

P.O. Box 658 Ophir, CO 81426
T. 970-369-1153 F. 303-496-0998

Info@mountaintrip.com
www.mountaintrip.com



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MOUNT ELBRUS 2009

A climb of Elbrus or Mengi Tau (Mountain of a thousand mountains) is a great way for climbers of all levels to experience high altitude mountaineering in a culturally rich setting. At 18,841', Elbrus is a heavily glaciated, twin-coned volcano that dominates the Caucasus Range. Due to its proximity to the Black Sea, it often seems to act as a magnet for brutal weather that streams up from the southwest. Moderate cramponing, a good level of fitness and a penchant for adventure will see you to the top, and the views of the Caucasus are stunning on a clear day. On summit day, our route ascends about 1000m of moderate snow slopes to the col between the two summit cones. Above this point, we will ascend another 300m of steeper snow to the western summit.

If you have never been to Russia, you are in for a real treat. Russia is a culturally diverse country and we will have time in our schedule to visit some of the sights in Moscow like the Kremlin, Red Square and St. Basil's Cathedral. We also have the option of beginning our expedition in St. Petersburg, where the stunning architecture of old blends with a vibrant and eclectic modern urban society. The Hermitage, in St. Petersburg, is one of the greatest art museums in the world, and worthy of a weeklong visit itself!

After spending one full day exploring Moscow or St. Petersburg, we will fly to Mineralnye Vody (Mineral Water) and drive the four hours to our hotel in the Baksan Valley, at the foot of Elbrus. We will spend two days doing acclimatization hikes, and have the option of climbing a nearby peak, if conditions and time constraints allow. A tram and ski lifts will then carry us near the primitive, yet serviceable, Barrels Huts on the flank of Elbrus from where we will begin our ascent of the mountain. After the climb, we will return to Mineralnye Vody, fly back to Moscow and make our return connections back home.

Conditioning:

Elbrus is a physically challenging ascent involving almost 5000 feet of elevation gain. Fitness is paramount for a successful ascent. You need to be prepared for a 12 hour summit day, so be sure to include some long, endurance training into your fitness regimen.

Skills:

The initial 3500' involve moderate snow climbing of 20-30 degrees. The climb to the summit steepens to 35 degrees in spots and can be icy if the wind has scoured the surface. It is relatively straightforward climbing and basic ice axe and crampon technique will see climbers to the summit.

ITINERARY



Day 1: Arrive in Russia (Moscow or St. Petersburg), meet your guides and go out for a Welcome Dinner.

Day 2: Sightseeing in Moscow or St. Petersburg.

Day 3: Fly to Mineralnye Vody and drive to Terskol, in the Baksan Valley.

Day 4: Acclimatization hike in a nearby valley with views of Elbrus. This is a moderate day of exercise with modest elevation gains. We'll spend the night in our hotel in Terskol.

Day 5: Acclimatization hike and review of crampon and ice axe techniques. We'll spend this night in Terskol as well.

Day 6: Ascend tram and ski lifts to the Barrels Huts at 12,000 feet and hike onto the glacier which we will ascend on summit day.

Day 7: Hike up to Pastukhov Rocks at about 15,400 feet for additional acclimatization and descend to the Barrels Huts.

Day 8: Ascend to the upper hut near the old Priutt Hut below Pastukhov Rocks and prepare for our summit attempt. We will spend the night at this relatively new hut at about 14,000 feet.

Day 9: Summit day!

Day 10: Contingency summit day

Day 10: Hiking, sightseeing and celebration in Terskol (or additional contingency summit day)

Day 12: Return flight from Mineralnye Vody to Moscow

Day 13: Sightseeing in Moscow

Day 14: Transfers to airport for flights back home.

***This is an itinerary. It is our plan, on paper, for the schedule of this expedition. Circumstances may occur which cause us to deviate from this plan. Travel in Russia often demands patience, adaptability and flexibility.

Expedition Cost: \$4800



Costs include:

- Airport transfers
- All Park fees, trekking permits and all sightseeing tours in Russia
- All lodging Russia (double occupancy- single occupancy is available for an additional fee)
- Accommodation in huts (shared occupancy)
- All scheduled group transportation in Russia
- All food while hiking and climbing
- Most restaurant meals in Russia
- All group gear (stoves, ropes, tents, technical climbing equipment, etc)
- Our top-notch guides and Russian staff

Costs do not include:

- Airport taxes
- Visa Fees
- International flights to and from Russia
- Non-scheduled shuttles or hotels
- Personal equipment (per equipment list)
- Alcoholic beverages, bottled drinks and items of a personal nature
- Any expenses incurred due to an early departure (due to evacuation, illness, etc. We HIGHLY recommend travel and trip insurance. Contact us for suggestions)
- Tips and gratuities

Cancellations and Refunds:

Our cancellation and refunds policies are outlined in the "Fee Payments, Refunds and Cancellations" page of your application packet. Please read everything in that packet thoroughly and contact us with any questions regarding our policies.

Visa application:

Most travelers need a visa to enter Russia. Visas applications begin with a Visa Invitation from Russia. We recommend you contact CTT Destinations for assistance with your visa. They charge a \$45 handling fee and \$50 for Fed-Ex charges. The Russian Consulate charges \$131 for the visa.

Send a check for \$221 payable to CTT Destinations to:

CTT Destinations
38579 SE River St. #2
P.O. Box 887
Snoqualmie, WA 98065

You might call them at 800-909-6647 with any questions or for assistance with your travel arrangements to Russia, as they are an excellent travel agency used by many mountain guiding services.