

Itinerary

Day 1 Vand'en Haut to Mex staying at Auberge de l'Armailli

Approximately 6 hours.

The trek starts with a steady plod up a wide and winding trail, which eventually opens out as you reach Lac de Salanfe. Here you see your first views of the Dent du Midi range and you can stop for refreshments at Auberge de Salanfe. From here continue up zigzag trails then along to the Col de Jorat (2200m). From here a long steep descent takes you down through alpine meadows with impressive views of the Dent du Midi pinnacles. Eventually undulating trails lead you through forest to the quaint village of Mex, which has a small museum; it's worth a visit. The accommodation is bunk beds and showers, dinner and breakfast is served in the café bar or on the terrace where you will see great views of the Rhone valley.



The museum at Mex



Race d' Heren



Great Masterwort

Day 2 Mex to Alpage de Chindonne

Approx 4 hrs 30 mins

The first part of the day is through forest on undulating paths with the odd glimpse of the Rhone Valley below. After a couple of hours the trail opens out again into beautiful meadows, which lead you through the small winter ski/sports centre of Les Jeurs. 15 minutes further you arrive at Alpage de Chindonne, which has a large and very accommodating bar/restaurant where they serve dinner and breakfast. There is a choice of shared dormitory style rooms or private rooms depending on availability.

Day 3 Alpage de Chindonne to Cantine de Bonavau

Approx 7 hrs 30 mins.

The trail continues its traverse with views of Lake Geneva in the distance. Steep descents and couloirs into valleys below are seen from our path, which eventually arrives for a refreshment break at Cabane Lacs d' Anteme. The views behind are of steep cliffs and waterfalls cascading into the green pastures below with grazing sheep. From here narrow paths follow through more meadows until eventually the Bonavau hut is seen on the other side of the large Couloire. The views on this section feel like a set from "Lord of the rings" again with large waterfalls, green pastures and cliffs. The Cantine de Bonavau has everything that you could imagine in a Swiss Alpine hut...Chickens wander freely living under an old chalet, painted woodwork, edelweiss decorations, wood burning stove, traditional furnishings, home made food by the friendly guardian Christine.



Spectacular and varied scenery

Day 4 Cantine de Bonavau to Van d'en Haut

Approx 7 hrs.

Back tracking your steps for a short distance the trail takes a right turn leading you up the side of a gorge. Part way up there is a section of **chains and railings**, although its not too difficult the exposure is not for the faint hearted. Eventually you leave the green pastures behind to arrive in a more barren and mountainous landscape but still the views are impressive with the steep limestone cliffs. A coffee stop can be made at the Cabane de Susanfe (this hut is regularly used by people who want to solely ascend the Haute Cime 3257m). From here continue up and over the Col de Susanfe descending a steep rocky section. Eventually the landscape becomes less hostile and greener as you drop down to Lac de Salanfe, where Marmottes shriek, Ibex are seen high amongst the cliffs and cattle graze. From here it takes around two hours to Van d'en Haut where we started our trek.

Day 5 Alternatively we can spend an extra night at the Cabane de Salanfe and have an easy final day, or if we made good progress a day can be spent walking in the Chamonix valley.

This itinerary may be subject to change due to weather conditions and hut availability.



The Bonavau Hut

Further info

Accommodation: Cost is an average of £25 per night Demi Pension (full board).

Language: French.