



ALPINE ASCENTS INTERNATIONAL
The seven summits company since 1986



ACONCAGUA



Cordillera de los Andes, Argentina
22,829 feet ~ 6,962 meters

OVERVIEW

The climb of Americas' highest peak is an awesome experience and superb challenge for mountaineers. Lodged deep in the canon of classic climbs, Aconcagua is often a stepping stone for Himalayan peaks, drawing climbers from all levels, as the ascent requires little prior technical climbing experience. Alpine Ascents International has a long standing reputation of leading successful climbs as well as acting as a prime resource for guide books, climbers and the media.



At 22,829 ft, Aconcagua is the tallest mountain in the Americas, and the highest mountain in the world outside of Asia. Located near the Chilean/Argentinean border, the ascent to the summit offers stunning views of the Andes mountain range. The “stone sentinel” rises approximately 4,000ft above its neighboring peaks and truly dominates the rugged Andean landscape. Aconcagua is a part of the Parque Provincial Aconcagua which protects over 71,000 hectares of mountainous terrain.

Aconcagua has literally been our home away from home, and we have been guiding Aconcagua since 1990. Our extensive experience guiding Aconcagua has produced outstanding and perhaps unprecedented success rates.

ACONCAGUA 22,829ft ~ 6,962m

Aconcagua is the highest mountain in South America and thus considered one of the “Seven Summits”
First Climbed: 1897 by Swiss climber, Mathias Zurbiggen.

The Route: We climb Aconcagua using the non-technical Vacas Valley Route. For those climbers who are interested and capable, we also offer an additional summit attempt via the more challenging Polish Glacier Route (on selected trips).

Climbing level: The Vacas Valley summit requires excellent physical condition and prior mountaineering experience or course is highly recommended. The Polish Glacier Route requires intermediate to advanced ice climbing skills in addition.



Cover: Aconcagua at sunrise. Willi Prittie

KEY ELEMENTS OF OUR CLIMB & SUCCESS

Simply put, we have Team Expedition Summit Success of about 90%. Since 1999 Alpine Ascents has had all but three regularly scheduled teams reach the summit of Aconcagua. We have lead numerous expeditions in which all climbers have reached the summit, and for those who have reached Camp III, we are confident our summit success is the finest in the industry. The success is a testament to our guides and the hard work and team spirit of our climbers. We believe that with our guides and acclimatization schedule, along with our pre trip assistance, Alpine Ascents offers the best possible chance for you to reach the summit of Aconcagua.



Our guides have found that enjoyment and success rates on Aconcagua are significantly increased by Alpine Ascent's focus on the following key elements. The combination of our expert guiding staff, our base and high camp managers, and an outstanding route, help create an unsurpassed alpine experience.

- **Honest Approach.** We are very clear as to the demands of climbing Aconcagua, (see letter from Willi Prittie). If you call our office and say "Hey, I've climbed Kilimanjaro", we will be very frank about the demands of climbing Aconcagua. We go to great lengths to educate and prepare our climbers. Aconcagua is a serious, rigorous climb and being properly prepared is of primary importance.
- **Guides.** Alpine Ascents carefully selects each Aconcagua guide team. Only guides who have co-led past ascents of Aconcagua (i.e. trained with an experienced guide) lead each team. Our guide staff is the most experienced on the mountain. For more on our outstanding guide staff see our website: www.AlpineAscents.com/Guides.asp
- We have a lead guide from Alpine Ascents on every trip while utilizing the expertise of local guides to assist with the climb. Our groups of 4-6 will have two guides and our teams of 10 will have at least 3 guides. We also have a permanent base camp to assist with climbers' needs and lodgings before and after the climb.
- Porters available upon request. (Note: Alpine Ascents does not provide porters)
- **Base Camp Manager.** In addition to our lead guide, we have a Base Camp Guide (local outfitter) to coordinate incoming and outgoing expeditions, handle specific needs of teams and clients, communicate between teams at various points on the mountain and to generally lend a hand wherever necessary.
- With our local outfitter we maintain a base camp that serves as a communication center for climbers and guides with use of two-way radios.
- **Second High Camp.** Alpine Ascents pioneered a second high camp, our Camp IV at 20,600'. This extra camp helps prepare for our final summit bid and is one of the main factors in our incredibly high summit success rate. Other companies have now followed our lead.
- **Extended Itinerary.** A slightly extended itinerary includes extra days that allows us to wait out bad weather, acclimatize properly and should we have early success, enjoy life in the charming city of Mendoza.
- **Vacas Valley Route.** We ascend via the less traveled and more aesthetically pleasing variation of the Vacas Valley route. This beautiful ascent offers a rare climbing opportunity as we encounter fewer climbers and spend quiet evenings in the rich mountain wilderness. We ascend the mountain by establishing a series of progressively higher camps. For the 3 day trek to and from base camp, our gear is carried by mules.
- Continual assessment of itinerary and location of camps.
- We have likely led more expeditions than any other guide service and have had many teams with 100% success.
- Utilizing Leave No Trace practices and environmental ethics, Alpine Ascents has initiated a waste removal system on our climbs with the WAG Bag system. Environmental Stewardship.

ACONCAGUA GENERAL INFORMATION

Training

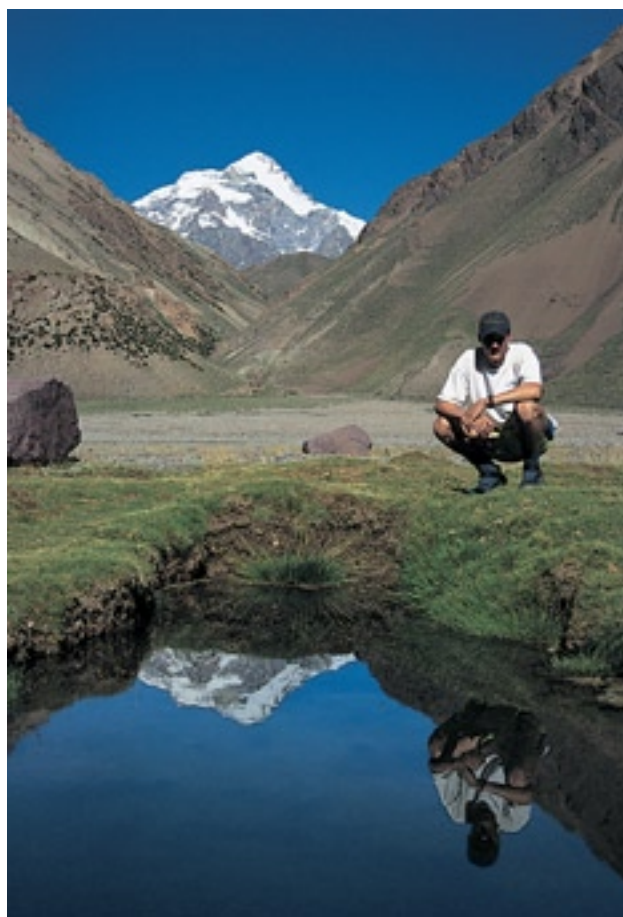
In the best interest of personal safety, success and team compatibility, adequate training and excellent physical condition is required. Prior experience carrying a heavy pack for multiple days serves as excellent preparation for this climb; a basic mountaineering course is recommended. Climbers must be able to carry an average of 50lbs or more and be physically and mentally prepared to deal with strenuous situations at high altitudes. Climbers need to be in excellent physical condition for both personal enjoyment and to be an integral team member. Climbers will assist in carrying group equipment. We encourage you to contact us so that we may assist you in developing a training program that meets your particular needs.

Polish Glacier Option

This additional summit attempt via the more technically difficult Polish Glacier route is offered for a few qualified climbers, given the rigors of climbing ice at 22,000'. On selected trips, up to two qualified climbers may attempt the Polish, weather permitting. Guides may also decide not to take climbers up the Polish route if their skill level or fitness are deemed inappropriate during the Aconcagua climb. We make this summit bid after our first attempt of our scheduled non-technical ascent. The climb begins from Camp III and entails a 3,500' elevation gain on steep snow and ice. The climb averages a steepness of 35°, and depending upon conditions, may have technical ice sections up to 60°. Climbers attempting this route need previous ice climbing experience and must acclimatize well to altitudes over 22,000'. This is a very rewarding climb. Only two climbers on the selected trips will be scheduled for the Polish on a first-come, first-served basis. Interested climbers will need to pay the Polish Glacier supplement fee, must have completed an advanced ice climbing course and have completed multiple ice climbs.

Statement from the Guides

“Although non-technical, this is a highly challenging climb and demands more than most other non-technical climbs (such as certain peaks in the U.S. and Kilimanjaro). This expedition-style climb requires the carrying of a heavy pack for multiple days, making prior physical training of three months or more critical to your success and enjoyment. We strongly recommend our 6-day mountaineering course for climbers who have not climbed with a 50 lb. pack or are unsure of the rigors that a climb such as Aconcagua requires. We stress these points to continue our high summit success and ensure that teams are well-balanced.”



TRAVEL RESERVATIONS

We recommend making your travel reservations with Scan East West Travel. They are familiar with our programs, and booking through them ensures coordination between your flights and the expedition schedule. Our agent is Charles Mulvehill. You can contact him by phone: 1-800-727-2157 or email: charles@scaneastwest.com

EXPEDITION ITINERARY

Day 1 Depart Country of Origin.

Day 2 Arrive Mendoza, Argentina. Climbers should arrive before 5 pm if possible. We will have an orientation for the climb, a Leave No Trace discussion, and equipment check. This will be followed by a group dinner in one of Mendoza's finest restaurants.

Day 3 After completing the permit process, we board our private bus to the town of Penitentes. In Penitentes, we organize mule loads and spend the night.

Days 4–6 After one night in Penitentes, we drive 15 minutes to Punta de Vacas (8,000'), where we will begin our three-day, 30 mile trek into Plaza Argentina (13,800'), base camp for our expedition. Mules will carry all of our gear so we can enjoy the trek without heavy loads. On the approach, we walk through green desert valleys dramatically enclosed between the mountains of the Andes. During the first half of the approach, our objective will remain hidden by the nearby mountains. However, at the end of the second day the stunning east face of Aconcagua will dramatically be revealed.

Day 7 After our arrival at Plaza Argentina, we set up camp and spend the next day preparing for the climb, exploring the local terrain and acclimatizing to the higher altitude.

Day 8 Carry to Camp I. Camp I is located behind an old moraine at 15,500'. This camp is very private and only Alpine Ascents uses it. We double carry to keep pack weight down and to help ensure good acclimatization.

Day 9 Move to Camp I.

Day 10 This day we carry to Camp II, located on a high pass known as Ameghino Col, at 17,700'. Ameghino Camp provides spectacular views of the surrounding mountains and the upper route of the Polish Glacier.

Day 11 Rest day at Camp I. This gives us further acclimatization time and rest before moving higher to sleep.

Day 12 Carry and move to Camp II.

Day 13 Carry to Camp III (19,200'), located just below the Polish Glacier, then return to Camp II.

Day 14 Move to Camp III.

Day 15 Rest and acclimatization at Camp III. This will prepare us for our move to Camp IV (high camp)

Day 16 Move to high camp, Camp IV (20,600'), located on the North Ridge. On the approach, we enjoy magnificent views of the Polish Glacier. Camp IV offers breathtaking scenes of many of the highest peaks of the Andes.

Day 17 Summit day begins at 5:00 am. We climb the North Ridge to Refugio Independencia at approximately 21,400'. From there, we traverse the West Face and climb up into the Canaleta, an 800' couloir that leads to the summit ridge. Finally, the Guanaco Ridge poses an easy traverse to the summit. On the top we have a spectacular 360° view. All around you will see the Andes Mountains consisting of several 20,000' peaks, including another of the highest peaks in South America, Mercedario. To the west lies Chile and the Pacific Ocean, and to the east, the plains of Argentina. Also from the summit you will be able to look directly down the 9,000' South Face of Aconcagua, considered one of the great faces of the world. Also included are acclimatization, rest and bad weather days.

Days 18 - 19 These extra days are built in to provide the best possible conditions for each participant to summit.

Day 20 We descend from high camp to Plaza de Mulas (Base Camp on the West side of the mountain).

Day 21 Trek out from Plaza de Mulas to Punta del Inca, where we take a car back to Penitentes for the night.

Day 22 Return to Mendoza and the Hyatt Hotel, to celebrate our time in the mountains and enjoy the comforts of Argentina.

Day 23 Depart Mendoza.

Day 24 Arrive Country of Origin.

RECENT EXPEDITION RECAPS & CYBERCASTS

Over the past 17 years Alpine Ascents has had outstanding success on Aconcagua. While this is a mountain that is known for low success rates, our frank upfront information has helped prepare climbers for the challenge. We encourage you to review our cybercasts over the last few years, which paint an excellent picture of our success and expertise. With lead guides such as Willi Prittie, Vernon Tejas and numerous other highly skilled professionals as lead guides, we offer an excellent chance to reach the summit and climb with some superb guides.

**Cybercasts for our recent trips
are available on our website:
www.AlpineAscents.com/cybercasts.asp**

Alpine Ascents provides family and friends the opportunity to follow our climbs as they proceed. Utilizing state-of-the art technology, we receive regular dispatches from the climbers and post them on our web site. Please note the following and extend these comments to those who may be following the cybercast. We will do our best to post updates as quickly as possible; on occasion satellite phones do not always function well and can lose service. This does not indicate a problem with the climb. Satellite phones are not the primary source for emergency communication (teams generally have radios). They function as a value added so we can post cybercasts for friends and family

Cybercasts are posted on business days during regular working hours. (We do not post cybercasts on holidays or weekends). Teams may not call in everyday, often teams do not call on rest days.

THEY SAY...

"The strengths were clearly the experience and knowledge brought by the guides, the thorough planning which provided us with excellent food considering the conditions, and most of all the sensible approach to planning the climb which gave everyone a good chance of summiting and acclimatizing properly when other groups were clearly rushing too quickly and failing. Alpine Ascents is clearly far more professional and inspire a great deal more confidence in their approach." Nick O. 2005 Climber.

"It was a trip to remember. I thought everything went very smooth and on schedule. Like past trips with Alpine Ascents, this climb was excellent. What can I say, Alpine Ascents is unequalled." Bob S. 2005 Climber.

"Surpassed my expectations in every way. The guides and organization skills were superb. Even the food was better. The interaction between base camp and higher camps worked very well. I can honestly find no weaknesses." Ian K.

"Outstanding! Alpine Ascents was first class in every area, (and we passed many groups on the mountain). I enjoyed the guides and camp manager. All contracted services (hotels, mules and drivers) were equally as good. I cannot recommend enough the quality of this trip and the guides." ~ Tom H.

"It was an extremely professionally arranged expedition. I could not find fault with any aspect of our trip. We summited; made good friends; came back safely. Excellent guides who could not have worked harder. Correct balance number of clients. Good quality hired equipment." ~ Michael S.



PRICES AND DATES

Current Prices, Dates, Inclusions, Policies
are available on our website:
www.AlpineAscents.com/Aconcagua-Price-Date.asp

LEAVE NO TRACE

With the rise in popularity of backpacking and climbing, the mountains around the world are visited by ever-increasing numbers of people. We are drawn to the mountains for their beauty, purity, remoteness, ruggedness, and the unique challenges they present. The mountains are our home, and it is our responsibility to maintain the natural beauty of the wilderness areas we explore. With this in mind, we are unwilling to sacrifice their preservation for human objectives. At Alpine Ascents environmental stewardship remains one of our core values and we take Leave No Trace ethics and practices very seriously. On our Elbrus climbs we teach and follow the environmentally appropriate Leave No Trace principals and practices. For more information see: [Leave No Trace \(www.Int.org\)](http://www.Int.org)

Principles of Leave No Trace

- Plan Ahead and Prepare
- Dispose of Waste Properly
- Be Considerate of Other Visitors
- Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
- Leave What You Find
- Respect Wildlife
- Minimize Campfire Impacts



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Alpine Ascents is committed to developing safe, self-reliant and environmentally conscious mountaineers and offering expeditions of unsurpassed quality throughout the world.

Our staff of experts is happy to answer any of your climbing questions, whether or not you are considering one of our expeditions.



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IS AN AMGA ACCREDITED
GUIDE SERVICE

For complete information visit our award-winning web site: www.AlpineAscents.com