



RUSSIAN CAUCASUS: MT. ELBRUS

Sample Itinerary | 13-Day Trip – Elbrus South Route

Days 1 & 2

Travel Days - Arrive in Moscow

Depart your country of origin with arrival into Moscow the following day. Welcome to Russia! You'll be transferred from Moscow's SVO airport to your hotel upon arrival. Get settled into your hotel and be sure to get plenty of rest tonight. Tomorrow you will experience Moscow!

Team welcome dinner on Day 2 included. Overnight at Mercure Baumanskaya, or similar accommodations.

Day 3

Moscow

Today you will start shaking off your jet-lag as you experience the must-sees for anyone traveling to Russia:

Red Square, the Kremlin and of course the famous Saint Basil's cathedral and its onion domes. Standing in the middle of Red Square, you can't help but feel overwhelmed by the weight of both history and modernity that surrounds you: the Kremlin walls, Lenin's Tomb and Gum Mall. You will have a guided tour inside the world-renowned Kremlin, seeing the Armory and its fascinating collection of national treasures. After lunch, your guide will tour you through Moscow's world-famous metro system, which is a like museum in and of itself.

Accommodations at Mercure Baumanskaya, or similar accommodations. Meals include Breakfast and Dinner

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Day 4

Moscow - North Caucasus

After flying into the Caucasus Mineral Waters airport (MRV), settle in for the scenic, 3-hour drive to Mount Elbrus, the highest mountain in Europe. Your guide will brief you on the history of the Balkar people along the way, among whom you will be spending the next week. Upon completion of the breathtaking drive to the foot of Mount Elbrus at 7,500 ft (2,300 m), you will check into your hotel and enjoy some free time to explore the area and take in the views around you. You will meet with your guide tonight to go over the plan for the next 6 days and a successful Elbrus ascent!

Accommodations at Azau Star, or similar accommodations. Meals include Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner.

Day 5

North Caucasus – Acclimatization Hike

Your acclimatization to the Caucasus Mountain heights starts today! Most of the day is focused on preparing for your Elbrus ascent. Cheget is a neighboring mountain to Elbrus with a beautiful view, if the weather allows. You will spend several hours hiking up Cheget to reach a rough elevation of 10,000 ft (3,000 m), getting your body used to the elevation and conditions. Mt. Cheget is a skier's free-ride dream in the winter, and you'll notice with how steep it is. You'll also be climbing surprisingly close to the Georgian part of the Caucasus range off to your left side. After a tasty lunch on the mountain, all gear will be double-checked (and rented as necessary), for your upcoming ascent. Be sure to try some of the tasty local cuisine at dinner tonight!

Accommodations at Azau Star, or similar accommodations. Meals include Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner.

Day 6

North Caucasus – Acclimatization Hike

Today you will do another hike up a nearby mountain valley and do some group training in preparation for the icy conditions of Elbrus. The mountain valley Irikchat is renowned in the Elbrus region as one of the most picturesque, as the Irik river flows down from a glacier. As much as summiting Elbrus is the focus of your trip, you'll be glad you had the chance to explore one of the quieter, parallel valleys and the natural beauty of the Caucasus Mountain range. Don't be surprised if you start planning for a return trip right now! Rest up tonight, as tomorrow you are moving up to base camp!

Accommodations at Azau Star, or similar accommodations. Meals include Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner.



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Day 7

North Caucasus - Arrive at Climber's Base Camp

Today you get to meet Mount Elbrus up close and personal. You will take the famous cable car system up three levels to the climber's base camp at 12,500 ft (3,800 m). This will be your home the next 4 days for your Elbrus ascent. As riveting as you will find Elbrus itself, perhaps the surrounding Caucasus range, stretching into Georgia and beyond is even more so.

Once you have are settled into you lodging, you will go on another brief acclimatization climb combined with some self-arrest training. Your body will continue to adjust today, as the elevation has doubled, not to mention the significantly colder weather (there is snow here at base camp year-round). Your mountain guide will be walking you through practical precautions for summiting Elbrus safely and successfully each day and your private cook on Elbrus will make sure you are getting the nourishment your body needs.

Accommodations at Heart of Elbrus Lodge. Meals include Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner.

Day 8

North Caucasus – Acclimatization Climb

During your second day on the mountain you will get a good feel for the beginning part of the ascent day route, as you do an acclimatization climb up to the Pastukhov Rocks, around 15,400 ft (4,700 m). This is a long, gently sloping incline, which will be a good test for how you're acclimatizing to the higher elevations of base camp. Make sure you are putting on sunscreen and covering up your face, as sunny days on Elbrus can result in serious sunburn for the unprepared. Spend some time getting used to the gear you will be using with some ice axe training. If you have a chance today, make sure to check out Elbrus' infamous "World's worst outhouse"; now you can mark that off your bucket list.

Accommodations at Heart of Elbrus Lodge. Meals include Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner.

Day 9

North Caucasus – Rest Day

Wake up with excitement today, as it is your final day before your Elbrus ascent. Today is a day to rest before the big summit attempt tomorrow and to allow your body one more day to adjust to the altitude. Get to know some of the other climbers on the mountain, play some board games or just get some extra sleep. If there are more than 3 people in your group, you will meet your second summit guide today, who will team with you and your guide on your ascent tomorrow. Turn in to bed early after dinner, as an early wake-up call awaits!

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Day 10

North Caucasus – Summit Day

It's Summit Day! You have an 8 to 12 hour ascent ahead of you so you will start your climb in the dark between 2:00 and 3:00 am. A team is a beautiful thing, as you work together with your group up the mountain. The early morning hours of your climb are quite surreal, with a long line of climbers ascending Elbrus, lit up by a highway of head lamps. Your climb will not be easy by any stretch of the imagination, as altitude sickness, extreme cold temperatures and unpredictable weather are all real possibilities, but it will all be worth it when you reach the top. Take in the view from the roof of Europe at 18,510 ft (5,642 m). Once you have a quick celebration of your success, prepare for your 3 to 4 hour descent back to base camp. Dinner never tasted better than it will tonight.

Accommodations at Heart of Elbrus Lodge. Meals include Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner.

Day 11

North Caucasus – Reserve/Rest Day

Rest day! You have earned it. Gather your things and jump on the cable car to head back down to Cheget this morning. Today you may want to peruse the charming local souvenir markets, full of tempting local goods, including Caucasus Papakha hats, beautiful hand-knit slippers, shawls and tasty local jams. Or, if you are up for it, go on a local horseback excursion, see a beautiful waterfall or try out a 4-wheeler on the local trails. In case there was inclement weather on Day 10 (yesterday's planned ascent), today will be your summit day up Elbrus.

Accommodations at Azau Star, or similar accommodations. Meals include Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner.

Day 12

North Caucasus - Moscow

Pack your bags and say goodbye for now to the North Caucasus. You will make the 3-hour drive from Elbrus to the local Mineral Waters airport (MRV) and fly back to Moscow. Upon arrival in the evening, you will be transferred to your hotel to rest or enjoy one final evening exploring Russia's majestic capital.

Accommodations Mercure Baumanskaya, or similar accommodations. Meals include Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner.

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Day 13

Moscow – Country of Origin

Pack your bags and prepare for your trip back home. You will be transferred to Moscow's SVO airport for your departing flight. Arrive home.

No accommodations. Meals include Breakfast.

Cost Per Person Includes:

- All accommodations, double occupancy. Includes 7 nights in hotels and 4 nights in mountain huts
- All meals as listed in the itinerary
- All airport transfers
- Domestic airfare (not to exceed \$225 USD per person) for each round trip flight
- Professional and experienced English-speaking local mountain guides
- Additional guides for summit attempt (1 guide for every 3 climbers)
- Skilled, professional and experienced US guides with Wilderness First Responders certifications
- One summit attempt (any departure from base camp on summit day or reserve day is considered a summit attempt)
- All excursion and entrance fees
- Group expedition equipment (ropes, communications, first-aid supplies, etc.)
- Use of Snowcat tractors/snowmobiles on acclimatization climbs or day of climb
- Registration with Russian emergency search and rescue services
- National park entrance fees
- Gondola fees
- Extensive pre-trip planning, customization and customer service
- Unlimited drinking water
- One full day Moscow tour with English-speaking guide

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Cost Per Person Does NOT Include:

- International airfare
- Russian tourist visa (approximately \$325 USD)
- Rental of personal climbing gear (see required gear list)
- Additional summit attempt
- Additional beverages at meals, either non-alcoholic or alcoholic
- Meals not included in the itinerary (lunches in Moscow)
- Personal expenses (spa services/banya, laundry, telephone calls, etc.)
- Early check in or late check out
- Subsequent lodging, transportation and food beyond the itinerary
- Approximately \$300 USD per person in tips for hotel staff, drivers, porters, guides and cooks
- Travelers, Medical and Evacuation Insurance
- Single accommodations are available for an additional fee
- Itinerary add-ons or customizations

For additional information, please contact:

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