climb
Mount Etna
Trek through pine forests and past ancient lava flows, picnic overlooking Sicily and cross the snow line en route to the crater of Mount Etna, Europe’s highest and most active volcano.

actionchallenge on Mount Etna

A fabulous hike up the iconic, active volcano of Mount Etna. This fascinating five day adventure takes us from the fertile lower slopes, past the scars of previous eruptions and beyond the snow-line to Etna’s active crater at the summit.

Our journey starts in Taormina, where we explore the town and enjoy delicious Sicilian food before beginning our trek with a tough walk up Etna’s slopes from Ragabo refuge. The trails are in good condition, surrounded by fascinating evidence of previous Etna explosions. We are accompanied by our specialist guide who explains the history, geology and activity of Europe’s highest and most active volcano. We see early lava flows on the lower slopes before gaining height and entering into the birch and pine forests en route Maletto.

From here we skirt the western flanks of Etna, passing the town of Bronte. Picnic spots don’t come better than this as we sit on Etna’s volcanic slopes, overlooking the towns of Biancavilla and Adrano, before trekking up to base camp. The last push from base camp to the summit is tough. Heading north, we trek together for 8 km up the steep slopes with incredible views across the southern part of the island spreading out before us. We begin to feel the mountainous conditions as the wind picks up and, with snow underfoot, we continue climbing to Refugio Alpino (2900m) and the summit of great Mount Etna. Our fantastic achievement is rewarded with incredible views of Etna’s live volcanic vents and craters.

We have a steep descent back to our refuge at 2,000 m before transferring back to our hotel for a celebratory meal with our group to toast our volcanic, Sicilian adventure!

at a glance
• Activity: Trekking
• Location: Mount Etna, Italy
• Duration: 5 days / 3 days trekking
• Difficulty: Moderate
• Distance: 63 km
• When: May 2014 / 2015
• Group size: 15 - 25 people

trip highlights
• Explore Taormina
• Learn Etna’s volcanic history
• Walk alongside early lava flows
• Picnic overlooking Biancavilla
• See the craters at Etna’s summit
• See Catania / Palermo
• Enjoy Sicilian meals and local wines

Action Challenge have been leading inspirational team adventures across the world for individuals, private groups, charities and corporate clients since 1999. Our trips enable people to experience the world’s most exhilarating locations, often in aid of charity. At the heart of every challenge is team spirit and fulfilment; together we take on once-in-a-lifetime adventures, achieve formidable goals and forge friendships for life.
Breakfasts each morning will be at our hotel and will typically consist of porridge, yoghurt and muesli. Lunches will be en route and evening meals will be at our hotel with a variety of rice, pasta, vegetables and a selection of fresh meat and fresh fish. We can cater for all dietary requirements if informed in advance.

introduction
This fully-inclusive adventure to Mount Etna will begin as soon as you register! You will receive a challenge pack including a training guide, kit list and discounts for all the essentials you may need. If you are raising money for a charity, we will sort out all the formalities so you can concentrate on your own preparation and fundraising. We offer pre-challenge briefings and training weekends in the UK, where you can meet our trek leaders, members of your group and others taking part in challenges around the world. On the day of departure you will meet your group and Action Challenge leader at the airport in London. Whether you’re joining the challenge on your own or with others, you will instantly be made to feel welcome. As a team we will board our flight to Catania, ready to take on the hike of a lifetime!

brief itinerary
| Day 1 | Depart London | Day 4 | Summit Craters |
| Day 2 | Pista Alta Montana | Day 5 | Palermo |
| Day 3 | Etna Base Camp | |

what’s included
- International flights
- Action Challenge trek leader
- Full support team, including local guides
- UK medic
- All accommodation
- All meals, except in free time
- Airline taxes
- Treated drinking water
- All transfers in local vehicles
- National Park entrance fees
- Celebration dinner
- Invitation to a challenge briefing in London
- Discounted training weekends in the Peak District, Brecon Beacons & Snowdonia
- Fitness and training guide
- Discounts from UK retailers
- Reduced rates at Nomad Travel Clinics and Masta Health

itinerary

DAY 1 - Departure Day
On arrival, we make our way to our hotel on the coast just below the town of Taormina. This afternoon we have time to walk around this lovely town where DH Lawrence wrote many of his poems. Tonight, as a welcome for the group we are treated to classic Sicilian home-grown food and wines, and meet the team who will be with us throughout the trek.

Meals: D   Accom: Hotel

dates
May 2014 / 2015

cost
All inclusive trip cost from £1,239
Initial £299 deposit to sign up
Three payment options available.

how tough is the challenge?
This challenge has been classed as a moderate challenge and requires a reasonable level of fitness to walk the route. We will be walking between 15 km and 27 km a day including prolonged climbs over Mount Etna.

when to go
This trek is possible from March onwards as the skies are clear, the temperature is below 25 degrees and there is minimal chance of rain. However, we do recommend that you prepare for all conditions so waterproofs may be necessary, although not essential.

food
Breakfasts each morning will be at our hotel and will typically consist of porridge, yoghurt and muesli. Lunches will be en route and evening meals will be at our hotel with a variety of rice, pasta, vegetables and a selection of fresh meat and fresh fish.

We can cater for all dietary requirements if informed in advance.

accommodation
- Four nights in 2 / 3* hotels

All accommodation is on a twin/triple-share, single-sex basis. We will pair you with someone of a similar age, where possible.
climb
Mount Etna

Trek through pine forests and past ancient lava flows, picnic overlooking Sicily and cross the snow line en route to the crater of Mount Etna, Europe’s highest and most active volcano.

DAY 2 - Pista Alta Montana

Our challenge starts early this morning as we transfer directly to the Ragabo refuge where we begin our trek with a long, tough day on Etna’s slopes. Our trek takes us all the way to the Maletto refuge, just above the village of Maletto on the western flanks of the volcano. These are good, fast walking paths and where we see superb contrasts between the early lava flows and the birch and pine forest that we reach towards the end of the day. Our specialist guide will give us explanations of the phenomena surrounding the volcano. After a full day trekking we transfer from just south of the refuge to the town of Randazzo to relax with a cool beer or glass of local wine.

Meals: B,L,D   Accom: Hotel   Distance: 27 km

DAY 3 - Etna Base Camp

This morning, after a good breakfast, we transfer back to the Maletto hut and set off, heading directly south skirting the western flanks of the volcano. We soon pass above the town of Bronte and by midday we eat our packed-lunches overlooking the towns of Biancavilla and Adriano with our backs to the formidable summit of Etna. The afternoon is spent trekking up to Etna’s ‘base camp’, the traditional starting point for hundreds who climb the summit each day. Tonight, in our comfortable hotel, we are able to fully relax with great Sicilian food and wine before an early night in preparation of our final climb in the morning.

Meals: B,L,D   Accom: Hotel   Distance: 22 km

DAY 4 - Summit Craters 3,350 m

Now that we have acclimatised and our legs are well prepared, we have a tough day climbing to the summit of Mt Etna, the highest and most active volcano in Europe. We head directly north, trekking for 8km on the steep slopes of the mountain. After about 4hrs we have lunch with superb views over much of the southern part of the island. The weather here is often windy and harsh and we are almost certainly climbing over a pristine layer of snow to Etna’s Refugio Alpino at 2900m. In 2012 Etna erupted 5 times and, from the safe areas, it is an incredible sight. From here we have a direct, steep descent back to our refuge at 2000m. On arrival we take a transfer to our comfortable hotel in the centre of Palermo where this evening we have a great celebratory meal to mark the end of an incredible challenge.

Meals: B,L,D   Accom: Hotel   Distance: 15 km

DAY 5 - Palermo

We have a relaxing breakfast before transferring to Palermo airport in time for our return flight to London.

single supplement

If you decide that you would like to have your own room on the challenge, we can accommodate this in the majority of places.

Please email us for more information

additional costs

- Insurance - approximately £60
- Tips for local staff - recommended amount £30
- Airline fuel surcharge / supplement as applied by airlines. Please note that this is capped at a maximum of £150.

kit & equipment

A kit list will be sent to you on receipt of registration. Many everyday items can be used on this challenge, and we offer a kit hire service to keep costs down.

land only

If you would like to join the group in Italy or wish to organise your own flights, we do offer a land only option, with a significant discount off the trip price. You will be required to meet your group at the refuge on Day One of the itinerary.

Please email us for more information

training weekends / briefings

We run a number of training weekends throughout the year in the Peak District, Brecon Beacons and Snowdonia. These are fully-inclusive 2 night’s accommodation and all meals. We also organise training days in London and the North and South downs. On both, you will get the chance to meet our mountain leaders and test out your kit and fitness!

You will also receive an invite to a challenge briefing in central London.
payment options

A REGISTRATION DEPOSIT of £299 (for 2014) is required to secure your place. We offer 2 deposit payment options:

OPTION 1: Deposit paid in full, by card at the time of registration.

OPTION 2: Deposit paid in two 50/50 split payments. The first 50% is paid when you register and the second is charged to your payment card at the end of the following month. For this option, a £10 supplement will be charged with the first instalment.

Once registered, there are 3 PAYMENT OPTIONS to fund the balance of the trip cost. Full details are on our website.

1) SELF FUNDED

For anyone who wants to pay for the entire trip themselves. It’s then completely up to you whether or not you choose to raise any money for a charity of your choice.

The total all inclusive cost of this trip is £1,239 (for 2014), which, after you pay the £299 Registration Deposit, leaves a balance of £940. This final balance is due for payment 10 weeks before your departure along with any fuel surcharges levied by the airline.

2) SPONSORSHIP FUNDED

This is for anyone who wants to take on this challenge and will link it with fundraising a significant sum of money for a charity of their choice. You would have to raise at least £1,900 (for 2014) via sponsorship and donations from friends, family and colleagues, and be confident at the outset that you can achieve this total.

Pay the Registration Deposit and nominate a charity to fundraise for. All fundraising goes directly to your charity and providing that you raise at least £1,900 (for 2014), your charity will pay for the balance of your trip costs to Action Challenge. That balance, paid by your charity, is £940 (the same as if you were you were ‘Self Funded’) - the charity will retain at least £960 to help fund their work. You will have to pay any airline fuel surcharges 10 weeks prior to departure.

3) MIXED FUNDED

A mix of the 2 options above! You pay about half the trip cost yourself, and also fundraise for your charity. They pay the remaining balance of your trip costs. Ideal for anyone who wants to take on the challenge and also fundraise for a charity, BUT is happy to pay a reasonable proportion of the trip cost themselves, which with your registration deposit, is set at a level that covers at least the costs of flights & accommodation; perfect for those who feel more at ease asking for sponsorship in respect to the ‘challenge’ component of their trip.

Pay the Registration Deposit and nominate a charity to fundraise for. All fundraising goes directly to your charity and providing that you raise at least £1,400 (for 2014), your charity will pay a portion of your trip cost to Action Challenge. That balance, paid by your charity, is £565. At the same time, you will be required to pay the remaining balance yourself, which will be a figure of £375 (These two amounts add up to the same as the ‘Self Funded’ final balance) - the charity will retain at least £835 to help fund their work. You will have to pay any airline fuel surcharges 10 weeks prior to departure.