

Mt. Elbrus Rapid Ascent Expedition

6 Days in Russia / Skill Level: Introductory



August 8 - 13, 2020

*Land Costs **\$9,950***

*All costs included with the exception of alcohol, in-town meals, gratuity, flights to starting city

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.



Overview

Mt. Elbrus, a dormant, double-coned volcano, rises to 18,510 feet. (5,642 meters) 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 climb for anyone with a strong fitness level who wishes to build on basic glacier climbing skills, climb a moderate high altitude peak, and explore the fascinating and diverse Russian culture in the Caucasus mountains and the famed city of Moscow.

Rapid Ascent is achieved by utilizing Hypoxico tents for 1 month prior to departure (this is required & the tent rental fee is included in cost of trip). Arriving in Russia pre-acclimatized through the Rapid Ascent system, we are able to complete this typically 2-week expedition in only 6 days. We have had great success with pre-acclimatization in the highest mountain ranges of the world and strongly suggest this method as a way of staying healthy and strong on traditionally long expeditions and ultimately, having a greater chance of summit success.

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. Time is spent reviewing 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 meets in the small city of Mineral Vody and then travels to Elbrus where we base in mountain huts 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.

After 2 days of skills practice and moving up the mountain, we make our summit push. Summit day on Elbrus is strenuous and long. We wake around 3 am and have a quick breakfast before

boarding a snowcat to take us to our previous high point on the mountain at 15,000 feet (4,572 meters). From there we don crampons, rope, and 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 and celebrating our climb, we depart for Mineral Vody. We recommend adding a couple of days in Moscow on your way home!

Our Mt. Elbrus expedition will be led by one of Alpenglow's AMGA-certified lead guides. AMGA (American Mountain Guides Association) certification is the highest possible training available to guides, and only the most experienced and dedicated attain it. 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 the Alpenglow guide team's favorite activities, we would love to arrange a ski descent for you! Please call us to discuss this option.



Elbrus Rapid Ascent Itinerary	
Day 1	Arrive in Mineral Vody, where you will meet your guides. 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. Once we arrive we will have our first team meeting, check equipment and prepare to climb!
Day 2	Today we begin our climb of Mt. Elbrus. Thanks to our pre-acclimatization with Hypoxico tents, we can move to altitude immediately. Through a combination of ski lifts and hiking we arrive at The Barrels, cozy mountain huts at 12,300 feet (3,750 meters) 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. We spend the afternoon near the Barrels reviewing glacier travel skills - roped travel, crampon and ice axe technique.
Day 3	Climb to Pastukhov Rocks at approximately 15,000 feet (4,572 meters). 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 by midday, and rest and hydrate for our summit climb.
Day 4	Summit Day! We wake around 3 AM 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 feet (4,572 meters). 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 Caucasuses from Europe's highest summit. The round-trip climb back to the Barrels takes around twelve hours.
Day 5	An extra summit day. If we have already climbed Elbrus, we descend to the Baksan Valley in the morning for a celebration. Night in Hotel.
Day 6	Drive back to Mineral Vody where you catch your flights home, onto Moscow or perhaps elsewhere in Russia! Flights should not depart before noon local time.

Client Expectations and Timeline

90+ Days to Departure

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. Alpenglow 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 Alpenglow 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 Alpenglow 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. Click here to find links to each.

General Trip Information

Payment

1. A 20% deposit is required for all treks and expeditions. Deposits are due upon registration, and can be paid by check made out to "Alpenglow Expeditions, LLC". All payments should be mailed to Alpenglow 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 cards with transaction fee of 3%. Deposits are non-refundable and non-transferable. This is not a flexible policy. Planning for our trips takes significant time and we have non-refundable costs.
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 Alpenglow 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, Alpenglow Expeditions will refund your payment minus the non-refundable deposit. 60-89 days prior, Alpenglow 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.

****Please confirm your itinerary with Alpenglow 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 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- We recommend using [Global Rescue's IMG Signature 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. Alpenglow 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, Alpenglow Expeditions, LLC is not a medical facility and Alpenglow 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 Alpenglow 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 (Acetazolomide) 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 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.