

Climb Mulhacen - the Highest Peak in Spain



Highlights

Climb mighty Mulhacen! This is Spain's highest peak and the highest in Europe, outside the Alps and the Caucasus. This expertly guided hike can be attempted at any time of year; it's non-technical, but will still get the blood pumping!

Spain's most majestic landscape, it's difficult to talk about the Sierra Nevada without slipping into hyperbole. Snow-clad ridges, sparkling mountain lakes and vast plateaus make this a hiking paradise, as well as one of the best places in southern Europe for birding and wildlife spotting – the biosphere reserve is home to golden eagles, wild cats and the nimble-footed Spanish Ibex. Towering over all this is Mulhacen (3,479 metres), the highest summit in the Iberian Peninsula and the third most topographically-prominent peak in Europe, after Mont Blanc and Mount Etna.

Mulhacen can be attempted at any time of year and in the summer you can tackle the summit in one day. All treks include a pre-departure overnight stay in Lanjarón. The single day trek goes via the Hoya de Portillo and involves a 1,300 metre ascent and 8-9 hours walking. Alternatively you can choose the longer trek, which begins with a 900m ascent and a 4 hour climb to Poqueira Hut, where you'll spend the night. The hut is a guarded refuge with beds, blankets, food and, most importantly, wine! The next day you will tackle a 1,000 metre ascent along the Rio Mulhacen and up the steep western flank of the mountain to the summit, where you will stand on the highest point of the Iberian Peninsula. It's then back down the gentle southern ridge, about 8 hours walking in all.

If you fancy something a little different you can try the ascent in winter. The route is the same as the multi-day summer trek, but you'll be kitted out with ice-axe and crampons (you'll be instructed on how to use these on Day One, and the team will advise you on what clothes to bring before your trip). The Sierra Nevada may lack the spectacular peaks of the Alps, but their epic sweep and the sense of solitude they engender make them one of Europe's ultimate travel destinations.

Is it for me?

At 3,479 metres high Mulhacen is no walk in the park. You will need to be fit enough to climb to its peak and hardy enough to withstand the mountain elements. Expect to sweat for your supper, and to pick up a few blisters on the way.

Altitude shouldn't be a problem and there are no sheer drops, but you will be walking for up to eight hours per day. If you have the physical strength and stamina for this we definitely recommend Mulhacen. The ascent itself is non-technical, so you don't need much actual mountaineering experience. With expert guides, comfy cabin accommodation, hot meals and local transport all organised, it's rarely this quick and painless to scale a mountain!

If you are unsure of your ability or have no previous experience of hill walking you might like to start with a gentler trek, perhaps in the Sierra de Huetor or Alpujarras.

Accommodation

If you go for the two-day ascent you will stay the night in the Poqueira Hut, on the lower slopes of Mulhacen. The hut has room for 84 people, and offers beds, blankets, meals and drinks. Here you'll be able to refuel and relax

Prices from

84 GBP (1 day) per person

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with some local 'vino caliente'.

Accommodation 'on the ground' is in nearby Lanjarón. Here you have the option of staying in the "Apartamentos Rurales de Lanjarón", which have been completed in rustic Andalucian style. They are furnished to a high standard with all modern conveniences. There are wood-burning fires for the winter months and comfortable bedrooms to rest your muscles in. There is also a hotel and a number of holiday cottages available in and around the town.

Your guides will point you in the direction of the many local bars & restaurants that Lanjarón has to offer. Expect to pay about half as much for food here as you would in London.

Itinerary

You will meet your guides at 10 am in Lanjarón on your first day of climbing. All the guides speak English and most of them also speak Spanish. You are most likely to be in a group of four.

Summer ascents...

In the summer it is possible to climb the mountain in one day. The following itinerary is for this option (including the first night in Lanjarón).

Day One - Lanjarón

Arrive in the spa town of Lanjarón the evening before your trek.

Day Two - Hoya de Portillo

You will trek to and from the Hoya de Portillo. Today you will cover a 1300m ascent, which is about 8-9 hours of walking, by the long south ridge and descend via the west flank.

The following itinerary is for the two day trek:

Day One - Lanjarón

As above.

Day Two - Poqueira Hut

Climb to the Poqueira Hut at 2500m. The walk takes 4 hours and involves a 900m ascent. There you will stay the night. The Poqueira Hut is a guarded refuge with beds, blankets, meals and wine. This is a great place to spend the night before ascending the peak.

Day Three - Mulhacen

You will follow the Rio Mulhacen before climbing the steep west flank of the mountain to the summit. The return is down the long but easy south ridge. This day involves about 8 hours walking with a 1000m ascent.

Winter Ascents...

In winter the ascent takes two-days. The route is the same as for the summer ascent. On Day One you will be supplied with ice axe and crampons and given instructions. You will be advised of clothing and equipment requirements beforehand.

Details

Getting there

Flying from the UK...

Fly to one of the three airports servicing the region: Granada (GRX), Malaga (AGP) or Almeria (LEI).

-From the South East: easyJet and Ryanair fly most days from London Stansted to Malaga; and AerLingus and Tap Portugal fly daily from London Gatwick to Almeria.

-From the South West: easyJet and Ryanair fly several times each week from Bristol to Malaga.

-From the Midlands: BMI Baby flies once per week from East Midlands Airport to Almeria and every day to Malaga.

-From the North West: Monarch Airlines flies several times per week from Manchester Airport to Malaga and Almeria.

-From Scotland: Ryanair flies three times per week from Edinburgh to Malaga.

Getting to Lanjarón...

-Transfers from airports:

If you arrive at Granada airport go through the double door into the main airport terminal, turn left, walk 30 metres and then turn right through the doors. Outside the terminal you will be met by the representative. Transfer to Lanjarón from here is 45 minutes.

If you arrive at Malaga airport wait just inside the main door to the outside near the photo kiosk or car park payment machine. You will be met here. Transfer to Lanjarón from here is around two hours.

If you arrive at Almeria airport you will be met in the main arrivals hall. From here transfer to Lanjarón is around 2.5 hours.

-Transfers by bus:

Granada is the nearest major city to Lanjarón. Alsina Graells buses operate out of Granada's bus station which is 3 km north west of the centre. Buses run daily from and to many destinations, including Malaga and Almeria. Go to [Alsina Graells](#) to consult timetables, fares and destinations.

Joining instructions...

Meet your group and guides at 10 am on Day One in Lanjarón.

End your trek in the late afternoon of the final day.

Price includes

Gear hire, local transport, backup vehicles, overnight accommodation in Lanjarón, and experienced Alpine, local and UK guides.

When is best

As you can scale the summit of Mulhacen in winter or summer there is no recommended time to travel. Weather conditions may affect the itinerary however, and on any mountain climb it is a good idea to know what awaits you before you head out. In the high Sierra Nevada it can snow for six months of the year. Your guides are all qualified mountain leaders and will know what is happening or going to happen in terms of the weather so you will be able to get advice and guidance from them.

Comfort level

Down to earth (hostels, camping, huts)

Experience required

Some previous experience is needed

Travellers should bring

The equipment you bring varies depending on what time of year you decide to go. Below is a recommended list for both seasons.

Summer ascent single day kit list 35 to 50 litre rucksack; 2 to 3 litres of water either in bottles or hydration sacks; sun hat; sun cream (P20 recommended); lip cream (Carmex recommended); sunglasses; lightweight trousers (shorts not recommended); lightweight boots; lightweight waterproof and windproof jacket; thermal base layer; trekking poles; food and snacks for the day; socks; lightweight fleece or vest; thermal gloves (even in summer you will need these up high)

Summer ascent multi day kit list (in addition to summer ascent single day kit list) 60 to 70 litre rucksack (this can be supplied in Lanjarón); 3 season sleeping bag; warm fleece or down jacket; warm headware; headtorch (Petzl recommended); toilet paper; toiletries; rubbish bag (all rubbish and packaging must be taken away); food to eat during the day (sealed, dehydrated food is available to buy).

Winter ascent multi day kit list (in addition to summer ascent single day kit list) 50 to 60 litre rucksack (can be supplied); warm fleece or down jacket; warm headware; headtorch (Petzl recommended); boots (4 season boots are best and you will need boots that take crampons); winter gloves; mountaineering jacket (Paramo recommended); thermal winter trousers; extra base layers; crampons (can be supplied); ice axe (can be supplied); helmet (can be supplied); harness (can be supplied); snowshoes (can be supplied).

Reviews (2)

Reviews of this experience

“ I found this trip a fantastic and unique trip, First, I liked the professional team who took care of everything and was always on time, secondly, it was a good chance to enjoy the mountains in Spain. I do recommend it to anyone who love adventures and enjoy a special experience. Also the experienced staff, helped me to have the right expectations about the trip, therefore I was prepared to everything. it is unforgettable experience. Simply, at the top, you have just reached the highest summit in Spain. ”

Ahmed reviewing Climb Mulhacen - the Highest Peak in Spain

“ I would definitely recommend this trip to others. A great challenge and fantastic views make the uphill exertion completely worthwhile! ”

Natasha reviewing Climb Mulhacen - the Highest Peak in Spain