



# EIGER MITTELLEGI RIDGE

3,970M/13,025FT

EX CHAMONIX

2021 TRIP NOTES







# EIGER MITTELLEGI RIDGE TRIP NOTES

## 2021 TRIP DETAILS

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

**Duration:** 6 days

**Departure:** ex Chamonix, France

**Price:** €5,300 1:1 guide to climber ratio

Climbers reach the false summit of the Eiger. Photo: Paul Palanca

The Eiger is a dramatic mountain steeped in a colourful history, not because of its first ascent via the West Flank in 1858, but more-so because of the attempts to climb its formidable Nordwand (North Face) in the 1930s that saw prospective ascensionists perish. We climb the Eiger by the long and exposed Mittellegi Ridge, the East Ridge of the mountain overlooking the famous North Face. The first few days of the programme involve warming up on some classic peaks around Chamonix and then in the Oberland close to the Eiger. These ascents are very good for getting your mind and body prepared for the intensity of climbing a big alpine route like the Eiger's Mittellegi Ridge.

The climbing on the Mittellegi is predominantly on rock with a very exposed snow crest near the top. Initially, you will climb in the dark but as dawn breaks you will be suitably impressed with the exposure on both sides of the ridge! The climb stays near the ridgeline, moving from side to side of the ridge, over and around towers and in the steeper sections we are aided by a thick hand line that is fixed in place on the mountain.

In order to get up this long route, prospective climbers must be confident rock climbing in alpine boots to grade US5.7/ AUS 15/ UK HS and be capable of moving at a steady pace for extended periods in technical terrain. We descend from the summit via the West Flank or the South Ridge, depending on conditions.

## HISTORY

The Eiger was first climbed via the West Flank in 1858 by Charles Barrington, Christian Almer and Peter Bohren. The first ascent of the Mittellegi Ridge was made by Fritz Amatter, Samuel Brawand, Yuko Maki and Fritz Steuri on 10 September 1921. Note: Don't let the date of the first ascent fool you into thinking the climb is easy! The route is long, difficult and serious. That the ascent was done in that era is more a reflection of the skills of the first ascensionists than an indication of it being easy.





A panoramic view across lush pastures, forests and towns below. Photo: Paul Palanca

## ABOUT THE CLIMB

Forming the left edge of the North Face, the Mittellegi Ridge rises in imposing steps and towers to a knife-edge snow crest leading to the summit. More technical than the Matterhorn, even with sections of fixed rope, it was the last of the great Oberland ridges to be climbed (1921).

As you climb the ridge looking down to your left you see majestic glaciers and on the right, you see the green meadows of Grindelwald. On the descent, we get to look down onto the famous North Face, climbed by four talented Austrian/German mountaineers in 1938.

During the ascent, we follow the very exposed ridge crest, turning and ascending rock towers along the way. We are assisted by a rather fat fixed rope that will help us through the steeper sections. Near the top, we climb a steep and airy snow arête with significant exposure on both sides, not for the faint-hearted!

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 4-6 hours and we'll take further 6-7 hours to descend. We usually descend via the West Flank or the South Ridge.

This ascent rewards those who are well prepared you will really enjoy this climb for its intensity and technical challenges.

## TRIP OUTLINE

Your guide will meet with you on the morning after your arrival in Chamonix, France, for an equipment check and briefing about the upcoming programme and anticipated weather conditions. You will then take a lift to a high mountain region close to Chamonix, where you will make ascents of appropriate training routes on the Aiguille de l'Index. This is the time where you get to practice climbing skills and start to acclimatise for the ascent of the Eiger in the final days of the programme.

The following day you will ascend to the Aiguille du Midi to climb the Arête des Cosmiques (AD, 3,800m/12,500ft), which is a very enjoyable climb on mixed snow and rock. In addition to being a really good day out in the mountains, this will help to consolidate your acclimatisation and to get some good climbing under your belt to get you well prepared for the upcoming ascent.

Once training has been completed, you will travel with your guide to Switzerland and ascend to the Mönchjochs Hut, climbing a route on the Mönch enroute. After the Mönch, you will take the train to the Eismeer station and from here you rappel onto the glacier and climb via steep rock to the Mittellegi Hut. It is from here you will make the ascent the following morning. After descending you return to Chamonix for the night.



▲The Eiger stands omnipotent behind Mittellegi Hut. Photo: Tim Robertson

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 appropriately prepared climbers a serious chance of attaining an ascent of this classic route.

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 collectively 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 by signing up for our 2-day Europe Pre-Course & Acclimatisation Programme.

## PREREQUISITE EXPERIENCE

To climb the Eiger's Mittellegi Ridge you need to be physically fit, have strong 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 their ability to succeed will be determined more by their current condition and capability than previous ascents they may have made in the past.

In order to get up this long route, prospective climbers must be confident in 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.

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 climbing history will include ascents of long and technical multi-pitch alpine routes, and you will be an active rock climber, current with use of rope skills and snow and ice climbing techniques.



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 Europe Pre-Course & Acclimatisation Programme in Chamonix prior to partaking in the ascent.

## ITINERARY

### DAY 0

Arrive Chamonix, hotel night.

### DAY 1

Meet your guide for a briefing and gear check before taking La Flégère and l'Index Lifts to 2,385m/7,825ft. Big boot rock climbing revision and training. Traverse the peaks of Aiguille de l'Index (2,595m/8,514ft) and return via La Flégère Lift. Chamonix hotel night.

### DAY 2

Take the Aiguille du Midi Lift (3,842m/12,605ft) and ascend the famous Arête des Cosmiques (3,800m/12,500ft). Drive to Grindelwald in Switzerland (3.5 hours). Hotel night.

### DAY 3

Train to Jungfrauoch (1.5 hours), climb the Mönch (3,585m/11,762ft) enroute to the Mönchjochs Hut (3,658m/12,001ft). The South-East Ridge (AD) of the Mönch is a delightful scramble, with an exposed knife-edge crest to finish. Fine views extend out to both the Eiger and the Jungfrau from the top. Overnight at Mönchjochs Hut.

### DAY 4

Train down to Eismeer station (1.5 hours). Short rappel to glacier, cross glacier and climb difficult ground (4 hours, AD) to Mittellegi Hut (3,355m/11,007ft).

### DAY 5

Climb Mittellegi Ridge (4,215m/13,829ft, 4-6 hours, D) and descend South Ridge to the North Eigerjoch, and then return to Mönchjochs Hut (6-7hours).



▲ A snow-covered Mittellegi Ridge. Photo: Andrew Peacock



▲ View from just below Mittellegi Hut. Photo: Paul Palanca



▲ Led by experienced and qualified IFMGA Mountain Guides. Photo: Paul Palanca

## DAY 6

Descend to Grindelwald and return to Chamonix possibly rock climbing en route. Possible spare weather day for Eiger summit. Hotel night in Chamonix.

## DAY 7

Depart Chamonix after breakfast.

**NOTE:** We can also initiate the programme in Lauterbrunnen, Switzerland, where we acclimatise on local peaks prior to climbing the Eiger. 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.

## CLIMBING SEASON

We operate on the Eiger in the summer months between July and 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 the summer months from mid-July, we traditionally experience more settled weather and warmer temperatures.

## WEATHER

Europe has a continental climate, which in general encourages more 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.



▲ Depart from the alpine centre of Chamonix. Photo: Guy Cotter



▲ Climbers on the Eiger. Photo: Paul Palani



▲ Descending off the Mörch. Photo: Stefan Spori



## 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 on confirmation of your booking. Your guide will go through this with you at the beginning of your trip. You can rent technical equipment for the climb, 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 schedule and weather forecast updates, lift

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

## FITNESS & HEALTH

To make the most of your climbing experience, you must train in the months leading up to your trip. By adopting a programme of running, cycling and/or hill walking you will greatly increase your chance of success on this peak. Build up your training 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 600m/2,000ft 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.

Our registration form requests that you advise us of any medical problems you may have and of any medication 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 Chamonix and Grindelwald. 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 with you to ensure you are fuelled for 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.



▲ A view of the Eiger. Photo: Tim Robertson





▲ On the Eiger's summit. Photo: Paul Palanca

## ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation is provided on a twin share B&B basis from your arrival on the evening of Day 0 through to and including the night of Day 6. 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 is no single supplement or private rooms available in the mountain huts but we can arrange this for you in Chamonix or Grindelwald. We can also arrange an upgrade to four or five-star hotel accommodation—please ask about the hotel options if interested.

## TRAVEL TO CHAMONIX

We commence our Eiger Guided Ascent from Chamonix in France. The closest international airport is in Geneva, just over the border in Switzerland. Regular shuttles operate through to Chamonix and the trip takes about 1.5 hours. Your shuttle driver will drop you at your accommodation. At the completion of the course, the shuttle can take you from your hotel back to the airport. The shuttle transfers are at your own cost, but we can help arrange this for you.

## 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 scheduled climb to assist with your acclimatisation. Climbers regularly attend our Europe Pre-Course & Acclimatisation Programme in Chamonix prior to partaking in the ascent. This 2-day acclimatisation and re-familiarisation programme takes you on day climbs to high elevations. The peaks are easily accessible from Chamonix and will kickstart your acclimatisation and get you out climbing before the main programme begins. By enhancing your acclimatisation and fine-tuning your skills before the Eiger programme begins, you experience more enjoyment from the climb and enjoy a greater success rate.



▲ Approaching the summit of the Mönch. Photo: Phil Ashby

## PRICES

Cost for the Eiger Guided Ascent, ex Chamonix is €5,300 on 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 4 nights as per schedule, 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 Chamonix and Grindelwald
- Lunches
- Extra additional meals, snacks or drinks purchased from huts or hotels
- Insurance for travel and climbing in Europe
- Transport to and from Chamonix (although we can arrange it for you)
- Gratuity

## EUROPE PRE-COURSE & ACCLIMATISATION PROGRAMME PRICING

€890 per person at a 1:2 guide to climber ratio  
 €1,500 per person at a 1:1 guide to climber ratio

The trip price includes the hotel on arrival day and first night. The hotel on the second night would be included as Day 0 on the Eiger Guided Ascent programme to follow. Please note this programme is to immediately precede the Eiger Guided Ascent with no rest day in between.

## 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:** 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 your place on one of our Eiger 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 trip start date.

## 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 Eiger Guided Ascents, please complete our online booking form and forward your deposit payment at <https://www.adventureconsultants.com/expeditions/european-ascents/eiger-via-mittellegi-ridge/book-now>.

If you require more information, please contact us at:

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**Web:** [www.adventureconsultants.com](http://www.adventureconsultants.com)



▲ Early morning views across the surrounding mountains. Photo: Paul Palanca



▲ On the summit of the Eiger. Photo: Phil Ashby



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.

