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# MATTERHORN

4,478M / 14,691FT

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EX ZERMATT

2021 TRIP NOTES





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## 2021 TRIP DETAILS

**Dates:** Available on demand  
July to September

**Duration:** 6 days

**Departure:** ex Zermatt, Switzerland

**Price:** €5,870 per person

A classic 'must-do' European climb. Photo: Mike Roberts

The Matterhorn is undeniably the most magnificent and well-known peak in the Alps. Its bold pyramidal shape evokes emotions of wonderment and even fear in those who view it for the first time, as its four distinct faces stand omnipotent and menacing over the green meadows below. Separated by sharp ridges, the four faces are orientated to the four points of the compass, the northern aspects within Switzerland while the southern side lies in Italy.

We ascend via the Hörnli Ridge that separates the North and East Faces via a long and technical route requiring the utmost attention from climbers. The steep rock ridge is very involving and a successful attempt requires a rapid rate of ascent and full concentration by a fit party. The steep North and East Faces drop away spectacularly on either side and the sense of exposure is dramatic.

With its formidable history and the magnificent grandeur of its architecture, the Hörnli Ridge on the Matterhorn is a climb that is definitely worth aspiring to.

## HISTORY

The European Alps are full of climbing history. They are the birthplace of mountaineering and their

rich heritage adds to the superb facilities, including catered huts and lift systems offering services not seen elsewhere.

The Hörnli Ridge is the route by which the Matterhorn's first ascent was made in 1865 by the tenacious Englishman, Edward Whymper, after many attempts on the mountain. In what became the most famous alpine calamity of all time, the group suffered a terrible tragedy on the descent when a rope broke resulting in the loss of four of the party.

## ABOUT THE CLIMB

The Matterhorn is a superb summit demanding fitness, determination and a level of competence on both rock and ice.



Enjoy warm-up climbs in the Monte Rosa region. Photo: Paolo Pieroni



Classic alpine rock climbing. Photo: Mike Roberts



Enjoy the ambience of traditional life in car-free Zermatt. Photo: Tammy Schiro

The summit day will start well before dawn, around 3am, and you will be encouraged by your guide to move consistently to ensure you reach the summit in a reasonable timeframe. Depending on conditions, the ascent will take between 4–6 hours and an equal length of time to descend.

Whilst much of the rock on the Hörnli Ridge is good, the first part of the route follows the East Face, slightly to the left of the ridge and here the rock is slabby and loose.

Though it looks narrow from a distance, the Hörnli Ridge is broad and featured when climbing. There are many scrambling sections as well as some steep climbing pitches. The last 200m/650ft requires the use of crampons and an ice axe.

With 1,000m/3,300ft of climbing, it is a long and tiring day, so will take at least as long to descend as to climb. Stopping at the Hörnli Hut for a tea break, we continue down to the more comfortable hotel at Schwarzsee. If you arrive well prepared you will really enjoy this climb for its intensity, without encountering extreme terrain.

## TRIP OUTLINE

Your guide will meet with you on the evening of your arrival in Zermatt, Switzerland, for an equipment check and briefing about the upcoming programme and anticipated weather conditions. You will start the training the following morning and take a lift to the Monte Rosa region close to Zermatt, where you will make ascents of interesting and challenging training routes.

This is when you get to practice climbing skills and become acclimatised ahead of the ascent of the Matterhorn in the final days of the programme. We have purposely included some classic ascents, not only to help you focus on the skills for the climb ahead, but to enable you to get some other fantastic routes under your belt as well! Once your training has been completed, we ascend to the Hörnli Hut on the lower part of the Matterhorn's Hörnli Ridge to prepare for the ascent the following morning.

First and foremost, weather and conditions have to be favourable for a safe ascent of this serious peak. Although success cannot be guaranteed, we have developed our approach to give you a serious chance of attaining an ascent of this classic route.



▲ Stupendous views from the Hörnli Ridge. Photo: Paolo Pieroni

The ascent is based entirely on a 1:1 guiding ratio. While some operators will clump you together with large groups during the early acclimatisation phase, we feel there is much to be gained on warm-up routes that get you prepared for the upcoming rigours and technical challenges that you will face.

We programme the trip over 6 days/7 nights to include the necessary period of acclimatisation before making an ascent at this altitude. We consider it vital that you work closely with your guide throughout the week to develop the appropriate level of communication and trust to make the ascent as a partnership of two people on a rope. Extra days can be added to the programme for additional acclimatisation and preparation days by signing up for our 2 day Europe Pre-Course and Acclimatisation Programme.

## PREREQUISITE EXPERIENCE

To climb the Matterhorn, you need to be fit, have strong physical and mental stamina and be capable of strenuous exercise for several days' duration. Prospective climbers must be competent in rock and alpine climbing practices and be aware that your ability to succeed will be determined more by your current condition and capability than previous ascents you may have made in the past. You will need to be proficient in snow and ice techniques, and cramponing.

In order to get up this long route, prospective climbers must be confident rock climbing in alpine boots to grade US 5.7/ AUS 15/ UK HS and be capable of moving at a steady pace for extended periods in technical terrain on snow and rock. It is imperative you have a high degree of cardiovascular fitness to cope with the strains of

the climb and the altitude. Your climbing history will include ascents of long and technical multi-pitch alpine routes, and you will be an active rock climber, current in the use of rope skills, as well as snow and ice climbing techniques.

## ITINERARY

### DAY 0

Arrive Zermatt. Meet your guide in the evening for a briefing and equipment check. Hotel night.

**NOTE:** In some instances, the guide will meet you on the morning of Day 1.

### DAY 1

Travel up the Gornergrat Railway for some technical rock training on the Riffelhorn 2,927m/9,603ft (multi-pitch climbs to grade 5c/US5.9/AUS 17). Hotel night.

### DAY 2

Cable car to the Klein Matterhorn (3,498m/11,476ft). Climb Pollux (4,092m/13,425ft) by the South West Ridge (PD+) and stay at Ayas Hut (3,425m/11,237ft).

### DAY 3

Climb the East Ridge of Breithorn (4,165m/13,665ft, AD), descend by normal route to the Klein Matterhorn and cable-car back down to Zermatt. Hotel night.



▲The magnificent Matterhorn. Photo: Olivier Baron

#### DAY 4

Take the lift to Schwarzsee (1,050m/3,400ft) and hike to the Hörnli Hut (3,260m/10,696ft). This will take about 2 hours, arriving in time for supper and an early night.

#### DAY 5

3am start for Matterhorn (4,478m/14,691ft) via the Hörnli Ridge (AD). After our descent back to Hörnli Hut, we continue down to the more comfortable hotel at Schwarzsee. Hotel night.

#### DAY 6

Enjoy a late start, descend to Zermatt. Possible rock climbing and this is also a spare day in case of bad weather. Hotel night in Zermatt.

#### DAY 7

Depart Zermatt after breakfast.

**NOTE:** We can also initiate the programme in Chamonix, France, where we acclimatise on appropriate local peaks prior to travelling to Switzerland to climb the Matterhorn. For an

alternative and more challenging route on the Matterhorn, we can also traverse up the Lion (Italian) Ridge and down to the Hörnli Hut. Please contact us for alternative itineraries and pricing.

## THE ADVANTAGES OF CLIMBING WITH ADVENTURE CONSULTANTS

Adventure Consultants is renowned for the quality of its service and strategy applied to expedition and ascent climbing. Our reputation is attributed to meticulous planning and experienced logistics coordination. We have a philosophy of investing in every expedition to offer our climbers the best possible chance of success.

We employ strong and specialised IFMGA Mountain Guides, who are some of the most pre-eminent in the industry. Many of our expedition members and climbers come to us because they have seen us in action on a previous trip and decide to opt for our level of service and proven experience. Others return because they know we do our very best to make expeditions and guided ascents safe and successful.



▲ Looking down at climbers ascending the ridge. Photo: Mike Roberts



▲ A team celebrates together on the summit! Photo: Kate Baecher



▲ On the lower reaches of the climb. Photo: Tammy Schiro

## CLIMBING SEASON

We operate on the Matterhorn in the summer months from July through until September, and other times as conditions allow. In early July, you can expect more snow cover on the route and as temperatures warm up into mid-July, we traditionally experience more settled weather and warmer temperatures.

## WEATHER

Europe has a continental climate which in general encourages stable weather. However, the weather in the high mountains can be changeable and at times very severe. It is possible that weather conditions may thwart an attempt on the summit of the Matterhorn in the time allotted. However, due to the length of the trip and our focus on the forecasts, we can often change our itinerary to work around frontal systems. Should the weather not allow a summit attempt within the time frame, it is sometimes possible to engage the guide for additional days depending on their availability.

## EQUIPMENT

Climbing in the European Alps requires high-quality clothing and equipment due to the extremes of weather conditions. Our focus is on having the essential clothing and equipment to keep you warm and comfortable during the climb.

You will be sent an equipment checklist upon confirmation of your booking. Your guide will go through this with you at the beginning of your trip. It is possible to rent technical equipment but you must provide your own mountaineering clothing as per the equipment list. Actual equipment taken may vary subject to seasonal weather and route conditions. Group equipment, including ropes and technical hardware, will be provided by your guide.

## COMMUNICATION & MESSAGES

Our guides are in cell phone communication with our operations base throughout the trip. This assists us with weather forecast updates, lift and accommodation coordination and safety backup.



▲ Above the Solvay Hut. Photo: Paolo Pieroni

Your own mobile phone should work in the region though you may want to check with your service provider first. Local mobile phones can be rented at international airports.

## FITNESS & HEALTH

In your build-up to the climb, it would be appropriate to be rock climbing regularly as well as training on hills for overall fitness. Your training should aim to progress until you are able to hike on consecutive days for at least 8 hours whilst carrying a 10kg/22lb pack, incorporating the elevation gain of over 1,200m/4,000ft which is required on summit day. A regular rock climbing programme is also essential. Your guide will be attuned to your fitness levels and will regulate the pace accordingly; however, it is essential that you arrive physically prepared to succeed on this mountain.

Even climbing at the moderate altitudes in Europe has a definite physical effect on people. Most climbers notice a lower performance rate than normal. Summit day is physically demanding and a dedicated training programme is essential to enhance your chance of success. It is preferable to spend a few days at altitude prior to your scheduled climb to assist with your acclimatisation. Climbers regularly attend our Pre-Course and Acclimatisation Programme prior to partaking in the ascent.

Our registration form requests that you advise us of any medical problems you may have and of any medications you are taking. Any information you supply will be treated as confidential.

## FOOD

We provide breakfasts for the duration of the trip and evening meals on the hut nights while the trip is running. This is from breakfast on Day 1 until breakfast on your departure day. You will be responsible for your own lunch and snacks each day, plus evening meals on the non-mountain nights in Zermatt and Schwarzsee. This allows you to experience the exciting culinary options available in the region, as there are many restaurants and bars within close walking distance that provide a variety of foods to suit your tastes. Any additional food, bottled water, beverages or meals you purchase that are not mentioned in the inclusions will be at your own expense.

You should bring a selection of your favourite snack food and hydration drinks to ensure you are fuelled by your preferred brands, as well as money for lunches and snacks whilst in the mountains. Actual amounts depend on your consumption but while you are climbing it's generally not possible to have a normal sized lunch, so you rely on snacks during the day and are able to take a late lunch once you arrive back at the hut.

If you have any special dietary requirements, please advise us at the time of registration. If your dietary requirements are especially strict, you are advised to bring a sufficient supply of your required food types with you to ensure you are provided for.

## ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation is provided on a twin share B&B basis from your arrival on the evening of Day 0 to the night of Day 6.



◆ A group of climbers approach the Solvay Hut. *Photo: Paolo Pieroni*

Accommodation in the mountains is in mountain huts in shared bunk rooms or dormitory rooms. Blankets are provided and no sleeping bag will be required, although you will require a 'sleeping sheet' for personal hygiene under the provided blankets. There are no single supplement options or private rooms available in the mountain huts but we can arrange this for you in Zermatt. We can also arrange an upgrade to four or five-star hotel accommodation—ask about the hotel options if interested.

## TRAVEL TO ZERMATT

We commence our Matterhorn Guided Ascent from Zermatt in Switzerland. The closest and most convenient international airports are located in Geneva and Zurich. Trains are the cheapest and fastest mode of transport from which to transfer to Zermatt. Services operate on the Brig line and transfer at Visp, which will see you arrive in Zermatt within 3.5 hours. Alternatively, taxi/shuttle services are available from the airports and offer a door to door service to your accommodation. Transfer costs are at your own expense, but we can provide advice and assistance with your transfer arrangements.

## INSURANCE

We strongly recommend that you take out Trip Cancellation Insurance and Travel Insurance, as well as Medical and Rescue Insurance to protect yourself in the event of injury or mishap prior to or during your trip.

While our focus is on safety and our track record supports this, the mountains do have hazards and there is the potential for mishap. If you were injured whilst on the trip, there is a very efficient rescue service nearby.

## PRE-TRIP ACCLIMATISATION

It is preferable to spend a few days at altitude prior to your ascent to assist with your acclimatisation. Climbers regularly attend our Chamonix based Pre-Course Acclimatisation Programme, and we are able to arrange a similar programme from Zermatt. The 2-day acclimatisation and re-familiarisation programme takes you on day climbs to high elevations on easily accessible peaks to kickstart your acclimatisation. Please contact our office for further information and costs.



A climber surveys the route ahead. Photo: Chris Ensoll

## PRICE

The cost for the Matterhorn Guided Ascent ex Zermatt is €5,870 for a 1:1 guide to climber ratio.

*All prices are subject to change without notice.*

The cost includes:

- Qualified mountain guide
- Group technical equipment
- Lifts as per the scheduled itinerary
- Huts as per the scheduled itinerary
- Transport as per the scheduled itinerary
- Hotel B&B 5 nights as per scheduled itinerary, including first night and last night of course
- Breakfast and dinner during mountain component of the course

The cost **does not** include:

- Any lift, hut, hotel or transport costs additional to the programme due to weather or logistics (any changes will be actioned only after you have been consulted by your guide)
- Personal mountaineering clothing and equipment as per lists supplied
- Evening meals during hotel nights in Zermatt and Schwarzsee
- Lunches
- Extra additional meals, snacks or drinks purchased from huts or hotels
- Insurance for travel and climbing in Europe
- Transport to and from Zermatt (although we can arrange it for you)
- Gratuity

## PAYMENT

All payments should be made by bank transfer to the following Euro bank account:

Bank of New Zealand  
Offshore Branch  
42 Willis Street  
Spark Central  
Wellington  
New Zealand

for the account of Adventure Consultants Limited

**Account Number:** 1000-594771-0002

**Account Type:** Euros

**Swift Address:** BKNZ NZ22

**NOTE:** All bank transfer charges are for the remitter's account.

We can also accept your deposit and balance payment by credit card (Visa, Mastercard and Amex), plus a 3% transaction fee.

## DEPOSIT

To confirm place on one of our Matterhorn Guided Ascents, we require a completed registration form with a deposit of €500 per person.

## BALANCE

The balance payment is due 60 days prior to the course start date.



▲ On the summit! Photo: Mike Roberts

## CANCELLATION & REFUND POLICY

Once you have paid your deposit your trip is confirmed, subject to payment of the balance of fees owing 60 days prior to your trip commencement date. A climber may then cancel their participation on the following basis:

- Cancellations outside of 60 days will result in the loss of the trip deposit.
- For cancellations made within 60 days of the trip commencement date we reserve the right to retain 50% of the full fee.
- For cancellations made within 30 days of the trip commencement date we reserve the right to retain 75% of the full fee.
- For cancellations within 15 days of the departure date a cancellation fee of 100% of the full fee applies.

We recommend you take out trip cancellation insurance via your travel agent if you wish to be covered against cancellation due to medical or personal reasons.

## HOW TO JOIN THIS TRIP

If you would like to join one of our 2021 Matterhorn Guided Ascents, please complete our online booking form and forward your deposit payment at <https://www.adventureconsultants.com/expeditions/european-ascents/matterhorn/book-now>.

## CONTACT US

If you require more information, please contact us at:

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▲ Sunset colours on the Matterhorn. Photo: Olivier Baron



Adventure Consultants is affiliated to the New Zealand Mountain Guides Association (NZMGA), New Zealand Alpine Club (NZAC) and a corporate member of the American Alpine Club (AAC). Adventure Consultants is a supporter of the dZi Foundation in Nepal for their 'Revitalise a Village' programmes.

Adventure Consultants perform to IFMGA/UIAGM standards and are world leaders in high altitude guiding.

