

Aconcagua 6962m



EXPEDITION OVERVIEW

Named 'Aconcahuac' (the stone sentinel) by the Incas, Aconcagua is the highest peak in the Southern and Western hemispheres, the second highest of the Seven Summits and the world's highest summit outside of the Himalaya.

Our approach to Base camp will be from the North East through the Vacas Valley. This is a much less frequented approach than the normal Horcones Valley, giving you a far better experience away from the crowds. The Vacas Route offers the strong mountain walker, with prior ice axe and crampons experience the opportunity to ascend one of the world's highest trekking summits. Although you will not require any previous climbing experience, the ascent is at very high altitude and therefore requires a high level of fitness, commitment and determination.

The climb is very weather dependent but our high guiding ratios, small group size and levels of support generally gives us a big advantage and improves our summit success. We provide leaders/guides on a ratio of 1:3/4 throughout the expedition and the team is limited to 9 or 10 climbers. Our aim is to reduce the physical hardship and create maximum flexibility to give you the best chance of summit success as we can more easily deal with clients varying walking speeds/fitness and weather.

Mountain Porters carry any group gear (tents, stoves, shovels, fuel) and we will work with you in the months preceding your expedition to help you identify the very lightest kit possible to further reduce your load to around 13kg. Your guide will assist you with tent placement, cooking and water preparation at the high camps. The expedition will still be physically challenging (all 7000m peaks are!) and you will still have to work hard to reach the summit but you will probably have the lightest load and the best guiding ratio on the mountain.

WHY CLIMB WITH ADVENTURE PEAKS

- Ascent via the Vacas Valley, a far more beautiful and less crowded approach than the normal Horcones route allowing more time to acclimatise.
- Upto 4 days for a summit attempt
- Expedition leader from the UK who is supported by our regular team of local Argentinian mountain guides to give a 1:3/4 ratio throughout your climb above base camp. Many operators only increase their ratio to this level on summit day allowing little or no time to bond or get to know you! Maximum 9/10 clients.
- Communal tent at camp 1 allowing you to chill
- Quality food, our guides prepare all meals at camp 1 using a variety of ingredients to delay the use of freeze dried food at this stage allowing you to retain strength.
- High-altitude porters to carry group equipment (tents, stoves, shovels and fuel)
- All National Park permit fees included in price
- Adventure Peaks has been operating successfully on Aconcagua for over fifteen years and we have gradually developed what we see as the best provision on the mountain, giving you the best chance to acclimatise and retain strength for your summit bid.

OUTLINE ITINERARY

KEY to inclusions (H-hotel, C-Camping, B-breakfast, L-lunch, D-dinner/evening meal)

Day 1-2 International flight arriving day 2. **(H,B on day 2)**

Day 3 Wasting no time in Mendoza we complete the permit formalities before traveling overland into the mountains and to Penitentes, a drive of about four hours. Here you organise your gear in readiness for the mules and our walk into base camp. **Hostel, Penitentes (H,B)**

Day 4 The trek into Base Camp at Plaza Argentinas starts today with a short drive to Punta de Vacas. Mules will carry all of your gear so you can enjoy the walk without heavy loads. The walk on the first day is reasonably easy although very hot and dusty and takes you through green desert valley scenery enclosed between the steep mountains of the Andes. Trekking up the west side of the Rio de las Vacas to your camp at Pampa de Lenas (2800m) is approximately 5 to 6 hours. The Park Ranger will examine the permits and issue rubbish bags, which will be checked again at the end of the expedition to ensure all garbage is removed from the mountain. **Camp, Pampa de Lenas. (C,B,L,D)**

Day 5 Leaving camp we cross the bridge over the Rio de las Vacas to then follow it up the beautiful valley to reach our overnight camp at Casa de Piedra (3250m), a journey of about 6 hours. From here you will get superb evening views of Aconcagua. **Camp, Casa de Piedra. (C,B,L,D)**

Day 6 We start the day with a river crossing to enter the Relinchos valley, initially a steep narrow canyon that eventually leads to a broader hanging valley and our Base Camp at Plaza Argentinas (4200m). The campsite will be in the moraine that provides a convenient windbreak and good views of the route ahead. **Base Camp, Plaza Argentinas. (C,B,L,D)**

Day 7 Rest day, acclimatisation and preparations for the climb. **Base Camp, Plaza Argentinas. (C,B,L,D)**

Day 8 Today as our porters take any group gear required for the climb to Camp 1 (4850m), we follow taking a small amount of food (about 5kg) as an acclimatisation walk. Although the route to Camp 1 is easy; the altitude will make it feel much steeper. You will return to Base Camp to aid rest. Climbing high and sleeping low is essential for acclimatisation in these early stages; you will feel much stronger in the longer term. **Base Camp, Plaza Argentinas. (C,B,L,D)**

Day 9 Acclimatisation day and final preparation in base camp. **Camp 1. (C,B,L,D)**

Day 10 Today we move up with personal gear to Camp 1. **Camp 1. (C,B,L,D)**

Day 11 Acclimatisation walk to Camp 2 at Guanacos (5400m) to drop off a few kg of food, porters will have moved group gear. The route to Camp 2 is a little steeper up to the col and generally takes around 3 to 4 hours. Return to Camp 1 for overnight. **Camp 1. (C,B,L,D)**

Day 12 Rest day and preparation to go up to Camp 2. **Camp 1. (C,B,L,D)**

Day 13 **Climb** to Camp 2 at Guanacos, situated on a platform at 5400m with spectacular views of the surrounding mountains. **(C,B,L,D)**

Day 14 Rest day at Camp 2 Guanacos to acclimatise and prepare for our summit bid. **Camp 23. (C,B,L,D)**

Day 15 Move to Camp Colera, our launching platform for the summit bid. When the team are ready to make their summit attempt we will move up to Camp Colera ready to make the summit attempt the following day (5970m). Porters move group equipment.

Summit Days 16-18 The team has three days in which to reach the summit leaving spare time in case of bad weather, however the summit will be attempted on the first day of good weather. **Camp Colera. (C,B,L,D)**



The Route: An hour before first light we will start our ascent joining the normal route at just over 6000m before white rocks. From here we ascend up to the old ruined Independencia hut 6450m. At the sheltered area of the Independencia hut we usually have a short break before starting the long and steady traverse up to the 'Canaletta', a large gully leading down from the summit ridge, which gives the most strenuous walking. A good snow coverage provides a better grip for crampons but if warm weather has melted this then the rocky terrain makes for more difficult footing. From here the group follows the summit ridge with its superb views of the south face for about 30 minutes until the last few steep steps leading onto the summit. A long day (7 to 10 hours ascent and 2 to 4 hours descent). The effort is worth it for the stupendous 360 degree views and the pleasure of sitting on the highest peak in the Southern hemisphere.

Day 19 Today we descend from Camp Colera all the way to Plaza de Mulas in the Horcones valley to complete a traverse of the mountain, a unique offering by Adventure Peaks which will allow you to fully appreciate the superior journey up the mountain via the Vacas Valley!!! **Camp, Plaza De Mulas. (C,B,L,D)**

Day 20 Descend to Road Head stay **Hostel, Penitentes** (or additional 4th summit day and transfer directly to Mendoza)

Day 21 Transfer to Mendoza **(H,B,L)**

Day 22-23 Return international flight.

Extra hotel night – please note we include two hotel nights in Mendoza, one at the start and one at the end. Should the expedition finish early, clients are responsible for any extra hotel nights.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE/FITNESS

The climb up Aconcagua is non-technical. It is suitable for mountain walkers with previous winter walking experience, The route can sometimes be free of snow throughout or can have a solid covering of snow. It is preferred clients have prior experience climbing to around 6000m before attempting Aconcagua together with.

experience of carrying 13-14kg even though porters carry all group equipment.

Although the ascent of Aconcagua is not technically difficult it is quite a long summit day (from 5900m at high camp to the 6962m summit). This could take 7-10 hours to ascend and 2-4 hours to descend and can prove to be extremely tiring. You should make sure you are fit and used to long mountain days.

THE ROUTE

On approach we **avoid** the normal and somewhat busier route from the Horcones valley and opt for the more remote and exciting approach up the Vacas Valley. Mules will be used to support the trek into the base camp. We take the False Polish traverse using Camp 3 Guanacos & Camp Colera joining the Normal Route for the final summit day. Our Itinerary has a good number of spare climbing days giving the best chance of summiting one of the continental 'Seven Summits'. The team will have use of a radio whilst on the hill.

WEATHER CONDITIONS

In Mendoza and on the walk in, it can be very hot. Wearing shorts and t-shirts with sunhats and plenty of suncream is the norm. However, there can also be torrential rain on the walk in so full waterproofs are essential. From Base Camp upwards there can be heavy snowfalls and from



Camp 1 up, the wind makes for severe wind chill. At high camp and on summit day the temperature can drop to -15 Celsius. So down jackets, good mitts and double boots are essential.

WHAT TO CARRY

On the trek you should aim to carry a very light rucksack. A 35L sac is ideal and this should contain 1-2L of water; waterproofs; a spare warm layer; camera; mini first aid kit; sun hat, sun-cream and sun-glasses; a warm hat and gloves. The rest of your gear can go in your kit bag and/or larger rucksack to be carried by the mules. On the mountain you will need a 60-65L sac to allow for the movement of your personal bulky gear such as sleeping bag, thermarest and down jackets. **Porters carry group gear**

HEALTH

All our leaders hold first aid certificates and carry a fully equipped first aid kit for medical emergencies. However you should bring your own supplies of plasters, blister prevention pads (compeed), paracetamol etc. and any

medication you are taking. Consult your GP or a vaccine specialist for professional advice or visit the website www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk Water including that from non-sealed bottles should never be drunk without first sterilizing with chlorine tablets or by boiling. There is a doctor at base-camp who will perform a basic medical check before your climb, including blood pressure O2 Saturation and Heart-rate.

INSURANCE

Insurance which covers rescue, medical expenses and helicopter evacuation is **essential** for all expeditions. **We will require a copy of your insurance prior to departure.**



USEFUL TIPS

Just in case your main luggage goes missing en route, it is a good idea to wear your boots on the plane. Most other things can be replaced but comfortable, well worn-in boots are more difficult to replace.

EQUIPMENT

A detailed equipment list is provided on booking. Specialist items such as sleeping bags and down jackets can be hired or purchased with 15% discount from the RRP of clothing and gear from our shop

BAGGAGE

For your own comfort, travel light. Normally airlines restrict baggage to 22kg, but you will be wearing boots and one set of trekking clothes. Some items can be left at the hotel for your return. A suitable kit bag is provided but important items should also be packed in plastic bags.

ECOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

We ask that you ensure that all your rubbish is carried back to base camp where we will pay for it to be removed back down to the valley by mules. You will be handed a bin liner by the Park Ranger upon entry into Aconcagua National Park and this will be numbered and counted in and out and fines issued if necessary.

VISAS AND PERMITS

No visa is required for UK and US Citizens and many other countries. For non-UK citizens, you may need to pay a Reciprocity fee before you enter Argentina.

Aconcagua Climbing Permits are included in our expedition price but we must all go to the Park Office in Mendoza to register and pick them up.

CURRENCY

The currency in Argentina is the peso. **Traveller's cheques** and foreign currency can be exchanged at most banks. **Credit Cards** Visa and Mastercard are widely accepted but surcharges of 10% are common. Ensure the magnetic strip is in good condition.

PRE EXPEDITION WEEKEND MEETS

Climbing any 7000m peak is a large undertaking and we



strongly recommend you attend one of our pre-expedition training weekends designed to help you prepare fully for your expedition. It will be an opportunity to meet other team members, check you have appropriate equipment, allowing members to meet in order to obtain information, share ideas and enjoy two good mountain days towards your training for the expedition. You are welcome to attend as many as you like and you can bring a partner or friend. Meets are held in a variety of different areas across the Lake District and also in Scotland in winter.

Participation Statement

Adventure Peaks recognises that climbing, hill walking and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement.

Adventure Travel – Accuracy of Itinerary

Although it is our intention to operate this itinerary as printed, it may be necessary to make some changes as a result of flight schedules, climatic conditions, limitations of infrastructure or other operational factors. As a consequence, the order or location of overnight stops and the duration of the day may vary from those outlined. You should be aware that some events are beyond our control and we would ask for your patience