

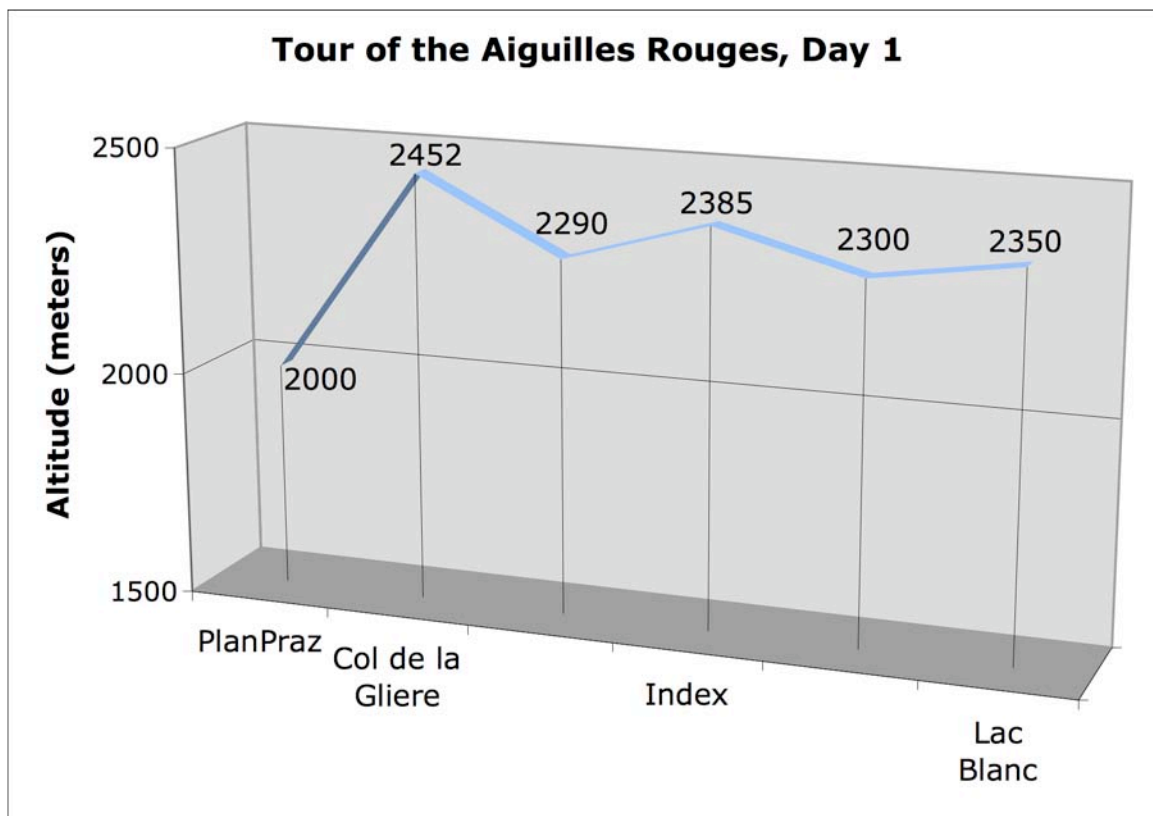
Start: Chamonix **Destination:** Lac Blanc

Unevenness: ↑600 m ↓300 m

Duration: 5 hours

Period: Beginning of July to the end of September

Character: Hike along a natural shelf facing south-east, half way between the valley and the Aiguilles Rouges tops. Open vistas over the Mont Blanc massive and the Chamonix valley.



Description: This is a relatively easy stage, although it shouldn't be taken lightly. It's a 5-hours walk in mountainous terrain and the passage of Col de la Gliere can be dangerous in case of bad weather. There is no place to buy food along the way, so the best bet is to buy it in Chamonix.

In Chamonix, look for where the Tourist Office (Office du Tourisme) is. The cabin-lift leaves Chamonix from the top of La Mollard, a road leading up from the Office du Tourisme in the town centre. Walk up the steep road, and take the cable-lift and get off at PlanPraz, the first stop. Do not continue to Brevent.

Once outside the facilities of the cable-lift, follow the only earth track that there is, quite wide. The track climbs a little and to your left you will leave a takeoff

zone for paraglide. A few meters later, the track turns slightly to the left. 50 meters ahead you will find the arrival of a chair lift, used only in winter. Here you see a wide track that climbs towards the Brevent, to your left, and other than descends; take the one that descends, North direction. (a) About 100 meters from the chair lift, there is a path on your left with a sign to Lac Cornu and Lacs Noirs. Take it. There are a few steps just at the beginning. The often stony path, with zig-zags and rocky steps, takes you directly to the Lac Cornu (2 hours if walking slowly).

The first time you get to see the Lac Cornu is the moment in which you enter the natural reserve of the Aiguilles Rouges. It is clearly marked with a plate nailed in a stone structure. The height is 2414 meters above sea level. Pay special attention from here to Col de la Gliere: do not follow the path that descends towards the Lac Cornu. The correct path stretches in the Northeast direction, leaving Lac Cornu to your left.

The path until Col de la Gliere passes among big rocks that came off from the mountain top that you have on your right. If there are snow patches (very likely at the beginning of July), take care in the transitions rock-snow. It is in these transitions that the rock heat up the snow, melting it and producing air patches. The safe bet is to follow previous footprints.

Once Col de la Gliere, take the path that leaves in the East direction and do not continue in the path that leads to Lacs Noirs. Here there is a delicate step so make use good of the cables inlaid on the rock. The path descends about 180 meters of unevenness, and you will have spectacular panoramas over the glacier of Argentiere and the Chardonnet peak, among others.

Once you have descended the 180 meters, you have to ascent around 80 meters. Then you will find a track wide. Take the ascent direction and do not descend. Immediately after, you will pass underneath a chair lift. The track takes to us until the arrival of the Index cableway. The altitude is 2385 meters.

Here follow the track in Northeast direction, and about 100 meters ahead the track will turn to a mountain path. This path takes you directly until a path crossing, shortly before the Lac Blanc hut.

About 1h30 later (depending on the rhythm), you will come to a path crossing, to the right it descends towards the Flegere and the left it climbs to the Lac Blanc. Take it towards the Lac Blanc. There are only 50 meters of unevenness until the Lac Blanc. The refuge stands clearly out, a bit higher than the level of the lake.

In case of bad weather... Please do not attempt to cross the Col de la Gliere if the weather is bad. Listen carefully to the weather forecast the day before and plan in advance. It is far better to take a less dangerous and equally pretty route. In the point (a) of this description, instead of taking the footpath that ascends to Lac Cornu and Lacs Noirs, follow the wide track. This will take you to the cableway of the Flegere, at 1877 meters. Passed the cable-car you will find a sign 'Lac Blanc 1h45'. Go down the rough track (north direction) beneath La Trappe chair-lift, then turn left (waymarked) past La Chavenne chalet, and on up stony zig-zags. This path ascends steadily over mixed terrain and will take you to the Lac Blanc.