Before departure, we also suggest that you try to fit in a number of long hikes in hilly terrain.



## Snowshoe Traverse of the Chablais - Kit List

### Essential items :

- **Rucksack** – approx. 20-30L - for you to carry each day
- **Kit bag or suitcase** - for your main luggage to be transported. We recommend a moderate sized bag, approximately 12kg; wheels may be useful.
- **Hiking boots** – You need to have a pair of hiking boots with ankle support and a good sole. These must be waterproof.
- **Gaiters** - waterproof, to go over your boots.
- **Waterproof jacket and trousers** – both essential items (not insulated: your other layers should provide the insulation).
- **Trekking trousers**
- **Base Layers** - tops and bottoms, several sets of breathable layers. Synthetic wicking or merino wool, not cotton - as they will dry quicker.
- **Mid layers** - various weight fleece jackets are good
- **Warm jacket** – We recommend a synthetic down jacket for when it gets cold. Remember, you are carrying this in your rucksack so it should be as light as possible. We recommend synthetic rather than down, which is not effective if it gets wet.
- **Gloves** (we recommend bringing 2-3 pairs. A lightly insulated or liner pair will be good on warm days. Then a pair of waterproof over-gloves. And another warmer (waterproof) pair of gloves are essential if it snows.
- **Warm hat** (lightweight woolly hat is fine)
- **Sun Hat**

- **Sunglasses** (good quality lenses and side protection are required when walking on snow)
- **Ski goggles** (required when it is cold or windy)
- **Suncream** (small bottle to save weight)
- **Lip protection** (with sun protection)
- **Water bottles** – you should have the capacity to carry at least 2 litres of water, ideally 3 litres. We recommend nalgene or metal water bottles rather than camel backs as they can freeze / leak in cold temperatures.
- **Headtorch and spare batteries** - a lightweight torch, such as a Petzl Tikka / Zipka is fine for this trip.
- **Casual evening wear and trainers** for the evenings
- **Washbag and toiletries**
- **Basic First Aid Kit** including any regular medications, plasters, pain killers, and blister treatment. Your leader will carry a large first aid kit.
- **Plastic bags / dry sacks** to keep essentials dry.
- **Passport** – to be carried whilst trekking. Make sure you keep it dry.
- **Cash** – for packed lunches and any drinks whilst on the trip

#### **Optional Items:**

- **Walking poles** – These are provided but if you would like to bring your own, please make sure they have snow baskets.
- **Buff** – can be useful for extra warmth if it's cold, or sun protection for your neck on a hot day
- **Camera**
- **Spare laces**
- **Thermos**
- **Book**
- **Mobile phone** – there is phone reception for the majority of the trip. It is a good idea to have a phone in case of emergency or if you need to leave the group for any reason.
- **Earplugs** - especially if you're not the one snoring!
- **Snacks** – not essential as we do go past shops most days so you can top up your supply of snacks fairly regularly
- **Antibacterial handwash**
- **Swimwear** - some of the hotels may have swimming pools or saunas

#### **THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE PROVIDED**

- Snow shoes
- Ski poles
- Avalanche probe
- Snow shovel
- Avalanche transceiver

#### **A note about the kit:**



We have put together this kit list after many years of snowshoeing in the Alps. If we are lucky, we will have a week of stable weather, but the temperatures always vary hugely on a day to day basis in the winter and spring in the mountains. Weather can be varied and extreme, which means that every item on the above 'essentials' list really is essential. If you do not have the correct kit, you can put yourself and others at risk of hypothermia.

If it snows, you *will* need waterproof jackets AND trousers, and will probably be glad of several pairs of gloves. If it's cold and/or windy, warm layers are critical. And when it's sunny (even if the air is cold), you will need a sunhat and sunglasses. Layers are essential when snowshoeing as you may feel very hot while moving but then get cold quickly when we stop. If you have any questions about kit, please don't hesitate to ask.