



The Summit Of Elbrus



The highest peak in Europe is our objective - 5642m of snow and rock. We aim to ascend the higher of Elbrus' twin-peaks, the West peak.

The Caucasus forms a chain of snowy, high, alpine mountains separating Georgia to the South from Russia to the north. Just north of the main chain, in Russia, lies Europe's highest summit - the twin-peaked Mount Elbrus. The main chain itself contains many mountains over 5000m. and tens of summits higher than Mont Blanc. In the valleys clear streams tumble down from the mountain to mix with the rushing melt waters from the glaciers at the head of the valley, passing through dramatic scenery, alpine meadows and beautiful forests. The

Baksan Valley, over about 40 miles, takes us from the northern foothills to the main chain itself. This is the most important and best developed valley in the Caucasus, partly because of the mineral wealth located near Tynyauz and partly on account of Elbrus at its head and the hundreds of magnificent mountains which comprise its watershed. Almost at the end of the Baksan Valley, at the foot of Elbrus, lies Terskol - the main centre for climbing in the Elbrus area of the Caucasus.



We run 2 scheduled Elbrus trips - the 15 day trip which provides an excellent acclimatisation programme in some of the more beautiful valleys and mountains in the region and the shorter 8 day trip which allows less time for acclimatisation. The 8 day trip is only suitable for the partly acclimatised or those who acclimatise well. If you are uncertain how well you perform at altitude we strongly recommend the 15 day trip.

Both trips will start from Moscow by flying to Mineralnye Vody, a spa town on the plains north of the Caucasus. From here a 3.5 - 4 hour bus journey takes you to our base hotel in the Baksan Valley. The international flights booked through EWP depart LHR in the late evening and arrive into Moscow in the early morning in time for the flight to Mineralnye Vody. If you wish we can arrange an earlier flight for you to spend some time in Moscow before flying down to Mineralnye Vody.

On the longer 15 day trip you will have 6 days in the Caucasus before going on to Elbrus. These days will be spent on two enjoyable camping trips to build up fitness and acclimatisation, following beautiful forested valleys, walking through alpine meadows, crossing glaciated mountain passes and climbing some of the easiest summits which provide superb panoramas of the Caucasus Range. During both of these trips there is time to practice the use of crampons and ices-axe. This trip will be porter supported but will involve backpacking with your own personal equipment including your sleeping bag.

For the ascent of Elbrus itself on both trips a cable car/chair lift system takes you to the Garabashi huts at 3800m. Depending on the group, weather and accommodation availability you will either stay at or camp near the Diesel hut at 4100m or in the Garabashi huts.

A snowcat operates from the top of the chairlift up as far as the Pastukhova Rocks. Depending on prevailing conditions, you might be able to use this facility during the Elbrus Ascent at extra cost.



Please note that the Elbrus region is on the Foreign office advise not to travel to list; we monitor the area all year round. Please ask us for details or see our website.

Grade, Qualifications and Staff

The ascent of Elbrus is a long trek up glaciers achievable by the fit and acclimatised. Although no advanced mountaineering experience is required, crampons and ice axe are required and you should be familiar with the basic use of crampons and ice axes before the trip. Steep snow and ice sections are encountered. These are tough trips. Some of the days are very demanding physically. For the 15 day trip personal kit has to be carried including your sleeping bag and mat. Some of the walking is on good paths but we trek over high passes, on steep, rugged ground, on glaciers and glacial deposits. We recommend some long walks before your trip. The first half of the trip is carefully designed to ensure that all group members have the chance to be at ease with the use of crampons and ice axe and that they have experienced a tough, long uphill day. As a result, our ascent success rate is very good. It must be remembered that Elbrus is an extremely serious mountain in spite of its technical ease. The guides' decision to turn back should be respected at all times. Our chief Caucasus guide is a well-qualified and very experienced mountaineer and leader who speaks good English and has an expert knowledge of the Caucasus. He has a team of assistant guides who are also well qualified, experienced and English speaking. They will have ropes and radios. We employ extra guides on Elbrus itself according to the size of the groups.

Equipment, Weather and Clothes

Mountain weather is variable. In the valleys it is possible for daytime temperatures to rise over 25°C. At night, especially at the high campsites, it can be very cold and you are likely to experience frosts. Rain, summer storms and even snowfall on the passes could be encountered at any time. On Elbrus the weather can turn Arctic. Very warm and wind-proof clothes are necessary for the ascent including both inner and outer waterproof gloves/mittens, duvet jacket, fleece and thermals. Stiff mountain boots suitable for winter mountaineering are probably the best footwear. You will also need an ice axe, crampons and a lightweight harness with karabiner; ski sticks are an optional extra but recommended. A four-season sleeping bag is needed on Elbrus although you might prefer to take a warm liner with 3-season bag. A detailed equipment list will be sent with confirmation of booking. It will be possible to leave luggage at the hotel at all times during the trip.

Health Matters and Documents

An emergency medical kit accompanies the trek and the Russian staff includes qualified medical personnel. We nevertheless recommend that you carry your own personal first aid kit. A suggested list of contents as well as more general health information is included in your pre-departure information. No special inoculations are required but we recommend that you consult your doctor for other cover such as typhoid. A visa is required and will be applied for on a group basis. For this we require your passport five weeks before departure for about 3 weeks; if this is a problem we will have to discuss the situation with you. Full details of the procedures involved will be included in the pre-departure booklet; you can contact us for details as well.

Food and Accommodation

All accommodation and meals are included in the trip cost. In Moscow and St Petersburg good quality hotels are used with en-suite facilities. The hotel in the Baksan Valley is pleasantly situated and friendly; rooms are usually doubles, facilities are en-suite but some are shared between two rooms. On Elbrus itself we generally stay in Huts. Accommodation for other sections of the trek is in double-skinned tents; we ask you to assist with pitching your tent. Food on trek is prepared by our own cooks from fresh foods supplemented by supplies brought in from St Petersburg. However we recommend that you bring with you a small selection of "goodies" - chocolates, nuts etc. which you are particularly fond of. These will be useful especially at times when the altitude might reduce your appetite for main meals or when you need energy for the final summit push. We try to cater for vegetarians but we cannot provide the same standard as expected in the West. We suggest that vegetarians take their own protein supplement if this is likely to cause a problem.

Outline Itineraries

The following itineraries are intended as working guides only and are subject to variation as a result of local conditions, weather and governmental restrictions. We reserve the right to alter (lengthen or shorten) the trek at any time if necessary. Time: GMT+3.

15 Day Trip

1. Fly from Moscow to Mineralnye Vody, a spa town on the plains north of the Caucasus. Drive by private bus to the hotel in the Baksan Valley, near Elbrus. If coming from the UK, the overnight flight arrives in Moscow in time for this flight.
2. Our trek starts with a pleasant walk up the Adyl-su valley to the "Green Hotel", an alpine meadow campsite at 2600m. This is an excellent day to tone up our muscles for the days ahead.
3. Walk up the Jankuat Glacier to the Eastern Jankuat Pass, 3600m. Excellent panorama of Elbrus and the main Caucasus chain. This walk provides good practice with ice axe and crampons. Walk back via the Adyl-su valley. Return to the hotel. Night in the hotel.
4. A short drive to Vierhny Baksan from where we walk up through woods then open mountain slopes to Syltran Lake at 3200m, one of the largest lakes in the Caucasus. Camp. This is a long, demanding day, excellent training for the long pull up Elbrus!
5. Cross the Syltran Pass, 3400m. With a possible 30 min. side trip to a nearby small summit and viewpoint. We descend by the Mukal Valley and then walk up by the Mkiara Valley to camp at 3100m.
6. Cross the glaciated Irik Pass, 3750m to a campsite in the forest lower down in the beautiful Irik valley. Camp.
7. Finishing our descent of the Irik valley we return to the hotel. The afternoon is free to relax, have a sauna or wander into Terskol.
8. We take the cable car/chair lift system up Elbrus and stay in the Garabashi Huts at 3800m or camp.
9. Acclimation walk to Pastuchova rocks at 4690m.
10. We begin in the small hours of the morning for the ascent to the highest of Elbrus' Twin Peaks - the West Summit. You carry your daypack with the day's requirements. We return to spend the night in Garabashi or camp.
11. Spare day on Elbrus in case of bad weather for the ascent on Day 10.
12. Return to hotel. Relax and perhaps enjoy one of the fine walks from the hotel.
13. Drive to Mineralnye Vody, fly to St Petersburg; dinner and night in hotel.
14. After breakfast, a morning city tour. After lunch free time to sight see or shop. Night in the hotel.
15. Early transfer to the airport for return flight.

8 Day Trip

1. Fly from Moscow to Mineralnye Vody, a spa town on the plains north of the Caucasus. Drive by private bus to the hotel in the Baksan Valley, near Elbrus. If coming from the UK, the overnight flight arrives in Moscow in time for this flight.
2. Acclimatisation walk from hotel to Cheget Garabashi summit, 3404m - which provides a magnificent viewpoint over Elbrus.
3. Ascend cable car system to Garabashi Huts, 3800m, we will stay here or walk 1½ hours to the Diesel Hut, 4200m. (If both huts are full you may have to camp.) Acclimatisation walk on the lower slopes.
4. Acclimatisation walk to Pastukhova Rocks, 4690m.
5. Ascent of Elbrus. We begin in the small hours of the morning for the ascent to the highest of Elbrus' twin peaks - the West Summit. You carry your day pack with the day's requirements. We return to spend the night at our hut.
6. A successful ascent of Elbrus is very much weather dependant therefore we plan this as a spare day in the Elbrus programme. (If Elbrus is climbed before Day 7 you will descend to the hotel and some valley walks will be organised.)
7. Descend to our hotel in the Baksan Valley.
8. Drive back to Mineralnye Vody, fly back to Moscow, and transfer to the international airport for return flight to London.

Prices include from Moscow: all transport for the programmes above (see international flight options below), food and accommodation in Russia, tents on trek for the on 15 day, permits and sightseeing costs as above.

Not included in the cost: personal insurance, visas (£60), snow cat (approx. \$20 depending on group size), sauna and tips, dinner on Day 14

Flights included the UK departure cost from London:

15 Day Trip Aeroflot Scheduled flights LHR/Moscow/MineralnyeVody,
Pulkovo Scheduled flights St Petersburg/LGW.
8 Day Trip Aeroflot Scheduled flights LHR/Moscow/MineralnyeVody return

From Moscow: If you are arranging your own international flights please send us full details.

Moscow hotels and transfers:

We can arrange for you to be met to transfer to the SVO1 for the flight to Mineralnye Vody. We can also arrange for a stay for you in a hotel in Moscow. If you wish to obtain your own domestic flights as well please ask for the best flight options for you to join in Mineralnye Vody Airport.



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