

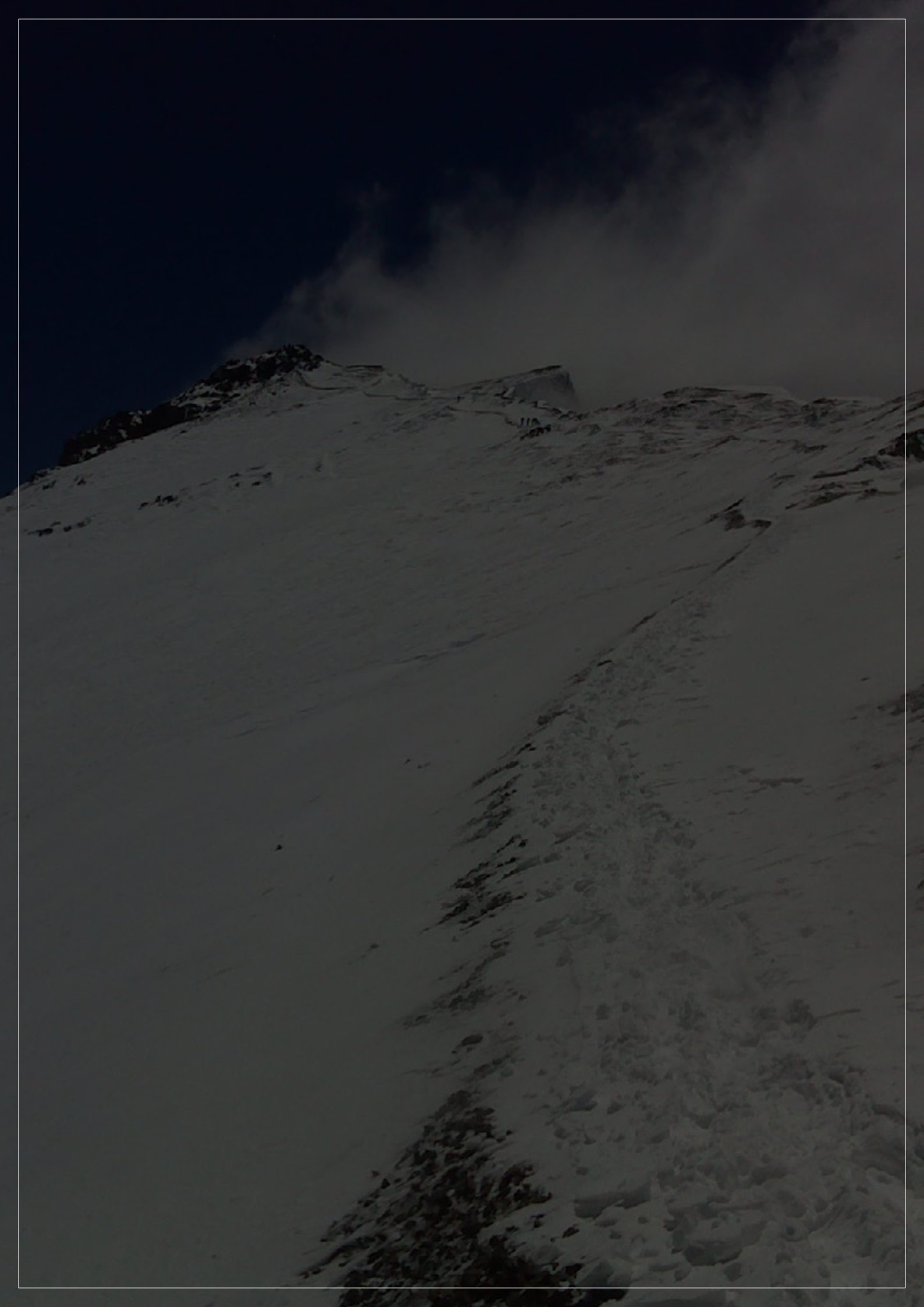


ACONCAGUA

6,962M / 22,841FT



2023/24 EXPEDITION TRIP NOTES





ACONCAGUA EXPEDITION NOTES

2023/24 EXPEDITION DETAILS

Dates: Trip 1: November 29 to December 17, 2023

Trip 2: January 3–21, 2024

Trip 3: January 24 to February 11, 2024

Duration: 19 days

Departure: ex Mendoza, Argentina

Price: US\$7,150 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.



▲ Aconcagua Camp 1. Photo: Suze Kelly



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



▲ A joyful AC team at Base Camp. 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 north-western 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 our camp at Puente del Inca, the 'Inca Bridge' 2,744m/9,003ft. 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 a night camping here and 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.



Descending from an acclimatisation hike at Penitentes. Photo: Pablo Guerrero

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.

The exact climbing itinerary is not fixed to allow for the optimal acclimatisation program and any inclement 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 nieves 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 drive back to Mendoza that afternoon.



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

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 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 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.



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

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 17, 2023

Trip 2: January 3–21, 2024

Trip 3: January 24 to February 11, 2024

ITINERARY

Day 1 Arrive into Mendoza this morning or the day prior, sort and check equipment

Day 2 Complete permitting process and drive to Puente del Inca (2,744m/9,003ft)

Day 3 Trek to Pampa de Leñas (2,950m/9,680ft)

Day 4 Trek to Casa de Piedra (3,250m/10,650ft)

Day 5 Trek to Plaza Argentina (4,200/13,800ft)

Day 6 Rest day/trek to Cerro Colorado (4,724m/15,499ft)

Day 7 Carry to Camp 1 (4,950m/16,250ft)

Day 8 Rest day

Day 9 Climb to Camp 1

Day 10 Carry to Camp 2 (5,500m/18,000ft)

Day 11 Climb to Camp 2

Day 12 Carry to Camp 3 'Colera Camp' (6,000m/19,700ft)

Day 13 Climb to Camp 3 'Colera Camp'

Day 14 Summit day (6,962m/22,841ft)

Day 15 Contingency day

Day 16 Contingency day

Day 17 Descend to Plaza de Mulas (4,300m/14,100ft)

Day 18 Trek to Puente del Inca, drive back to Mendoza

Day 19 Depart for home

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.



▲ Camp Colera. Photo: Mark Austin



▲ Climbers approaching the summit ridge. Photo: Pablo Guerrieri



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



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

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.

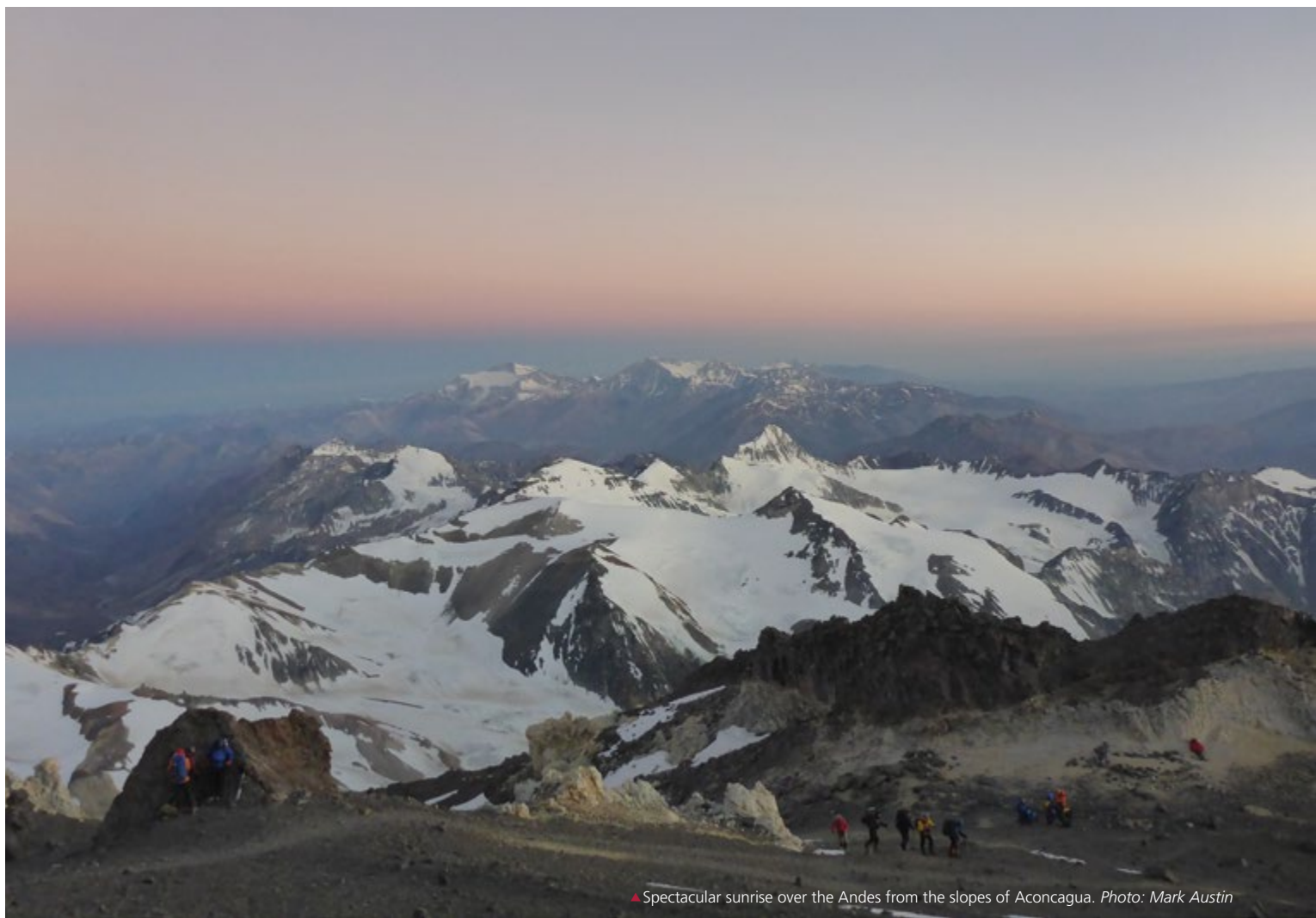
FOOD

Our guides prepare food during the trek in and whilst on the mountain. In camps, food is provided by the well trained Argentine cooks at Puente del Inca, 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.



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

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 a digital passport photograph 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 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/30–45lb.

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.



On the summit of Aconcagua. Photo: Suze Kelly

EXPEDITION FEE

The cost of the expedition ex Mendoza, Argentina is US\$7,150 per person.

Climbing permit fees are an additional cost of US\$950.

Permit fees are payable in US dollars at the National Park Service office in Mendoza prior to departing for Puente del Inca. Permit fees are subject to change.

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, 18
- Dome tent accommodation and meals at Puente del Inca (shared occupancy) on day 2
- All trek and expedition food ex Puente del Inca
- Group Equipment: ropes, tents, stoves, cookware, etc., and all supplies for a safe and strong summit bid
- Mule supported trek to Base Camp (maximum 30kg 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)
- Climbing permit fees. Permit fees are subject to change.
- 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 30kg 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
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: 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.



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

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 90 days of the trip commencement date we reserve the right to retain 50% of the balance payment fee.
- For cancellations within 60 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.

CONTACT US

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

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Phone: +64 3 443 8711

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.



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