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Website: www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk
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2020 trip dossier | **Mt Elbrus via North £1499**

Website link | <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/elbrus%2Bnorth.html>

Key features

- **Climb Mount Elbrus 5642m the highest summit in Europe.**
- **6 full days guiding with a maximum ratio of 1:5.**
- **Reach the summit completely on foot by the original route first climbed nearly 200 years ago.**
- **Led by top qualified Elbrus guides, to teach all the necessary skills for the climb.**
- **All technical equipment hire can be arranged through Icicle.**
- **2020 dates; 19 – 28 Jun, 3 – 12 Jul, 28 Aug – 6 Sep, 18 – 27 Sep.**



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UK registered company 413 6635. VAT 770 137 933

'inspirational mountain adventure holidays'

20 years
established in 2000





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Course overview

- At over 800m higher than Mont Blanc, Elbrus is the "Seventh Summit" of Europe. In terms of technical difficulty, it is easier than Mont Blanc, although the importance of acclimatisation is greater, as it is higher
- The mountain is an extinct volcano, conical in shape, with a crater rim on which the twin summits are perched. The higher west peak is reached by a steep snow climb from Sedlowina saddle, the col separating the peaks.
- You require no previous climbing or mountaineering experience for this expedition, as you are taught all necessary ice axe and crampon skills on the mountain, but you should be a competent trekker who is familiar with 9-12 hour days with up to 1800m of height gains. Fitness is more important for the north route.
- This expedition will appeal to those who have ascended Mont Blanc, or one of the other major Alpine peaks, who want to step up a gear in terms of altitude. While the mountain is one of the Seven Summits, it is one of the most enjoyable to climb, as the Alpine approach is used, and there is no need for siege style tactics, porters, or time consuming walk in's.
- This ascent of Mount Elbrus is made from the north. It is a wilder side of the mountain, with no hotels, restaurants, cable cars or snow cats. You reach the summit completely on foot, using the route of the first ascent nearly 200 years ago. The 90km approach to basecamp from Kislovodsk is made by 4x4 over rugged terrain to Dzhily-Su where the route begins. The summit day is tougher, with 1900m of height gain, and the round trip takes approximately 16 hours, so you need to be fitter than for the normal route from the south.
- You fly in and out of the local Caucasus town of Mineralnye Vody, from where you are transferred to the Baksan valley. The itinerary aims to maximise time on the mountain, whilst minimising the amount of time that you have to take off work for the expedition.

Expedition notes:

- Our formula is to restrict the group sizes, so that there are a maximum of 15 clients. The small group sizes enable us to run specialist ascents, where the group can bond well, and each expedition member has great access to the local guides.
- Whilst every effort will be made to adhere to the planned itinerary, it must be realised that in this type of adventurous travel, changes to the itinerary may occur. Your final itinerary may differ in respect of the places where you stay overnight. Please bear this in mind, especially in the Caucasus!

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- On the ascent of Elbrus, you are guided by local guides who have detailed local knowledge. Local guides are not 'guiding' or qualified in the same stringent way as IFMGA International Mountain Guides, but work in a far more traditional sense as route finders and assistants to our expedition members, so a higher degree of adventure and autonomy is required than on our Alpine trips.
- Our trips are privately run exclusively for Icicle clients where there are six or more people booked on a date. All the trips are guaranteed even for one person, and if there are five or less of our clients on a trip, you are matched with other clients from our partners. We use local logistics agents for visa invitations, guides, transport and accommodation. You are guided by an English speaking local guide on these trips
- With adventure travel, the unexpected is the norm in these areas and, despite painstaking planning and organisation, our adventure holidays can never be taken for granted like regular holidays. Many of the places that we visit do not have the same quality of emergency health and safety services that we are used to in the developed world. Internal flights can be cancelled, road transport is generally uncomfortable and unreliable, and hotels and any star ratings often do not approach the equivalent standards of the West. If you are not prepared for this, you should not book on this style of trip. We see these factors as a selling point, and it really defines for us what adventure travel is all about.



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Sample itinerary

Our standard 8 day Elbrus via the South route itinerary typically runs from Saturday through to Saturday, however note that on some weeks, especially at the extremities of the season, we offer trips Sunday to Sunday, so check the dates carefully. The reason for the alternation is to fit with the changes in the majority of flight schedules in peak and off peak seasons, to give you the maximum flexibility possible.

Friday

Fly to Mineralnye Vody Airport, to arrive for the group airport transfer departing at 14.30 (allow an hour after flight arrival for baggage collection, etc). The airport transfer takes approximately three and a half hours to the Baksan Valley. Transfer to the town of Kislovodsk, the last town before the lower steppes of the Caucasus. Spend the rest of the day sorting gear and preparing for the climb. Overnight in Kislovodsk. Dinner with the group. Night in hotel..

Saturday

After breakfast, you depart for basecamp. The vehicle is loaded with the gear, and a four hour drive takes you into the heart of the lush foothills of the lower Caucasus to Mt. Elbrus Base Camp (2500m). You establish a basecamp, then take a short acclimatization hike to explore the remote valley and stretch your legs after the many long hours of travel.

Sunday

Acclimatisation hike up to 3100 m. You'll see the fascinating stone mushrooms that are up to 5m high. This region is a great place for rock climbing. Descend to the basecamp. Overnight in the basecamp.

Monday

Carry loads up to the high camp. You pack up a portion of the supplies and make a carry to high camp (3800m). After depositing a cache and enjoying the views, you descend back to the basecamp for the night.

Tuesday

Move to up to the high camp. An early start gives ample opportunity to enjoy the climb up to high camp. The route from basecamp takes you above a narrow gorge and out of the high grasslands into the alpine zone, affording stunning views of the glaciers of Mount Elbrus and the lower steppes of the Caucasus to the

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north. The last stretch of the climb leads through the jumbled rock moraine along side the Mikelchiran Glacier before cresting a steep pitch to reach camp.

Wednesday

Acclimatisation hike to the Lenz Rocks (4800m). The route brings you onto some moderate glacial terrain. You will be roped up in order to protect yourselves from the several crevasses that must be crossed. Return to the high camp for the night.

Thursday

Summit Day! After an alpine start we climb from the high camp across the upper portion of the Mikelchiran Glacier until you reach the Saddle at 5300m. Mount Elbrus has two large summit domes and the Saddle separates the East Summit from the West Summit. Both are comparable in size and height. After enjoying the summit and its impressive views of the Caucasus mountain range, you descend back to the high camp.

Friday

Today you breakdown the high camp and descend back to basecamp for the night. This day can also be used as an extra summit day in case you encounter bad weather or need additional time for acclimatisation.

Saturday

Transportation from Dzhily-Su to Kislovodsk where you will enjoy hot showers and a good night's sleep. Note that if you return to Kislovodsk earlier scheduled, you will have to pay extra for individual transportation to Kislovodsk and for additional nights at hotel (subject to availability, as this is a popular spa town). Night in hotel.

Sunday

Breakfast in the hotel, before the group return airport transfer to Mineralnye Vody airport, to arrive c. 10.30am. This is suitable for flights departing after 12.30. If your flight departs much later than 12.30 then a private airport transfer can be arranged for an additional charge (see exclusions section below).

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Course Inclusions

1) Elbrus guides for daily leading and instruction, 2) Pre expedition Information dossier, 3) Equipment discount voucher for our UK shop, 4) 2 nights of hotel accommodation (twin or triple rooms) in Kislovodsk in a 3* hotel with breakfast, and other nights in tents / hut on full board basis, 5) Road transport in region and airport transfers (communal with rest of group, to leave airport at 14.30 on day 1 and drop off by 10.30 on last day - different transfer times available see note in exclusions), 6) All costs for expedition leaders, local guides and porters, 7) We provide all communal equipment (you provide your own clothing, mountaineering boots, and climbing equipment), 8) Transfer from Kislovodsk to basecamp and back, 9) Invitation letter for Russian visa, 9) Climbing certificate for successfully summiting Elbrus, 10) Free (with UK postage) Icicle expedition kit bag..

Course Exclusions

1) Travel to & from Mineralnye Vody airport, 2) Evening meal on the last night in area (budget on c. £20 per night), 3) Airport transfers outside communal times (as outlined above) these are c.£85 each way, 4) Single room upgrades in hotel (subject to availability, c.£85 extra), 5) UK and foreign airport taxes, optional trips, souvenirs and tips, 6) Extra nights in Kislovodsk (not usually required), and all lunches and dinners in Kislovodsk, 7) Your personal laundry, telephone calls, and any purchases in mountain huts / hotels / bars / restaurants, 8) Hire of personal equipment (such as sleeping bag, boots, crampons etc.), 9) Porter services for personal belongings, 10) Single occupancy at hotel or in tent, 11) Extras before course: personal activities insurance, & excess baggage charges, 12) Visa application costs.

ITINERARY NOTES: Where possible we follow itineraries. Mountain adventures are weather and conditions dependant, so occasionally we are forced to alter the plans. If this is the case, suitable alternatives are offered. Please use this itinerary as a guide to the types of route / activity you attempt.

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Climbing skill

These are outlined on this page; <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/courses.html>, and this course is;

Course level: **Beginner**
Mountaineering: **Previous experience preferred but not necessary.**
Ice & Rock: **Use of ice axe and crampons preferred.**
Fitness: **Good general fitness and stamina**

Fitness & stamina

The ideal fitness levels are detailed at; <http://www.icicle-mountaineering.ltd.uk/trainingpreparation.html>, and there are links to general training advice and planners that you can adapt to suit and follow.

This trip is graded: **Level 3** - At this level your fitness should be somewhere between running a fast paced 10km run, and half marathon fitness. Typically you'll enjoy more hill training, and so would be able to run for about an hour and a half of cross country, and enjoy big hill days out too



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