



The Ascent of the Matterhorn

The Matterhorn, one of the most impressive and famous peaks of the Alps, has unfortunately become more and more of a fashionable and prestige mountain in recent years. It must therefore be explicitly emphasized that the Matterhorn is one of the most difficult classic alpine ascents. Even experienced mountaineers are strongly advised to hire a mountain guide for the ascent.

Prerequisites

An excellent level of fitness (8–9 hours) and very good acclimatization are required to climb the Matterhorn. This is best achieved through intensive training in the surroundings of Zermatt (daily ascents of 1,000–1,500 meters of elevation gain at a pace of around 400 vertical meters per hour, including breaks). Naturally, you should already have a very good basic level of fitness before arriving in Zermatt.

To prepare both physically and technically and to acclimatize to the thin mountain air, we recommend a minimum stay in Zermatt of one week to ten days.

In addition to the outstanding physical demands, the ascent is also technically challenging. Rock climbing sections, movement in alpine terrain, and the use of crampons are essential skills.

Important

Before attempting the Matterhorn ascent, we strongly recommend a preparatory climb. Depending on your experience and fitness level, this serves as a final refinement and test for the Matterhorn ascent.

Possible preparation tours include:

- **Pollux (4,091 m a.s.l.)** – *Day tour*
An ascent over rock and ice that leaves no time for boredom; 5–6 hours from Klein Matterhorn.
- **Half Breithorn Traverse (4,165 m a.s.l.)** – *Day tour*
Interesting rock climbing with breathtaking exposure for confident, sure-footed climbers; 4–5 hours from Klein Matterhorn.
- **Rimpfischhorn (4,199 m a.s.l.)** – *With overnight stay at Fluhalp hut*
A combined rock and ice tour; approx. 6 hours ascent.
- **Riffelhorn (2,928 m a.s.l.)** – *Day tour*
Rock climbing with the Matterhorn climbing parcours; approx. 4 hours from Rotenboden.

Season

The best time to climb the Matterhorn is between mid-July and mid-September, depending on prevailing weather and snow conditions. We recommend planning the ascent outside the peak season (i.e., not between August 1st and 15th).

On the evening before the ascent, the mountain guide meets the guest at the Hörnli Hut. The ascent usually begins at approximately 3:30–5:00 a.m. the following morning and takes about four hours. The descent requires a similar amount of time.

For safety reasons, the mountain guide takes only one guest on the rope.

Equipment

Crampons, climbing harness, and helmet (mandatory). Technical equipment can be rented at any sports shop. Rigid, crampon-compatible mountain boots with profiled rubber soles, backpack approx. 30 liters, warm and weatherproof clothing, gloves, hat, headlamp, sunglasses, sunscreen, small but energy-rich food (glucose tablets, dried fruit, chocolate), and a thermos flask (tea is available at the hut) or a 1-liter drinking bottle.

Costs

The mountain guiding fee for the ascent of the Matterhorn is **CHF 1,600** total (excluding preparation tour). The guide takes only one guest on the rope.

Extras: Overnight stay at the hut with half board for both guide and guest (CHF 150 per person), marching tea, as well as a diploma and a commemorative medal upon successful ascent.

General Conditions

Private insurance is required. Every mountaineer must be personally insured against mountain accidents. Additionally, we recommend purchasing the Air Zermatt rescue card for CHF 30 / €20 per person per year.

Cancellation Conditions

If the tour must be aborted or canceled at short notice due to inadequate preparation of the guest, the mountain guide must be fully compensated. In the event of deteriorating weather during the tour, compensation is based on the length of the tour completed. If the tour does not start due to bad weather, a bad-weather fee of CHF 200 will be charged.

