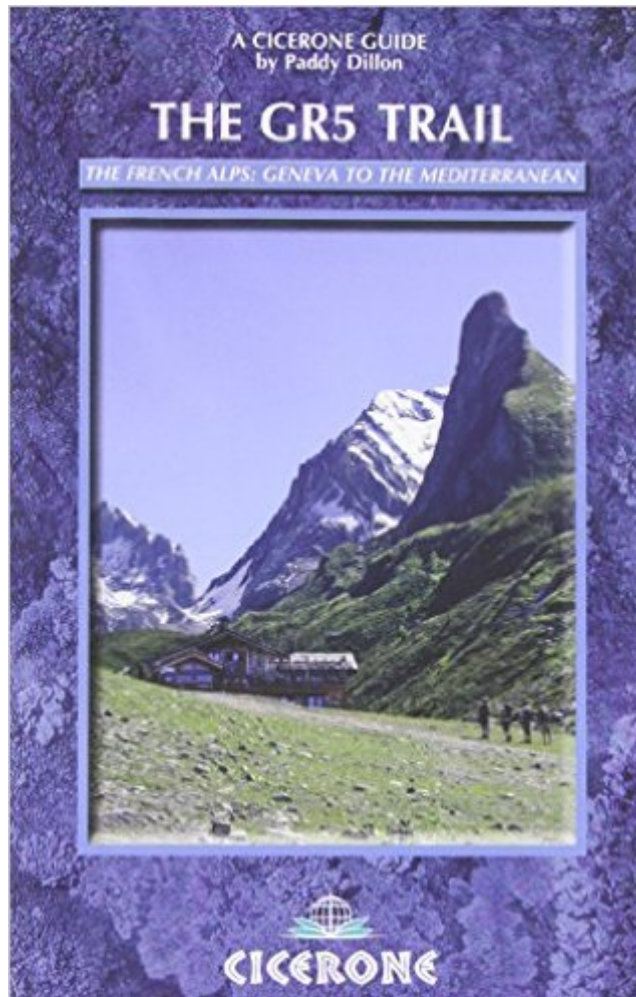


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The GR5 Trail: Through The French Alps: Lake Geneva To Nice (Cicerone Guides)



Synopsis

The GR5 is one of the world's most spectacular long-distance trails, but at the same time well within the reach of moderately experienced walkers and backpackers. There is good signposting and waymarking, plus lodgings, food and drink are all available at regular intervals. The paths and tracks are generally well graded, while steep climbs are tackled on zigzag paths, so the overall gradient is not so severe. These numerous benefits mean that every summer, thousands of walkers embark on this trek. It makes its way through the Alps from the shores of Lac Léman at Geneva to the Mediterranean at Nice, following a route of 674km (420 miles) on well-graded and well-marked paths and tracks. The route can be trekked in a month, or it can be split over a series of summer trips to prolong the enjoyment. Good public transport links across the length of the trail mean that it is easy to divide the trek into several separate trips. This guidebook also describes some scenic variant routes, including the stunning GR55 through the Vanoise National Park and the delightful GR52 that crosses the Mercantour National Park. Full descriptions and maps are provided for these alternatives, at the appropriate stages. The book includes daily stages, timings, ascents and descents; full-colour mapping and gradient profiles; full information about facilities and services along the route.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This guide is excellent. It is thorough, with great maps and sound directions, useful details and good advice. It is really pushing the limits to criticize such a fine work. So before I do, let me say that it is

essential that you buy this book if you are planning to hike the GR 5, or sections of it, between Lake Geneva (Leman) and Nice. Don't hesitate. Put your money down. My criticisms are minor, and to some degree personal. The book is small in size, but it is printed in color and on quality paper, so it is a little heavy. I am hiking the GR 5 in sections, so while I read the guide at home, I will be taking color photocopies of the sections with me on my GR5 expeditions, where every bit of weight counts. So in my view it is easy to get around this first criticism. Secondly, and more seriously, the length of the days proposed are sometimes very long. Even when I was younger, the prospect of some enormous days, such as the first day from St Gingolph to La Chapelle d'Abondance (7 1/2 hours and over 6000 feet ascent) would have been excessive. And as a first day of alpine hiking, such a forced march would never have been my choice. Instead, I cut this day off at the Chalets de Bise, shortening the day by about 30%, and had a wonderful overnight stay there, watching the cows being brought in at this working farm (and refuge) and enjoying the alpenglow on the Cornettes de Bise. Had I followed the guide's recommendation, I would have had a very unpleasant time reaching La Chapelle. Instead, I had one of the most wonderful evenings I have ever passed in the Alps. I have been doing the same ever since, and I plan to continue doing so.

On the whole this is a fantastic guide and one which we couldn't have walked the route from St Gingolph to Menton without. We did have one problem on the route from Le Boreon to Refuge de Nice (Day 28 on the GR52) so much so that both my colleague and I doubted if Paddy Dillon had actually walked this section. Up until this day, we had agreed with the timings given in the book and generally with the descriptions on difficulty etc. I walked slightly faster than the given times and my colleague nearly always walked the sections in the time given sometimes slightly slower. However, the problem came when leaving La Madone de Fenestre. The book suggests a time of 2 hrs 15min to the Pas du Mont Colomb, 40 minutes from there to La Barme and then 20 minutes from there to the Refuge de Nice i.e. a total of 3 hrs 15 minutes from La Madone de Fenestre to the Refuge. It actually took me 4 hrs 10 minutes and my colleague 4 hrs 30 minutes i.e. more than an hour longer than we expected - we didn't stop for more than 5 or 10 minutes. The book mentions nothing of snow on the ascent to the Pas du Mont Colomb, this was on September 14th and it had obviously been there since the spring so is most likely a permanent feature. It was very difficult finding one's way across the snow. The descent from the Pas to La Barme was horrendous with large boulders and we had great difficulty finding our way from boulder to boulder without losing the path. We wouldn't have minded if the timings had been better or we had been sufficiently warned. The description in the book makes it sound like many other stretches i.

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