

# Mount Everest: Reaching the Summit [B2]

Il 29 maggio del 1953 gli alpinisti Edmund Hillary, neozelandese, e l'indonepalese Tenzing Norgay furono i primi scalatori a raggiungere la cima più alta della Terra. Una prodezza che molti cercano di emulare.



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Everest, at 8,849 metres [above](#) sea level, is the highest mountain in the world. It [sits](#) on the [crest](#) of the Himalayas on the [border](#) between Nepal and Tibet. Called Chomo-Lungma, or 'Mother Goddess of the Land', by the Tibetans, the English named the mountain after Sir George Everest, a 19th-century [surveyor](#). The [summit](#) of Everest reaches two-thirds of the way through the Earth's atmosphere, almost the cruising [altitude](#) of a commercial flight.

## DEATH AT THE SUMMIT?

The first recorded [attempt](#) to [climb](#) Everest was made in 1921 by a British expedition. A violent storm forced them to abort. Brilliant mountaineer George Mallory returned in 1924 with another British expedition. They reached an elevation of 8,573 metres without using artificial oxygen. Mallory and [fellow](#) mountaineer Andrew Irvine [attempted](#) the [summit](#), and did not

return. In 1999, Mallory's frozen body was miraculously [recovered](#). [Whether](#) he or Irvine reached the [summit](#) remains a mystery.

## **KHUMBU ICEFALL**

In April 1953, New Zealander Edmund Hillary and Nepali-Indian Sherpa Tenzing Norgay were part of another British team that planned to scale the southeast face of Everest. They made their first camp [below](#) the Khumbu [Icefall](#), a [steep](#), [rugged](#), rapidly-moving section of the Khumbu Glacier. Here, constant movement opens deep [crevasses](#) and sends [chunks](#) of ice [hurtling](#) down the mountain. After successfully crossing the icefall, the team walked up the Western [Cwm](#), a glacial valley with [steep ridges](#) around it. It leads to the south face of Lhotse, the fourth highest mountain in the world.

## **THE DEATH ZONE**

Typically, the last camp on an Everest ascent is made at the South [Col](#), 7,920 metres up. This [dip](#) between two peaks is swept clear of snow by high winds. However, Hillary and Tenzing went up another 610 meters. They were now in the 'death zone', an area so called because there is not enough oxygen for humans to survive. On the final five-hour [climb](#), Hillary and Tenzing fought through snow, followed an exposed [ridgeline](#) with 1,000-metre [drops](#), [scrambled](#) up [steep](#), rocky steps, and finally crossed a [sloping](#) snowfield to reach the [summit](#) of Everest at 11:30am on 29 May 1953.

## **SUMMIT FEVER**

Since then, there have been approximately 11,346 [summit](#) ascents by 6,098 people. whereas over 310 [climbers](#) have died while [attempting](#) to ascend or more commonly on the descent. The major causes of death are avalanches, falls and [collapses](#) due to [altitude](#) sickness. In the death zone the body's cells begin to die and lungs and brains fill with liquid.

## DEADLY CONGESTION

Major tragedies occurred in 1996 when a [blizzard](#) hit, killing twelve [climbers](#); in 2014 an avalanche killed sixteen; and in 2015 a devastating earthquake that killed around nine thousand people caused avalanches in which twenty-two [climbers](#) died. There are also modern dangers on the mountain: commercialisation has led to less experienced [climbers](#) and congestion. People can be trapped for hours in the death zone, [queuing](#) for an opportunity to reach the [summit](#). Climbers report seeing frozen bodies, from days to decades old, all along the route. Culture Scalare le cime dell'Everest fino al Campo Base non è una missione facile, ma ne vale la pena per i panorami mozzafiato e i posti storici. Jeff Bonaldi, viaggiatore e fondatore di "The Explorer's Passage", ci racconta la sua avventura.

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# Glossary

- **surveyor** = topografo
- **altitude** = altitudine di crociera
- **chunks** = blocchi
- **hurtling** = precipitare
- **blizzard** = tempesta di neve
- **crevasses** = crepacci
- **Col** = colle
- **dip** = avvallamento
- **ridgeline** = crinale, costone
- **sloping** = inclinato
- **above** = sopra
- **border** = frontiera
- **recovered** = recuperare
- **steep** = ripida
- **Cwm** = valle (in gallese)
- **sits** = trovarsi
- **crest** = cima
- **ridges** = creste
- **scrambled** = arrampicarsi
- **fellow** = compagno, collega
- **rugged** = impervia, scoscesa
- **summit** = cima, vetta
- **attempt** = tentativo
- **Whether** = se
- **below** = sotto
- **climb** = scalare
- **Icefall** = cascata di ghiaccio
- **drops** = cadute
- **collapses** = collassi
- **queuing** = fare la coda