



SKI ANTARCTICA



2024 EXPEDITION TRIP NOTES





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2024 EXPEDITION DETAILS

Dates: January 1–17, 2024

Duration: 16 days

Departure: ex Punta Arenas, Chile

Price: US\$36,000 per person

▲ Looking west over Rossman Cove. Photo: Wilson Cheung

During the southern hemisphere summer of 2023/24, Adventure Consultants will operate an expedition to ski in the Ellsworth Mountains in Antarctica. This Ski Antarctica trip offers the opportunity for backcountry skiers to carve first tracks on pristine slopes in the world's most remote environment.

The Heritage Range that will be our playground for this expedition has the breadth of terrain to suit any experience level, with unparalleled views in all directions and options for multi-day trips or day tours from our base at Union Glacier Camp.

Enjoy the exploration as a trip in itself, or as an add-on to our Vinson Massif or South Pole expeditions to complete your Antarctic experience.

HISTORY

Union Glacier is located in the Heritage Range amongst the Ellsworth Mountains, 1,300km/700 nautical miles from the South Pole. These mountains are the highest in Antarctica and include Vinson Massif (4,892m/16,050ft), the continent's highest peak.

The mountains were discovered on 23 November 1935 by Lincoln Ellsworth on a trans-Antarctic flight and he named them the Sentinel Range. The Canadian company Adventure Network International (ANI) opened up this area to private expeditions and operated regular flights to its summer camp at Patriot Hills from 1985. In 2003/2004 they withdrew their Antarctic operations and Antarctica Logistics & Expeditions (ALE) stepped in. ALE is run by some of the same people that initially started ANI back in the 1980s and they now use a new camp at Union Glacier as their base within Antarctica.

The terrain and skiing in the area is varied with routes ranging from easy to technical levels. Under the leadership of experienced Antarctic guides, backcountry skiers of varying levels of experience can safely undertake the trip.



▲ Ski a range of varied terrain. Photo: Dylan Taylor

MEETING POINT

Expedition members will gather in Punta Arenas, Chile. Daily flights on LAN Chile and Ladeco Airlines connect with Santiago and other points to the north. As the group gear must be weighed and loaded at least one day prior to departure for Union Glacier and you must attend the expedition briefing, you are advised to schedule your arrival in Punta Arenas accordingly. Thus, you must arrive on or before the scheduled Day 1.

ACCESS TO THE MOUNTAINS

From Punta Arenas at the tip of Chile, we fly by Ilyushin 76 aircraft to the ALE base at Union Glacier. Here the aircraft makes a wheeled landing on a natural blue-ice runway.

The Union Glacier Camp, situated at 80 degrees South is a small collection of 'clam-style' tents. These have double walls to withstand Antarctic conditions, with a high-tech nylon covering and durable aluminium frames that open up like a clam shell. They are tall enough to stand up in and incorporate a wooden floor to provide solid footing and insulation from the snow. Guests will also have access to the camp's dining tent where residents gather to share buffet-style meals.

Depending on our skiing objectives, we will travel from Union Glacier into the nearby mountains where we may spend several nights camping.

PREREQUISITE EXPERIENCE

To join our Ski Antarctica Expedition you should have a good level of fitness, as those who are 'mountain-fit' when they arrive in Antarctica will enjoy it far more! Expedition members should have good leg strength and strong overall cardio fitness.

Because the skiing is varied, we can tailor the objectives to meet your experience level. Members with modest backcountry skiing backgrounds can join this expedition but some overall cold camping experience and previous backcountry or off-piste ski experience is recommended.

TRIP DATES & ITINERARY

Dates: January 1–17, 2024

Day 1	Meet in Punta Arenas, Chile
Day 2–3	Weighing and loading of gear, expedition briefing
Day 4	Fly to Union Glacier, Antarctica
Day 5–7	Expedition Preparations
Day 8–14	Ski Touring
Day 15	Depart for Punta Arenas
Day 16	Depart for home

NOTE: Flights to and from Antarctica are subject to weather. Delays can and often do occur therefore it is important to allow some flexibility with airline travel arrangements at the end of the expedition.



▲ A blue sky day above the Driscoll Glacier. Photo: David Hamilton



▲ Endless opportunities in the surrounding mountains. Photo: David Hamilton



▲ A skier contemplates their route. Photo: Dylan Taylor

DETAILED ITINERARY

Days 1–3

We will arrange a specific time to come to your hotel and review your personal clothing and equipment. Please lay out all of the items on our Required Clothing & Equipment List in your hotel room so we can go through each item with you. We will help sort the items to pack in your checked luggage vs. your carry-on bag and what items to leave behind in Punta Arenas.

The evening before your Antarctic flight, you are required to attend an important safety briefing to be followed by cocktails and hors d'oeuvres. At the briefing, we will describe the flight dispatch process, update you on the current weather and prepare you for arrival at Union Glacier. Stay and enjoy pisco sours served over ancient Antarctic ice with your fellow travellers.

Day 4: Fly to Antarctica

We will call you at your hotel in the morning to advise you of current conditions in Antarctica. If the weather is suitable for our flight, we will pick

you up at your hotel within the hour. Please meet us in the lobby with hotel bills paid, ready to board the bus. At the Punta Arenas airport, we board our chartered jet for the 4¼ hour flight to Antarctica. Our route crosses the Drake Passage, then follows the west side of the Antarctic Peninsula and the spine of the Ellsworth Mountains. We land on a naturally occurring blue-ice runway on Union Glacier where you will take your first steps on Antarctica. Climb aboard one of our specially-adapted vans for the 8km/5 mile shuttle to our main camp. Our friendly staff will provide a welcome tour of camp and show you to your tent.

NOTE: Every effort will be made to keep to the scheduled flight date and we will depart as soon as weather and runway conditions permit. Please understand that delays are common in Antarctic travel. All flights are dependent on weather, aircraft serviceability and local conditions. Our staff will stay in close contact with you and will provide you with regular flight updates.

Day 5–7: Expedition Preparations

Your climbing team will spend the first few days at Union Glacier brushing up on skills and getting acclimatised to the Antarctic conditions. You'll



▲ Skiing off Ronald Ridge. Photo: Simon Abrahams

practice rope work, crevasse rescue, navigation, weather observations and polar camping skills. During this period, you will also discuss and plan your objectives with your guide and pack your equipment to ready for departure. While based in Union Glacier Camp, you may also have time to join an excursion to one of the nearby scenic destinations such as the Drake Icefall or the beach at Rossman Cove.

Day 8–14: Ski Touring

It's time to explore Antarctica as it should be, untracked and pristine. The opportunities for discovery are endless, whether you are looking for steep lines, first descents or gentle, scenic ski tours. Only a handful of people have passed through this terrain and it is exhilarating to think that you may be one of the only people to stand on a summit, set tracks on a slope or marvel at the view below.

Numerous valleys grant access to the snowy peaks of the Enterprise Hills, Pioneer Heights and Soholt Peaks. In recent years, snowfalls have created consistently good skiing conditions with boot-top powder in some areas. You and your guide will develop a custom expedition plan tailored to your

personal skillset and pursuits. There are options to take on local day trips and return home to Union Glacier Camp each evening for dinner or set out on a multiday expedition to explore various peaks in the Heritage Range. Once your skiing dreams are fulfilled, you'll return to Union Glacier Camp to enjoy a celebration dinner and toast your achievements!

Day 15: Fly to Punta Arenas

When weather and runway conditions permit, our intercontinental aircraft will arrive at Union Glacier to transport you back to Chile. Our staff will meet you at the airport and transfer you back to your hotel.

Day 16: Flexible Departure Day

We recommend booking your flight home one week after your scheduled return Antarctic flight. If you purchase a full-fare ticket, most airlines will allow you to move your departure date. It is important to give yourself a buffer as delays are common in Antarctic travel. We can assist with details of local tour operators and excursions if you wish to explore Chile before you return home.

TEAM SIZE

The Ski Antarctica expedition can operate at different guide-to-skier ratios, depending on the ambitions of the group and the technical difficulty of the objectives. You will find the ski guides companionable and strong expedition leaders with considerable power and willingness to see you achieve your goals.



▲ Gaining height for the next run. Photo: Russ Hepburn



Skiing up East Cove behind Mount Rossman. Photo: Wilson Cheung

THE ADVANTAGES OF SKIING WITH ADVENTURE CONSULTANTS

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

We employ strong and specialised expedition leaders and support staff, who are some of the most pre-eminent in the industry. We pride ourselves on operating with small teams with 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.

FOOD

Freshly-cooked meals, baked goods and desserts will be served from Union Glacier Camp's fully-equipped kitchen, with fresh food regularly flown in from Chile. Buffet-style meals are served at set times which bring together all the camp residents, from mountain climbers to polar expeditioners and research scientists. Vegetarian options are available upon request and in between meals, self-serve snacks and beverages will be available. When in field camps, lighter weight mountain meals will be prepared by your guide, although assistance with cooking tasks is always appreciated. We bring a variety of foods and snacks to cater to most tastes, however, if you have a favourite snack food/treat, we highly recommend you bring a small supply along with you.

HOTELS

Adventure Consultants can make your hotel reservations in Punta Arenas or you can take care of this yourself. Please advise us of your preference at the time of booking.



▲ Fly to the blue ice runway at Union Glacier. Photo: Guy Cotter



▲ Stay at Union Glacier. Photo: Mike Roberts



▲ Enjoy great food and comfortable facilities. Photo: JB Chandesris

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.

VISAS

Expedition members must secure their own visa for multiple-entry into Chile. While Chile claims part of the Antarctic Continent as its sovereignty, it requires that we check through immigration when leaving for and returning from Antarctica, thus a multi-entry visa is required.

DOCUMENTATION & PHOTOGRAPHS

Expedition members will be requested to provide 2 passport photographs and a copy of their passport biodata page.

EQUIPMENT LIST

Expedition members will be sent a list detailing all necessary clothing and equipment to be procured. 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 a safe and enjoyable Antarctic experience.

EXPEDITION FEE

The cost of the expedition ex Punta Arenas, Chile is US\$36,000 per person.

This is an inclusive cost and covers the following:

- Airport transfers in Punta Arenas, Chile
- Round trip flight to Antarctica from Punta Arenas
- Meals and tented accommodation in Antarctica
- Group camping and climbing equipment
- All expedition organisational requirements
- Ski guide
- Celebration dinner and certificate of achievement
- Checked luggage up to 25kg



▲ Skiers prepare their skis for the next run. Photo: Dylan Taylor

The expedition fee **does not** include the following:

- Insurance coverage—personal, medical, evacuation or otherwise
- Commercial flights to and from Punta Arenas
- Chilean visa and airport fees
- Airport transfers outside of Punta Arenas
- Meals and accommodation in Punta Arenas
- Additional flights within Antarctica
- Personal equipment and clothing
- Expenses incurred due to delays
- Excess baggage transportation charges of US\$77 per kg for any baggage exceeding the personal equipment weight limit
- Satellite phone charges
- Photos from Ski Antarctica

NOTE: The operation of the expedition is subject to minimum team number requirements being met. All prices subject to change.

PAYMENT DETAILS

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

Bank of New Zealand
Offshore Branch
42 Willis Street
Spark Central
Wellington
New Zealand

for the account of Adventure Consultants Limited

Account Number: 1000-594771-0000

Account Type: US Dollars

Swift Address: BKNZLN22

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.



▲ Touring up the Torasi Couloir. Photo: Todd Passey

DEPOSIT

A non-refundable deposit of US\$5,000 is payable to secure a place on the expedition.

BALANCE

The balance is payable 120 days prior to the expedition start date.

CANCELLATION & REFUND POLICY

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

- Cancellations outside of 120 days will result in the loss of the trip deposit.
- For cancellations made within 120 days of the trip commencement date we reserve the right to retain 50% of the balance payment fee.
- For cancellations within 90 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 our Ski Antarctica Expedition, please complete our online application form at <https://www.adventureconsultants.com/expeditions/antarctica/ski-antarctica/book-now> and submit your trip deposit.

CONTACT US

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

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▲ Ski tour in a unique and wildly remote area. Photo: Dylan Taylor



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.



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