

EVERY ADVENTURE DESERVES A MEAL THAT FUELS THE JOURNEY!

DIETARY REQUIREMENTS IN REFUGES

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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

When planning a trekking or mountaineering adventure, one important detail to consider is your dietary requirements – especially when it comes to meals in mountain refuges. While these remote mountain shelters offer hearty, simple meals to refuel you after a long day on the trail, they aren't always equipped to handle complex dietary needs with the same ease as a restaurant in town. That said, with some preparation and clear communication, your dietary needs can still be met, ensuring you enjoy every moment of your adventure.

In this journal, we'll guide you on how to communicate your dietary preferences or restrictions to both us and the refuges and give you an idea of what to expect when it comes to meals in these unique environments.

WHY IT'S BEST TO INFORM US AND THE REFUGES

Mountain refuges are not restaurants, and often their menus are limited by the food they can transport to these remote locations – sometimes by helicopter or mule. The meals are typically set, designed to fuel trekkers with simple, hearty ingredients, like pasta, polenta, stews, and bread. If you have specific dietary needs, it's crucial to inform us in advance so we can communicate with the refuges to see what's possible.

HOW TO INFORM US:

- Make sure to include your dietary requirements when filling out your participant information form.
- Mention whether your restriction is an intolerance, allergy or preference (e.g. vegan, gluten-free, etc.). This helps us – and the refuges – understand the seriousness of your request and plan accordingly.

However, while we do our best to arrange for your dietary needs in advance, **it's important that you remind the refuge staff when you arrive.** This ensures that they are aware of your requirements in real time and can adjust the meal for you if possible.

WHY IS THIS NECESSARY?

In busy periods, with many trekkers and climbers arriving at the same time, a gentle reminder can ensure you're not overlooked in the meal preparations.

MANAGING EXPECTATIONS: WHAT REFUGES CAN (AND CAN'T) PROVIDE

Refuges work with limited resources. They often have one set menu for the day, and their supplies are brought in at the start of the season or flown in periodically. This means they may not have a wide variety of ingredients on hand to cater to highly specific dietary requirements.

WHAT YOU CAN GENERALLY EXPECT:

- **Vegetarian meals** are often possible, as many mountain meals are based around simple carbohydrates like pasta or polenta.
- **Gluten-free options** may be limited, but refuges can often accommodate with things like rice or potatoes, so it's important to ask what's available.
- **Vegan meals** may be a challenge, as cheese and dairy are staples in many alpine dishes. If vegan is a must, make sure to alert us early and again at the refuge. It might be a good idea to pack some extra snacks as a backup.
- **Food allergies:** If you have serious food allergies (e.g. nuts, shellfish, gluten), it's especially important to inform both us and the refuge. While they will do their best to accommodate, keep in mind that cross-contamination may not always be avoidable in such rustic environments.

TIPS FOR NAVIGATING DIETARY REQUIREMENTS IN REFUGES

Communicate Early and Often

Include your dietary needs in your information form as early as possible. Once at the refuge, kindly remind the staff of your dietary restrictions upon arrival.

Be Flexible

Remember, refuges are in remote locations with limited supplies. While they will try to meet your needs, be prepared for simple alternatives rather than gourmet substitutions.

Pack Extra Snacks

Especially if you have strict dietary restrictions (e.g. vegan, gluten-free), it's a good idea to bring some extra snacks or protein bars. This will ensure you have something to eat in case the refuge can't fully meet your needs.

Bring a Sense of Adventure

Refuges are part of the trekking experience, and mealtimes are often a communal affair. Embrace the simplicity of the meals and the opportunity to share stories and food with fellow trekkers from around the world.

FINAL THOUGHTS

While mountain refuges do their best to accommodate dietary needs, it's important to set realistic expectations. You're in the wilderness, and while the views are spectacular, the meal choices might not be as flexible as you're used to. By communicating early and packing a few extras, you can ensure your dietary requirements are managed, leaving you free to enjoy the adventure ahead.

If you have any specific concerns or questions about your dietary requirements during the trek, don't hesitate to get in touch with us. We're here to help make sure you're well-prepared for your time in the mountains.

If you want to learn more about what to expect from staying in mountain refuges, be sure to check out our guide to **Mountain Refuges: Simple Shelters, Big Adventures** and how they compare with hotels in **A True Mountain Experience vs. Hotel Comforts**.