



Aconcagua Expedition Argentina



January 20 - February 9, 2013

\$4,650

*land costs, not including Aconcagua National Park Permit**

Difficulty Level: Intermediate – Participants should have either climbed/ trekked at altitude (over 15,000 feet/4,575 meters) or have had extensive backpacking experience. No technical climbing experience is necessary. However, climbing Aconcagua is notorious for being physically challenging. The weather is cold and the mountain is tall. It is imperative that you are in excellent physical shape, and able to hike in rugged terrain for long days. We are happy to detail training programs as needed to get you ready for this expedition.



Aconcagua, 22,841 feet (6,962 meters), is famous for many reasons – it is the tallest peak in the Western hemisphere; it is the ideal training ground for 8,000 meter peaks like Cho Oyu and Everest; it can be climbed without prior technical experience; it occasionally sees huge storms, cold temperatures and savage winds. A summit of Aconcagua is a proud achievement, and takes two weeks of hard work – acclimatizing, setting camps, and carrying loads – before you earn your summit bid.

Aconcagua is, however, also a mountain that can be attempted without years of mountaineering experience. Far more important are aerobic training, a positive attitude, and excellent logistical support. Our expedition is designed to maximize your enjoyment of this mountain while fostering education in the skills of high-altitude climbing. We focus on bringing each climber to a point of being a competent and active teammate and partner in our climb.

To accomplish these goals and maximize your summit chances, we climb a route called the 360°. The 360° avoids the crowds, trash, and general overuse of the normal route, yet still allows us a moderate summit day without any technical climbing. It is the most interesting route on the mountain, since it combines parts of 4 different routes (The Polish Glacier, Normal, Guanacos, and Ameghino) and travels on all the different aspects of Aconcagua, thus the name 360°.

After meeting the team in Mendoza, we spend four days driving and trekking to our basecamp. This approach is not only a fantastic opportunity to see more of Argentina's Andes. It is also essential to our acclimatization. From our 14,000 foot (4,267 meter) basecamp, we spend the next ten days placing and stocking three camps and progressively moving up the mountain. During this time we utilize a method of "climbing high and sleeping low" to help us acclimate. Our highest camp is placed at 19,580 feet (5,968 meters), and when we arrive there we will be ready for our summit bid.

The summit day itself is very challenging. We climb over 3,200 vertical feet (975 meters) over sand, scree, and, in some seasons, snowfields. Our reward is to stand on the highest point in the Americas, with stunning views of the Andes in every direction. After summit photos and celebration we descend back to high camp to rest and recover. Our expedition finishes with a two day walk back out from the mountain, and then some well-deserved celebration in Mendoza over the best steaks and red wine you'll ever enjoy!

Our Aconcagua expedition will be led by one of Alpenglow's AMGA certified lead guides. AMGA (American Mountain Guides Association) certification is the highest possible training available to guides, and only the most experienced and dedicated attain it. Our lead guides have also traveled and climbed extensively in South America and know the Andes intimately. Their knowledge of Andean culture as well as the mountains, combined with their passion for teaching others to become competent mountaineers, guarantees that your experience will be one to remember! We combine our guides' experience with the local expertise of one of

Argentina's best logistics operators. This ensures we have the best in transportation, food, equipment, and lodging.



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Aconcagua Expedition Itinerary

Day 1	Arrive into Mendoza, Argentina by early afternoon. This small city is famous for its wineries and traditional barbeque and steaks. We spend the day exploring the town, applying for our climbing permits and preparing for the climb. (Sunday)
Day 2	Leave Mendoza by private van for the town of Penitentes (8,000 feet/2,440 meters). Penitentes sits at the entrance to the valleys leading into Aconcagua.
Day 3	Spend the day in Penitentes to organize gear, take a half-day acclimatization hike, and enjoy the beautiful surroundings and comfortable hotel prior to heading into the mountains.
Day 4	After a short drive to Puente de Vacas (7,600 feet/2,316 meters) we organize our mules and begin the 3-day trek to Base Camp. Our approach up the Vacas Valley is less traveled than the normal approach, and also much greener. We hike four to five hours to our first camp at Las Lenas (9,000 feet/2,743 meters). Burros carry most of our gear for the trek in, so we will be able to hike with light packs and enjoy the stunning scenery.
Day 5	Today we get our first stunning views of Aconcagua and the Polish glacier as we hike 11 miles (18 kilometers) to our camp at Casa de Piedras 10,600 feet (3,231 meters).
Day 6	After a challenging day of steep hiking up the Relinchos Valley we arrive into Plaza Argentina, where we set our Base Camp. This will be home for a few days, so we take our time finding the perfect spot at the base of the moraine 13,800 feet (4,206 meters).
Day 7	Today we rest and allow our bodies to continue the important process of acclimatization. We enjoy fantastic food from our local cook, and take some short walks to enjoy the views and stretch sore muscles from the trek in.
Day 8	Carry to Camp I. Our first day on the mountain proper is truly unique. We move over the moraine and then through a field of tall penitentes (fins of ice that can be over 3 meters tall, formed by the intense sun) on our way to our campsite at 16,000 feet (4,877 meters). After caching our gear, we return to basecamp for the night.
Day 9	Additional rest day in basecamp. This process of carrying loads, then resting, then moving up is essential for a comfortable acclimatization process and an enjoyable and successful climb.
Day 10	Move to Camp I, 16,000 feet (4,877 ,meters).

Day 11	Carry to Camp II. Four or so hours of hiking takes us through the Amegheni Col and under the Polish Glacier to our camp on the Guanacos Route at 17,900 feet (5,456 meters).
Day 12	Rest in Camp I, 16,000 feet (4,877 meters).
Day 13	Move to Camp II, 17,900 feet (5,456 meters).
Day 14	Rest in Camp II, 17,900 feet (5,456 meters).
Day 15	Today we move to our final camp, at nearly 19,700 feet (6,000 meters). This is where we join the Normal route. The day is not difficult, but can provide fantastic climbing on 30 degree slopes as we traverse below the Polish glacier. We do not make multiple carries to this final camp, so our packs will be heavy. Reaching Camp III we begin resting and preparing for our summit bid.
Day 16	Extra Day to be utilized as needed for weather or altitude issues.
Day 17	Extra Day to be taken as needed for weather or altitude issues.
Day 18	Summit Day! Leaving camp before dawn, we move up past the ruins of Refugio Independencia on the exposed North Ridge. We then traverse the West Face to the Canaleta, perhaps the physical and mental crux of the entire route. The Canaleta is 1,000 vertical feet of scree and sand and must be climbed slowly but consistently. Our reward is joining the easy Guanacos Ridge, which boasts stunning views in every direction and leads us upward from the lower south summit to the north summit. At 22,841 feet (6,962 meters) it is the highest point in the Western hemisphere. The views of the surrounding Andes, the desert plains, the Pacific, and the 9,000 foot (2,745 meter) South Face are mind-boggling. A 10-12 hour round trip day finds us back in high camp, rehydrating and resting.
Day 19	We descend the Normal Route to Plaza de Mulas basecamp (13,800 feet/4,206 meter), where our cook and mules meet us. While we will see more people on our descent, returning by the normal route means we will experience two different sides of Aconcagua.
Day 20	Load the mules and trek 6 to 7 hours out the Horcones Valley to the trailhead and our van. While we will be tired from the climb, our bodies will be ready for the extra oxygen and fantastic food to be found upon returning to Penitentes. After organizing our gear and eating a late lunch, we jump in our van for the three hour drive back to Mendoza. By dinnertime we will be enjoying a celebration dinner of traditional asada (barbecue) at one of Mendoza's best restaurants. We spend the

	night in our hotel in Mendoza.
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Day 21	After a leisurely morning, catch afternoon flights from Mendoza to your home, usually via Santiago, Chile. (Saturday)
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**Note - The Aconcagua National Park permit fee is not included in the trip cost. While Alpenglow endeavors to have as few add-on costs as possible on our climbs, the park has been changing this fee each season making it difficult to plan for this fee. Please be prepared to pay the park service directly at the beginning of your trip. The fee must be paid in cash in US dollars or euro, and, at the time of this writing, was \$760/person.*

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