



## HEDONISTIC HIKING

### Italian Alps

#### *Val d'Aosta and the Mont Blanc Massif*

Hike through flower-filled alpine meadows and enjoy spectacular views of Mont Blanc and the majestic peaks of the Italian Alps. Visit ancient castles and follow the routes of the Roman armies, medieval pilgrims and Napoleon Bonaparte. See alpine fauna in their natural habitat and enjoy the fabulous hospitality and delicious cuisine of the smallest region of Italy.



#### What is included?

- 7 nights' accommodation in **two luxurious 4-star hotels each with spa facilities**
- **Two experienced and knowledgeable guides** who will look after your every need and bring this stunning area to life
- **All meals** including delicious local wines
- **Gourmet picnic lunches** each day and snacks en route
- Dinner in a variety of **superb restaurants**.
- **Support vehicle**, enabling you to walk as little or as much of the trail as you please
- **Transport to/from Turin** in air-conditioned minibus
- Comprehensive **pre-trip information**.



#### Itinerary



The tour starts and ends in Turin, the host city for the 2006 Winter Olympics. There are daily flights from the UK to Turin. The nearest intercontinental airport is Milan and we can help you to arrange transfers from there if necessary. We stay in two towns in the Aosta Valley, Bard at 350m and Cogne at 1550m. Most of the hiking is at an altitude of between 1500m and 2500m. Nevertheless it is a hiking holiday and not a climbing expedition so no technical skills whatsoever are required. Where possible we make use of chairlifts and cable cars to take us to the best areas for walking.



### Day 1

Meet Turin Train Station at 11.30pm or Turin Airport 12.30pm. Drive 1 hour to Pont St Martin, the gateway to the Aosta Valley. Starting at the Roman bridge in the village we follow, on foot, the ancient route of the Roman armies past vineyards clinging to the hillsides to pick up the paved Roman road which brings us to the town of Bard. ***Since there is an opportunity for a short walk before we check into the hotel please ensure that you are in you your hiking gear with boots to hand (ie not in you main luggage).*** We stay in a delightful hotel with spa facilities for the next 4 nights. Welcome drink and dinner in the hotel restaurant. (6km/3.8miles)



### Day 2



We drive up the valley towards Cervinia and take a cable car and chair lift high up above the tree line. A circular walk takes us through flower-filled pastures, stopping en route to enjoy a delicious picnic lunch, to the small village of Chamois. Later in the day we visit the dramatic fortress at Bard, which played a crucial part in Napoleon's advance into Italy in 1800, overlooking our hotel. In the afternoon we visit a small producer of the famous Lardo d'Arnad to learn about the intricate process involved in making this renowned delicacy. Dinner in a local restaurant. (6km/3.8miles)

### Day 3



A beautiful drive takes us to the Champorcher valley, carved out by glaciers millions of years ago. Our hike starts along the route used by Victor Emmanuel II, the first King of Italy, in the 19th century when escaping the court to go hunting in the mountains. We follow small trails climbing past beautiful lakes encircled by snow-covered peaks and enjoy stunning views down into the valley as we descend. Dinner at the Ad Gallias hotel. (11km/6.8miles)

### Day 4

Today we explore the remote Gressoney valley with its fascinating Walser heritage. We climb up to and follow a trail overlooking the valley, past tiny hamlets with characteristic stone and wood houses, to a mountain refuge where we have lunch. In the afternoon we descend to the valley and on to Gressoney St Jean and visit the fairytale castle of Queen Margherite of Savoy, Queen of Italy at the end of the 19th century. Dinner in a rustic restaurant in the hills. (7km/4.3miles)



### Day 5

Today we leave Bard and travel up the valley to the regional capital of Aosta. Time to visit the town and see many of the important Roman monuments. In the afternoon we drive to Cogne, the gateway to the Grand Paradiso National Park where we stay in a historic family-run hotel set amongst lush pastures in the heart of the village. Light dinner in the open air and evening walk opportunity along streams and pastures back to the hotel. (3km/1.8miles)



### Day 6



A pretty walk takes us through the hamlets around Cogne with panoramic views of the Mont Blanc and Gran Paradiso snow-capped mountains. Dinner of local specialties in a nearby restaurant. (10km/6.2 miles)

### Day 7



We start our walk at the pretty village of Gimillan (1788m). We follow the river valley, passing shepherds' huts and tiny hamlets – accessible only by foot. The peace is only disturbed by the chimes of the cow bells as they savour the lush grass of the hills. Picnic by a pristine mountain lake before descending once again to Gimillan. Final dinner at the hotel's Michelin-starred restaurant. (11km/6.8miles)



### Day 8

Return to Turin Airport/Train Station for 11 o'clock.

### Walking

Shortest day: 6km/3.8miles

Longest day: 11km/6.8miles

There are 6 days of walking on the trip. We walk on well-graded mountain paths, woodland tracks and quiet tarmac roads. Although many of the distances are short there is more ascent and descent than on our other tours. The Val d'Aosta is a mountainous region and on several days we hike at an altitude of 2000m or more. Nevertheless, it is mountain walking not climbing. Where possible we make use of chairlifts and cable cars to take us to the best areas for walking. A few sections of the walk could be considered vertiginous, please contact us if you have any concerns about this. On occasion, where there is no van access en route, both members of staff will accompany the group to provide extra support and to carry the lunch for you. Sturdy walking boots, with good ankle support, are essential. Walking poles are recommended, especially on steeper sections. These can be purchased locally – although not on the first day of the tour.



**Weather:**

In late June you can expect typical spring weather, warm and sunny days but with sudden changes in temperature in the mountains and cool evenings.

Temperature: Min. 14° Max. 28°

Monthly Rainfall: 50mm

**Dates:**

23rd-30th June 2012

**Cost:**

€2385 per person (Single supplement €295)

[ENQUIRE ABOUT  
THIS TOUR](#)

