

The Matterhorn

Europe | 4,478m



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The **Matterhorn**, (4,478m) sometimes called 'the mountain of mountains', is one of the most instantly recognised and iconic peaks in the world. It roars out from the surrounding **Alpine** landscape and grabs the attention of everyone stepping off the train at **Zermatt** in **Switzerland**. Dramatic and awe-inspiring, it has for centuries been a major tick for mountaineers worldwide.

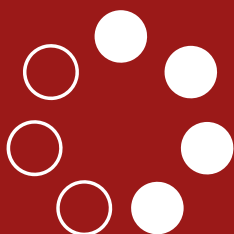
Make this ascent yourself with our superb 360 Mountain Guides who know, and need to know, this route backwards. You don't have to be a brilliant climber to summit the Matterhorn, but you do have to be able to move over some extreme scrambling terrain quickly and efficiently and have some previous mountaineering experience under your belt. The Matterhorn is steep and serious on all sides, and combines technical rock

ridges, graded at Alpine AD, with high altitude. We climb the **Hornli Ridge** from Switzerland on a 1 to 1 guide to client ratio.

This itinerary is an outline, and the day-to-day running will depend on local conditions, and the fitness and dynamics of the team. It is designed to give you the very best chance of summiting. We'll give you the best acclimatisation possible, the most thorough training, and fully qualified Mountain Guides. The rest is up to you.

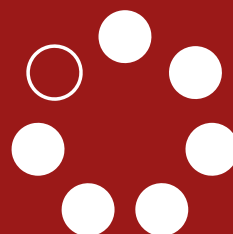
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Physical – P4

Sustained physical effort calls for a state of high conditioning. You should already have experience of tough challenges (P3) and be regularly training as part of your normal routine. Expect days of up to 8 hours and longer while carrying a pack up to 8-14kg in weight. Summit night could be easily in excess of 12 hours.



Technical – T6

Expect punchy sections of more technical rock climbing or prolonged Alpine climbing at Scottish Winter III or Alpine AD. Good skills on rock or ice are paramount.

Please note that the grading system used is a rough guide only.



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ITINERARY

DAY 1 : Saas Grund

Your trip will start with a briefing at 6:30 pm at the Hotel Schoenblick in Saas Grund. We will discuss the week ahead and answer any questions you may have before checking/issuing equipment.

DAY 2-4 : Training & acclimatisation climbs

The Saastal region gives excellent access to a number of great routes which are perfect preparation for the Matterhorn. We will most likely walk up to the Almageller Hutte, where we might undertake rock climbing, the traverse of the Wiesmies and the South Ridge of the Lagginhorn. At the end of the training and acclimatisation phase the Guide will decide whether you are ready to attempt the Matterhorn. Please note that the Guide's decision is final. All the Guides have a huge amount of experience, and their priority is your safety.

DAY 5-7 : Summit Phase

Usually an ascent of the Matterhorn takes 2 days. We have a three day window and will select the best two day period. Hence you will either have a day off before or after the summit phase.

After driving to Tasch we take the train to Zermatt. From there a walk across town to the Klein Matterhorn lift allows you to soak up the atmosphere. The Matterhorn dominates the town, and you'll pass the famous Hotel Monte Rosa where Edward Whymper and the rest of the team stayed prior their ill-fated first ascent in 1865. After reaching Schwarzsee (Black Lake) the hike to the Hornli Hut begins. The trail is straight-forward, and there's no need to use ropes etc. Shorts can be a good idea to avoid getting too hot. The hike to the hut will take around 1 ½ hours. Once there, there's plenty of time to prepare your rucksack for the following day. You can leave excess gear at the hut to collect on the way down.

The climb to the summit will begin early the next morning. Breakfast will likely be around 04:30/05:00. Traditionally the Zermatt Guides leave the hut first, with the foreign Guides following, and the unguided teams at the rear. Headtorches will usually be used for the first part of the climb, but it will soon be light. The climb is long – 1200m of ascent. The route is a mix of walking, scrambling, easy rock climbing, and fixed ropes. The fixed ropes are on various parts of the mountain where the ground is steepest. They are mostly fat gym ropes like you'd find a school gym. On reaching those your Guide will climb up and then belay you up. The best technique is to try and keep your arms as straight as possible and then use your legs on the wall. Efficient rope climbing is essential to avoid getting too tired. On the way up there is an emergency shelter at Solvay. This is often used as a turnaround point. Different Guides use different times, but any team taking over 2 ½ hours to reach the Solvay will have a very slow ascent, and an even slower descent. Hence for safety reasons they will turn around.

The route is usually climbed without crampons until around 2/3 height at "The Shoulder". From there it's usually snowy to the summit. After a brief celebration at the summit it's time to turn around and head down. Most teams take longer to go down than they do to go up. Imagine climbing a ladder – easy on the way up, not so easy on the way down. Hence it's important to keep to time, and to listen carefully to the instructions of your Guide. On the steeper sections you will be lowered by your Guide – DO NOT TRY AND CLIMB DOWN. LET

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ITINERARY

DAY 8 : Saas Grund

On the final day breakfast at the hotel is included before departure. Don't forget to settle your hotel bill before you leave.

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KIT LIST

Bags & Packs

Daysack

30-40L maximum. Mammut "Granite 30/40", and Osprey "Mutant" and Talon 33 recommended

Sleeping Gear

Sleeping bag liner

A liner is mandatory for hygiene reasons. The huts do provide blankets

Headwear

Sunglasses

Worth spending money on good UV filters. For glacier work category 4 with side and nose protectors. Julbo is our preferred supplier

Wide brimmed hat

Keeps the sun off exposed areas like ears and the nape of the neck

Warm headgear

This can be a warm hat, beanie, balaclava, anything to reduce the heat loss from your head

Goggles

Low light lenses recommended as goggles most likely used in poor weather

Sunblock

SPF >30

Lip salve

Sun cream will not work on your lips and they are very susceptible to burn without proper protection

Upper Body

Thermal shirt/T shirt

Merino wool (e.g. Icebreaker) recommended as they don't smell

Thin gloves

Must be leather palmed for rope climbing

Light insulated jacket

A lighter jacket such as a Primaloft or lightweight down which can be worn at lower to mid altitudes is a great addition to your kit offering greater flexibility with layering

Mid layer

A slightly heavier weight for greater warmth that can be worn over a base layer. Fleece for merino wool are ideal

Waterproof jacket

Gore Tex. Arc'Teryx Beta AR recommended

Duvet jacket (available to hire in Chamonix)

Synthetic jackets recommended as they stay warm if wet. Arc'teryx recommended. Please see FAQ's for kit hire

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KIT LIST

Warm gloves

Consider liners or a light polartec pair for lower altitudes and evenings, and a thicker waterproof pair like ski gloves for higher altitudes

Mitts

Dachstein wool mitts recommended, or fleece with Gore Tex shell

Lower Body

Mountain trousers

Mammut "Base Jump" (Schoeller fabric) or similar recommended

Waterproof trousers

Gore Tex. Arc'Teryx Beta AR recommended

Feet

Thick socks

Smartwool or Teko recommended

Crampon compatible boots (available to hire in Chamonix)

Scarpa Freney, Triolet, Sportiva Trango etc are all ideal i.e. ankle height boots. Please see FAQ's for kit hire

Gaiters

In case of snowy conditions

Technical Equipment

Harness (available to hire in Chamonix)

We recommend Petzl harnesses and the Black Diamond "Alpine Bod" Please see FAQ's for kit hire

Helmet (available to hire in Chamonix)

Petzl "Ecrin Roc" and Black Diamond "Half Dome" recommended. Please see FAQ's for kit hire

Ice axe (available to hire in Chamonix)

Grivel "Air Tech" recommended. The bottom of your axe should reach your shin when held in your hand standing upright. Please see FAQ's for kit hire

Crampons (available to hire in Chamonix)

Petzl Vasak and Grivel G12 highly recommended. Please see FAQ's for kit hire

Trekking poles

These can be handy when crossing glaciers, and on paths for reducing shock on your knees. Leki and Komperdell recommended. Snow baskets essential

Hydration

Water bottles / bladder

2L capacity either in a combination of bladder and Nalgene bottle or just Nalgene bottles

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KIT LIST

Toiletries

Wash kit

Keep it simple on the mountain. Essentials are toothbrush, toothpaste and deodorant. Moisturiser is advisable, everything else is a luxury!

Alcohol gel

Most huts do not have running water to wash with

Medications

Personal first aid kit

Painkillers (Paracetamol or Ibuprofen), blister plasters (Compeed recommended)

Personal medication

Keep this in your daysack

Miscellaneous

Head torch

Bring spare batteries

Ear plugs

For protection against the inevitable snorers!

Camera

Bring plenty of spare batteries and memory cards

Documentation

Passport

Don't forget this! Your passport should have at least 6 months validity. With your passport expiry date at least six months after the final day of travel.

Copy of passport

Just in case

Travel insurance

Copy of own travel insurance details. And relevant contact numbers. We have a partnership with True Traveller and would recommend that you contact them when looking for travel insurance for your trip with 360. However, it is vital that you ensure that the insurance cover they offer is suitable for you, taking your personal circumstances (items to be insured, cancellation cover, medical history) into account. Many other insurance providers are available and we do recommend that you shop around to get the best cover for you on the expedition you are undertaking. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the appropriate insurance for your intended trip. To include medical evacuation and coverage up to the maximum altitude of this trip.

EHIC (formerly E111)

While you do have travel insurance, this can save you paperwork and reduce upfront costs should you have a minor ailment or need to see a local GP if you already have one

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FAQ'S

General

What does a guiding fee only itinerary include?

Our 2024 price (which is based on even numbers) includes all guiding . It does not include:

- Flights
- Transfers from Geneva airport to Saas Grund
- Saas Grund accommodation (half-board allow 300 CHF **in cash**)
- Hut accommodation for you and your guide (allow 550CHF for 3 nights)
- Lunches (allow €10 / day)
- Mountain lifts for you and your guide (allow 100CHF for the lift to Schwarzsee)
- Insurance
- Personal equipment for each person: ice axe, crampons, helmet, harness, boots. (Equipment can be hired in situ for those that need it, at additional cost, paid locally.)
- Any additional costs associated with leaving the expedition early

If you have any questions about how this works please contact us on 0207 1834 360.

Travel

How do I get from Geneva/Zurich Airport to Saas Grund? How much does it cost?

The easiest way to reach the hotel is by public transport from either airport. You will change from train to bus in Visp. Please do not arrive at the hotel before 1500.

At the end of the trip, try and arrange your return flight for early afternoon. This will allow you to have breakfast before you leave.

The transfer takes around 4 hours and tickets and times can be found online here: <https://www.sbb.ch/en/buying/pages/fahrplan/fahrplan.xhtml>.

A return ticket costs around 150CHF.

When should I be aiming to arrive and leave Saas Grund

Access to accommodation can not be guaranteed before 3pm on arrival day.

At the end of the trip try and arrange your flight time for mid-late afternoon allowing you to have breakfast before you leave.

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FAQ'S

The Climb

How long are the days?

The length of days will vary when Alpine Climbing, but everyone taking part in a Matterhorn trip should expect to be moving for 8-12 hrs per day.

Is it really necessary to spend so long acclimatising?

Yes. Acclimatisation is absolutely vital for Matterhorn. Many people spend insufficient time up high before attempting the summit, and often fail as a result. Failure to acclimatise properly can lead to sickness and even death.

Health and Safety

What previous experience do I need to have ?

We suggest that you have a minimum of 12 days of Alpine Climbing on routes at AD grade.

Ideally, this is a week on Mont Blanc/Monte Rosa with another week of more technical climbing.

What can I do to get technically ready for such an expedition?

Even though you might have had lots of experience on expeditions such as Kilimanjaro, Mera and Stok Kangri these aren't technical peaks and we would, therefore, advise you get some more technical training in before attempting the Matterhorn.

If you are keen and feel this is you then it might be worth attending an Alpine Development week.

Guided week: ratio 1:2. Details here:

<http://www.stuartmacdonald.org/home/Courses/details/21>. Pls quote 360 on booking/communicating.

What are the guide ratios?

Guides work on a ratio of 1:2 during your training and preparation days, and during the Matterhorn climb work on a ratio of 1:1.

Are the Mountain Guides certified?

All Guides operating in the European Alps must be Internationally Certified. Training and Assessment takes a minimum of three years and anyone caught operating without a license will be prosecuted. Occasionally we employ trainee guides (known as Aspirants). They are in the final stages of qualifying as Guides and are allowed to operate under the tutorage of an experienced Guide.

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FAQ'S

Accommodation, Food and Water

What accommodation do we use in Saas Grund?

For this trip we will be staying at the Hotel Pension Schoenblick in Saas Grund. The hotel is opposite the "Unter den Bodmen" bus stop if arriving by public transport. If driving, make a left turn out of Saas Grund towards Saas Almagell, and then the hotel is on the left, opposite the Mischabel campsite.

The hotel is a little quirky. It is dated inside, but is excellent value. They also allow us to keep our rooms when on the mountain, so no need to pack/re-pack etc. They will provide us with "Saastal Cards" to use local lifts and buses for free. We will be staying in triple rooms during our stay due to heavy demand at the hotel. You should settle the bill before you leave at the end of the week.

Can I get a packed lunch and dinner?

You can make sandwiches at breakfast in the hotel. On the mountain you can order a sandwich from the refuge staff before dinner.

An evening meal is included at the hotel and in the refuge.

What type of food should I carry?

Everyone is different, however it is essential to eat well in the mountains. Sandwiches are hard to beat, supplemented by fruit and chocolate bars. Don't carry too much food, and remember that some foods will freeze solid unless kept in jacket pockets.

How much water should I carry each day?

Do not carry too much water – it is very heavy. As a general rule 1-2 litres is the right amount. Avoid using Camel Back style systems with drinking straws. They leak, the tubes freeze, and they will always let you down when you need them most. Nalgene style plastic bottles are the best.

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FAQ'S

What are the mountain huts like?

Mountain huts are mostly owned by the Alpine Clubs. They are there to provide accommodation and food for mountaineers. They often cater for large numbers (>100), and hence can be quite busy. Meals are usually simple but plentiful, and anyone with special dietary requirements must let us know in advance so we can inform the hut guardian. Please note that while huts will usually try and accommodate vegetarians etc they do sometimes struggle with more specialised requirements such as gluten free. Showers and running water are not usually available. Meals, drinks, and snacks can be purchased for cash. As an indicative cost, a 1.5 litre bottle of mineral water typically costs 6-9 Euros and a bar of chocolate 2 Euros. The rooms are usually dormitory style, with large alpine bunks (up to 15 people in a row). Indoor footwear is provided in the refuges so there is no need to take your own.

If there is no water in the huts for washing, what should we do?

Take some wet wipes to give yourself a clean in the evening. A toothbrush, some wet wipes, and a small tube of toothpaste (shared between several people) is plenty. Some alcohol hand gel is also handy.

Kit

Can I hire equipment?

Anyone wishing to hire equipment can do so. Please let us know in advance as your guides will bring any hire gear with them (except boots which we hire locally around 50CHF for the week) other items are available as follows, payable in cash in situ:

- Ice Axe €20
- Harness €13
- Helmet €13
- Crampons €28
- Duvet Jacket €24
- Down mitts €10
- Full Package: Duvet Jacket, Mitts, Axe, Harness, Crampons, Helmet – €99

The costs above are current at the time of writing, but they may change – please check with us for the current info!

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FAQ'S

Insurance

Do I need special travel insurance for the expedition?

You must carry individual travel insurance to take part in the expedition. We cannot take you on the mountain without proof of insurance.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the appropriate insurance for your intended trip. To include medical evacuation and coverage up to the maximum altitude of this trip.

Your insurance details are requested on the booking form, however this can be arranged at a later date. 360 Expeditions will be requesting your insurance details 8 weeks before your departure.

Will I need a Global Health Insurance Card (UK GHIC) for this expedition?

The UK Global Health Insurance Card (UK GHIC) replaces the old European Health Insurance Card (EHIC).

It is worth having a Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) as this "gives card holders the right to access state-provided healthcare on temporary stays in European Economic Area (EEA) countries or Switzerland. Treatment should be provided on the same basis as it would be to a resident of that country and is provided either at reduced cost or, in many cases, for free. The GHIC covers treatment that is medically necessary until the card holder returns home. This includes treatment for pre-existing medical conditions." If you don't already have one, you can apply for one [here](#) and it is free. Many travel insurers won't cover 'medical costs in the unlikely event that you need medical treatment whilst you are away' that could have been covered by a GHIC.

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TRAINING PROGRAM

To begin 6 months prior to the expedition where possible.

1. CVS: Cardiovascular exercise which is low impact such as swimming, cycling, cross trainer, rowing.

2. Weekend walk should be done over undulating terrain. Only a light rucksack needs to be carried.

3. For specific exercises it is worth doing static squats and heel raises on a regular basis to improve leg muscles prior to the trip. Static squats are especially useful to help protect the knees. Please remember that it is still important to have a well balanced workout using a variety of muscle groups.

4. It is worth winding down and resting in the week leading up to the trip, doing several light walks to keep things going.

5. When walking going at a pace of a brisk walk with a light sweat and enough to feel breathless is recommended

6. During the program, rather than step up suddenly each month (example, going for 3 one hour walks each week during the weekdays in April to 3 one and half hour walks suddenly in May) it is better to build up gradually each week so there isn't a large transition (example, going for 3 one hour walks during week 1 in April, going for 3 one hour and ten minute walks during week 2 in April, going for 3 one hour and fifteen minute walks during week 3 in April, going for 3 one hour and twenty minute walks during week 4 in April)

6. It is important you seek medical advice prior to starting any training program, especially if you are not used to regular physical exertion

All the best with your training!

MONTH 1

OPT 1

2 x 30 mins weekday walk
1 x 1 hour weekend walk
1 x 10 mins CVS

OPT 2

1 x 30 mins weekday walk
2 x 1 hour weekend walk
1 x 10 mins CVS

MONTH 2

OPT 1

2 x 45 mins weekday walk
1 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

OPT 2

1 x 45 mins weekday walk
2 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

MONTH 3

OPT 1

2 x 45 mins weekday walk
1 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

OPT 2

1 x 45 mins weekday walk
2 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

MONTH 4

OPT 1

3 x 1 hour weekday walk
1 x 4 hours weekend walk
3 x 15 mins CVS

OPT 2

2 x 1 hour weekday walk
2 x 4 hours weekend walk
3 x 15 mins CVS

MONTH 5

OPT 1

3 x 1.5 hours weekday walk
1 x 5 hours weekend walk
3 x 20 - 25 mins CVS

OPT 2

2 x 1.5 hours weekday walk
2 x 5 hours weekend walk
3 x 20 - 25 mins CVS

MONTH 6

OPT 1

3 x 2 hours weekday walk
1 x 6 hours weekend walk
3 x 30 mins CVS

OPT 2

2 x 3 hours weekday walk
2 x 6 hours weekend walk
3 x 30 mins CVS



"Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty & well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out & loudly proclaiming 'Wow! What a Ride!' "

Dream it. Plan it. Live it.