

# BASE CAMP

## THE MOUNTAIN INQUISITION

### Squash Falconer

#### Highest mountain you've climbed?

When I was little it was Thorpe Cloud (287m) in the Peak District, which looks giant when you're less than 4ft tall. Now my highest is Everest!

#### What's with the unusual nickname?

I was given the name Louise but my sister Jo, who was 15 months old when I was born, couldn't say that. So she called me Ease, then Peas, then Squashpeas – then finally settled on Squash.

#### Funniest thing you've seen on a hill?

'Shut up' written in stones en route to Everest Base Camp. Of all the things to write...! I really giggled.

#### Have you ever Googled yourself?

Yes... and again just now because you asked. I just tried Google Images too, and a photo came up of a brown mountain that says, "may all the mountains you climb in life be made of chocolate"! Google know me very well.

#### You're in a pub. What's on the menu?

Homemade chips, garlic mushrooms, Greek salad, Cajun chicken salad, margherita pizza, roast dinner, banoffee pie, chocolate brownies with cream, chocolate fondant... I could go on!

#### Who would play you in a movie about your life?

Ideally me! I'd love to go back and do the things I've done all over again.

#### What was the last book you read?

*Mr Small* by Roger Hargreaves. I have a friend who's very small so I bought a copy and 'edited' it for him as a gift. It caused a lot of amusement, for me anyway.

#### What tastes the best on the hill?

Chocolate, obviously, and sun-dried tomatoes, perhaps not so obviously. I took a jar when I went to Everest and opened them before the summit push. They were such a treat!



MONTY TOMLINSON

Squash descends the Alps' Col de l'Iseran (2270m) on her ElliptiGo - a kind of cross between a stepper and a bike.

#### What's scarier, heights or sharks?

Sharks! I went diving recently and the water was really cloudy, then from nowhere a huge whale (which I know isn't a shark) appeared and terrified me more than standing on the edge of a mountain ever has done.

#### Are you happier alone or in a group?

In a group. I love meeting people and sharing experiences.

#### What's your favourite animal?

A quokka, they actually smile. I grew up on a farm so I'm an animal lover. Except for chickens – I'm scared of them!

#### What's the worst thing you've ever eaten?

Durian fruit. I tried it in Singapore a few years ago, and it smells and tastes so bad. I couldn't believe fruit could be so appalling.

#### Weirdest place you've slept?

On my recent Go Trek trip (a 3,074 mile ElliptiGo journey through Europe) we stayed on the floor of a German bike shop. We had beds in the middle of penny farthings, electric bikes and Segways, and the shop owner sang karaoke to us. It was strange.

A quokka: eternally happy about something...



#### Most expensive piece of kit you own?

My Ozone Ultralite mountain wing (for paragliding); but my Rab down suit and expedition sleeping bag come a close second.

#### Wild camp or posh hotel?

Wild camp, although there's nothing wrong with a posh hotel now and then.

#### Which celeb would you like to share a tent with?

Peter Kay. It's always best to share a tent with someone who makes you laugh.

#### Scafell Pike, Snowdon or Ben Nevis?

All of them really, but Snowdon if I have to choose one. My godparents live close by and I love the whole area.

#### Who's your mountaineering hero?

My very good friend Emma Jones. She's not well-known but she's an amazing mountaineer.

#### What's the best flavour of crisps?

I love eating salt & vinegar crisps with milk chocolate and a cup of tea. Try it – delicious!

#### Strangest person you've met on the hill?

What if he reads this? I'd better not say!

#### When were you last naked outdoors?

This summer on The Go Trek. I reached Lake Serre-Ponçon in France at 10.30pm, it had been a hot day and I needed a wash. It was dark so I jumped in the lake for a refreshing bath!

#### How much is a pint of Yewbarrow Ale at the Wasdale Head Inn?

£3.30 – I just called and asked. Is that cheating? I don't drink so I'm useless when it comes to knowing the cost of a pint.

#### Your ultimate mountain day in three words?

Motorbike, climb, fly!

» Squash Falconer (32) is a British adventurer and mountaineer. She's climbed Aconcagua, bum-boarded off Cho Oyu, paraglided off Mont Blanc – and she summited Everest in 2011. To keep up with her adventures visit [www.squashfalconer.com](http://www.squashfalconer.com)