

## Elbrus – 5642m (North or South)

- Europe's true highest peak and one of the Seven Summits
- Situated in the dramatic mountain range of the Caucasus
- 99% client success in 2015, 2016 and 2017, in total over 180 summits out of 185



### Mount Elbrus South Ridge

Our Mount Elbrus expedition via the south side has achieved outstanding success rates for people of all levels over the past decade. On this expedition we gradually gain height and increase our chance of success by taking time to acclimatise in the Syltran-Su valley on Mount Mukal, which offers views across the beautiful valleys to Elbrus. Once acclimatised, we use the cable car to regain our high point at just over 4000m from where we follow sweeping snow slopes to the col between Elbrus' twin summits before continuing easily to the true summit of Europe's highest mountain in an ascent of about 1000m.

In 2015, 2016 and 2017, 99% of our clients reached the summit via the South ridge totalling 180 out of 185 clients. This success is in sharp contrast to what is normally achieved on the Northern approach due to the grueling summit day which totals 1900m! 2016 was the exception on the North side which saw far better success than the norm of 50% due to the incredibly good weather that season.

### Mount Elbrus Northern Approach

This expedition takes the more remote approach away from the famous cable car of the South. Whilst the route may be described as more beautiful, the final summit day is far longer and more exhausting being around 1,900m to the main west summit and should, therefore, only be attempted by those with a very high level of fitness!!

### WHY CLIMB WITH ADVENTURE PEAKS

- 97% client success in 2017 (72 out of 74 summits)
  - 99% client success in 2016 (68 out of 69 summits)
  - 98% client success in 2015
- Please note expedition success is different to client success as only one client has to reach the summit for it to be successful.
- Over 50 previously successful Elbrus Expeditions over the past decade

### WHY WE ACHIEVE SUCH GOOD RESULTS

- Adventure Peaks are High Altitude Mountain specialists
- Additional summits climbed during the acclimatisation phase
- No load carrying
- High Guiding Ratio
- 3 days set aside for a summit attempt

## OUTLINE ITINERARY

**KEY to inclusions (H/L-hotel/lodge, MH-Mountain Hut, C-Camping, B-breakfast, L-lunch, D-dinner/evening meal)**

### South Side Expedition

Our Standard expedition via the south ridge has achieved outstanding success rates for people of all levels over the past decade.

**Day 1** International travel via Moscow

**Day 2** We arrive late morning in Mineralnye Vody (Mineral Waters) just to the North of the Caucasus mountain range. From here a 4-hour overland journey by road past fields of sunflowers takes us to the Upper Baksan Valley. We arrive at our hotel which will form the main base for the expedition. (H/L,L,D)

**Day 3** From our hotel we drive to Verkhniy Baksan, here we leave the main road and take the road as far as possible up the Syltran-Su valley (ideally to 2300m, but will depend on road conditions). At the end of the road we will trek to Lake Syltrankel at 3200m (3-4 hours) where we will have lunch, set up our overnight camp, refresh skills and relax. (C,B,L,D)

**Day 4** Today we make our ascent of Mount Mukal (3899m). On a clear day you will also be rewarded with beautiful views across the Baksan valley towards Elbrus. (C,B,L,D)



**Day 5** After packing up camp ready for the porters we descend back to the valley and return to the hotel to make our final preparations for the Elbrus summit bid. (H/L,B,L,D)

**Day 6** Today we take the cable car and chair lift to the Barrels at 3700m on Elbrus (also called 'Bochky' or 'Karabashi'), our base for the next few nights to further aid the process of acclimatisation before our summit bid. Whilst on the mountain the accommodation is more basic but food will be cooked for you. If time permits we will do a further short acclimatisation walk to the old burnt down Prijutt Refuge, 4060m. (MH,B,L,D)

**Day 7** Today our destination is the Pastukov Rocks stretching from 4550-4700m, allowing us to practise crampon work as well as being rewarded with good views of Ushba, one of the most famous mountains of the region,

often described as the Matterhorn of the Caucasus. We overnight at the Barrels. (MH,B,L,D)

**Days 8 to 10** Potential summit days:

We rise in the early hours and prepare for a 3am departure for the highest point of Europe. It is often possible to obtain a lift by Snowcat to around 4700m. The route from here is a steady climb up to the Sedlowina Saddle, the col between the two peaks of Elbrus. From here the final 300 metres of ascent to the West summit is on steeper snow slopes. The ascent is approximately 8-10 hours round trip. Time permitting we will return to our hotel base in the valley to celebrate or spend a further night in the Barrels. (MH,B,L,D)



**Day 11** Morning transfer to Mineralnye Vody and fly to Moscow for late afternoon international flights, usually getting you home the same day.

### PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE/FITNESS

Although technically straightforward, the summit day is quite long so a good basic fitness is required to complete an 8-10 hour day. Ideally you should have basic ice axe & crampon skills. If you do not have these skills, we recommend one of our Scottish winter skills courses.

### INCLUSIONS

- Group transfer from Mineralnye Vody to the mountain and back.
- Permit fees
- Accommodation and meals in the Baksan valley hotel and on the mountain
- All communal equipment necessary for the climb
- Medical first aid supplies
- An expedition team leader (British or/and Russian)
- Visa support letters
- Cable car / chair lift on Elbrus

### NOT INCLUDED

- Snowcat approx. 700-1200€ between the group if used (depending on whether dropped off at the bottom or top of Pastukov rocks or higher.) Can be paid in euros or rubles. Could be shared with other groups if applicable. Max capacity 10-12 people.
- Extra hotel nights if summiting early (spending fewer than three nights in the Barrels on the south side)
- Moscow extension
- Visas
- Tips

## North Side Expedition

Our North side expedition takes the more remote approach away from the cable cars and chair lifts of the south. Whilst the route may be described as more beautiful the final summit day is far longer and more exhausting being around 1,900m to the main west summit and should therefore only be attempted by those with a very high level of fitness!!

**Day 1** International travel via Moscow

**Day 2** We arrive late morning in Mineralnye Vody (Mineral Waters) just to the north of the Caucasus mountain range. From here we transfer to our hotel in Nalchik a journey of about 100 km. (H/L,L,D)

**Day 3** Transfer to base camp at Emmanuel Glade, 2598m, a journey of about 100km initially on tarmac but gradually deteriorating into a bumpy dirt track as we get closer to Base Camp (MH,B,L,D)

**Day 4** Today we take a lovely acclimatisation walk through grassy terrain and past lakes towards our pre-established summit camp at 3800m. Return to BC (MH,B,L,D)

**Day 5** Final preparations are made before we leave Base Camp for our summit camp near the North Hut at 3800m (MH,B,L,D)

**Day 6** Acclimatisation day spent doing crampon and glacial travel skills incorporating a climb to 4300m (MH,B,L,D)

**Day 7** Acclimatisation climb to Lenz Rocks at 4600m – 4800m (MH,,B,L,D)

**Day 8** Ascent of Mount Elbrus 5,642m  
We rise very early and prepare for a 1.00am start as the route from the north is a gruelling 14-16 hour return trip! The route heads towards the saddle between the two peaks and then follows the normal route on a rising traverse with an average gradient of 40 degrees which can be exposed before finally crossing the large summit plateau to the summit (MH,B,L,D)

**Days 9 to 10**  
Reserve summit days in case of bad weather (MH,B,L,D)

**Day 11** Descend to Base Camp (MH,B,L,D)

**Day 12** Return to Nalchik (H,B,L,D)

**Day 13** Morning transfer to Mineralnye Vody and fly to Moscow for late afternoon international flights, usually getting you home the same day

## PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE/FITNESS

Although technically straightforward, the summit day from the north is **exceptionally long** and strenuous so a high level of fitness is required to undertake the 14-16 hour summit day. (The South Elbrus ascent is less strenuous) Basic ice axe arrest & crampon skills are required. If you

do not have these skills, we recommend one of our Scottish Winter Skills or Winter Mountaineering Courses.

## EXPEDITION FOOD

Our food supplies will consist of local produce with a mix of fresh produce (salad, veg, chicken, rice and pasta based meals). Please note, vegetarianism is not widely popular in Russia and choice for vegetarians will be fairly limited although things appear to be improving each year. For special interest and to keep the taste buds going we ask that each member brings a small 'luxury' item to share at some point with the rest of the group. Suggestions include chocolates, biscuits, liqueurs, etc.

## ACCOMMODATION

Whilst in the valley, overnight accommodation will be in hotels/lodges. On the climb you will spend a number of nights on the southern route in the 'Barrels' which are dormitory style 'huts' with bunks and mattresses, sleeping 6. A separate building is used for meals and a long-drop toilet cabin is available separate from the Barrels. On the north side we stay in basic huts.

## WHAT TO CARRY

For the acclimatisation peaks you should limit your personal equipment to the absolute essentials as some of the days will be long and steep. For Elbrus summit day it can be very cold in the early hours of the morning, so a down jacket is essential. You will only carry your personal kit.

## ALTITUDE

If you are new to altitude you may have concerns about the effects. Don't worry, our itineraries generally allow sufficient time to acclimatise. You may experience a headache or a little breathlessness; the best way to avoid such symptoms is to do everything slowly, walk at a gentle steady pace and drink plenty of fluid.

## EQUIPMENT

A detailed equipment list is provided on booking. Specialist items such as sleeping bags & down jackets can be hired or purchased with 15% discount from our shop.

## BAGGAGE

For your own comfort, travel light. It is a good idea to wear your boots on the plane in case of lost luggage as these are hard to replace. Normally airlines restrict baggage to 20kg, but you will be wearing boots and one set of mountain clothes. Some items can be left at the hotel for your return. A suitable kitbag is provided for UK clients, but we do advise important items should also be packed in plastic bags as the kitbags are not waterproof.

## VISA

A Russian visa usually takes 7-10 working days to process, longer at busy periods. Allow yourself plenty of time in case of incorrect forms being rejected etc. You will need an invitation letter/voucher from our Russian agent to support your application. We need a copy or scan of your passport in order to obtain these, plus your flight details if booking your own flights. We will send the documents to you approximately 2-3 months prior to departure.

For UK citizens you will need to complete and print out an application form from <http://ru.vfsglobal.co.uk> then apply either in person or by post. Further information will be sent to you with your Letters of Invitation.

(If you are self employed, you may need to supply bank statements so give yourself plenty of time to arrange this). If you are not a UK citizen, please check with your in-country Russian Embassy about application procedures.

### **INSURANCE**

Insurance which covers mountain rescue and medical expenses is **essential**. We will require details of your insurance prior to departure. The British Mountaineering Council will currently cover the Elbrus region for UK clients. If using other Insurers, please check carefully to make sure they cover this area and the Foreign Office status 'advise against all but essential travel'.

### **FLIGHTS AND JOINING ARRANGEMENTS**

If you book your flight with Adventure Peaks our preferred route to Mineralnye Vody is via Moscow using Aeroflot.

In order to fit in with the group transfer, land only clients will need to make their own way to Mineralnye Vody and meet the rest of the group before 13:00 on day 2 and departing again after around 11:00 on the final day of the itinerary.

**PLEASE ENSURE YOU DO NOT PURCHASE YOUR INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL (FLIGHTS OR OTHER) UNTIL WE HAVE GUARANTEED YOUR TRIP IS RUNNING.**

### **MOSCOW EXTENSION** (plus 2 nights/ 3 days)

*This extension is for those who wish to spend time in Moscow to visit The Kremlin, St Basil's Cathedral, Red Square or perhaps a visit to one of the many classic opera, ballets or state circuses. The price you pay covers the hotel, on a B&B basis only. Our agents will be happy to advise you how to manage any excursions you may want to take and the best places to visit.*



### **Participation Statement**

Adventure Peaks recognises that climbing, hill walking and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement.

**Adventure Peaks has resumed expeditions to Elbrus BUT it must be understood the Foreign Office Advice is to avoid all but essential travel to this region.**

*"We advise against all but essential travel to North Ossetia, Karachai-Cherkessia and Kabardino-Balkaria (including the Elbrus area)." (from Foreign Office Website unchanged since 18/12/2007)*

For more information please visit: [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/russia](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/russia)

If you decide to participate in an Elbrus Expedition you must understand you are travelling against Foreign Office advice and accept the risk and any consequence. Adventure Peaks, by running this expedition, does not overrule Foreign Office advice.

### **Adventure Travel – Accuracy of Itinerary**

Although it is our intention to operate this itinerary as printed, it may be necessary to make some changes as a result of flight schedules, climatic conditions, limitations of infrastructure or other operational factors. As a consequence, the order or location of overnight stops and the duration of the day may vary from those outlined. You should be aware that some events are beyond our control and we would ask for your patience.