



SOUTH POLE SKI THE LAST DEGREE



2020/2021 EXPEDITION NOTES





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Dates: December 15–30, 2020
December 31, 2020 to January 15, 2021
Duration: 16 days
Departure: ex Punta Arenas, Chile
Price: US\$65,790 per person

▲ Happy faces at the South Pole. Photo: Guy Cotter

The South Pole Ski the Last Degree Expedition is a fabulous expedition for those who would like to ski to the South Pole without the time constraints of the full South Pole expedition. If you are someone who loves being in the wildest environments on earth, then this expedition is a 'must do' adventure of a lifetime.

ABOUT THE LAST DEGREE

The Last Degree is effectively the process of making the journey over the last latitude of distance to the South Pole from 89° South. The actual distance is 60 nautical miles being 111km/69mi. We fly to the start point at 89° South to begin the trek. The trip initiates in Chile and involves a flight by jet into Antarctica's interior, followed by a fixed wing (Twin Otter) flight to the start point of the trek.

The South Pole itself is at an elevation of 2,835m/9,301ft above sea level but due to the very cold air mass, has an effective air pressure elevation much higher than this.

For this reason, we need to acclimatise to the thin air and the exertions we expect on the trek to the Pole. Training is provided on polar survival and travel techniques once we arrive in Antarctica and prior to the expedition getting underway.

Once we have flown to the start point, we take time to adjust to the cold and the thin air as well as becoming familiar with the rigours of expedition life.

GETTING STARTED

We meet in Punta Arenas, Chile at the tip of South America for briefings and gear checks prior to flying into the interior of Antarctica. From Punta Arenas, we fly by Ilyushin 76 aircraft to the Antarctic Logistics & Expeditions (ALE) Base Camp at Union Glacier. Here the aircraft makes a wheeled landing on a natural blue-ice runway.

Our flights to Antarctica are operated by ALE who are the sole providers of aircraft access into the region. We have worked with them since their inception in the early 1980's, when Adventure Consultants founder Rob Hall provided them assistance establishing the Vinson Massif routes and camps.



▲ The Ilyushin 76 transports climbers and skiers to and from Antarctica. Photo: Guy Cotter

The Union Glacier Base Camp is situated at 80° South and is a small collection of tents. The dining and kitchen tent have a wooden floor and is heated with a kerosene stove. We sleep overnight in our own mountain tents but gather for meals in the warmth of the dining tent.

Your guides will hold a briefing on the logistics and safety protocols of the upcoming adventure and cover all aspects of the trip not already addressed in the initial briefing held in Punta Arenas. We pay special attention to the environmental considerations required to leave the continent with as minimal an impact as possible. Following the briefing, we will sort sufficient equipment for an overnight practice tour to consolidate the skills needed for the trip itself. This is an ideal time to sort out last minute equipment queries and to familiarise yourself with the environment, and how we best manage ourselves when we are out in it.

Following our tour, we will finalise packing of the group supplies and equipment to divide this amongst the team onto sleds. We must then wait for sufficiently fine weather to start the long flight to the beginning of the trek. Conditions need to be clear and calm along the route with good visibility for landing and taking off. There can be delays of

several days and sometimes more, so it is vital you are prepared for this eventuality and that you can relax at these times. Antarctica is not predictable or tameable and no amount of enthusiasm or pressure to get started will change her.

Once the weather forecasters give us the green light, we load into the ski-equipped Twin Otter aircraft for the 6-hour flight south into the heart of Antarctica. Along the way we stop at the Thiel Mountains to refuel the aircraft from a specially placed fuel cache, and then continue our flight the remainder of the distance to 89° South.

DAILY ROUTINE ON THE EXPEDITION

As we will be arriving high onto the Polar Plateau, we will encounter effects of altitude that may make us feel a little weak to begin with. Everyone will be towing a sled loaded with their personal and expedition equipment, and we will have a short day to stretch our legs then establish our first camp. We will begin slowly on the expedition to bring everyone up to an optimum pace for remainder of the journey. There will be no rushing as it is vital that we avoid injury and burnout, so that we have the stamina to finish the expedition.



• Sled hauling. Photo: Liefer Orn Svavarsson

Each day we will awake around 7.30am for breakfast and hydration, before we begin to break camp and pack our belongings. We travel for around 8 hours every day with a break every hour for food and drink. Everybody travels together, and the pace will be slow, steady and not hurried. The objective is to maintain an optimum body temperature; too cold and we burn too much energy; whilst too hot will cause sweating that promotes hypothermia when you stop, in addition to dehydration issues. At the day's end you will have travelled 10–15km/6–10mi.

On arrival at our camp site, the group will set up tents and build protective snow walls and contribute to snow melting and meal preparations. Team members will share tents in either 2 or 3 person tents and each tent 'team' will have their own stove for cooking and snow melting. Everyone is involved and working to get the camp ready for habitation. The bonus is that you will stay warm by helping! Once inside your tent you will be sheltered from the wind and the 24-hour daylight will enable clothes to be dried in the midnight sun.

PREREQUISITE EXPERIENCE

To partake in the Ski the Last Degree Expedition, you need to be physically fit, have strong mental stamina and be capable of strenuous exercise at altitude for several days duration. You don't necessarily need to be an experienced skier as there is little technical requirement on the flat, however the days will be physical, and you must train well before joining to ensure you have an enjoyable trip. Sleds are hauled each day carrying personal and group equipment, weighing approximately 30kg. Expedition members can expect to be exerting themselves for about eight hours per day, with another hour establishing camp and another hour preparing food and drinks.

Undertaking a Polar Training Course prior to your South Pole expedition can be extremely beneficial in terms of adjusting to the challenge of polar travel. Courses include cold weather camping skills, sled hauling, glacier travel and self-rescue, navigation and more. Contact our office for more information.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS A TEAM MEMBER

Your guides will train you in the techniques and skills to enjoy the adventure. They are there to guide you and to educate you in the requisite skills. It is however up to you to absorb that training and to follow their leadership and instructions. Failing to do so, will likely lead to serious consequences. We are after all, in one of the most extreme habitats on earth.

Your survival and well-being require you to manage yourself responsibly and to be extremely vigilant in your personal self-care. It is up to you to regulate factors such as your food and hydration levels to ensure you have sufficient energy to complete the journey. There will be sufficient food and fluids available for you to ingest, but you must discipline yourself to eat and drink, as insufficient intake can lead to a deteriorating condition. You must take extra care to not remove gloves and other protective layers at the wrong time, as this may lead to frostbite when exposed to the elements. Your feet will also require diligent attention to ensure you do not get blisters. You will need to pay care to not allow a single blister to occur as they will likely get worse rather than better as the trip progresses. A seemingly small oversight by you in looking after yourself can lead to you failing to complete the trip or suffering personal damage.



▲ Camping on the Polar Plateau. Photo: Guy Cotter

These considerations consume us as we travel and our responsibility to the group is to ensure we stay in good shape to continue towards the objective.

You also have social responsibilities to the other team members. There may be stresses on the journey that you are not familiar with and it is important that you join the expedition on the understanding that you will contribute to the emotional and physical well-being of the other team members. Conviviality and respect for others is tantamount to a successful expedition outcome.

TEAM SIZE

The team will have a minimum size of 4 skiers and 1 guide and a maximum size of 10 skiers and 2 guides.

Adventure Consultants are the longest serving guiding company in Antarctica and were integral in pioneering early ascents and journeys on the continent. You will find the Adventure Consultants 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 1:5.

ADVANTAGES OF JOINING ADVENTURE CONSULTANTS ON AN EXPEDITION

Adventure Consultants is renowned for the quality of its service and strategy applied to high altitude expedition climbing and polar travel. 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 support staff, whom 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.



Setting up camp at the end of a day's skiing. Photo: Lieferr Orn Svavarsson

MEETING POINT

The expedition team will gather at Punta Arenas in Chile. Regular daily flights on LAN Chile and Ladeco Airlines connect with Santiago and other points north. As the group gear must be weighed and loaded at least one day prior to departure to Union Glacier as well as attend the expedition briefing, you are advised to schedule your arrival in Punta Arenas accordingly. Thus, we recommend arriving the day before the official start date of the expedition or at the very least, arriving on the morning of Day 1.

ITINERARY

Trip 1: December 15–30, 2020

Trip 2: December 31, 2020 to January 15, 2021

Day 1	Meet in Punta Arenas, Chile
Day 2	Weighing & loading of gear
Day 3	Expedition Briefing
Day 4	Fly to Union Glacier, Antarctica
Day 5	Acclimatisation day
Days 6–7	Training days
Day 8	Fly to 89° South
Days 9–12	Ski to the South Pole
Day 13	Arrive at the South Pole
Day 14	Fly South Pole to Union Glacier
Day 15	Return to Punta Arenas, Chile
Day 16	Depart for home

NOTE: Antarctic flights are often subject to weather delays. It is, therefore, important to allow some flexibility with airline travel arrangements at the end of the expedition in the event you are delayed.

Every effort will be made to ensure the expedition itinerary is adhered to, but Antarctica is the most remote and isolated continent on earth. The above program is subject to change as it may be affected by weather conditions, aircraft serviceability and other factors are out of the hands of Adventure Consultants, our staff and contractors. While every effort is made to ensure the expedition is run to schedule, acceptance onto the expedition is based on your acceptance of those conditions. Having stated that, our track record in Antarctica is impeccable, but it is a sign of our respect of Antarctica's environmental omnipotence that we alert you to those possibilities.

HOTELS

We stay in a small and modest hotel in central Punta Arenas, which is a good hub for the team members while we await our flight to the 'ice'. It is only 2–3 stars but has a relaxed local atmosphere and the staff are very friendly. Let us know if you'd like us to book a room for you. If you would prefer luxury accommodation during your stay in Punta Arenas, we can arrange this for you and please advise us at the time of booking of your preference. Meals and hotel expenses in Punta Arenas are not included in the trip cost.

VISA REQUIREMENTS

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, requiring a multi-entry visa.



▲ Antarctic fashion, ski to the Pole style. Photo: Lieferr Orn Svavarsson



▲ A warm welcome in a cold place. Photo: Lieferr Orn Svavarsson



▲ Celebrating a successful trip at the South Pole. Photo: Lieferr Orn Svavarsson

EQUIPMENT LIST

A full clothing and equipment checklist will be sent to all expedition members once their booking is confirmed. The expedition leader will be available prior to the trip to discuss individual equipment questions.

MEDICAL EXAMINATION

Expedition members will be provided with pre-trip medical advice and a medical questionnaire and asked to visit their family physician and receive a full medical examination. This information will be sighted only by the expedition leader and our medical adviser and treated with full confidentiality.

DOCUMENTATION & PHOTOGRAPHS

Expedition members will be requested to provide 2 passport photographs and a copy of their outdoor résumé and medical questionnaire. You must also provide proof of rescue insurance to the value of US\$300,000.

CLIMB OR SKI ANTARCTICA OPTIONS

Some expedition members may wish to extend their time in Antarctica and ski tour or climb peaks on the frozen continent. Whether your interest is towards a more technically challenging ascent or a wander up a gentle and unnamed summit, Antarctica has endless scope for mountaineering and ski touring.

Our Climb or Ski Antarctica Expeditions are ideal add-ons to your Antarctic adventure, contact our office for more information.

THE EXPEDITION FEE

The cost of the expedition ex Punta Arenas, Chile is US\$65,790.

This is an inclusive cost and covers the following:

- Flights to and from Union Glacier in Antarctica
- Flights from Union Glacier to 89° South and from South Pole back to Union Glacier Camp
- All group equipment including sleds, cooking gear, etc.
- Skis, poles and skins



▲ Striding out across the Polar Plateau. Photo: Guy Cotter

- Tents and food while in Antarctica
- Mountain guides
- Access to our satellite telephone for outgoing calls
- Dispatch webpage updated throughout the trip for friends and family to follow
- Transport of 23kg/51lbs of personal equipment

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

- Air travel to and from Punta Arenas, Chile
- Hotel accommodation and meals in Punta Arenas
- Chilean visa and airport fees
- Personal insurance—full travel, medical and rescue insurance is required as well as personal trip cancellation insurance (medical evacuation insurance cover of US\$300,000 is required)
- Personal clothing and equipment including ski boots (a full equipment list is provided on booking)
- Excess baggage transportation charges of US\$75.00 per kg for any baggage exceeding the personal equipment weight limit.
- Cost of satellite telephone calls whilst on expedition
- Personal expenses incurred on the expedition
- Gratuity

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: BKNZ22

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

We also accept your deposit and balance payment by credit card (Visa, Mastercard, or Amex), plus a 3% credit card fee.



▲ Skier wearing a full face mask. Photo: Liefer Orn Svavarsson

DEPOSIT

A non-refundable deposit of US\$10,000 is payable to secure a place on the expedition.

BALANCE

The balance is payable 120 days before the trip departure 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 one of our South Pole Ski the Last Degree Expeditions, please feel free to book online booking at <https://www.adventureconsultants.com/expeditions/antarctica/south-pole-ski-the-last-degree/book-now> and return your completed application to us with a deposit along with your climbing and polar travel résumé.

If you require more information please contact us at:

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▲ Arrival at the South Pole. Photo: Liefar Orn Svavarsson



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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