



Expeditions

South Pole – The Last Degree

- A stunning Ski Journey in an extreme environment
- Antarctica at its very best, a white wilderness



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. The journey to the South Pole on Skis is the ultimate and most exhilarating ski journey on earth. From Punta Arenas in Chile we'll fly across central Antarctica to be dropped off at 89 degrees south. From here we head south on our seven day journey towards the South Pole.

The expedition is open to strong ski tourers with a good level of fitness and previous experience of camping in cold conditions, such as from a mountaineering expedition. The journey takes us into an extreme environment that will offer a real physical and mental challenge. **It is advisable to book at least 6-9 months in advance.**

Participation Statement

Adventure Peaks recognises that climbing, skiing, 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 (H-Hotel, C-Camping, B-breakfast, L-lunch, D-dinner/evening meal)

Day 0 Arrive in Punta Arenas, transfer to your Hotel. Expedition briefing, final preparations, packing and equipment checks to ensure nothing has been missed. We talk through our/Antarctica's environmental policy and how we can ensure this pristine environment is maintained. **(H.B)**

Day 1 Today we have a morning briefing and slide show to provide you with information on our flight arrangements, the current weather and what to expect on your arrival in Antarctica. Provided we have completed our preparations the rest of the day is free to explore the city. **(H.B)**



Day 2 Flight to Antarctica and the Thiel Mountains

If the weather conditions in both Punta Arenas and Antarctica 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. We land on the blue ice of the Union Glacier.

Day 3 Today we get use to our equipment and acclimatise to Antarctic conditions with a short ski trip before making preparations for a mini-expedition.

Day 4-5 We get to try sled hauling with an overnight mini-expedition around Union Glacier. This will give you the opportunity to practice and fine tune your clothing and camping systems before leaving for the South Pole.



Days 3-5 These days may need to be condensed according to the weather forecast to allow an early flight to 89 degrees.

Day 5 If the Twin Otters are ready to fly and conditions for landing are good, we fly to 89 degrees South, 60 nautical miles from our goal where we begin our journey to the geographic South Pole. On landing we arrange our loads to start our first day of skiing and pulling our sleds. We are at 9,000ft and because of the density of the air, it feels like 12,000ft so we may well notice the altitude in the depth of our breathing!! The terrain is windswept with patches of sastrugi (hummocks of windblown snow up to 2 metres high) through which we must weave a path. We will aim to cover 5-6 miles as we adjust to the altitude. 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.



Day 6-10 With 24 hours of daylight it is important to set a rhythm for the days ahead, beginning with breakfast at 8am, packing and skiing by 10am. Normally we would stop by 5pm to set up camp and cook giving plenty of time to recoup and relax. Gradually as we become acclimatised our daily mileage will increase to ten miles per day. The views from camp are incredible across the vast open space.



Day 11 The South Pole

As we approach the South Pole, gradually the research station will appear on the horizon some 15 miles away! On arrival you will feel an incredible sense of satisfaction being amongst the very few (less than 300) who have arrived at the South Pole by ski. (C,B,L,D)

Day 12 Return to Union Glacier

Weather permitting our plane will arrive to pick us up for our return flight to the Union Glacier of about 6hrs over the polar plateau. Celebration dinner. (C,B,L,D)

Day 13 Weather permitting the Ilusion will arrive to take us back to the warmth of Punta Arenas.

Day 14+ Return International flights. (Important - see section 'International flights').

Every effort will be made to keep to this itinerary but it is subject to weather conditions. 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 trip is not high, but it is physically demanding with a need to pull heavy loads up to 30kg 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 ski tourers who have experience of cold conditions. Basic alpine skills including glacier travel 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 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. 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 skis, 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 is 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 and we always send a UK leader/guide with our expeditions.



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 10 days** after your anticipated return date from Antarctica.

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS / MISSED FLIGHTS

We suggest you purchase a **fully flexible** air ticket to allow for bad weather. It is best to **book your return at least one week later than your planned return to Punta Arenas** and then if the trip ends on time, you can bring it forward rather than trying to delay it from central Antarctica in the freezing cold! This is why we list this trip as 19 days on our website / brochure. Adventure Peaks cannot be held liable for any missed international flights.

