

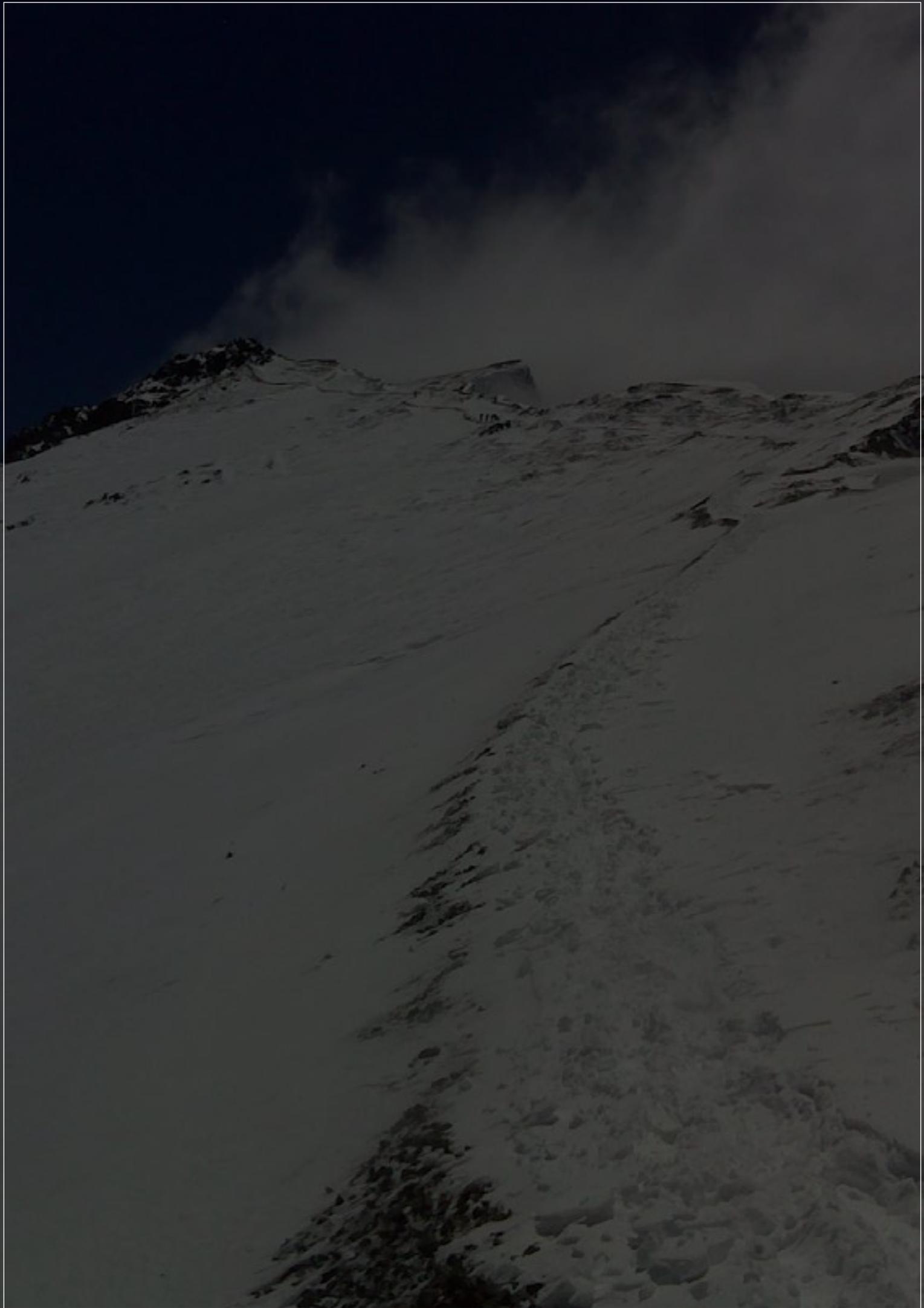


ACONCAGUA

6,962M / 22,841FT



2019-20 EXPEDITION TRIP NOTES





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2019/20 EXPEDITION DETAILS

Dates: November 29 to December 18, 2019
January 03–22, 2020

Duration: 20 days

Departure: ex Mendoza, Argentina

Price: US\$6,100 per person

▲ A successful team prepares to descend the mountain. Photo: Suze Kelly

Aconcagua, the “Sentinel of Stone”, is the highest peak outside of the Himalayas. Located in western Argentina, the heart of the Central Andes, it is South America’s highest peak 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 of the Himalayas.

The Adventure Consultants Aconcagua expedition 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 refined our program over the years, developing what we believe is the best acclimatisation strategy and the most appropriate climbing route with the least people on it. We

have more days available than most programs that often fail due to bad weather on the only available summit day. Our climbing route traverses over the mountain making 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.

Unlike most of the operators on Aconcagua, we provide a client focused expedition that is geared towards giving you the maximum opportunity of 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.



▲ Carrying big packs between camps is a major part of climbing on Aconcagua. Photo: Pablo Gurrieri

HISTORY

The earliest historical link to Aconcagua comes from the discovery of 15th century Incan remains found at an altitude of 5,300m/17,400ft, although it is believed that the Incas climbed significantly higher than this on the mountain.

In 1887, Swiss guide Matthias Zurbriggen climbed the long scree slopes on the northwestern side of Aconcagua alone after his companions turned back with altitude sickness and was credited as the first person to summit. Zurbriggen was already famous in Switzerland and New Zealand, where he had made numerous first ascents as well as the second ascent of Aoraki 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.

HOW THE EXPEDITION OPERATES

The expedition begins and ends in the charming Argentine city of Mendoza. We encourage you to arrive a day early if you need time to purchase or rent equipment, as well as to take the time to explore the charming city of Mendoza. Tree-lined avenues, beautifully tiled plazas, lively markets and outdoor cafés with vibrant latin rhythms offer a unique setting to sample the region's fine cuisine and wine.

Once we have finalised our equipment and permits in Mendoza, we travel by coach 180km/ 110 miles to the town of Penitentes at 2,720m/8,920ft. This impressive natural rock bridge and associated hot

sulphur springs offer an opportunity to bathe in thermal pools while experiencing the ambience of the Andes. We will spend two nights here in a hotel and hike around the area to aid our acclimatisation. Mule loads will be organised while final gear preparations are completed.

Approaching the Vacas Valley Route involves a 3-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 Base Camp at Plaza Argentina (4,200m/13,800ft). During the trek we will be accompanied by the gauchos, 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 7 to 10-day period. Camps on the mountain are as comfortable as the conditions allow; we have a dining tent at 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.



• Descending from an acclimatisation hike at Penitentes. Photo: Pablo Guerrieri

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/100 miles 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 most of the ascent entails unroped travel over moraine, scree and permanent snow fields 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, but 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.

PREREQUISITE EXPERIENCE

Climbing to a summit that is almost 7,000m/23,000ft 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



▲ Views of Aconcagua on the trek to Base Camp. Photo: Suze Kelly



▲ One of many river crossings on the trek to Base Camp. Photo: Pablo Gurrieri



▲ Comfortable quarters and excellent food await at Base Camp. Photo: Pablo Gurrieri

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 strong mental stamina and be capable of strenuous exercise for several days' duration. Expedition members can expect exert themselves for about 6 hours per day and be capable of carrying a 15–20kg/30–45lb pack (although additional porter support is available—see Page 9). 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 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/3,500ft ascent at altitude. This rewarding and photogenic day typically takes between twelve and fourteen hours.

This expedition is suitable for people with general mountaineering skills. Comprehensive instruction in high altitude camping and climbing techniques will be passed on to you by your guides during the expedition.

For those wishing to attempt the Polish Glacier, a higher base skill is required. Please contact us to see if you have the appropriate experience. The route requires technical snow/ice climbing above 6,000m/19,500ft.

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

TRIP DATES

Trip 1: November 29 to December 18, 2019

Trip 2: January 3–22, 2020

Trip 3: January 29 to February 23, 2020 (Course & Ascent Program)*



▲Wide open spaces on the way to Camp 2 on Aconcagua. Photo: Pablo Guerrieri

ITINERARY

Day 1	Arrive into Mendoza this morning or the day prior, sort and check equipment
Day 2	Complete permitting process and drive to Penitentes (2,720/8,920ft)
Day 3	Acclimatisation hike
Day 4	Trek to Pampa de Lenas (2,950m/9,680ft)
Day 5	Trek to Casa de Piedra (3,250m/10,650ft)
Day 6	Trek to Plaza Argentina (4,200/13,800ft)
Day 7	Rest day/trek to Cerro Colorado (4,724m/15,499ft)
Day 8	Carry to Camp 1 (4,950m/16,250ft)
Day 9	Rest day
Day 10	Climb to Camp 1
Day 11	Carry to Camp 2 (5,500m/18,000ft)
Day 12	Climb to Camp 2
Day 13	Carry to Camp 3 'Colera Camp' (6,000m/19,700ft)
Day 14	Climb to Camp 3 'Colera Camp'
Day 15	Summit day (6,962m/22,841ft)
Day 16	Contingency day
Day 17	Contingency day
Day 18	Descend to Plaza de Mulas (4,300m/14,100ft)
Day 19	Trek to Puente del Inca (2,740m/8,990ft) and drive to Mendoza
Day 20	Depart for home

- * If your mountaineering experience is limited or you find you need more time than others to acclimatise to high altitude, then our Aconcagua Course & Ascent programme provides additional acclimatisation and instruction during our pre-climb on Cerro Vallecitos—US\$6,990 per person.

TEAM SIZE

The team will have a maximum size of 12 members and 3 guides. You will find the Adventure Consultants mountain guides strong and companionable Expedition Leaders with the capacity 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 the Vacas Valley route.

THE ADVANTAGES OF CLIMBING WITH ADVENTURE CONSULTANTS

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, with the best backup 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.



▲ Aconcagua Camp 1. Photo: Suze Kelly



▲ A team carrying loads on snow to Camp 2. Photo: Mark Austin



▲ A joyful AC team at Base Camp. Photo: Pablo Gurrieri

FOOD

Our guides prepare food during the trek in and whilst on the mountain. At Base Camp, food 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, gluten or 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 supply of your required food types with you to ensure you are provided for during the expedition.

MEDICAL EXAMINATION

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

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.

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 climbing permits to be issued in Mendoza.

DOCUMENTATION & PHOTOGRAPHS

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

EQUIPMENT LIST

Expedition members will be sent a list detailing all necessary individual clothing and equipment to be provided.



▲ Spectacular sunrise over the Andes from the slopes of Aconcagua. Photo: Mark Austin

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 on Aconcagua and achieving success.

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/30-45lbs.

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, some of our climbers elect to have porter support moving between camps, others rid themselves of a few kilos to make their own pack weight more reasonable throughout the expedition.

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\$6,100 per person.

Climbing permit fees are an additional cost. For Trip 1 and the Course & Ascent, this is US\$730. Trip 2, which falls in the high season, is US\$950.

Permit fees are payable in Argentinian pesos at the National Park Service office in Mendoza prior to departing for Penitentes. 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
- All land transport within Argentina ex Mendoza
- 2 night's accommodation in Mendoza (twin-share) on days 1, 19
- Hotel and meals at Penitentes (shared occupancy) on days 2, 3
- 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 23kg per person)



▲ Aconcagua's shadow falls across the Andes at dawn. Photo: Leonardo Miranda



▲ Camp Colera. Photo: Mark Austin



▲ Climbers approaching the summit ridge. Photo: Pablo Gurrien

- 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
- Airport transfers
- Excess equipment over the 23kg 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. All prices are subject to change.

For those who want to attempt the Polish Glacier Route, price is available on application. Please contact our office for more information.

PAYMENT DETAILS

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 Number: 1000-594771-0000
Account Type: US Dollars
Swift Address: BKNZM22

NOTE: All bank transfer charges are for the remitter's account.



Happy climbers on the summit of Aconcagua. Photo: Leonardo Miranda

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 & REFUND POLICY

An expedition member may cancel their participation on the following basis:

- 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.

We strongly recommend you take out trip cancellation insurance via your travel agent if you wish to be covered against cancellation due to medical or personal reasons.

HOW TO JOIN THIS EXPEDITION

If you would like to join one of our Aconcagua expeditions, please feel free to book online at <https://www.adventureconsultants.com/expeditions/seven-summits/aconcagua/book-now> and submit this along with your trip deposit.

Please also contact us if you'd like any further information or assistance in planning your trip:

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

Phone: +64 3 443 8711

Freephone from North America: +1 866 757 8722

Email: info@adventure.co.nz

Website: www.adventureconsultants.com



▲ Aconcagua at sunset. Photo: Suze Kelly



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 is a supporter of the dZi Foundation in Nepal for their 'Revitalise a Village' programmes.

Adventure Consultants perform to IFMGA/UIAGM standards and are world leaders in high altitude guiding.

