

ELBRUS (Russia) 5642M

Elbrus technical difficulty:

Mt Elbrus is the highest peak in the Caucasus and in Europe, and one of the fabled Seven Summits.

The North route is more remote and more committing than the [South route](#) as it has less in the way of infrastructure on the lower reaches of the mountain. However, this reduction in facilities is balanced by the lack of human intrusion onto the landscape. There is little in the way of mechanical support, and the trip is mostly camping, and the summit route is harder than the south side, being longer and involving an interim camp at 4600 metres (if the weather allows) which requires winter camping skills and good teamwork.

With an elevation of 5642 metres, Mt Elbrus is a fine ascent which requires mountaineering skills, although altitude and unpredictable weather make for a challenging and adventurous trip. It is perfect for people who wish to gain ice and snow experience as full training is given, for those wishing to climb the Seven Summits and for people who have aspirations of going on to climb higher peaks in the Himalayas and S. America.

This expedition lasts thirteen days including travel and allows for travel days, several days of acclimatisation hikes in the stunning valleys and a five day climbing period on Europe's highest peak.

Mount Elbrus stands between the great masses of Europe and Asia, dynamic in both region and terrain. It presents a strenuous and rewarding climb, but also includes a full experience of Russian culture, history and character. The ascent of Mt Elbrus by the north route is a long climb over a moderate incline (average 35 degrees, with some sections on the summit day increasing to 40 degrees) that requires good acclimatization but present few technical difficulties. However, despite the apparent simplicity of this route, it can be dangerous. The altitude, variable weather, and often low temperatures can transform the ascent into a real mountain adventure!

Good times for climbing Mt Elbrus are from June through to August, with perhaps the best month for stable weather being July. Each trip is 12 days unless you have opted for the 8 day trip and we can also organise a stopover in Moscow if you wish. We provide all the accommodation, food and logistics for this trip, and there are no kitties or hidden extras. You only need money for some drinks in the hotel and souvenirs.

Mount Elbrus is not technically difficult but there is the danger of weather and exposure, making it cold and committing; it is necessary to have crampons, warm clothing, and good boots for summit day (preferably plastic or at least capable of taking a crampon – these are available to hire in Terskol. Ropes are not necessary on the northern route and the team will need to be roped up from the top hut to the summit and back.

Official Papers

- [Valid passport](#)
- [2 Copies of first page + visa page of passport](#)
- Airline tickets
- [Voucher copy](#) (a copy of the form which was sent to you for obtainig visa).
- [Border zone permission, other registartions and permits](#) - (your guide will have this for you).

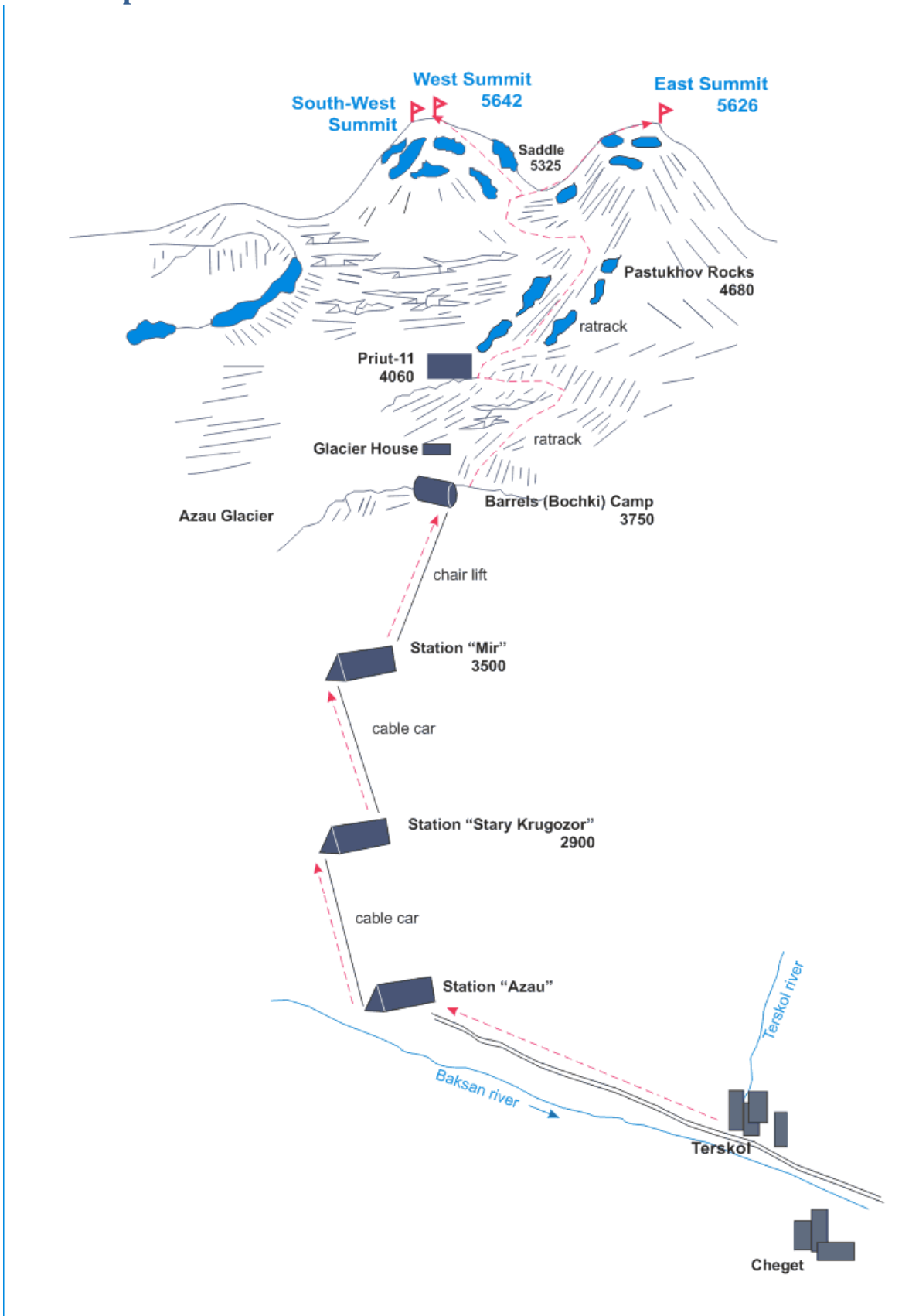
Camping Gear

- [Sleeping bag rated to -5 °C](#)

Outerwear

- Insulated parka/jacket, down or synthetic, rated to -10°C and able to fit over other sweater layers
- Rain jacket and pants(side-leg zippers are helpful), roomy and water repellent

Route map



Clothing

- Midweight fleece jacket
- Fleece pants or tights
- Midweight thermal underwear tops and bottom
- Hiking pants/skirt
- Hiking shorts
- Long-sleeve shirts/blouses
- T-shirts
- Underwear
- Hiking socks
- Liner socks

Footwear

- Hiking boots, sturdy, ankle-support, water-resistant, broken-in
- Camp shoes: running shoes or trail shoes, sneakers

Mountaineering Gear

- **Plastic boots or crampon-compatible heavy leather mountaineering boots.** - Cool feet could force you to turn back, or result in frostbite. We strongly recommend plastic boots. The only but very important advantage of plastic boots is that they may be dried easily on field. If you have your leather boots wet on the first day most likely they will stay wet for the whole trip. Wet boots may cause problems. In many cases leather boots may be good enough but it strongly depends on their model, quality and the way you treat them. We can not estimate that distantly and therefore advise to have plastic boots. If you come with leather boots our guide will estimate their quality and if there is a problem will advise to hire plastic boots. You have the right to reject that advice.
- **Crampons.** - (See crampons info on [Equipment for Rent](#) Page).
- **Ice axe.** - An ice axe sometimes is not necessary depending on current weather (snow conditions). However one must have it in case it becomes necessary (your guide will advise before the climb).
- Protectors for ice axe and crampons; when you ride the chairlifts, they will often be crowded and an unprotected axe or crampons can do damage).
- **Headlamp.** - The climb starts at night and for some hours you walk in the dark. Also a headlamp is extremely useful while visiting toilet at night at the huts.
- **Big backpack or a bag which may be carried like a backpack.** - In case the 3rd leg of lifts is closed by any reason you will be forced to carry your own personal gear to the base camp on Elbrus. It is 0.5 - 1 hour walk depending on one's pace.
- **Flask (thermos bottle) .** Do not rely on those backpack flasks with a pipe - the pipe (for sure) and flask (probably) will freeze.
- **Small backpack for hikes and summit climb.**
- **Ski/treking poles/sticks.**
- **Windproof mask** - in case of cold strong wind
- **Harness with a short piece of rope for selfbelay, 2 carabiners.** - This short rope is for self belay and for more flexible connecting with the main rope. It is not a "prusik" for getting out of a crevasse. We do not expect the participants can use any equipment for getting out of a crevasse. More than enough if they may be instantly roped up by connecting their short ropes with carabiners to the main rope or any fixed point. If several people are roped up in one string it is much easier to walk if they are not connected to the main rope directly but through that short rope end. Same if one climbs along a hanged (fixed) rope, it is much easier if the main rope glides not through a carabiner right on his chest but through a carabiner on the short rope end. Our guide will adjust the equipment for you before the climb and will show how to use it (short traing course during the acclimatization hike

will give you necessary skills). If you have no your own "harness+short rope+carabiner" equipment we provide that free of charge for regular departure public tour participants.

Clothing Accessories

- Sun hat
- Warm hat.
- Bandana
- Fleece windproof gloves.
- Thin liner gloves
- Waterproof overmitts (to protect gloves from snow)
- Balaclava
- Snow gaiters, knee-length (supergaiters, which cover the whole boot, are excellent)

City Clothing

- Lightweight easily washable items for travel and daily wear
- Comfortable shoes

Travel Accessories

- Water bottles
- Pocket knife or multi-tool
- Sunglasses with retainer strap (side-shields or glacier glasses highly recommended) or goggles
- Spare contact lenses/glasses/sunglasses
- Sunblock and lip balm.
- Toiletry kit
- Small, quick-dry towel
- Hand sanitizer gel and Handi-wipes
- Several Ziploc plastic bags
- Large, heavy-duty plastic trash bags
- Plastic bowl, cup and spoon
- Swimsuit - for a sunbath or sauna. Local people do not like naked bodies at public places..
- Personal first-aid kit.
- Any prescription or over the counter medications used regularly (these will not be available in the Caucasus).
- Watch/Travel alarm
- Rubber sink stopper for sinks in hotel (generally, these are not available in Russian hotels)
- Adapter for any electrical appliances. The 220V current in Russian outlets will ruin Western 110V appliances.
- Knee supports
- Camera, film and spare batteries
- Reading and writing materials
- Ear plugs (when you sleep in the huts with 5 other people there are always someone snoring...)

Supplemental food

- Range of goods in Russia is not same as in your country so you may wish to bring some items that are probably not available in Russia and which may make your trip more pleasurable:
- Your favourite: instant coffee, herbal teas, powdered milk, sugar substitute, other instant drinks

- Your favorite trail snacks, dried fruits, candy bars, gumdrops, peanut butter
- Vitamin supplements

Health and general condition+Training

Preparation for an Alpine Ascents' Mt. Elbrus Climb

Climbing Mt. Elbrus (18,510') requires familiarity with snow and ice skills (up to 45 degree slopes), strength endurance, and strong cardiovascular conditioning. Just because you exercise regularly (4-6 times per week) does not mean you have the conditioning needed to reach the summit of Mt. Elbrus, the highest peak on the European continent. Plenty of people who have the endurance to run a marathon fail to summit high-altitude peaks. Pure cardiovascular fitness is simply not enough. Summit day alone requires stamina necessary to travel sometimes 12-15 hours round trip. You should be comfortable enough to ascend 3,000' feet of elevation on successive days carrying up to 25-30 pounds.

Prioritize your training efforts in the following way, assuming that you are in good health and injury-free:

1. Climbing conditioning – pack-loaded uphill hiking, walking, and stair climbing
2. Strength training for the lower body and core
3. Cardiovascular training, including both aerobic and anaerobic workouts without pack weight
4. Flexibility training

Most people will need to train specifically for Elbrus for at least 3-4 months. During your training, you will need to progressively ramp up your hike time, distance and elevation gain (at roughly 10% per week) to safely and effectively build your trekking-specific conditioning. Trying to rush this will increase the risk of experiencing some sort of training injury and not being ready for your trip. Below are more details of how to incorporate these four priorities into your program.

Climbing conditioning - Hike along outdoor trails, gradually increasing your pack weight until you are comfortable carrying a 25-pound pack. If you live where it is relatively flat, go up and down stairs or train on an inclined treadmill or stairmaster. Use whatever varied surface terrain (i.e. gravel beds, sand dunes, river banks) you have access to. A reasonable goal would be to ascend 3,000 feet carrying an average pack of 25 pounds in a 2-3 hour period, or roughly 1,000-1,500 vertical feet per hour. A good training option for pack weight is to carry water in gallon containers or collapsible jugs, so you can dump water at the top as needed, to lighten the load for the descent.

In early season, start with a hike that gains up to 2000' elevation over 5-7 miles round trip, and carry a 10-pound pack; each hike try adding 2-3 pounds until you are comfortable with a 30-pound pack, then begin increasing the total elevation gain and mileage. When you can gain 3,000 feet with a 30-pound pack, start decreasing rest breaks and increasing speed on each conditioning workout. A month from your climb, you should be comfortable carrying 35 pounds on your conditioners.

Two training techniques that will be useful for high-altitude trekking are 1) interval training and 2) back to back training (discussed in more detail in "*Putting it all together*" below.) To include interval training, find a steep hill or sets of stairs that will allow you to climb steadily for several minutes. Push as hard as you can going up, then recover coming down, and repeat for anywhere from 20-45 minutes depending on how close to your climb you are. Gradually add weight to your pack (no more than 10% per week) until you can carry 35 pounds the entire time. If possible, participate in as many hikes at altitude as you possibly can to learn how your body reacts above 13,000 feet elevation. Training information provided by www.BodyResults.com

Strength conditioning - Training with free weights, bands, a backpack, bodyweight exercises, or gym machines will help you build overall strength, particularly in the core (lower back and abdominals), upper back and shoulders, and legs. Developing strength in your upper back and shoulders will help you with such tasks as carrying your pack and using trekking poles effectively. The calves, hips, quads, hamstrings and glutes are all involved in ascending and descending steep (up to 45 degree) snow and ice, and strength endurance is required in all areas of the legs and hips.

Training primarily with free weights will give you the functional, trekking-specific strength that will help you most in the mountains. Free weight-training requires that you balance the weights as you would your own body, weighted with a pack, in three-dimensional space. When starting any strength conditioning program, complete two full-body strength workouts a week for 30-45 minutes each, focusing on compound exercises such as squats, lunges, step-ups, dips, pull-ups, rows, dead lifts, bench presses, pushups, and overhead presses.

In the beginning phase of strength conditioning, focus on building a foundation for harder workouts; to that end, keep the weight light enough to concentrate on good form and complete 2 sets of each exercise for 8-10 repetitions. As you continue to train, you will shift focus to building strength (generally lower reps 5-8 with heavier weight). 4-6 weeks before your climb, shift your training to focus on strength endurance (higher reps 10-15 with light weight) to turn the newly gained strength into greater strength endurance. Each training phase should vary the weight used, repetitions completed, number of sets, and rest intervals. Regardless of training phase, always be sure you maintain proper form in order to prevent injury or strain.

Cardiovascular conditioning – Include spinal-loading aerobic training options 3-5 times a week.

Appropriate options include trail running, walking on an inclined treadmill, doing stair stepping or step mill training, jogging, working on an elliptical machine, walking up and down hills, or participating in step aerobic classes. While biking, rowing and swimming are aerobic options for the earliest stages of training, be sure as you get closer to your trip that you include activities suggested above that load the spine and legs the same way that trekking will.

When first beginning a cardiovascular training program, begin with three weekly workouts of 30 minutes of sustained activity at a moderate intensity, and build to 4-5 aerobic sessions of sustained effort for at least 45-60 minutes. Be sure to include a 5-10 minute gentle warm-up before working at your target heart rate for the day (for most workouts, choose a level of exertion that allows you to connect a few words together in a phrase, but leaves you feeling comfortably tired at the end of the workout), and cool down with 5-10 minutes of appropriate stretching of the muscles you use most in your activity, including lower back, calves, hamstrings, hips and quadriceps.

Flexibility conditioning – Be sure to include at least 5-10 minutes of targeted stretching following every workout, specifically for the hamstrings, glutes, hips, calves, lower back and quadriceps. If you have any areas of concern early season, add emphasis to making sure you have normal range of motion about all your joints. This will become even more important as you add weight and distance to your conditioners. Training information provided by www.BodyResults.com **DayClimbing**

Putting it all together -- Roughly a month before your climb, you should be at the conditioning level where you are comfortable hiking on consecutive weekend days, what is referred to as *Back-to-Back training*. This involves hiking with your target climb pack weight (35 pounds) on the first day for at least 3,000' gain, and a somewhat lighter pack (25 pounds) for greater mileage on the second day to simulate your approach and summit days of your trip. This will not only be helpful physically but also prepare you psychologically for the challenge of repeat high-effort days without any recovery days in between. A sample week of training *a month prior to your climb* might look like the chart below, in an effort to help you build as much stamina as possible.

Be sure to include at least one recovery day per week and listen closely to your body. Take the final week to taper or gradually reduce intensity and volume of training so that by the time you leave for your trip you are well rested and physically and psychologically up to the challenge.

You can find additional training resources at www.BodyResults.com for the following:

- Training Articles
- Training Books and DVDs
- Customized Online Mountaineering Specific Training

Special discounts are available for Alpine Ascents Customers at the page www.BodyResults.com/aa
This training information was provided by Wilderness Sports Conditioning experts Courtenay and Doug Schurman of BodyResults.com. They are the exclusive conditioning resource for Alpine Ascents. They oversee all client training, are co-authors of the book, The Outdoor Athlete (2009)

GPS Coordinates:

I'm not sure how soon this will work with new info site. Here are the coordinates of the South and North routes.

It is not a good figures layout but I hope you can determine the gaps.

Standard South route

- 1 43,17,935 042,27,846 The barrels hut (lifts)
- 2 43,18,255 042,27,736
- 3 43,18,942 042,27,617 a hut
- 4 43,19,035 042,27,648
- 5 43,19,118 042,27,637
- 6 43,19,403 042,27,557
- 7 43,19,549 042,27,522
- 8 43,19,733 042,27,510
- 9 43,19,913 042,27,481 Pastuckhov Rocks upper end
- 10 43,20,052 042,27,455
- 11 43,20,140 042,27,427
- 12 43,20,252 042,27,395
- 13 43,20,345 042,27,281 turn left for Diagonal
- 14 43,20,411 042,27,205
- 15 43,20,535 042,27,058
- 16 43,20,559 042,27,013
- 17 43,20,587 042,26,982
- 18 43,20,896 042,26,812 Saddle
- 19 43,21,006 042,26,639
- 20 43,21,091 042,26,616
- 21 43,21,135 042,26,557
- 22 43,21,134 042,26,509
- 23 43,21,163 042,26,305
- 24 43,21,147 042,26,276 West summit

1st column - number of a point
2nd column - N
3rd column - E

Standard North route, starting from big meadow at the end of the road.

1 2585 43.25' 737 42.30' 591 Base camp
2 2692 43.25' 717 42.30' 118
3 2811 43.25' 361 42.29' 843
4 2881 43.24' 773 42.29' 663 "airfield" - big plain area
5 3056 43.24' 486 42.29' 611
6 3086 43.24' 315 42.29' 492
7 3206 43.24' 306 42.29' 316
8 3287 43.24' 219 42.29' 214
9 3386 43.24' 148 42.29' 083
10 3469 43.23' 992 42.28' 996
11 3503 43.23' 789 42.28' 721
12 3493 43.23' 562 42.28' 550
13 3700 43.23' 431 42.28' 487
14 3745 43.23' 393 42.28' 452
15 3737 43.23' 365 42.28' 471 a hut
16 3830 43.23' 116 42.28' 508
17 3940 43.22' 909 42.28' 497
18 3942 43.22' 907 42.28' 497
19 4022 43.22' 791 42.28' 483
20 4049 43.22' 671 42.28' 379
21 4166 43.22' 650 42.28' 335
22 4240 43.22' 569 42.28' 251
23 4295 43.22' 502 42.28' 199
24 4399 43.22' 385 42.28' 092 big crevasse
25 4417 43.22' 357 42.28' 064
26 4571 43.22' 131 42.27' 977 Lentz Rocks
27 4625 43.22' 116 42.27' 921
28 4643 43.22' 082 42.27' 989 possible camp site
29 4660 43.22' 061 42.27' 900
30 4733 43.21' 951 42.27' 850
31 4823 43.21' 841 42.27' 812
32 4879 43.21' 754 42.27' 787
33 5050 43.21' 568 42.27' 623
34 5082 43.21' 529 42.27' 557
35 5136 43.21' 445 42.27' 460
36 5251 43.21' 353 42.27' 302
37 5275 43.21' 324 42.27' 225
38 5320 43.21' 251 42.27' 079 Saddle from the North

1st column - numbers of points
2nd column - elevation in meters
3rd column - N
4th column - E

Agencys to use:

[RU - Pilgrim tours](#)

[RU - Russian Adventures](#)

Online shops:

[DK - Outnorth](#)

[EN – Blackdiamond equipement](#)

[EN - GearExpress](#)

[EN – Go Outdoors](#)

[US – US Outdoor](#)

[EN - Rei](#)

[AU – Climbing Anchors](#)

[UK – Banana fingers](#)

[EN - Patagonia](#)

[EN – Rock run](#)

[DK - Spejdersport](#)

[DK – Eventyr sport](#)

[DK - Gubbies](#)

[DK - Klatregrej](#)

Weather links

[Mountain forecast](#)

[Snow forecast](#)

[Summit post](#)

[World Weather online](#)

[Yr no](#)

[Foreca](#)

[My weather 2](#)

[Weather](#)

Other related links:

<http://www.7-summits.co.uk/elbrus-itinerary.html> - in English, 2001, a story about Elbrus tour, day by day.

<http://www.teamstraydogs.com/ElbrusNews.htm> - in English, 2004, pretty pictorial description.

<http://www.utsidan.se/ddb/expeditioner/artiklar/545.htm> - In Swedish, same comment as for the link above.

http://www.summitpost.org/show/mountain_link.pl/mountain_id/73 - Climbing info site on a growing selection of mountains. Elbrus page

<http://www.tightropenet.com/elbrus/> - in English, 2002, Elbrus tour journal

<http://www.alpineascents.com/elbrus.asp> Mount elbrus guide

Other info:

crampons

1. Russian visa.
2. Voucher with Elbrus region mentioned.
3. OVIR registration.
4. Elbrus Area Preserve permission.
5. Immigration card.

Classic Climbs in the Caucasus: 80 selected climbs

On the Edge of Europe: Mountaineering in the Caucasus

Climbers and Hikers Guide to the Worlds Mountains

ice axes, crampons

http://www.pilgrim-tours.com/index.shtml?tours/standard_10_day/index

#10 July 16 - July 25, 2014

44300 RUB ,1280 USD 942 EUR