



*Séjours montagne*

## prepare your mont blanc ascent: test your skills and fitness over a weekend on the sainte victoire mountain

Climbing Mont Blanc, the roof of Europe at 4810 m, is a demanding challenge that requires determination and preparation. The ROC ÉCRINS team is offering this 2-day programme, an opportunity to test your physical fitness and endurance during the winter, on the Sainte Victoire Mountain in Provence. The programme has been designed to meet 3 main objectives: to enable you to train over a weekend in an easily accessible outdoor area; to test your physical fitness for walking in varied terrain and your stamina for a long ascent with a rucksack; and lastly, to tackle the mental preparation required to manage your training and any stress you may be experiencing in a vertical environment that could lead to vertigo (which can be the case on the Goûter ridge). At an altitude of 4810 m, the body is confronted with unusual conditions that are far removed from its comfort zone. In addition to this holiday, from June to September we also offer a

- Level : Level 1: Beginner
- Mountain range : Sainte Victoire Mountain, Aix-en-Provence
- 2 days
- 4 - 8 personnes (departure is confirmed from 4 people)
- Prices : 470,00 €

### Your trip day to day

#### DAY 1: PIC DES MOUCHES, HIGHEST POINT OF THE SAINTE VICTOIRE MOUNTAIN ASCENT

Meet up at Aix-en-provence TGV station or, for those arriving by car, at the car park of the Sainte Victoire House (Chemin Départemental n°17, 13100 Saint-Antonin-sur-Bayon).

The Sainte Victoire mountain range, rising 1,011 m above the plains of Provence, offers a wide range of hiking routes with varying degrees of difficulty, from simple strolls to rocky sections, steep slopes and scree... a cocktail to get your cardio pumping. This is where we'll test your ability to make an effort in varied terrain, with a rucksack on your back and a positive altitude difference of over 1000 m.

After reviewing everyone's motivations and expectations for this course, the guide will take stock of the preparation of your rucksack and explain the day's objectives: to help you find your walking pace so that you can keep up with the distance... (basics of physiology for endurance athletes) and then give you the right advice for moving around on uneven terrain, both uphill and downhill.

We'll also work on mental management beforehand: preparing for the course.

At the summit, an extraordinary panorama of the rolling plains of the Pays d'Aix region, with, on a clear day, view on the sea, Mont Ventoux and the Alps.

Meals and overnight in a bed and breakfast ideally situated on the plain at the foot of Mont St Victoire.

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## DAY 2: LA CROIX DE PROVENCE (PROVENCE'S CROSS) SUMMIT ASCENT

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The second day starts with a short debriefing on how each participant felt after the first ascent. This weekend's aim is to prepare you to manage your relationship with effort, but also your ability to express your current limits and perhaps go beyond them to be ready on D-day.

Programme for the day: climb to the Croix de Provence, to apply and expand on what you learnt the day before on a superb, slightly more technical and aerial route: walking on varied terrain, scree obstacle course, positive and negative vertical loop, managing vertigo. Exit onto the ridge through the astonishing Garagai chasm. Once at the top: ridge tour to work on endurance and descent by another route.

During the day, we'll look at how to manage effort, fatigue, water and food, how to "rope up", i.e. how to help each other and work as a group in the mountains, how to pack a rucksack, and how to test your equipment (technical clothing and possibly your boots).

**end of our trip** at the end of the day with the aim of continuing the physical preparation to give yourself the best chance of climbing Mont Blanc.

**NB : The programme is intended as a guide only. It could be modified at any time by the mountain guide for safety reasons, weather conditions or regarding the physical and technical level of the participants.**

### IMPORTANT

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**NB: This stay is by no means sufficient to prepare you for the ascent of Mont Blanc and you should bear in mind that it does not reflect the difficulties of the Mont Blanc ascent.**

**It is an important first step in your preparation for the ascent of Mont Blanc.** It will enable you to take stock of your current physical abilities and, if necessary, adapt your training according to your needs: cardio, endurance, stamina, agility in varied terrain, managing vertigo, relations with the group, etc.

### Teaching

To be able to attempt a Mont Blanc ascent, you first need to know the basics of moving on varied terrain, i.e. how to walk on uneven ground, on scree, on steep or abrupt slopes where you sometimes have to use your hands, and how to move on aerial passages both uphill and downhill. All this requires balance and precise positioning.

Being able to descend a steep slope of sometimes slippery and unstable rock at a steady pace after walking for several hours is one of the essential skills you need to start mountaineering.

You also need to be able to maintain an effort of relative intensity for a prolonged period. The ability to walk at a steady pace over long gradients is not innate; you have to learn to regulate your pace and manage your breathing.

### min/max people

8 participants maximum. **Departure is guaranteed from 4 participants.** You will be notified at least 48 hours before departure in the event of cancellation. Where possible, an alternative solution will be offered.

**NB : For cancellation conditions for privatised trips** (made up groups) please refer to our [conditions of sale](#).

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### Personal equipment

Hiking in high mountain requires being able to cope with all weather and environmental conditions which can change very quickly. Appropriate equipment guarantees safety and represents an essential part of the success and comfort of your climb/stay.}

You will not necessarily use all the items on this list which but you must nevertheless have them in your bag.

All of this equipment is technical and generally quite expensive. **Please note that we offer some of this equipment for rental, they are indicated by a \* in the list below, you will find rental prices in the "Gear rental and extras prices" section. Please note, the mountaineering kit that we offer for rental only includes individual technical equipment (mountaineering boots, crampons, ice axe, harness, helmet); clothing (gore tex jacket, soft shell fleece, goretex pants) are not part of it.**

Equipment hire and changes to your booking are only possible before payment of the balance of your booking (45 days before departure). **We advise you to take the time, upon registration, to list the equipment you already have. No equipment initially rented from ROC ECRINS and not taken or used on the day of departure will be refunded.**

Important, if you have your own personal equipment: the legislation regarding P.P.I. (personal protective equipment, this is the helmet, harness, and sunglasses) limits the use of the equipment over time. They can be used for 5 years from the date of purchase. Beyond this date, your equipment is considered to no longer be up to standard. You can find all the information regarding P.P.E. here > [www.inrs.fr](http://www.inrs.fr)

### Headwear

At high altitudes, snow reflects UV rays and the sun's rays are not as well filtered by the atmosphere; even a cloudy sky allows 90% of UV rays to pass through, so it is essential to protect yourself against the dangers of the sun.

- A pair of class 4 protection sunglasses is highly recommended for everyone and very strongly recommended for sensitive eyes. They'll come in handy on a ski holiday too.
- Sun cream high protection (index 50 recommended) for face and lips; remember to take the smallest size possible (no large tubes)
- a cap for the approach walk (prefer a soft model with no large seams that can be worn under the helmet)
- a ski mask (**indispensable** in case of gusts of wind or snowfall)
- a beanie hat that can be worn under the helmet (without pompoms)
- a helmet\* approved for mountaineering ( 5 years max since date of purchase)
- a neck gaiters or Buff (avoid scarves)
- a headlamp with loaded batteries!!!

### Bodywear

When making a prolonged effort at altitude, the principle is to be able to layer different garments according to the intensity of the effort and the weather conditions (temperature, wind, snowfall, rain), in order to stay as dry as possible.

NB: ski clothes are not suitable because they are often too warm, too heavy and not very breathable.

### Upper body

- First layer: a long-sleeve base layer in a breathable, quick-drying material such as merino, wood fibre..., cotton to be avoided (to protect you from UV rays and for safety in the event of a fall).  
Second layer: a lightweight fleece or soft shell jacket\*. Ideally, it should be windproof and breathable. Put it on as soon as the temperature cools, usually when you arrive on the glacier.
- Third layer: a warm, compressible down jacket (synthetic or down, -10°C protection). It will keep you warm during a long stop on the route, at the summit while you take photos, on the refuge terrace, and sometimes even while walking in very cold weather.  
Fourth layer: a gore tex\* windproof jacket to protect against rain and snow. This is the waterproof jacket

that keeps you dry in bad weather. It must be lightweight and breathable.

- a mountaineering harness\* (5 years max from date of purchase)

## Lower body

- a thin pair of tights in fleece or cotton, ideally  $\frac{3}{4}$  so as not to make the socks too thick. You'll need them in case of very cold weather, and you can put them on at the hut at the start of the ascent if necessary. You can also use it as nightwear.
- Mountaineering trousers: mountaineering trousers are water-repellent, windproof, breathable and hard-wearing. You can also take hiking or trekking trousers that aren't too light (as long as you have a gore tex overtrouser to put over them). **NB: mountaineering trousers are not available for hire**
- an overtrouser\* in GoreTex or equivalent material: these are very light trousers that you put over your trousers in case of rain, wind or snow. They have zips along the legs, so you can put them on quickly at any time without having to remove your shoes.

## The hands

- a pair of thin gloves in fleece, softshell or leather for the climbs to the refuge.
- one pair of thicker gloves like ski gloves
- a pair of VERY WARM Mittens (if your ski gloves aren't warm enough), which you'll put over the thin gloves when you get to the top and for the descent.

## Footwear

- Mountaineering boots\* (crampon-compatible): these boots are different from hiking boots. They are rigid, which will enable you to crampon on ice while providing good support for the ankle and crampons. They must also be waterproof and offer excellent protection against the cold.
  - Hiking or mountaineering socks : these should be warm and well-fitting and high enough to rise above boot level to avoid overheating. One pair is enough for a 48-hour mountain run. You can also take a pair of very light mini-socks to put on in the refuge in the evening while your pair of technical socks dry.
  - a pair of crampons\* **with anti-boot** in good condition and sharp, suitable for your boots,
  - a mountaineering ice axe\* light and long, suited to your height, it should almost reach the ground when in your hand with your arm extended alongside your body.
  - gaiters\* which will keep your feet dry in fresh snow; they also prevent crampon points catching on the bottom of your trousers.
- NB: all refuges provide slippers, so you don't need to take extra shoes.

Guide's tip for 48-hour tours: as most of the time the refuge is reached on footpaths, you can plan to go up and down in trail trainers (soles with crampons) to protect your feet from the heat that can be caused by the rigidity of mountaineering boots (you'll need to have your mountaineering boots in your bag). You can leave your trainers at the refuge before setting off on the climb and pick them up on your return.

This adds weight, but it can be very useful for those with sensitive feet - the choice is yours...

## And last but not least

- Telescopic walking poles\* with snow washers (8 cm minimum diameter ). Not compulsory but highly recommended; they will help you on the way up and take the strain off your knees on the way down.
- water : make sure you have enough water for around 2 litres, ideally a one-litre plastic bottle plus smaller ones (around 25 cl) to keep warm and close to your body in your jacket. Water bags are not suitable for use at high altitude because they freeze! You can use them, but only when going up to the refuge.
- energy food (cereal bars, dried fruit...depending on your habits),
- small thermos 500ML max (not compulsory, a hot drink can be comforting but it adds weight...)
- camera: prefer a small size that you can slip into your pocket, no need to bring a large camera that risks being damaged. Besides, with the cold the battery would be empty very quickly.
- small first aid kit adapted to your personal needs, also containing elastoplast and double-skin dressings for any blisters. If you are taking medication, take only the number of tablets you need. Pack a few paracetamol tablets as it's not uncommon to suffer from headaches when at altitude.
- micro Toilet Bag: just the bare essentials (toothbrush, mini tube of toothpaste...) and, very important, earplugs for a good night's sleep in the refuge.
- a bed liner (meat bag): compulsory for nights in refuges. All the refuges are providing pillows and duvets but these are obviously not washed after each passage.

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- a bin bag to isolate your wet stuff in case of rain or a waterproof overbag.
- documents always useful to have with you in a small waterproof bag: ID proof, references of your assistance insurance if you haven't taken out the policy we offer.
- A small amount of cash for personal expenses (drinks, etc.) in the refuges (most of the refuges don't accept payment by credit card).

And remember, all of the above must fit into:

- A mountain rucksack\* of around 35 litres (40 litres max) with ice axe holder and chest strap. The filled rucksack should not exceed 10 kg, including technical equipment (crampons, harness, helmet). Remember that weight is the mountaineer's enemy. Once you've packed your rucksack, there should still be room for a picnic!

You should also bring a second bag (such as a soft travel bag) to store the items you don't need for the nights at the refuge and to leave in your car.

## High mountain : special warning

The Sainte Victoire mountain is a wild, natural area with numerous hiking trails through boulder chaos and possible rockfalls.

## Skills and stamina level

To make the most of those 2 long days of walking at altitude, with significant vertical drop, a good level of fitness is required.

This course will give you the opportunity to assess your physical condition in real mountain conditions. Depending on how you feel, and with the advice of the instructor, you'll then be able to adapt your preparation and training to get the skills you need to climb Mont Blanc.

Below you'll find other courses to complete your preparation:

**To learn how to use crampons (ice school) and do a first mountaineering course with a night in a refuge :**

> [[2 JOURS D'INITIATION ET D'APPRENTISSAGE DE L'ALPINISME POUR PRÉPARER L'ASCENSION DU MONT BLANC](#) ou bien :

> lien vers [STAGE D'INITIATION A L'ALPINISME : ASCENSION DE LA ROCHE FAURIO 3730M EN 3 JOURS](#)

**To test your ability to complete a major ascent over 48 hours at an adequate pace to reach a summit above 3500m :**

> lien vers [ASCENSION ROCHE FAURIO, 3730m EN 2 JOURS](#)

## Guiding

**By state-certified mountain guides or trainees mountain guides (aspirant guides) from the Roc Écrins team.** They will have a VHF radio connected to the emergency services, a satellite phone or a mobile phone. They will also have a collective first-aid kit.

\*A trainee mountain guide is a guide in training who is authorised to work and supervise climbs from their third year of training. They are not beginners, as it takes several years of practice and training to build up a list of routes and have the experience and technical level required to enter the mountain guide training course.

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## Insurances

**To take part in one of our stays, you must be properly insured for the chosen activity** (rescue and repatriation costs) in the event of an incident or accident occurring during the stay. (We strongly recommend that this also includes cancellation cover). It is your responsibility to check the cover provided by your personal insurance policy. If you do not have such an insurance, you can take out the EUROP ASSISTANCE contract when you sign up. The amount of the "ASSISTANCE" insurance covering repatriation, rescue and search costs represents 2.4% of the price of the stay. MULTIRISK" insurance covering assistance, cancellation, loss of luggage and interruption of holiday, represents 5.6% of the price of the holiday.

## Accommodation

You'll be staying in a comfortable bed and breakfast at the foot of Sainte Victoire mountain, in a peaceful natural setting. Meals prepared with care. Fantastic views on the south face of Mount Sainte Victoire. Spacious, bright, south-facing rooms for two to four people. Linen and towels provided, wi-fi access.

This accommodation is subject to availability at the time of booking.

## Transport and carbon footprint

### TRANSPORT DURING THE STAY

Transport from Aix-TGV train station to the starting point of the course is provided by ROC ECRINS

### CARBON FOOTPRINT OF THE STAY: 108 KG CO2

That's the CO2 produced by our travels during your stay!

Carpooling ? We can put you in touch with other participants. Contact us by email or telephone.  
<https://www.blablacar.fr/>

### Offset your carbon emissions !

For every tree planted, 150 kg of CO2 are stored !  
<https://www.reforestaction.com/plan...>

## Meeting point

Around 8.30am at Aix TGV station for those arriving by train or directly in the car park of the Maison Sainte Victoire (Chemin Départemental n°17, 13100 Saint-Antonin-sur-Bayon) for those arriving by car.

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## Getting there

The Sainte Victoire massif is easily accessible by TGV train (stop at Aix-en-Provence station) and by the A7, A8 and A51 motorways.

## Price

**Price per person : 470,00 €**

**The price includes:**

- **Mountain guiding service** , including their meals, overnight accommodation
- **Full board accommodation in bed and breakfast** from the first evening to the lunch on day 2
- Transport during the course for those coming by train to Aix-TGV
- -\* Organisation and reservations (accommodation, guide, equipment) of your stay

**The price doesn't include:**

- Picnic on the first day
- Personal expenses: snacks, drinks, etc
- Individual technical equipment rental (mountaineering boots, crampons, ice axe, harness, helmet)
- liability, repatriation and cancellation insurances
- Transport to and from meeting point and during the stay

Any other expenses not mentioned under the above section "the price includes".

## How to book

To book your trip :

- complete the **pre-registration form** online
- You will receive **a booking contract** by email. It sets out the details of your booking as well as the schedule and payment terms.
- On receipt of this contract, **the deposit of 30%** must be payed within 4 days in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in the contract. Your registration can only be confirmed when the deposit has been payed.
- The balance must be paid 45 days before the departure. Please note that any balance not paid within 45 days of departure will be considered as a cancellation of your booking. Financial withholding would therefore be applied in accordance with our terms and conditions of sale.
- For a of a booking made less than 45 days before departure, the total amount of the booking must be paid on receipt of the booking contract in accordance with the terms and conditions set out therein.