



## **Trip Factsheet: Monte Rosa Climber**

### **Zermatt**

Zermatt is a charming alpine village. It is car-free and reached only by a 15 minute train journey from the valley station of Tasch. As you would expect given its location it is one of Europe's main centres of Alpinism and is a bustling town in both winter and summer. The town is at 1,650m/5,420ft. Zermatt is in the German-speaking section of Switzerland. English (and French) are widely spoken.

For further details on Zermatt click on the Zermatt Tourism website at [www.zermatt.ch/en/](http://www.zermatt.ch/en/)

### **Monte Rosa (4,634m/15,203ft)**

Monte Rosa is the second highest mountain in the Alps and the highest mountain in Switzerland. The Monte Rosa is known in German as the Dufourspitze. It is in the Monte Rosa massif which is a range that lies on the border between Switzerland and Italy and is made up of several summits over 4500m, including Nordend, Zumsteinspitze, Signalkuppe and Ludwigshöhe.

Monte Rosa is located in the Pennine Alps (at 45°56'12.6"N, 7°52'01.4"E), 12kms east of Zermatt. It was first climbed in 1855.

We usually ascend Monte Rosa over a 3 day period via the West ridge - the route is graded AD. The ascent begins from the Monte Rosa Hut which is accessed via the Gornergrat railway and a 2 hour trek. Summit day is a long, steady climb with 1800m of ascent to the highest point, called the Dufourspitze. There is a short grade 3 rock section and ice-slopes up to 40 degrees. Virtually all of the climbing requires crampons and ice-axe.

### **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.

### **Travel to Zermatt**

The closest airports to Zermatt 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 or Geneva the journey time is between 3½ and 4 hours and usually requires 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 Zermatt by train from the UK using the Eurostar from London St. Pancras to Paris, then the TGV to Geneva 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)

Swiss Transfer Ticket - this is a return ticket from the Swiss boarder or one of Switzerland's airports to your destination. The ticket is valid for 1 month, but each journey must be completed in one day and on the most direct route. The transfer ticket cannot be brought in

Switzerland you must do it in advance from a sales point like the Switzerland Travel Centre in London.

You can purchase a transfer ticket from the Switzerland Travel Centre [www.stc.co.uk](http://www.stc.co.uk) Tel: 0207 420 4934. They need 10 days to process and post the card to you but you cannot get one more than 2 months in advance of your travel. Their website contains all the information about all the Swiss Travel Passes available.

### **Rendezvous in Zermatt**

Our Monte Rosa climbs start and finish in Zermatt. They start at about 7pm on your day of arrival in Zermatt 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 Zermatt**

Our preferred hotel in Zermatt is the Hotel Tannenhof [www.rhone.ch/tannenhof](http://www.rhone.ch/tannenhof)

This is a small, family run hotel in the centre of the Village.

The address is: Hotel Tannenhof, Englischer Viertel 3, Zermatt; Tel: +41 27 697 31 88; Fax: +41 27 967 31 73.

The hotel offers basic accommodation but is clean and comfortable. Most rooms are en-suite but it also has rooms which use shared facilities.

You usually stay 3 nights during the week 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 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 can 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. e.g. between 10-12€ or 12-16CHF 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 trekkers) have a pleasant stay:

- Before you go inside the hut you must take off your boots and leave these together with your ice-axe, crampons, harness and helmet in the boot room. 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, which will all look the same!
- ***Top Tip:*** *clearly name or place a small amount of coloured tape on your boots, axe, crampons, harness and helmet to help you identify them amongst all the others*

- Hut 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!

What to wear in the hut - we are often asked by people what they should wear in the hut. It's a good question as you don't want to carry many or any extra clothes with you if they are not required. In the huts you will probably end up wearing your base layer thermals (top & bottom) or you can carry a lightweight pair of loose trousers to wear around the hut in the afternoons/evenings. Your base layer top is what you will probably wear on your top half or you can carry a t-shirt to wear in the hut that can double to sleep in.

### **Meals**

Breakfasts: in the huts a typical breakfast will consist of coffee, tea, hot chocolate, orange juice, bread, butter, jam.

Evening meals: a set menu of 3 courses. Typical menu will be soup to start, a main dish of meat or pasta with mash or rice and vegetables. Dessert will be fruit or mousse. Most huts now cater well for vegetarian, vegan and gluten free diets; however you need to remember that they don't have an unlimited supply of fresh food and subsequently choice can be limited, you cannot afford to be fussy!

Lunch: huts offer a basic packed lunch which you can order the night before, this will usually consist of bread with cheese, salami and/or a sandwich plus a chocolate bar, crisps and fresh fruit if they have it available.

Drinks and snacks: the huts serve tea, coffee, bottled water, soft drinks, beer and wine. They also sell some snacks. Items sold in the huts are expensive and we do recommend you bring some of your favourite hill snacks with you on the trip.

Please note that lunches, drinks and snacks are not included in the price of the trip and need to be paid for individually.

### **Guides and Group Sizes**

All our trekking trips are run by our team of IFMGA Mountain Guides. The team is led by Olly Allen, Matt Dickinson and Nick Parks. The maximum ratio for the Monte Rosa Climber is 1:2 for the week.

### **Itinerary**

Our standard Monte Rosa course is 6 guided days with 7 nights' accommodation.

We keep the itinerary flexible and your guide will decide on the itinerary for the training and preparation days based on the ground and weather conditions and your previous mountaineering experience.

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 Monte Rosa ascent cannot be undertaken.

### **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.

### **Training for the Monte Rosa climb**

The Monte Rosa is a long but moderately straightforward ascent with some exposed sections, a short grade 3 rock climb and ice-slopes up to 40 degrees. You will need to climb with ice-axe and crampons and previous experience of alpine climbing and mountaineering is desirable. You will be climbing for 6-8 hours on varied terrain up and down steep hills carrying a larger rucksack, so you'll soon be found out if you're not in tip-top condition.

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

- Zermatt hotel accommodation on B&B basis (twin rooms)
- Hut fees with breakfast and evening meal

### **Scheduled expenses**

- Travel to and from Zermatt
- Evening meals in Zermatt
- Uplift costs and local transfers – the main lifts in Zermatt are expensive. We estimate the costs will be in the region of £150-£175 for the week which will need to be paid locally in Euros and Swiss Francs.
- Lunches and drinks (25-35 CHF per day)
- Equipment hire (as required)
- Personal Insurance

### **Spending Money**

You should bring an allowance for lunches, drinks (including bottled water) which is brought in huts and can be expensive. We suggest around 80 – 100€ plus 200 – 250 Swiss Francs should be sufficient to cover all personal expenses. Please note that most of the trip is in Switzerland but you will also be crossing into Italy so you should bring your money in Swiss Francs but also some Euros. There are cash point facilities in Zermatt. Please note most mountain huts do not accept credit cards.

### **Equipment and Kit Hire**

A copy of our recommended ski kit list can be found on our website or you can call or email us and we will send you a copy.

Essential items you need to have:

- Mountaineering boots B2 or B3 that are crampon compatible
- Ice axe
- Crampons
- Climbing helmet
- Harness with karabiner
- Telescopic walking poles
- 30 – 35 litre rucksack

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 or Euros.

### **Food**

We suggest you bring with you or buy in resort snack food that you can take out on the hill with you each day. Things like cereal bars, dried fruit and nuts, chocolate, sugary sweets or your favourite hill snacks. When you're staying overnight in huts its best to take supplies for the days you are away. Huts do sell food but it's expensive and sometimes stocks run low.

If you have any food allergies or dietary requirements especially if you are a Coeliac (Gluten free) or have a dairy allergy we recommend you bring some food with you so you can supplement your dinners. Most huts now cater well for vegetarian, vegan and gluten free diets;

however you need to remember that they don't have an unlimited supply of fresh food and subsequently choice can be limited, you cannot afford to be fussy!  
The huts can provide a small basic packed lunch of bread, salami, cheese and chocolate that you can buy each day but it's important that you don't rely on this option only. You do need to carry some snack food for each day.

You will also generally stop for short breaks each hour where you should eat something each time so you maintain your energy levels throughout the day.

### **Insurance**

You need to have personal insurance that covers you for off piste skiing 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.

Around 2-3 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:

Email: [info@mountaintracks.co.uk](mailto:info@mountaintracks.co.uk)

Phone: +44 20 8123 2978

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