

Mt Vinson 4897m

- **A stunning Mountain in an extreme environment**
- **Antarctica at its very best, a white wilderness**
- **100% success**



EXPEDITION OVERVIEW

Antarctica is a land of dreams; a pristine environment of epic proportions and extremities. For half of the year, when there is 24 hours of daylight, the snow shines whiter than white. Mount Vinson occupies a grand position just 600 miles from the South Pole and 1200miles from the northern tip of the Antarctic Peninsular; the coldest, most windswept continent on earth. The elegant symmetrical pyramids of the Ellsworth Mountains give rise to the complex high glacial massif of Vinson itself, the highest

mountain on the continent of Antarctica. From its summit you will be awe struck by the clarity of the views to the nearby peaks of Mount Shinn and Mount Gardner, and beyond the thousands of square miles of ice and glaciers that lead to the South Pole. The climb of Mt Vinson is a moderate technical climb, but we are in a potentially extreme environment that will offer a real physical and mental challenge. **It is advisable to book at least 6-9months in advance.**

SUCCESS

We have a high level of success on Mt Vinson, with over 92% of our climbers reaching the summit, over a period of five years.

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.

OUTLINE ITINERARY

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

Day 1 Arrive in Punta Arenas and transfer to your hotel. **H,B.**

Day 2 Spare day in case of delays. Free time to ensure you have all the supplies you need and to explore Punta Arenas. **H,B.**

Day 3 Expedition briefing, final preparations and equipment checks with information on our flight arrangements, the current weather and what to expect on your arrival in Antarctica to ensure nothing has been missed. We talk through our/Antarctica's environmental policy and how we can ensure this pristine environment is maintained. The rest of the day is free to explore the city. **H,B.**



Carrying our gear between rucksacks and pulks/sleds, we ascend the Branscomb Glacier for 6 miles to camp 1 (2,770m/9,100ft). Although the glacier is never steep, this can be a tough day due to hard 'sastrugi' (wind scoured snow flutings). The team will be roped together as should be the case on any glacial terrain. On arrival at camp we build snow walls to protect us from the wind, the snow is easily sawn into blocks and folk quite often become quite creative during down time as sculptures start to form! A toilet area is created so that contamination is kept to a minimum and all removable waste can be taken off the mountain (yes, including human waste that quickly freezes). A mega-mitt is used as a cooking/group communal area. All camps follow the same routine. **(C,B,L,D)**



Day 4 Flight to Union Glacier

If the weather conditions in both Punta Arenas and the Union Glacier permit, we fly by a Russian jet powered Ilyushion-76 aircraft over Tierra del Fuego and out across Drake's Passage, towards the frozen lands of Antarctica. This is a six hour flight and there will be an opportunity to visit the flight deck for some incredible views. On arrival on Union Glacier we erect our tents and enjoy a good meal. Alternatively, if the Twin Otters are ready to fly and conditions for landing at Vinson base camp (2,300m/7,000ft) are good, we may head off within a few hours for the mountain. **(C,B,L,D)**

Day 5 If we have not flown the previous day, we fly by Twin Otter aircraft to base camp, a flight of about 1 hour 15 minutes. This is situated on the Branscomb Glacier, to the south of the Ellsworth Mountains. During the flight we should have excellent views of Vinson and other spectacular peaks which make up this remote mountain range. After unloading the aircraft, we rearrange our loads ready for the journey ahead.

Day 6 Today we carry to the base of the headwall (3,080m/10,100ft) or continue up to Camp II (c3,750m/12,300ft). Some teams used to camp near to the base of the headwall, but for safety reasons most go directly up to camp II (sometimes referred to as camp 3). The ascent from camp 1 starts out again quite gradually to the top of the Branscomb Glacier until it ends in a steep



headwall. We leave our pulks here and move up with rucksacks through the headwall to the large col between Mt Vinson and Mt Shinn. The steepest sections are around 40° and straight forward provided care is taken crossing a few crevassed areas. Camp is located directly opposite Mount Shinn and it becomes our launch pad for the summit. The views from this camp are incredible. **(C,B,L,D)**



Day 7 Unless we moved up directly to our high camp the previous day this is today's task. We ensure the camp is secure as we remain here until the weather allows us to make our summit bid. **(C,B,L,D)**

Day 8 to 13 Ascent of Mount Vinson

Although it only takes one day to reach the summit and return to camp we have numerous days available to achieve this in case of bad weather. Roped up, the route leaves camp on easy ice slopes to join a long glaciated valley that leads to Vinson at its far end. We may place some marker wands, but we do carry a GPS, in case the weather deteriorates. As the summit becomes visible, it gradually reaches up to form a fine triangular pyramid, the base of which we follow to gain its far ridge to the east. The ascent of the ridge is quite tiring as the altitude starts to take effect but the rewards could not be better as we gain the final summit ridge an impressive sloping shelf capped by a cornice and a few rock obstacles that finally give way to the highest summit on Antarctica. The views from the top are simply unforgettable. The ascent takes about 9 hours, with a further 3 hours for the descent.

After our ascent of Vinson, we can either descend directly to base camp or, if team members are feeling keen and fit, attempt Mount Shinn, which is shorter but a little steeper and more sustained. **(C,B,L,D)**

Day 14 Return to base camp

We need to be back at base camp by today, ready for our return flight to Union Glacier. Please note, we must wait until we have a full plane load before flying back to Union Glacier from Vinson base camp. **(C,B,L,D)**

Day 15 Weather permitting the Ilusion will arrive to take us back to the warmth of Punta Arenas. (Hotel will be arranged for you – to pay locally).

Days 16 This is the first possible date for your return International flights to depart Mendoza. **However, due to the nature of flights on and off Antarctica we strongly advise you book your international flights for 1 week after the planned departure date from Antarctica.**

Every effort will be made to keep to this itinerary but it is subject to weather. Flight delays can be expected so please don't schedule any important meeting directly after your planned return date, this is Antarctica! **Flexible international flight tickets should be purchased.**

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE/FITNESS

The technical difficulty of this climb is not high, but it is physically demanding with a need to carry heavy loads up to 25kg combined with good camping skills in a harsh environment (training can be given, please enquire about our winter alpine training). The trip is ideally suited to



strong mountaineers who have experience of Alpine PD+ routes and /or an ability to climb Scottish grade 1 winter routes and previous experience of altitude to at least 4000m. Basic alpine skills including glacier travel and crevasse rescue will be needed.

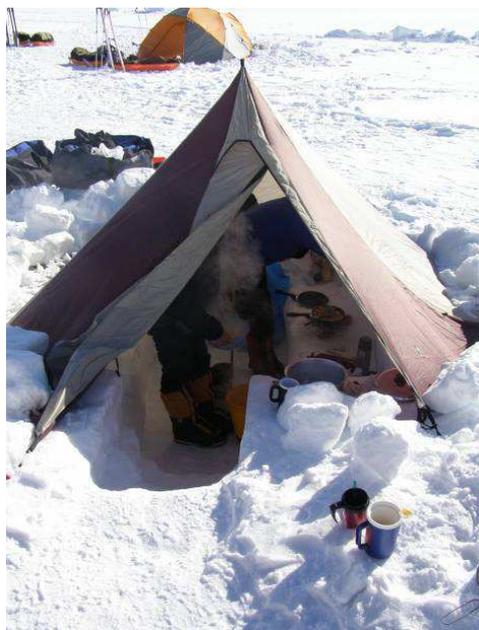
WEATHER CONDITIONS

The climate is strongly influenced by the high pressure of the polar ice cap, giving quite stable conditions but, as in any mountain environment, high winds and snowfall can effect progress. During the climbing season (Antarctica's

summer!), November to the end of January, you will have 24 hours of daylight with average temperatures of -30°C combined with intense sunshine: a unique combination.

CATERING ARRANGEMENTS

We use a combination of fresh produce which remains frozen and lighter weight specialist foods for high on the mountain. Packed lunch items include a variety of snacks: chocolate, muesli bars, nuts, dried fruit, cheese, salami, etc. A Mega-Mitt tent is used as a cook/communal tent which is cosy, sociable and quite comfortable.



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 can not.

EQUIPMENT

A detailed equipment list is provided on booking. Specialist items such as sleeping bags, boots and down jackets can be hired or purchased with 15% discount.



BAGGAGE

For your own comfort and enjoyment travel light with good quality warm clothing. Normally airlines restrict baggage to 30kg, but you will be wearing boots and one set of arctic clothes. Some items can be left at the hotel for

your return. We provide you with an Adventure Peaks kit bag.

VISAS AND PERMITS No Visa required for UK, EU or US citizens. Passports must be valid for at least six months after the end date of the trip.

LOGISTICS SUPPORT

We have a well staffed full time office open seven days per week that can provide on-going technical advice and guidance during the build up to your expedition.

IMPORTANT – The small print

Please note, flights to and from Antarctica can be delayed due to the weather. Please buy a flexible ticket, be patient and bring a good book to read. Our logistics company have stipulated that your travel insurance needs to cover you for at least 14 days after your anticipated return date from Antarctica. 3 Hotel nights on a twin room basis in Punta Arenas are included in the cost of the expedition, these are usually at the start of your trip. Additional nights including when you arrive back in Punta Arenas from Antarctica, must be paid for directly. The agent will help arrange this accommodation for you.

MISSED INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

We suggest you purchase a fully flexible air ticket to allow for bad weather. It is best to book your return at least five days later than your planned return to Punta Arenas and then bring it forward rather than trying to delay it from central Antarctica in the freezing cold! Adventure Peaks cannot be held liable for any missed international flights.

EXTENSIONS SKI LAST DEGREE to the South Pole

Adventure Peaks offers the opportunity for climbers with some skiing experience to ski the last degree to the South Pole (from the 89th degree to the 90th degree). We fly out to the 89th degree on a ski equipped Twin Otter to start our 70 mile journey across the wind scoured ice in an effort to reach the Geographical South Pole. The trip takes about ten days. Very few people have completed such a journey to this southern most tip of the world. This journey can be done independently or in combination with Mt. Vinson. Please request full information sheet.

