



### **Trip Factsheet: Eiger Climber**

#### **The Eiger (3,970m/13,035ft)**

The Eiger is one of the most famous mountains in the Alps due to its famous North Face, one of the 6 great North Faces of the Alps – along with the Matterhorn, the Cima Grande di Lavaredo, the Piz Badile, the Petit Dru and the Grandes Jorasses.

It is located in the Bernese Alps at 46°34'39"N, 8°0'19"E. It was first climbed – via the West Flank – on August 11, 1858.

There are 2 options for the route of ascent, either the Mittellegi Ridge from the Mittellegi Hut or via the South ridge from the Monchjoch hut. The route requires 2 days. The first day you ascend using the Jungfrau railway to the top station from where you walk to the hut. Summit day is a long climb – 800m of ascent - of mixed rock, snow and ice with considerable exposure particularly on the summit ridge. It usually takes 9-10 hours for the ascent and descent which is either via the same route or via the West flank.

#### **Switzerland**

Switzerland is a land-locked alpine country in Western Europe. It is bordered by Germany to the North, Austria and Liechtenstein to the East, Italy to the South and France to the West. It is one of the world's richest countries and its population enjoys a very high standard of living.

Switzerland has 4 national languages: French, German, Italian and Romansh.

#### **Climate**

The Alps generally have a very pleasant climate throughout the spring, summer and autumn with warm days and cool nights, with daytime temperatures in the valley around 24 - 28°C. At high altitude the temperature often goes down below -10 and can feel even colder with wind chill.

#### **Travel to Grindelwald**

The closest international airports to Grindelwald are Zurich and Geneva. We recommend that you travel from the airport by train. The Swiss railway system is very reliable and you'll enjoy great scenery en route.

From Zurich the journey time is about 2¼ hours and from Geneva airport about 3 hours. Both journeys require 1 or 2 changes. For timetables click on [www.sbb.ch/en](http://www.sbb.ch/en)

Want to take the train to the resort? No problem – it's possible to get to Grindelwald by train from the UK using the Eurostar from London St. Pancras to Paris, then the TGV to Basel and onward via regional train. The journey can be done in 1 day. For more information and other useful train travel details look at [www.snowcarbon.co.uk](http://www.snowcarbon.co.uk)

#### **Rendezvous in Grindelwald**

Our Eiger courses start at about 7pm on your day of arrival in Grindelwald with a welcome meeting and briefing with your guide in your hotel. Our guide will come with an up-to-date weather forecast for the week and will run through the planned itinerary and do an equipment

check. This meeting is also an opportunity for you to ask any last minute questions and ensure you have all the information you need for the course.

### **Accommodation in Grindelwald**

We work with a number of small, comfortable hotels in Grindelwald that provide good quality accommodation.

You usually stay just the first and last nights in this hotel on a bed & breakfast basis. Other nights are spent in the high mountain huts.

### **Staying in Mountain Huts**

The high alpine huts are one of the big attractions to mountaineering or trekking in the Alps. They allow us to enjoy the mountains with only light packs and without having to worry about meals or finding somewhere to sleep! Most huts have only very basic facilities. Sleeping arrangements are in mixed sex dormitory-style rooms with bunks; there can be up to 20 people in one room.

Washing facilities are limited and generally there is no running water in any of the huts, although this may vary in some huts. There are basins in which you can use bottled water to wash the best you can and clean your teeth, but they are NOT generally in private cubicles and are mixed sex. Toilets are generally septic-tank type (so non-flushing) and again mixed sex. You need to be prepared for simple living in the huts and appreciate they are located at high altitude and in inhospitable terrain.

A 3-course evening meal and breakfast are served by the guardian and his team and food is usually nourishing and filling. Beer, wine, soft drinks and snacks are also available. All food and drink in the huts is delivered by helicopter and consequently prices will be high e.g. between 3-5€ or 8-12CHF for a 1.5litre bottle of still water.

There are a few basic hut 'rules' that you need to follow so that you (and your fellow climbers) have a pleasant stay:

- On arriving at the hut you must take off your boots and leave these together with your ice-axe, crampons in the foyer. Be sure to store these carefully as the hut is likely to get very busy and you'll need to find all your kit in the morning rush!
- House slippers are provided and must be worn in the hut
- Your guide will register you with the guardian and will assign you your bunk
- Follow the instructions of your guide and keep requests to the guardian and his team to a minimum – they are usually very busy sorting out groups, cooking meals, keeping the hut clean
- In the morning your guide will often want to leave early – be sure to have all your kit ready to go the night before. Be organized and everything will be much easier!

### **Itinerary**

On the first day you will usually ascend to the top of the Jungfrauoch railway before descending and crossing the Aletsch glacier towards the Konkordia hut. We use the Konkordia, Finsteraarhorn and Monchjoch huts to enjoy 3 days of classic mountaineering while maintaining a flexible approach. The training serves as great acclimatisation for the Eiger itself. The principal summits we try to climb are the Monch, Jungfrau and Gross Grunhorn.

The main ascent of the Eiger is over 2 days and we typically start from the Mittellegi hut (Mittellegi Ridge) or from the Monchjoch hut (South Ridge). Either way we start early and the day will be at least 9 - 10 hours in length.

The guide will decide whether it is safe to make the summit attempt and he/she will arrange an alternative itinerary in the case where the Eiger ascent cannot be undertaken. The first 4 days are guided on a 1:2 ratio and the final 2 days are guided on a 1:1 ratio.

### **Training for the Eiger climb**

The Eiger ascent is a challenging climb. Participants must have previous rock and snow/ice climbing experience and have excellent levels of fitness & endurance. You need to be comfortable cramponing on steep 50 degree frozen snow or soft ice, both in ascent and descent. Scrambling on steep rock is good preparation.

Doing sports that increase your aerobic fitness and leg strength are key. So when preparing for this trip nothing beats activities that increase your heart rate and build your aerobic levels e.g. running, cycling and swimming.

Movement skills - agility, balance, flexibility - which allow you to adjust to uneven terrain - are also very relevant. If time permits try to include some yoga or pilates into your training schedule.

#### *Frames of reference:*

- If you are a long distance runner (marathon or half marathon) or similar endurance sport and you're training or competing within 4 -5 months of doing this trip, then you can stop reading now, just keep up the good work!
- If you have run a few 10ks or do sprint/Olympic distance triathlons or compete or train for other similar sporting events then you will be fine too but focus on some long slow walking or running to build your endurance levels a little.
- If you have done very little apart from the occasional 30 minute jog, short cycle ride (mountain bike or road) or you occasionally go to the gym after work – then you have some work to do but fear not you can attain the fitness levels you need but you do need to increase the amount of exercise you do each week and do this well in advance of your trip (ideally 3-4 months out).

For any mountaineering trip you will be doing exercise that requires you to operate for long periods of time at a relatively low intensity. You will be carrying a rucksack which will mean you may have added weight to carry but it's a lot easier if you have strong core muscles (stomach and back). It's also essential to prepare and practise walking downhill, not just up! Long, steep downhill walks take their toll on your body too, hips, knees and ankles need to get used to the motion of going down on varied terrain. So make sure you not only get lots of uphill but you train to walk down too.

It's best to get prepared in plenty of time, not by trying to pack in as much training in the last 2-3 weeks as it takes about this length of time for the body to adapt to an increase in exercise. Don't think that you will get fit during the programme you won't and don't think that simply going to the gym to run on the treadmill for 40mins twice a week will be enough – it won't! In the last 2 weeks you can decrease the amount and intensity of the exercise you do; so you arrive fresh and ready for the challenge.

Good fitness will make your trip overall much more enjoyable and you will get more out of it!  
For more information contact us and we'll send you our 12 week training guide.

### **What's included in the price of your holiday?**

- All guide fees and expenses
- 2 nights B&B hotel accommodation (twin share) in Grindelwald
- Half board mountain hut accommodation

### **Scheduled expenses**

- Travel to and from Grindelwald
- Evening meals in Grindelwald
- Uplift costs and local transfers – the Jungfrau railway from Interlaken to the Jungfrauoch is expensive costing more than 100CHF per person
- Lunches and drinks (25-35 CHF per day)
- Equipment hire (as required)
- Personal Insurance

### **Equipment and Kit Hire**

A copy of our recommended Alpine Mountaineering kit list can be found on our website or email our office for a copy.

If you need to rent any technical equipment you should let us know in advance. This can usually be arranged through our guides and you will need to pay the guide directly in resort in Swiss Francs.

### **Insurance**

You need to have personal insurance that covers you for your alpine activity and the cover must include helicopter rescue.

For UK & European residents we recommend the Ski Club's insurance. For more details and to purchase a policy online visit <http://www.skiclubinsurance.co.uk/> If you need assistance with arranging insurance please let us know.

You should bring a copy of your insurance certificate with you to the Alps.

For EU residents we recommend that you also obtain the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) prior to travel and take this with you in addition to your personal insurance.

See <https://www.gov.uk/european-health-insurance-card>

### **What happens next?**

We will contact you 8 weeks before your arrival date to request the final balance payment.

Two weeks before your arrival date we will email you final joining instructions with relevant contact details for your guide(s), hotels, etc.

### **More information**

If you have any questions or need further details don't hesitate to contact us:

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