

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



South Side Elbrus

Our Standard expedition via the south side has achieved outstanding success rates for people of all levels over the past decade. On this expedition you will gradually gain height and increase your fitness by acclimatising carefully on the nearby peaks of Peak Cheget, and Andyrchi. This will give you the opportunity of attaining two further Caucasian summits as well as Elbrus. Once acclimatised, we will use the cable car and chair lift onto the slopes of Elbrus for the first part of our journey to just over 4000m and a snow cat to 4500m. Our route then follows sweeping snow slopes to the col between Elbrus' twin summits from where we continue easily to the true summit of Europe's highest mountain in an ascent of about 1000m.

North Side Elbrus

A more challenging assault of the mountain from the remote North side of Elbrus. Suitable for those with a high level of fitness due to the longer summit day (1900m) compared to that of the South side, it offers a more scenic ascent of Elbrus.

Participation Statement

AdventurePeaks 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

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.

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 level 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,B, L,D)

Day 3 From our hotel base we will acclimatise on the slopes of nearby Peak Cheget. If everyone is feeling fit and enthusiastic, we can reach the summit at 3461m and get the first views looking across the beautiful valley to Elbrus. The group may decide to get the chairlift part way up or down which would cost in the region of 500 roubles per person. (H/L, B, L, D).

Day 4 We transfer to the Adyl-su valley and make our ascent of Andyrchi (3913m) via the VCSP Pass. This is a long day but we will stop for lunch at the campsite at 3200m. Looking South from the pass you will see some of the stunning rock spires which offer many routes for any adventurous rock climber, the valley continues down to the Georgian Border. On a clear day you will also be rewarded with a beautiful view across the Baksan valley towards Elbrus (H/L,B,L,D).



Day 5 Today we will take the cable-car to the Mir station and walk up to Prijutt 11 hut (4060m) and then descend back down into the valley.

Day 6 Final preparations are made before we take the cable car and chair lift to the Barrels at 3800m 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 4500-4700m, allowing us to practice

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 3.00am departure for the highest point of Europe. It is often possible to obtain a lift by Snowcat to around 4500m. 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 8-12 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.

INCLUSIONS

- All transportation from Mineralnye Vody to the mountain and back.
- Permit charges
- Accommodation and meals in the Baksan Valley Hotel and on the mountain.
- All communal equipment necessary for the climb
- Medical safety equipment and supplies
- An expedition team leader (British or/and Russian)
- Access to Monthly pre-expedition meets
- Visa support letters
- Cable car / chair lift on Elbrus

NOT INCLUDED

- Snowcat approx 400-500€ between the group (depending on whether dropped off at the bottom or top of Pastukov rocks or higher.) Can be paid in euros or roubles. Could be shared with other groups if applicable. Max capacity 10-12 people.
- Additional valley hotel nights if summiting early, visiting Nalchik, or for a Moscow Extension.
- Visas

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. 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.

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 MineralnyeVody (Mineral Waters) just to the North of the Caucasus mountain range. From here we transfer to our hotel in Piatigorsk a journey of about 30 km. (H/L,B, 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(C, 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(C,B,L,D).

Day 5 Final preparations are made before we leave base camp for our summit camp (C,B,L,D)

Day 6 Acclimatisation day spent doing Crampon and Glacial Travel skills incorporating a climb to 4300m(C,B,L,D)

Day 7 Climb to Lenz Rocks at 4600m – 4800m (C,B,L,D)

Days 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.(C,B,L,D)

Days 9 to 10

Reserve summit days in case of bad weather(C,B,L,D)

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

Day 12 Return to Piatigorsk(H,B,L,D)

Day 13 Morning transfer to MineralnyeVody and fly to Moscow for late afternoon International flights, usually getting you home the same day.

INCLUSIONS

- All transportation from Mineralnye Vody to the mountain and back.
- Permit charges
- Accommodation and meals in Hotel, (including packed lunch) and on the mountain as per basic programme. (But please read exclusions)
- All communal equipment necessary for the climb
- Medical safety equipment and supplies

- An expedition team leader (British or/and Russian)
- Visa support letters

NOT INCLUDED

- Additional valley hotel nights if summitting early, or for a Moscow Extension.
- Visas

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 14-16hour 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 that is supplemented with supplies from the UK for items we know can't be purchased locally. It will be supplemented by snacks. Please note, vegetarianism is not widely popular in Russia and choice for vegetarians will be fairly limited.

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 South 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 have a base camp mess tent.(C,B,L,D)

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 Insurer's, please check carefully to make sure they cover this area and the Foreign Office status 'advise against all but essential travel'.

LOCAL COSTS

Whilst in the mountains and in the Hotel in the Baksan Valley, meals are included (apart from extra nights), please see the key above. Individuals are responsible for drinks throughout. Please note, if staying on for a Moscow extension, meals can be expensive.

CURRENCY

The Russian Rouble is the only accepted currency in shops and restaurants. Euros and US Dollars in pristine condition

are the best to bring to change and Sterling can also be changed at airports or hotels, (try to get some low denominations). Most clients change money at Moscow Airport but bear in mind the bureau may be closed overnight. There is a bank in Terskol and a change bureau and Cash machine in Cheget near your Hotel..

FLIGHTS AND JOINING ARRANGEMENTS

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

Land only clients will need to make their own way to Mineralnye Vody and meet the rest of the group at the airport at about midday on day 1 of the itinerary. It is important that you arrive approximately the same time as the other team members ready for the transfer, so please ask for details before booking your flights. Alternatively you can meet up with the rest of the group at Moscow Sheremetyevo airport early in the morning of Day 1 for the domestic flight to Mineralnye Vody, (again, ask for details). The cost of this domestic flight is **NOT** included in the land only price, but Adventure Peaks will gladly book this for you at extra cost (normally about £230) if you prefer.

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.

