

Elbrus

Expedition Information Pack

Expedition Dates: July 2016

Pre-Expedition Preparation:

In this document you will find detailed information on fitness & training, the necessary equipment, tourist visas, travel insurance, medical advice, temperatures & climate, altitude considerations, spending money and tips. Please review this information in full and prepare yourself for this fantastic adventure! We have also included information about Russia, an FAQ and the expedition itinerary with details on what's included and excluded.

If you have any questions contact us by email on info@earths-edge.com or by phone on +353 (1) 5320869.

Fitness & Training:

Our new itinerary on the north side of Elbrus is an extremely tough challenge with an average of five hours of trekking per day except on the summit day which involves roughly 16 hours of trekking. Although this is not a technical climb, it does require the use of crampons and an ice axe. Previous experience in winter conditions and at high altitude (>5000m) is recommended. We will provide training in how to move on snow and ice during the first three days of hiking. It is your responsibility to contact us if you have any concerns regarding your level of fitness, health or ability to complete the trek. We strongly recommend that you read the expedition itinerary in full before signing up to this challenge.

Everybody is different, so we cannot recommend a specific pre-expedition fitness programme, but we would be more than happy to speak to you about your fitness and training. The following tips may help you prepare.

This expedition is not for the faint hearted and your training should be taken seriously. In order to attain the fitness levels you will need to partake in this expedition, completing long hikes in Ireland for several days in a row should present no problems for you. Here is a guideline you can follow to get you started; with a 20kg rucksack you should be able to complete the following routes from start to finish in the below time frames with no issues.

Walk	Route	Time
Carrauntoohill (Kerry)	Caher (Coomloughra) Route	6 hrs
Croagh Patrick (Mayo)	Main Route	3/4 hrs
Galtymore (Tipperary)	Black Road Route	4/5 hrs
Lugnaquilla (Wicklow)	Camara Hill Route	4/5 hrs
Spink (Wicklow)	Looped Walk Route	3/4 hrs

Please do not attempt these walks alone. You or someone in your party should have walking experience and the necessary navigational skills. If you would like to hire a guide to take you on one of these walks please contact us to be put in touch with a qualified mountain leader.

Although hillwalking is best, please remember any type of cardiovascular training will help you prepare for this expedition. Focus your training on building endurance fitness by completing long, slow and low intensity training sessions rather than fast and short sessions. Build the distance and duration of your training session's slowly as over training often leads to injury. In the three months prior to departure try to include two long training days in a row to replicate walking for continuous days on the expedition.

If you have any old injuries, weak joints, soft tissue injuries or any other issues which affect your mobility we suggest you address these issues now. It goes without saying that if you are experiencing discomfort or pain during short training sessions the problem has the potential to become more serious when exercising for long

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durations on continuous days. Please visit your physiotherapist in an effort to address the issue and strengthen the weakened area. If you have low muscle mass in your legs we suggest that you add strength training to your schedule. Muscle mass protects our joints and this is very important especially on long descents.

If you are buying any new equipment for this expedition such as a rucksack, boots, base layers etc., be sure to use it before departure. All gear should be well broken in to avoid blisters and chaffing!

The itinerary has been designed with correct acclimatisation in mind with no big jumps in elevation. While on the expedition you will be encouraged to take it easy, eat well and stay very hydrated. Very hydrated means drinking between three and five litres of water per day depending on how much you sweat. Drinking three or more litres in a day is much harder than it sounds. We would recommend people practice drinking a large amount of water. Try drinking from a 500ml water bottle and see how many times you can refill it in a day. In our experience it is those who cannot stay well hydrated that run into problems at altitude. Although your ability to withstand high altitudes is not directly related to your physical fitness levels, a good level of fitness will certainly assist in your general stamina.


It is not uncommon for people to encounter stomach problems on expeditions. This is due to a number of reasons such as poor hygiene, change in diet, a low immune system and poorly prepared food. We do everything we can to make sure food and water is safe for you to consume. It is very important that you wash your hands before eating and after going to the toilet. We recommend people eat as healthily as possible and take a multivitamin supplement and probiotics for one month prior to departure and during the expedition. This will help you adjust to changes in your diet and keep you healthy throughout the expedition.

Earth's Edge Training Days:

We hold training events prior to all expeditions. You will meet the expedition leader, expedition doctor and your fellow adventurers! You will get the opportunity to ask questions and receive detailed briefs and advice about all aspects of the expedition including training, equipment, weather etc. These events are also a lot of fun and they take place in Glendalough which is a stunning location!

Equipment:

The following is what we recommend you take, and is a guideline of what to bring on this expedition. You are responsible for having the necessary personal equipment you need for this trek. When you sign up to an Earth's Edge expedition you are entitled to a loyalty card with our equipment partner; Great Outdoors. Great Outdoors have an excellent range of expedition equipment, very knowledgeable staff and are 100% Irish owned. The loyalty card entitles you to a 15% discount until the day your expedition departs and 10% discount thereafter.

EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST	
Double plastic or synthetic boots. (This item is available to rent upon request.) -Examples of suitable boots; La Sportiva Spantik, Scarpa Phantom 6000, Scarpa Omega, or similar. Scarpa Phantom Guide, La Sportiva Batura or similar will be acceptable. -Examples of unsuitable boots; La Sportiva Nepal Extreme, Scarpa Mont Blanc, Meindl Makalu or similar.	
12 point crampons (This item is available to rent upon request).	
Walking ice axe (60 – 70cm): The ideal length of the ice axe depends on your height. Under 1.7m use 60cm, Between 1.7 & 1.9m use 65cm and over 1.9m use a 70cm tool. (This item may be available to rent upon request.)	
Sling (approx size 120cm x 10mm).	
Climbing harness & two screw gate carabiners. (This item may be available to rent upon request.)	
Trekking boots. If you are buying new boots for this trip please ensure they are well broken in before departure. Few things will make you more miserable during the trek than blisters.	

Runners or sandals (to wear in transit & at lower altitude when not trekking).	
Mid-weight hiking socks x 3. At least three pairs, some people choose to bring a pair of socks for each day of trekking.	
Heavyweight hiking socks x 2.	
Lightweight liner socks (for summit night).	
Underwear, we recommend you bring enough so you are comfortable at all times. Synthetic rather than cotton underwear is advisable.	
Shorts x 1.	
Lightweight trousers x 1.	
Softshell trousers x 1.	
Synthetic/wool/silk long johns x 2 (for night time use and summit night).	
Waterproof trousers (N.B. make sure the trousers have zips to the knee at least).	
Long sleeve base layers x 2 (silk, wool, or synthetic).	
Short sleeve base layer x 2 (as above).	
Mid weight fleece, down or soft shell jackets x 2.	
A down jacket. It must be heavy weight with a hood.	
Waterproof jacket.	
A fleece hat to wear in the mornings and evenings.	
A buff.	
Category 3 or 4 sunglasses.	
Category 3 or 4 ski goggles.	
A sun hat with a wide brim to cover the face and neck.	
A pair of lightweight wool or synthetic liner gloves.	
A pair of heavy down mitts.	
Walking poles.	
Rucksack (65-80 litres): You will use this when carrying loads between basecamp and Camp 1 with an estimated maximum weight of 20kgs. If you want to bring an additional 35 litre rucksack to use while trekking above Camp 1 you can.	
Duffel bag (100-150 litres) to carry your equipment to basecamp with lock. We recommend you use something strong and sturdy, as this bag will be carried by the support team.	
Dry bags. To organise and water proof your equipment inside your bags.	
Water bottles: Three wide mouth 1 litre water bottles with insulated covering. If you wish to bring a water bladder to use at lower elevations you can but it will not work at high altitude so you need bottles.	
A warm sleeping bag (4 season comfort rating, temperature -20°C or lower).	
A 500ml thermos flask.	
A sleeping bag liner (This helps to keep your sleeping bag clean and adds an extra season).	
Swimsuit (needed if you get the opportunity to visit a Russian Sauna).	
Spare laces.	
Suncream at least factor 30.	
SPF lip balm.	
Insect repellent, deet based products are best.	
Hand sanitizer.	
Toiletries, N.B as little as possible, if you are travelling with friends try to share toiletries. * Wet wipes and a nail brush are very useful.	
Toilet roll.	
Personal first aid kit. We recommend you carry rehydration salts, plasters, compeed, paracetamol, Imodium, motilium and antibiotics suitable to treat traveller's diarrhoea. Ciprofloxacin or something with similar coverage would be the most suitable antibiotic, please consult your doctor for up to date advice. The expedition medic will also have a full medical kit to deal with issues of a more serious nature.	
Personal medication. Please carry any medication you are currently taking on a regular basis	

such as asthma inhalers, nutritional supplements, the contraceptive pill, blood pressure tablets. If you suffer or have suffered from any skin conditions bring appropriate creams such as canesten, zovirax, anusol or hydrocortisone 1%.	
Small towel for washing.	
We ensure that all drinking water provided to you is treated correctly but you may still wish to bring your own personal supply of tablets/drops for water purification such as iodine or chlorine. Powdered fruit juice can be used to disguise the taste of the purification.	
Personal snacks; although sufficient food is supplied throughout the trek you need to bring your own supply of high energy snacks for the expedition. Bring snacks you enjoy eating such as sweets, energy bars & chocolate.	
Headlamp with spare batteries.	
Thermarest.	
A spare set of clothes to wear after you finish the expedition.	
A photocopy of your travel insurance and passport.	
Vaccination booklet (if required).	
OPTIONAL ITEMS	
Power Adaptor – Plug C or F is used in Russia.	
Diamox (tablet form not capsules); if you have decided to take it. For more information about Diamox its uses and side effects please refer to the information on AMS and Diamox in this document.	
Ear plugs.	
A camera.	
A book and/or writing paper.	

Tourist Visas:

All participants are required to have a tourist visa to enter Russia. We will send you the required letter of invitation and voucher to obtain a visa. You will then need to follow the instructions of the Russian Embassy of your country to obtain a visa. For the Russian Embassy in Dublin [click here](#). Please allow at least 20 working days for your visa to process. It is your responsibility to ensure that you make the application in good time.

Travel Insurance:

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have sufficient personal travel insurance for this expedition. Your policy must provide cover for; a) medical injury or sickness b) trekking up to 5,700 metres (c) helicopter evacuation in an emergency situation, and d) repatriation to ones country of residence. You must declare any pre-existing medical conditions to your insurers and ensure you receive written confirmation that any pre-existing medical conditions are fully insured. We advise you to obtain travel insurance as soon as you book, that will cover you for unforeseeable circumstances such as illness or injury that might result in you not being able to take part in your expedition. We recommend Campbell Irvine for your travel insurance requirements as their policies cover a, b, c & d as above and include cancellation cover. To contact Campbell Irvine call [+44 844 826 2722](tel:+448448262722) or go to their website www.campbellirvinedirect.com/earthsedge.

Vaccinations & Prophylaxis:

We are not qualified to answer all your questions about travel health directly. We recommend consulting your GP or The Travel Health Clinic (www.travelhealth.ie) for the most up to date medical advice. When you sign up for this event we will email you specific advice supplied to us by The Travel Health Clinic which details what is required for this destination.

Medical:

Before departure you will be required to complete an extensive medical questionnaire. It is for your own safety that we require you to disclose as much detail about your medical history as possible. The information you supply is treated with the strictest confidence. We will do our best to accommodate everyone on this expedition, but we do reserve the right to refuse participation if we feel your safety or that of the group may be compromised. All participants on Earth's Edge expeditions are required to have a medical form completed by

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their own doctor. We recommend you do this at the same time you see your doctor for travel vaccines (if required). These measures are put in place for the safety of all participants on the trek.

Temperatures & Climate:

Temperatures on the expedition may vary from 25 degrees at lower elevations to -20 or lower on the summit day. It is very important to be prepared for extremes in weather as the Caucasus Mountains are notorious for fast changing weather. Review the gear list in detail and ensure you have enough cold weather clothing. If in doubt take extra gear, it can always be stored in the hotel if you don't need it. For accurate weather information please review these two websites;

Mountain Forecasts: www.mountain-forecast.com/

Norwegian Meteorological Institute: www.yr.no

Altitude Considerations:

The human body is quite capable of adapting to a very wide range of barometric pressures and there is plenty of oxygen even at the highest point of this expedition. However, the process of adaptation or acclimatisation does take time and the most important rule is to gain height slowly. Keeping well hydrated is also a huge factor in avoiding AMS (Acute Mountain Sickness). AMS is brought on by lower oxygen levels at higher altitudes. Symptoms include breathlessness, headache, poor sleep, nausea & dizziness. AMS is treated simply by not ascending to higher elevations or in more severe cases descending to lower elevations, where in most cases the symptoms are quickly relieved. This itinerary has been designed to minimise the chances of you getting altitude sickness. Our guides are highly experienced in these matters and will be able to give you good advice to help minimise any temporary discomfort that you might experience. If you have suffered serious problems at altitude before, you should seek the advice of your doctor or a specialist. Please note it is common for most people to experience mild headaches on the summit day of this expedition. Always keep your guide informed on how you are feeling.

Diamox

Diamox (Acetazolamide) is a carbonic anhydrase inhibitor. In simple terms Diamox causes the kidneys to excrete more bicarbonate which causes the blood to become more acidic. Acidifying the blood stimulates ventilation, which increases the amount of oxygen in the blood which reduces the chances of getting AMS. We recommend all clients especially those who have had AMS in the past to take Diamox prophylactically (as a preventative), starting on the first day of trekking. Current guidelines suggest 125 mg twice per day (in tablet form not capsules). You should try taking Diamox for two days prior to departing Ireland to ensure you don't suffer any of the more serious side effects. Numbness and tingly fingers and toes are common but in some cases users can suffer from nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea. If you experience any of the latter three side effects we would advise against using Diamox.

The Altitude Centre Ireland

If you would like to know how you will fare at altitude ahead of this expedition contact our friends at the Altitude Centre Ireland, Ireland's specialist in altitude training. They offer AMS Susceptibility Consultations which will determine your body's sensitivity to low oxygen (high altitude) and then recommend specific training if needed. For more information call 061748585 or email ireland@altitudecentre.com. Quote Earth's Edge to avail of a 10% discount.

Spending Money & Tips:

We recommend that you carry €300 with you to Russia in mixed notes. You can exchange EURO or US Dollars into Roubles in Moscow airport, Mineralny Vody airport or at the bank in Pyatigorsk. There are ATM machines in Pyatigorsk so do carry your credit card as a backup. Unfortunately in Pyatigorsk the hotels and bars only accept cash. We recommend you tip if you are happy with the service, the recommended tip for Elbrus is €70. Please give your tip to the Expedition Leader and he/she will distribute the tip evenly among all local staff.

Note: There may be additional costs on the expedition which are outside the control of Earth's Edge which you would need to pay for locally. For example if there was a change to the itinerary due to weather and the group summited the mountain a day early, we would then return to Pyatigorsk a day early too. This would result in us needing an extra night in the hotel in Pyatigorsk which would cost in the region of €30 per person.

About Russia:

The department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (www.dfa.ie) strongly advise against travel to the Elbrus Region. "Mount Elbrus has becoming increasingly popular as a tourist destination in recent years. However, travel to the area is not advisable, given its proximity to insecure areas of the North Caucasus region." www.dfa.ie If you decide to participate in an Elbrus expedition you must educate yourself about the risks involved and understand that you are travelling against DFA advice. *Please note that we haven't experienced any issues in this regard, on any of our previous Elbrus expeditions (2012, 2013, 2014 & 2015).

Area:	17,075,400 sq. km
Population:	143,800,000
Official Languages:	Russian
Religion:	Russian Orthodox (72%), Muslim (5%) Christianity (2%), Others (2%) & no religious affiliation (19%)
Local Time:	GMT +3.00
Local Currency:	Rouble.
Currency for Exchange:	EURO, USD & GBP.
Where to Exchange:	In banks found in all major towns.
ATMs:	ATMs are found in all major towns.
Credit Cards:	Are generally accepted.

Up-to-date information concerning global exchange rates can be obtained at www.xe.com

Elbrus Expedition Summary & Itinerary:

Standing at an impressive 5642m (18,481'), Elbrus is Europe's highest mountain and one of the 'Seven Summits'. Elbrus is located in the Caucasus Mountains which separate Europe and Asia stretching almost 1000km from the Black sea to the Caspian Sea. This beautiful mountain range has some fantastic scenery with vast mountain views, alpine meadows and dense forest. Our 14 day itinerary allows plenty of time for acclimatisation and flexibility in the event of bad weather. Weather plays a huge part in a successful summit attempt with high winds, blizzards, thunderstorms and thick mists common even in summer. Elbrus is covered in snow 365 days of the year and crampons and ice axes are required to reach the summit. However the route is not technical and we provide all the necessary training on the expedition. Climbing the mountain from the North side is much more beautiful and less crowded than the classic south side. However the summit day is much tougher and it is essential that participants have previous experience on mountains above 5,000m. As well as camping throughout the itinerary the summit day involves a 1,900m ascent which can take over 16 hours.

Please note the following itinerary is very much subject to change based on weather conditions and the health and fitness of all expedition members. Our itinerary allows a fantastic opportunity to summit Elbrus without using any lifts or snowcats, however you should be aware there is no guarantee in reaching the summit. The nature of high altitude peaks such as this one mean that sometimes we don't get a window of good weather which allows us to attempt the summit.

YOUR EXPEDITION AT A GLANCE

	Altitude	Hours of Trekking
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Day 1	Dublin to Moscow		
Day 2	Moscow to Pyatigorsk		
Day 3	Pyatigorsk to Emmanuel Meadows	2,200m	n/a
Day 4	Basecamp to Camp 1 to basecamp.	3,763m	9 hrs
Day 5	Basecamp to Camp 1	3,763m	7 hrs
Day 6	Rest & Skills Day	4,000m	3 hrs
Day 7	Acclimatisation to Lentz Rocks	4,650m	6 hrs
Day 8	Rest Day	3,763m	n/a
Day 9	Summit Day!	5,642m	16 hrs
Day 10	Spare summit day	-----	-----
Day 11	Camp 1 to Basecamp	2,200m	4hrs
Day 12	Basecamp to Pyatigorsk		n/a
Day 13	Pyatigorsk to Moscow		
Day 14	Moscow to Dublin		

Day 1: Fly Dublin to Moscow.

Depart Dublin on a one stop flight to Moscow. Arrive in Moscow in the evening. Transfer from the airport to the hotel in Moscow. Relax in the hotel for the evening. Overnight hotel.

Day 2: Fly Moscow to Mineralny Vody and drive to Pyatigorsk, 3 hrs.

After breakfast transfer to the airport for the two hour flight to Mineralny Vody. From Mineralny Vody we drive for less than an hour to reach Pyatigorsk. Pyatigorsk is popular with Russian tourists who come to visit the town's famous health spas. Relax in the hotel or explore the town in the afternoon. Today the expedition leader will check all participants' equipment and advise you on rental equipment. Overnight hotel. Altitude 500m.

Day 3: Pyatigorsk to Emmanuel Meadows, 4 hrs.

Today we take the four hour drive to our basecamp on the Emmanuel meadows (2,200m). The 100km journey starts on sealed road the moves to gravel and we even cross a river just before basecamp. It's a scenic drive through rural countryside and on clear days we get great views of Elbrus. In the afternoon we can go for a short walk to explore the beautiful meadow with wild flowers. Overnight camp.

Day 4: Carry to Camp 1, 9 hrs.

Today we carry equipment to camp 1 (3,763m). On this expedition you are required to carry food and some equipment to Camp 1. We may encounter some patches of snow near camp 1 but typically the route is on grass and rock. Once we have dropped our equipment we will return to basecamp for the night. Overnight camp.

Day 5: Move to Camp 1, 7 hrs

Today we retrace our steps and move to Camp 1. Overnight camp.

Day 6: Rest & Skills Day.

We take a rest day today and practise our snow and ice skills. In the mid-morning we go for a short walk to practice walking in crampons, using an ice axe, basic rope work and moving at altitude. Overnight camp.

Day 7: Acclimatisation hike to Lentz Rocks, 6 hrs.

Today we walk to the Lentz rocks (4,650m) gaining significant altitude. We focus on keeping a slow and steady pace to help our acclimatisation. It's a straight forward route and if the weather is good we will have lunch at the rocks and take in the surrounding views before descending back to the camp 1 for dinner. Overnight camp.

Day 8: Rest Day.

We take a day to rest bodies ahead of summit day tomorrow. Overnight camp.

Day 9: Summit Day! 16hrs.

Climbing Elbrus from the North side is very tough. With a 1,900m elevation gain one needs strong physical and

mental strength to reach the summit and return to camp 1. We will start in the very early morning by retracing our steps to the Lentz rocks. Usually we enjoy a break at the rocks for food and a hot drink as the sunrises. Once moving again we pass through an area of rocky outcrops and then start to traverse to the west towards the saddle. The saddle separates the Eastern (5,621m) and Western (5,642) summits of Elbrus. We take another break at the saddle and then ascend up the Western summit. Parts of this ascent are quite steep and there is some fixed rope for a short section. This section takes roughly 90 minutes and all the hard work is well worth it as on a clear day the panoramic views from the summit are second to none. We spend a short while at the summit (5,642m) for photos before descending all the way back to Camp 1. Overnight camp.

Day 10: Spare Summit Attempt.

A spare day in the case of bad weather on Day 9.

Day 11: Camp 1 to Emmanuel Meadows, 4 hrs.

Today we descend back to our base camp in the Emmanuel meadows (2,200m). Overnight camp.

Day 12: Emmanuel Meadows to Pyatigorsk, 4 hrs.

In the morning we drive to Pyatigorsk. Your afternoon is free to visit the health spas or go shopping. In the evening we go for dinner to celebrate the end of our expedition. Overnight hotel.

Day 13: Pyatigorsk to Moscow, 3hrs.

In the morning we drive back to Mineralny Vody for the flight back to Moscow. Overnight hotel.

Day 14: Moscow to Dublin.

Transfer to the airport after breakfast. Depart Moscow on a one stop flight to Dublin. Arrive back in Dublin in the late evening.

Note: In the case of bad weather some teams decide to move to the South side of the mountain and attempt the summit from there. The ascent from the south side requires a shorter weather window and can be a good option provided we can source vehicles for the journey around to Terskol. If there is a change to the itinerary of this nature you will need to pay your share of these costs.

Expedition Costs:

€399 non-refundable deposit at the time of booking & €3,100 balance payment two months before departure - Total €3,499. Read our [best price guarantee](#).

*Prices were set on September 14th, 2015.

Expedition Costs Include:

- International return flights from Dublin to Moscow, economy class.
- Internal return flights from Moscow to Mineralny Vody, economy class.
- All ground transport in Russia.
- All accommodation in hotels and camping for the duration of the itinerary based on two people sharing.
- All meals and drinking water for the duration of the itinerary except in Moscow and Pyatigorsk where accommodation is based on B&B.
- Local guides, permits and park fees.
- Earth's Edge Expedition Leader.
- Earth's Edge Expedition Doctor.
- All group gear consisting of first aid kits, communications equipment and cooking equipment etc.
- An Earth's Edge expedition softshell jacket.
- A celebratory dinner at the end of the expedition.

Expedition Costs Exclude:

- Transfers to and from Dublin airport.

- Expenses of a personal nature like laundry, phone calls, alcohol, tips and any costs arising out of unforeseen circumstances such as bad weather, landslides, road conditions and any other circumstances beyond our control.
- Personal equipment, travel insurance and a tourist visa.
- Sightseeing in Moscow and Pyatigorsk.

Expedition FAQ:

What is the accommodation like on this expedition?

In Moscow and in Pyatigorsk we will be staying in hotels. All rooms are clean and comfortable. While on the mountain we will be camping in two person tents. Our prices are based on two people sharing. It is generally possible to arrange single rooms on Earth's Edge expeditions. Contact us to request a single room.

What is the food like on this expedition?

Food plays a huge part in the success of our expeditions. A cook accompanies all expeditions to prepare nutritious food. All fresh produce is washed using clean water and all perishable items are kept cool. We provide balanced meals which keep participants energised throughout the expedition. We like to cook local seasonal dishes but we also cook western dishes and can cater to all dietary preferences and/or restrictions. Please let us know of your dietary requirements. Please note food in Russia has a reputation for being bland and you should prepare yourself for less than exciting food.

How many people can take part in this expedition?

This expedition will have an average of 8 participants, with 12 being the maximum group size.

Who is leading this expedition?

An Earth's Edge expedition leader accompanies all expeditions. Our leaders are highly experienced and skilled in expedition leadership and wilderness first aid. Local English-speaking guides work with our expedition leaders to run the expedition. Our local guides are highly experienced and very familiar with the expedition route, local history, cultures and customs of the region.

Will I get a chance to meet any of my other team members before departure?

Yes about two months before every expedition we organise a pre-departure meeting. An experienced expedition leader & doctor will meet the group to answer questions about the trek. Most people at this stage will have questions about their equipment and will be given advice on the best way to pack for the trip. This is also a great opportunity for participant's to meet one another before setting off. Around this time you will receive a pre-departure document which will include lots of important information such as what time you need to meet at the airport and emergency contact information that you can pass on to your next of kin. Please note where differences exist between this info pack and the pre-departure document the pre-departure document supersedes.

Can participants extend their stay after the expedition?

Extensions are possible but subject to availability, contact us ASAP if you wish to extend your trip. For extension requests made at least four months before departure there is a change fee of €50 plus fare difference. For requests made between two and four months before departure there is a change fee of €100 plus fare difference. It is not possible to make an extension request within two months of departure.

What back-up support is there on this expedition?

Along with the Earth's Edge expedition leader we use local guides, cooks, and support staff of the highest

standard. We employ local staff based on their qualifications, experience and references. Our expedition leaders and local guides are trained in wilderness first-aid. Our expedition leaders and local staff are familiar with the locations of local medical services and hospitals. Where no mobile/cell phone network is available expeditions are accompanied by two-way radios and satellite phones. Our expedition leaders have 24/7 access to our office in Ireland.

What emergency procedures are in place?

A detailed assessment of risk is completed for all expeditions. The risk assessment covers potential minor and major injuries, environmental risks, political risks and evacuation plans detailing the locations of local hospitals, emergency services and airports.

What happens if someone gets sick or injured?

In the event of someone falling ill or getting injured, the expedition leader will assess and treat the sick or injured person. Often with some rest, participants can continue without a problem. If needed a guide will help the injured person to the next camp where an evacuation to a hospital can be arranged for more serious incidents. In the unlikely event of a serious incident which requires urgent hospital treatment a helicopter evacuation can be requested from local authorities. Extra costs incurred as a result of an evacuation must be paid by the participant. Your personal travel insurance must cover such eventualities.

What happens in bad weather?

In the event of a sudden change of weather conditions the Earth's Edge expedition leader and local guide will assess the situation and make an informed decision on what to do. Participant safety is always the priority in the decision making process. This itinerary has been designed taking into consideration possible bad weather. Alternative routes and contingency plans are always in place in the case of adverse weather conditions.

What happens if the airline loses a participants luggage?

If an airline loses luggage, Earth's Edge will help report the lost baggage and chase up the airline while the participant continues on the expedition. Personal travel insurance should cover the purchase of any necessary clothes and equipment needed. Generally the airline will deliver lost luggage within 24 hours.

What happens if a participant misses their airport connection?

If a flight connection is missed because a previous flight was delayed, the airlines will offer an alternative flight and accommodation if necessary. If this disrupts any part of your expedition, Earth's Edge will make alternative arrangements to get you back on schedule. Any extra costs incurred due to a missed connection will be covered by the airline or the participant's personal travel insurance.

Why Earth's Edge?

- Earth's Edge is Ireland's only fully licensed & bonded adventure travel company.
- Earth's Edge is 100% Irish owned.
- We use (mostly Irish) qualified expedition leaders with solid travel experience & who are 'salt of the earth' genuinely lovely people.
- We send (mostly Irish) doctors on all of our expeditions, regardless of the difficulty or remoteness of its location. They are accompanied by a comprehensive medical kit.
- We excel at expedition planning and management. Each expedition goes through a custom made event check-list starting 12 months before departure to ensure we do all we can to run expeditions as smoothly as possible.
- We provide excellent expedition support. All expeditions are managed from our office in Dublin and have 24/7 support from an operations and medical expert.
- We endeavour to respond to all enquiries from both current & potential clients within 24hrs.
- Our office staff hold bachelor degrees in tourism management and are keen adventurers themselves. So when you make an enquiry you are speaking to an expedition's expert as opposed to a travel agent.
- We offer very inclusive packages which are excellent value for money.
- The emphasis we place on preparing our clients for their expeditions is second to none. We provide detailed informative trip documentation, medical & vaccine guidance & visa support.
- Earth's Edge hold pre-departure events two months prior to each expedition, these include training hikes and a detailed overview of what to expect including expert advice on gear.
- We follow a strict environmental, social & economic responsible travel policy.
- Earth's Edge group sizes are always small. This enables us to minimise our environmental impact & it also ensures we retain the element of adventure in our expeditions that separates them from your average holiday.