The Aconcagua Course and Ascent enables you to develop a sound introduction to high altitude mountaineering, culminating in climbing to the summit of Aconcagua; the highest peak outside of the Himalaya. Located in Western Argentina in the heart of the Central Andes, it is South America’s highest peak (6,962m/22,840ft), and one of the much sought after "Seven Summits".

An ascent of this eminent Andean Peak is ideal for those wishing to experience high altitude expedition mountaineering and is often undertaken as a preparation climb for the big mountains in the Himalaya. We begin by acclimatising on the nearby Cerro Vallecitos (5,440m), where your guides will deliver the appropriate instruction in camp craft, managing yourself at high altitude and mountaineering techniques, resulting in an enhanced summit success rate once the attempt is made on Aconcagua.

The Adventure Consultants Aconcagua Course and Ascent provides the very best opportunity for you to climb this lofty mountain in an environment that is properly managed, to give you the best chance to succeed in safety and relative comfort. You will benefit from our many years of experience on this and other high mountains across the globe and our highly qualified guides will offer you an experience that is not being offered by any other expedition provider on Aconcagua.

We have developed the Aconcagua Course and Ascent programme to incorporate a more comprehensive acclimatisation strategy and additional instruction, so as to improve your chance of a successful summit on Aconcagua. In addition to our pre-acclimatisation and instructional period on Vallecitos, we have more days available on Aconcagua than most programmes, and specifically more days available for the summit attempt. Our climbing route traverses over the mountain, making the best use of the time available and allowing for a faster exit via the shorter Horcones Valley, whilst giving us the opportunity to appreciate the relative remoteness of the Vacas Valley on the approach.

Our point of difference is that we provide a team member focused expedition that is geared towards
giving you the maximum opportunity at succeeding on this peak. Our success rate is an indication of the emphasis we place on your well-being and a successful outcome for you.

We believe the ascent should be made in the best style possible, a philosophy that has seen us help our expedition members achieve many successful ascents and promoted our reputation in the arena of high altitude expedition guiding.

**History**

The earliest historical link to Aconcagua comes from the discovery of fifteenth-century Inca remains found at the altitude of 5,300m. It is believed that the Incas climbed significantly higher than this on Aconcagua. In 1887 the lone Swiss guide Matthias Zurbriggen climbed the long scree slopes on the northwestern side of Aconcagua and was credited as the first person to summit. His companions had turned back because of high altitude sickness.

Zurbriggen was already famous in Switzerland and New Zealand, where he had made numerous first ascents as well as the second ascent of Mount Cook, New Zealand’s highest mountain. The Polish Glacier was the second route to be pioneered on Aconcagua. The 1934 Polish Andes Expedition accomplished this first ascent in alpine style, a climb far ahead of its time.

**Itinerary and Dates**

Dates: **January 29 - February 23, 2018**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Arrive into Mendoza this morning or the day prior. Sort equipment and ensure personal clothing/equipment is suitable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Complete permitting process and drive to Vallecitos, accommodation in San Bernardo Hut (2,800m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Acclimatisation hike, accommodation in San Bernardo Hut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Move to Piedra Grande Camp (3,580m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Move to El Salto Camp (4,200m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Rest day/acclimatisation hike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Summit day for Cerro Vallecitos (5,440m), return to El Salto Camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Trek out to San Bernardo Hut, drive to Penitentes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Rest day in Penitentes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Trek to Pampa de Lenas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Trek to Casa de Piedra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Trek to Plaza Argentina Base Camp (4,200m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>Rest, gear preparation and camp carry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-22</td>
<td>7 days for the climb to Aconcagua’s summit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Contingency day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Descend to Plaza de Mulas Base Camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Trek to Penitentes and drive to Mendoza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Depart for home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You can also climb Aconcagua with Adventure Consultants on either of our two shorter 20-day standard programme expeditions:
Trip 1: November 29 - December 18, 2017
Trip 2: January 3 - 22, 2018

How the Expedition Operates

The expedition begins and culminates in the charming Argentine city of Mendoza. Tree-lined avenues, beautifully tiled plazas, lively markets and outdoor cafes with vibrant Latin rhythms, offer a unique setting to sample the region’s fine cuisine and wine.

We have time Mendoza to finalise our equipment. But if you have a lot of gear to rent or purchase we advise you to arrive a day earlier than day one, January 29. On day two after completing the permitting process, we travel by coach 95 kilometres to the Vallecitos ski field at 2,800m/9,186ft where we stay two nights in the San Bernardo Hut enjoying day hikes around the area to aid our acclimatisation.

We continue the ascent by trekking 4-5 hours through picturesque green meadows and up steep grass and scree slopes to an interim camp, Piedra Grande Camp (3,580m). The following day we continue trekking for 3 hours through to our Base Camp known as El Salto. El Salto is situated at the base of the glacier (4,200m). We spend a further day here, acclimatising and reviewing skills for the next day’s summit attempt.

The climb begins by following an easy path through open basins to a saddle from where we follow the ridge to the summit of Vallecitos. A short but exposed scramble leads to the summit itself. After celebrations and a photographic session which includes views to Aconcagua, we descend to El Salto for a well-earned meal and rest, before our trek out to San Bernardo Hut.

From here we drive to the town of Penitentes where we enjoy a shower and rest day and prepare for the next phase of the expedition. Mule loads will be organised for the trek to Aconcagua Base Camp, while final gear preparations are completed.

Approaching the Vacas Valley route involves a three-day trek along the desert-like Vacas and Relinchos Valleys, which are distinguished by striking colourful rock formations and spectacular glaciers contrasting with the
interspersed greenery. ‘Gauchos’, the ‘cowboys’ of the Argentine Pampa will lead mules carrying our equipment to the Base Camp at Plaza Argentina (4,200m/13,800ft). During the trek we will be accompanied by the muleteers, enabling us to hike with lightweight day packs and to be ferried across the Rio de Las Vacas, if the waters are high.

Upon arriving at Plaza Argentina Base Camp, our sleeping tents will be established in rock windbreaks on the moraine of the Relinchos Glacier. We utilise a large heated and insulated dining tent, complete with sturdy flooring, and have excellent catered meals whilst at Base Camp. After dinner, we can relax in the comfortable lounge area to read or socialise with other members. There is power for charging devices, wi-fi and hot showers available free of charge. A valuable acclimatisation and organisation day will occur before we begin carrying and caching equipment to Camp 1 (4,700m/15,400ft) the following morning. We continue to ascend in a lightweight expedition style progressively establishing three camps over a seven to ten day period. Camps on the mountain are as comfortable as the conditions allow; we have a dining tent in Camp 1 and Camp 2 where meals of ‘real’ (not dried) food are prepared by your guides and at Camp 3 there is a large cook tent staffed by a dedicated guide who assists in preparing food and drinks and provides additional support to the group.

The exact climbing itinerary is not fixed to allow for the optimal acclimatisation program and any inclement weather. The Aconcagua massif is often subject to very cold temperatures and storms that sweep in from the Pacific Ocean; 160km to the west. Hence your guide will be working around any forecasted weather systems to plan for the best summit program.

Climbing at altitude is more arduous than at lower elevations due to the thinner atmosphere. Our experience at high altitude has enabled us to develop a successful strategy for climbing high peaks with sensible acclimatisation. Rest days will be interspersed between camp move days and load shuttling. The terrain during the majority of the ascent entails unroped travel over moraine, scree and permanent snowfields where the unique neve penitentes or ‘ice towers’ will be encountered.

Summit day begins from Camp 3 and it is here we join the normal route from the Horcones Valley, which meanders up the ‘Canaleta’ and through to the summit. The ascent is never technical and conditions are varied; some seasons the route is completely free of snow, whereas other years see deep snow on this section so we must be prepared for all eventualities. Aconcagua is known for very cold weather high on the mountain. About 6-10 hours after leaving top camp we reach the summit and its splendid panoramas. It’s only a few hours back to the camp and a well-earned brew!

Having completed the climb, we now descend in one day to the comfortable Plaza de Mulas Base Camp in the Horcones Valley for a good meal and rest. The following morning we embark on the trek out down the valley and pass through Penitentes, to then return to Mendoza on the same day.

To maximise safety and summit opportunities our schedule allows several contingency days.

We operate with small groups to ensure individualised attention and further enhance our efficiency and safety.
We place special emphasis on ensuring the highest standards in accommodation, transport, food, equipment and guiding expertise.

Course Objective

To develop sufficient skills to ascend Aconcagua, South America’s highest peak.

- Development of footwork, cramponing and snow climbing skills
- Expedition camping skills
- A training climb on Cerro Vallecitos 5,440m
- An ascent of Aconcagua 6,962m

Skills Covered

You will be taught basic snow climbing techniques that will prepare you for the ascent of Aconcagua. The training will focus on teaching good footwork by spending as much time as possible on similar slopes to what you would find on the climbing route up and down the mountain.

- Footwork and mountain travel techniques
- Basic snow climbing using crampons and ice axe
- Pacing and acclimatisation practices
- Expedition camping skills

Level of Experience Required

Climbing to a summit that is almost 7,000 metres in elevation is an extreme undertaking. The ascent of Aconcagua is a very physically demanding objective that is frequently underestimated due to the incorrect assumption that because the climb is not technically difficult it is not extremely physically challenging. Climbers on Aconcagua must be prepared to endure an environment that can be potentially life-threatening; you may encounter extreme weather conditions including cold temperatures and very high winds, as well as the effects of extreme altitude. We suggest you prepare yourself physically and mentally for the Aconcagua expedition through a physical training program and mountain skills training.

To climb Aconcagua you need to be physically fit, have a strong mental stamina and be capable of strenuous exercise for several days duration. Expedition members can expect to be exerting themselves for about six hours per day and be capable of carrying a 15-20kg pack (although additional porter support is available – see below). To be successful you must train by carrying a heavy pack in mountainous terrain.

Climbing at altitude affects people differently - most climbers notice a lower performance rate than normal. Our climbing days are mostly short to accommodate this and vital rest days are usually welcomed! Our graduated acclimatisation program and pre-climb on Vallecitos allows you to progressively consolidate your fitness, but you must arrive on the expedition in good health and with
a good level of fitness. Summit day is the most physically demanding of the days and entails a 1,100m or 3,500ft ascent at altitude. This rewarding and photogenic day typically takes between twelve and fourteen hours.

The Aconcagua expedition is suitable for people with general mountaineering skills. If your prior mountain experience is limited or you find you need more time than others to acclimatise to high altitude, then the Course & Ascent provides additional acclimatisation and instruction during our pre-climb on Cerro Vallecitos.

Importantly, participants should be of a positive frame of mind and be willing to operate as part of a team.

---

**Porter Support**

Porter support for group equipment and waste is included in the expedition fee. This means that you will only carry your own personal equipment, usually around 15-20kg. There is also an option of purchasing additional porter support for all or part of the Aconcagua expedition to assist in carrying personal equipment. For example, many of our climbers elect to have porter support moving between camps, or just rid yourself of a few kilos to make your own pack weight more reasonable throughout.

Porters can usually be organised from Base Camp but if you would like to organise this service in advance, please contact our office.

---

**Expedition Fee**

The cost of the expedition ex Mendoza, Argentina is US$6,800 per person.

*Climbing permit fees are an additional cost of US$582. Permit fees are payable in Argentine Pesos at the National Park Service office in Mendoza prior to departing for Vallecitos. Permit fees are subject to change and the peso equivalent varies depending on the official exchange rate on the day.*

This is an inclusive cost and covers the following:

- Adventure Consultants mountain guides
- All expedition organisational requirements
- Airport transfers if arriving on scheduled arrival date
- All land transport within Argentina ex Mendoza
- 2 nights accommodation in Mendoza (twin-share) on days 1 and 25
- Accommodation (shared occupancy) and meals in San Bernardo Hut on days 2 and 3 and at Penitentes on day 8 and 9
- All trek and expedition food ex Penitentes
- Group Equipment: ropes, tents, stoves, cookware etc. and all supplies necessary to make a safe and strong bid for the summit
- Mule supported trek to Base Camp (maximum 25kg per person)
- Porter support for all group equipment and waste
• Regular written and photo internet dispatches for families and friends to follow your progress

The expedition fee does not include the following:

• Personal clothing and equipment
• Additional night’s accommodation in Mendoza at the start and end of the expedition (arrive earlier than day 1 if you need more time to purchase/rent equipment)
• Hotel and meals at Penitentes at end of trip if the team elect to stay here rather than return to Mendoza
• Climbing permit fee, payable in Mendoza
• Personal travel insurance/ trip cancellation insurance/ medical evacuation insurance
• Meals and personal expenses in Mendoza
• Return flights to Mendoza
• Excess equipment over the 25kg per person
• Any costs associated with an early departure from the expedition
• Accommodation in Mendoza should the expedition return prior to the scheduled date
• Gratuities to guides and local staff

The operation of the expedition is subject to minimum team number requirements being met.

Visas

Generally, entry Visas are not required for travellers to Argentina staying less than three months but please check with your travel agent for details according to your nationality.

The trekking and climbing permits are a separate matter dealt with by the expedition agent. Note - you will need proof of your evacuation/rescue insurance for the permits to be issued in Mendoza.

Payments

All payments should be made by bank transfer to the following bank and account:

Bank of New Zealand
Offshore Branch
1 Willis Street
Wellington
New Zealand

for the account of Adventure Consultants Limited

Account # 1000-594771-0000
Account Type: US Dollars
Swift Address: BKNZNZ22

Note: All bank transfer charges are for the remitter’s account.
We can also accept your deposit and balance payment by credit card (Visa, Mastercard, Amex), plus a 3% credit card fee.

---

**Deposit**

A non-refundable deposit of **US$500** is payable to secure a place on the expedition.

---

**Balance**

The balance is payable 90 days prior to the expedition start date.

---

**Cancellation and Refund Policy**

- Cancellations outside of 90 days will result in the loss of the trip deposit.
- For cancellations made within 89 - 60 days of the trip commencement date we reserve the right to retain 50% of the balance payment fee.
- For cancellations within 59 days of the departure date a cancellation fee of 100% of the full fee applies.

*Team members should take out private insurance if they wish to be covered against cancellation due to medical or personal reasons. This is called Trip Cancellation Insurance and can be obtained from your normal travel agent.*

---

**Team Membership**

The team will be led by one IFMGA/NZMGA qualified Western guide and have a **maximum size of 12 members**, three guides. The expedition will operate with a minimum of 8 members.

You will find the Adventure Consultants’ mountain guides companionable and strong expedition leaders with considerable power and willingness to see you achieve your goals. The number of guides is determined by the team size but the normal ratio of guides to members is 1:4 for climbing Vallecitos and the Vacas Valley route.

For groups of less than 8 members, the expedition will be led by one of our extremely experienced and qualified local guides.

---

**Food**

Our food on the expedition when trekking in and on the mountain is prepared by the guides, and when in Base Camp is provided by the well trained Argentine cooks at Plaza Argentina and Plaza de Mulas. Please indicate any specific dietary requirements you may have on your application form.
For special diets such as vegan and gluten/dairy free, we will call you to discuss your needs and how this will work in the group cooking situation. If your dietary requirements are especially strict, you are advised to bring a sufficient supply of your required food types with you to ensure you are provided for.

**Equipment List**

Expedition members will be sent a list detailing all necessary individual clothing and equipment to be provided. We will correspond with you prior to the trip to answer your queries and ensure you have met all the equipment requirements. Having the correct equipment is key to your performance on summit day and achieving success.

**Medical Examination**

Expedition members will be provided with a medical questionnaire and asked to visit their family physician and receive a full medical examination. This information will be sighted only by our medical adviser and the guides and is treated with full confidentiality. Advice on immunisations will be provided at this time.

**Documentation and Photographs**

Expedition members will be requested to provide 3 passport photographs and a copy of their passport biodata page.

**The Advantages of Climbing With Us**

Adventure Consultants is renowned for the quality of its service and strategy applied to high altitude expedition climbing. Our reputation is attributed to meticulous planning and experienced logistics coordination. We have a philosophy of investing in every expedition to offer our climbers the best possible chance of success.

We employ strong and specialised Expedition Leaders and staff, who are some of the most pre-eminent in the industry. We pride ourselves on operating with small teams, the best back-up and support available. This includes nutritious and ample quantities of food, comfortable Base Camp facilities, reliable communications systems and the necessary medical back up.

Many of our expedition members come to us because they have seen us in action on a previous trip and decide to opt for our level of service and proven experience. Others return because they know we do our very best to make expeditions safe and successful.
How to Join this Expedition

If you would like to join our Aconcagua Course and Ascent please request an Expedition Application Form or use our online booking form at http://www.adventureconsultants.com/adventure/BookingForm/ and forward along with a deposit for the trip.

If you require more information please contact us at;

Adventure Consultants Ltd
PO Box 739, 20 Brownston St
Wanaka, 9343
New Zealand

Ph +64 3 443 8711  Fax +64 3 443 8733

Email: info@adventure.co.nz  Website: www.adventureconsultants.com

Adventure Consultants – is affiliated to the New Zealand Mountain Guides Association (NZMGA), New Zealand Alpine Club (NZAC) and a corporate member of the American Alpine Club (AAC). Adventure Consultants perform to IFMGA/UIAGM standards and are world leaders in high altitude guiding.

All material Copyright © Adventure Consultants Ltd 2017/2018