

## Mt. Elbrus Expedition

14 Days in Russia / Skill Level: Introductory



July 28- Aug. 10, 2018  
July 27- Aug. 9, 2019

*Land costs- \$6,450*

\*All costs included with the exception of alcohol, in-town meals

**Difficulty Level:** Introductory – No technical climbing or altitude experience is necessary. Elbrus does require glacier skills, such as walking with crampons and ice axe use, but this is all taught en route. It is important that you are in good physical shape, and able to hike in rugged terrain for long days. We are happy to detail physical and technical training programs as needed to get you ready for our introductory expeditions. \*\*\*PLEASE CALL TO DISCUSS SKI DESCENT\*\*\*

## Overview

Mt. Elbrus, a dormant double-coned volcano, rises to 18,510' / 5642m. Its double peaks tower over the stunning western Caucasus Region of Russia, near the border of Georgia. Elbrus is the highest point in all of Europe (& Russia), making this climb one of the renowned 'Seven Summits'. Boasting 22 glaciers on the peak, this is the perfect introductory climb for anyone with a strong fitness level who wishes to build glacier climbing skills, climb a moderate high altitude peak, and explore the fascinating and diverse Russian culture in the Caucasus mountains and the famed cities of St. Petersburg and Moscow.

Alpenglow Expeditions climbs Elbrus from the accessible south side, which benefits from the use of snowcats and chairlifts to gain altitude and mountain huts for sleeping.



This means that you only have to carry a small pack on all of your climbing days, allowing you to enjoy your summit experience much more. Lots of time is spent acquiring the necessary skills to climb a glaciated snow and ice route, and the terrain creates a perfect progression from low-angled cramponing early on the mountain to more exposed and steeper slopes on summit day.

Our trip begins in the cosmopolitan city of St. Petersburg, city of the Tsars. One simply could not visit Russia without seeing this city, known as the "Venice of the North". We then travel to Mineral Voldy and begin our acclimatization and climb. The first few days are focused on day trips that allow us to acclimatize and develop glacier climbing skills. After that we move up to a mountain hut known as the Barrels. Thanks to our local Russian support team, we will continue to eat well and carry only light packs, even at this camp high on the mountain. Summit day on Elbrus is strenuous and long.

We wake around 3am and have a quick breakfast before boarding a snowcat to take us to our previous high point on the mountain at 15,000' / 4572m. From there we put on our crampons, attach to the rope, and break out the ice axe and begin the climb. As



the sun rises we will be high on the mountain, with the sun giving us energy for the final push. From the summit we will enjoy well deserved views of the surrounding peaks before making a quick descent back to the hut.

After descending to the valley, we fly to Russia's capitol and Europe's largest city, Moscow, located on the Moskva River. We will visit the famed Saint Basil's Cathedral, the Kremlin, Red Square and celebrate our climb in this historically and economically significant city.

Our Mt. Elbrus expedition will be led by one of Alpenglow's lead guides. Our lead guides are certified by the AMGA/IFMGA guide and they spend time between guiding around the world on high altitude expeditions in South America, the Himalaya and while also leading trips on highly technical rock, ice and ski terrain in Europe and the United States. We will be supported by a great team of Russian guides and a cook. Their experience and local knowledge will not only make your trip more comfortable, they will also add to your understanding of this mountain and the local people.

If you are an advanced skier with backcountry (off piste) experience, it is also possible to arrange to ski Mt. Elbrus. Since ski mountaineering is one of Alpenglow's guides favorite activities, we would love to arrange a ski descent for you! Please call us to discuss this option.

## Mt. Elbrus Itinerary

Day 1

Arrive in St. Petersburg, where you will meet your guides. Transfer to our hotel and have a team dinner. (Saturday)

Day 2

Explore St. Petersburg, perhaps Russia's most beautiful and interesting city. Russia's cultural hub is a fascinating mix of historical sights and trendy modernism. We will spend the entire day touring the city, and will visit the famed Hermitage, St. Isaac's Cathedral, and the Fortress of Peter and Paul.

Day 3

Fly to Mineral Vody and travel by bus to Terskol in the Baksan Valley. This short flight should give us excellent views of the Caucasus and possibly our first peak of Mt. Elbrus. The bus ride is 3-4 hours but will pass quickly with the stunning views. Our hotel in Terskol is new, next to the ski lifts, and has excellent local and international food.

Day 4

Today we take an acclimatization hike in the stunning Baksan Valley. Steep paths wind all through the valley and many options exist, including possibly using one of the local ski lifts to gain more altitude. We return to our hotel for the night.

Day 5

While continuing to acclimatize we hike to a local glacier and spend half the day teaching and reviewing crampon and ice axe technique. This practice is essential for safety and efficiency on Elbrus. We return to the hotel for the night.

Day 6

Today we begin our actual climb of Mt. Elbrus. Through a combination of ski lifts and hiking we arrive at The Barrels, cozy mountain huts at 12,300' / 3750m on Elbrus. To ensure we stay well fed and healthy, we will have a Russian cook with us at the huts preparing mountain food and making our stay more comfortable.

Day 7

Climb to Pastukhov Rocks at approximately 15,000' / 4572m. As well as a chance to practice our glacier and crampon skills, this is also an important climb for acclimatization and a great time to see the route on the mountain in daylight. We return to the Barrels for the night.

Day 8

Rest and practice additional crevasse rescue and advanced glacier skills. Since tonight's climb is quite long and will require all of our energy, it is important we conserve, while also eating and hydrating as much as we can today. Night in the Barrels.

Day 9

Summit Day! We wake around 3am for a quick breakfast and hot drink. An optional snow-cat (weather dependent) takes us to our previous highpoint at Pastukhov Rocks, just below 15,000' / 4572m. From there it is almost 4,000 vertical feet (1,220 meters) to the summit of Elbrus, primarily on open moderately angled glaciers. We should reach the summit mid-morning and have stunning views of the Caucasus from Europe's highest summit. The round-trip climb back to the hut takes around twelve hours.

Day 10	An extra summit day. If we have already climbed Elbrus, we descend to the Baksan Valley today. Night in hut or hotel.
Day 11	Return to our hotel in the Baksan Valley. If we have already descended this day can be spent hiking, climbing, or just relaxing and celebrating our ascent.
Day 12	Drive back to Mineral Voldy and fly to Moscow. After checking into our hotel we will wander the city and eat a fantastic dinner.
Day 13	Spend the day exploring Moscow, visiting the Kremlin, Cathedrals, and Red Square.
Day 14	Depart Moscow for home. (Friday)

## Client Expectations and Timeline

<b>90+ Days to Departure</b>	
Reserve Spot	Make your deposit to confirm registration - if you haven't already, head over to our website and click "Reserve Spot" and select your dates. The rest of the process is as easy as buying a book online. Make sure that you select to add an extension if you wish to extend any expedition.
Q&A	Q&A with Alpenglow - time to ask any question about travel, logistics, training and everything in between.
Application	Complete full application including medical questionnaire & travel information.
Reserve Rentals	Reserve rentals if needed within application. For our climbing schools, we have a small rental inventory of boots, ice axes crampons, helmets and harnesses. These are provided at no cost on a first come first serve basis. Please let us know what you plan on renting as soon as possible.

## Within 90 Days to Departure

Complete Payment	Full Payment will be collected at the 90 day mark. Alpenglw will contact you prior to taking final payment and once you confirm we'll simply move your booking into the final stages. For international trips, a wire transaction is the best way to send payment. We also accept credit cards with transaction fee of 3% or you can pay by check.
Book Travel	We recommend reviewing flight options outside of 90 days and confirming with Alpenglw on travel times. Use us to guide you to the best flight schedules to make travel as easy as possible. Once you book your flights don't forget to share with the Alpenglw office so we pick you up on time from the airport.
Training	This is the hard part. The hours of training you put in directly correlates to your success in the mountains. Train hard and be ready for the adventure of a lifetime!
Equipment	Compile all equipment using the equipment list as a guide.
Purchase Insurance	Purchase travel and rescue insurance. We recommend Global Rescue and Travel Guard. <a href="#">Click here to find links to each.</a>

## General Trip Information

### Payment

1. A deposit of 20% is required for all treks and expeditions more than 90 days away. Deposits are due upon registration, and can be paid by check made out to "Alpenglw Expeditions, LLC". All payments should be mailed to Alpenglw Expeditions at P.O. Box 3122, Olympic Valley, CA 96146 or sent via wire transfer. If wiring payment, please contact us for bank details and be certain that you are covering ALL fees! We also accept credit card payments with a transaction fee of 3%. Deposits are non-refundable and non-transferable. This is not a flexible policy. Planning our trips takes significant time and has non-refundable costs as well.
2. Balances are due 90 days before the expedition departs from the United States. Payment should be made as described above.
3. The cost of your trip includes your land costs (excluding in-town meals). This includes: double occupancy lodging while in town, meals on the mountain, scheduled transportation while in the countries we are visiting, group camping and climbing equipment, individual technical climbing equipment (boots, ice axes, crampons, helmets, harnesses), and guides.
4. The cost of your trip does not include: flights to/from the city where the expedition begins, airport taxes, visas, in-town meals, immunizations, tips for guides or local staff, travel, rescue, or any other type of insurance, hospitalization or evacuation costs, single supplement charges, excess baggage charges, alcohol, or other personal expenses.
5. The costs of delays or changes to itinerary that are beyond the control of Alpenglw

Expeditions or its agents are not included.

### **Cancellations**

1. We reserve the right to cancel any trip at any time. Reasons for cancellation might include (but are not limited to) political instability, natural disasters, or inadequate enrollment. If we cancel a trip prior to its start for low enrollment, we fully refund your payments. If we cancel your trip prior to its start due to political instability, natural disasters, or other reasons of that nature, we will refund all but non-recoverable costs. Changes to a trip itinerary made by our guides for any reason do not constitute a cancellation, and no refunds will be made in this case.
2. If you cancel your trip more than 90 days prior to departure, Alpenglw Expeditions will refund your payment minus the non-refundable deposit. 60-89 days prior, Alpenglw Expeditions will refund 50% of your payment. Fewer than 60 days prior, there are no refunds or credits.
3. On any trip, our guides reserve the right to remove any person, for any reason. These reasons generally stem from a person jeopardizing the safety of themselves or another team member. This includes a person who is not physically able to climb at the level necessary for the chosen route. In all these cases, there are no refunds whatsoever, and the client will be responsible for any additional costs incurred in leaving the trip.

### **Flights**

We recommend using Kayak.com as a primary source for finding low-fare airfares. If you prefer to work with a travel agent, we recommend Jane Chauvin at Penny Pitou travel: (1-888-526-4488) or [jane@pennypitoutravel.com](mailto:jane@pennypitoutravel.com). She is fast, efficient and affordable and intimately aware of the challenges of booking mountaineering trips.

**\*\*Please confirm your itinerary with Alpenglw Expeditions before you purchase it.\*\***

### **Insurance**

We require that all participants carry rescue insurance, travel insurance, and health insurance. Your policy numbers must be provided to us prior to leaving the USA. Homeowner/Renter's insurance is also recommended.

- Rescue Insurance- For US citizens, we recommend obtaining rescue insurance through American Alpine Club and upgrading that service via Global Rescue. Visit [www.americanalpineclub.org](http://www.americanalpineclub.org) to become a member and obtain the appropriate level of coverage based on the altitude of the peaks you will be climbing with us. Helicopter rescues in foreign countries, while unlikely, can cost up to \$20,000. International climbers have several options as well for rescue insurance. Our recommendation is Global Rescue as we have had great success with them in the past. Your insurance must not have a mountaineering exclusion and must cover up to your trip's highest altitude. This coverage is very important.
- Travel Insurance- Coverage should include lost/damaged baggage, unexpected delays, accident/life, and trip cancellation. Trip cancellation will cover you for non-refundable air and land costs should you need to cancel your trip due to an emergency. Since our costs are often not refundable, this coverage is very important as well, and should be purchased as soon as possible after registering for an expedition.
- Health Insurance- All members of our teams are required to have current health insurance. This insurance should cover emergency hospitalization abroad as well as domestically.
- Homeowner/Renter's Insurance- While unusual, thefts can occur while overseas. We

recommend a policy to cover these losses.

## **Medical**

All of our expeditions and treks are physically demanding. Regardless of the skill level or experience needed, it is essential that you arrive in good physical shape, and prepared to handle extreme conditions, including cold, heat, and long tiring days. Alpenglw Expeditions, LLC and its guides reserve the right to remove any member of our trips at any time if we do not believe they are ready for the rigors of the trip.

Our guides are certified in wilderness medicine, CPR, and are experienced in client care in remote high altitude locations. However, Alpenglw Expeditions, LLC is not a medical facility and Alpenglw Expeditions, LLC assumes no liability regarding medical care.

You are responsible for your own medications, inoculations, and deciding whether you are physically able to participate in an Alpenglw Expeditions trip. You should discuss your participation in this trip, and the dangers involved, with your physician.

Some of the medications you may consider carrying with you include:

1. Tylenol – a simple painkiller for headaches and minor pains.
2. Ibuprofen – mild altitude headaches, along with body aches and pains, are common.
3. A cold and flu remedy of your choice (strong decongestant).
4. Pepto Bismol - for minor stomach upset, best taken in caplet form.
5. Immodium AD – to control diarrhea, when necessary. Again, tablets are preferred.
6. Cough Drops – the air at altitude is very dry, and many climbers develop hacking coughs.
7. A laxative agent of your choice.
8. Dramamine (or equivalent) – an anti-motion sickness agent of your choice as bus/plane rides to our trailheads are often very bumpy.
9. Diamox (Acetazolamide) required – prescription medication often used prophylactically to prevent altitude sickness. You should have a large enough supply to take 250mg/day (best as scored tablets so you can take 125mg twice a day).
10. Z-pack required – a broad spectrum anti-biotic.

Also be sure to discuss vaccinations with your doctor. Often a travel clinic has the most up-to-date information on which shots are necessary for the country you are visiting. Be sure to mention that most of our trips explore only the highlands and capital cities. This might mean that you need fewer immunizations, and anti-malarials are often not necessary. Determine this with your doctor, and refer to your trip itinerary for the exact locations we will be visiting. At the very least, your tetanus shot should be up-to-date and you should have protection against Hepatitis A.

## **Aerobic Conditioning**

We cannot stress enough the importance of being in excellent aerobic condition before arriving on your trip. Arriving fit will increase your safety on the trip and reduce the risk of medical issues. It will also dramatically increase your enjoyment and learning during your trek or expedition. At the minimum, we recommend an exercise regimen that includes a minimum of 3 one-hour workouts per week (biking, running, swimming) along with a few long days hiking as you get close to your departure date. Please call us if you would like to discuss a specific routine to fit your needs.

## Money

The countries we visit can still be challenging places to use a credit card or find an ATM. While you may choose to bring these for backup, we recommend you bring enough cash for your planned spending. American dollars are still the easiest way to carry money. Be sure you carry clean, new bills and have some smaller denominations. Carry your money and important documents in a hidden waist pouch under your clothes.

The amount of money you need varies by how many presents you plan on bringing back! In addition to souvenirs and gifts, plan on spending on airport departure taxes, alcohol and snacks, and tips for local staff and your guides.

### Additional Notes

- Single Supplement - If you prefer a single room while we are in hotels, please let us know as soon as possible. There will be an additional cost associated for this.
- Cameras – high quality point and shoot digital cameras are an excellent option. We have found that small pocket cameras are much better than big DSLRs for summit days. You need a simple light system, and the new generation of digitals take great photos. A guide favorite is the Sony RX 100.
- Be sure to create a data sheet of all of your essential information – passport, credit card or ATM numbers, airline ticket information, visa number (if applicable), etc. This sheet should then be photocopied and scattered amongst your luggage. If any of your documents are stolen, having this information will be essential.
- Rental Equipment - Alpenglow Expeditions offers a limited number of mountaineering boots, crampons, ice axes, helmets, harnesses, carabiners, perlon, and belay devices for use by our clients. There is no additional charge for using this equipment, but please let us know as soon as possible if you intend to use Alpenglow Expeditions' equipment. Check your expedition's equipment list to see what technical climbing equipment is necessary for your climb or trek. Rental gear from Alpenglow is only available for shipment within the US. Rental gear must be taken home by the renter and shipped back to Alpenglow within two weeks of end of trip at the renter's expense.