

## Aconcagua Rapid Ascent Expedition

14 Days in Argentina / Skill Level: Intermediate



2018: December 23 - January 5

\$12,450\*

2019: January 6-19, January 20 - February 2, February 3-16

\*All costs included with the exception of alcohol, in-town meals, and park permit\*\*.

*\*\*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 \$975/person.*

**Difficulty Level:** Intermediate – Participants should have climbed/trekking at altitude (over 18,000 feet/5,500 meters). No technical climbing experience is necessary. 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.

## Overview

Peaking above the clouds at 22,841 feet (6,962 meters), Aconcagua is impressive both in stature and beauty. The tallest peak in the Western hemisphere is the ideal training ground for 8,000 meter peaks like Cho Oyu and Everest. It is possible to climb Aconcagua without prior technical experience, but the often devastating weather deters inexperienced mountaineers. The peak is fraught with massive storms that generate freezing temperatures and savage winds. A summit of Aconcagua is a proud achievement, requiring critical preparation and dedication. The climb demands extensive acclimatization (made easier by Alpenglow's use of Hypoxico tents) setting up camps, and carrying heavy loads (although reduced by Alpenglow's use of extra porters). A summit bid is no small feat.

Given the relatively low technicality, you can attempt Aconcagua without extensive mountaineering experience. Aerobic training, a positive attitude, and excellent logistical support are far more important elements. We've designed our expedition to maximize enjoyment while fostering education and high altitude climbing skills. We focus on transforming individual climbers into competent and active members of the expedition team.



To accomplish these goals and maximize your summit chances, we will ascend a route called the 360°. This more obscure itinerary mitigates the issue of crowds, trash, and overuse encountered on the normal route, while enabling us to summit without any technical climbing. True to its name, this exciting route combines parts of four different routes (The Polish Glacier, Normal, Guanacos, and Ameghino) and traverses all the varied elements on Aconcagua.

Our journey begins in Mendoza with a formal meet and greet. The following day we will take a private van to the town of Penitentes. After organizing our gear and food, a helicopter will carry us to our 13,800 foot (4,206 meter) base camp. Here we will spend the next six days establishing and stocking three separate camps, each at a progressively higher elevation. We will set up our highest camp at 19,580 feet (5,968 meters). During this process, we will utilize the traditional acclimatization method of “climbing high and sleeping low”. When we finally arrive to stay at our highest camp, we will prepare for our summit bid.



The summit day is extremely challenging, but entirely attainable. We will climb over 3,200 vertical feet (975 meters) across sand, scree, and -- during some seasons -- snowfields. When you reach the summit, you will be standing on the highest point in the Americas. Exceptionally stunning views of the encompassing snow-capped Andes serve as your ultimate reward. After summit photos and celebration, we will descend back down to our high camp to rest and rehydrate and then continue on to Plaza des Mulas basecamp. The following morning, a

helicopter will whisk us back to Mendoza, where we will enjoy a well-deserved celebration over delectable steaks and flavorful red wine.

While an expedition of this magnitude typically requires three weeks, we can do it in a mere fourteen days. How? One, participants must use Hypoxico tents for one month before departure, (the cost of the trip includes the tent rental fee). This makes for faster acclimatization on the mountain. Additionally, the use of helicopters and porters (also included) adds to our logistical speed and efficiency. Porters reduce the weight of your load, helping you maintain your strength and comfort, while helicopters serve as swift forms of transportation to and from basecamp. We have had great success with our unique pre-acclimatization methods in the highest mountain ranges of the world. We recommend this method as a way to stay strong and healthy on extensive expeditions, and increase your chance of summiting.

Alpenglow's AMGA-certified lead guides manage our Aconcagua expeditions. AMGA (American Mountain Guides Association) certification is the most prestigious in the world, attained only by the most experienced and dedicated guides. Our lead guides have traveled and climbed extensively throughout South America and possess intimate knowledge of the Andes. A thorough understanding of Andean culture combined with a passion for developing climbers into competent mountaineers guarantees an experience you won't soon forget. 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.

## Aconcagua Rapid Ascent 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.
Day 2	After obtaining permits, we will 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. We will spend a couple of hours organizing equipment and food for our climb and then helicopter to base camp as soon as weather and timing allow (either this evening or tomorrow).
Day 3	Today we might helicopter into base camp if we did not last night, or simply have a rest day in base camp, getting used to life at this new altitude. 13,800 feet (4,206 meters)

Day 4	Move 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). We utilize porters to assist in moving our equipment to Camp 1 in a single push.
Day 5	Touch Camp II. Approximately four 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 6	Move to Camp II, 17,900 feet (5,456 meters).
Day 7	Rest in Camp II, 17,900 feet (5,456 meters).
Day 8	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. Reaching Camp III we begin resting and preparing for our summit bid.
Day 9	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. 10-12 hours of climbing finds us back in high camp. After rehydrating and resting we descend the normal route easily to Plaza de Mulas basecamp (13,800 feet/4,206 meter).
Day 10-12	Extra Day to be utilized as needed for weather or altitude issues.
Day 13	Today we leave the mountain in style, with one of the most beautiful helicopter flights in the world. The heli takes us directly from base camp to the road, in about a 15-minute flight. After a quick 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.
Day 14	After a leisurely morning, catch afternoon flights from Mendoza to your home, usually via Santiago, Chile.

## Client Expectations and Timeline

### 90+ Days to Departure

Reserve Spot	Make your deposit to confirm registration - if you haven't already, head over to our website and click "Reserve Spot" and select your dates. The rest of the process is as easy as buying a book online. Make sure that
Q&A	Q&A with Alpenglow - time to ask any question about travel, logistics, training and everything in between.
Application	Complete full application including medical questionnaire & travel information.
Reserve Rentals	Reserve rentals if needed within application. For our climbing schools, we have a small rental inventory of boots, ice axes crampons, helmets and harnesses. These are provided at no cost on a first come first serve basis. Please let us know what you plan on renting as soon as possible.

### Within 90 Days to Departure

Complete Payment	Full Payment will be collected at the 90 day mark. Alpenglow will contact you prior to taking final payment and once you confirm we'll simply move your booking into the final stages. For international trips, a wire transaction is the best way to send payment. We also accept credit cards with transaction fee of 3% or you can pay by check.
Book Travel	We recommend reviewing flight options outside of 90 days and confirming with Alpenglow on travel times. Use us to guide you to the best flight schedules to make travel as easy as possible. Once you book your flights don't forget to share with the Alpenglow office so we pick you up on time from the airport.
Training	This is the hard part. The hours of training you put in to this directly correlate to
Equipment	Compile all equipment using the equipment list as a guide.
Purchase Insurance	Purchase travel and rescue insurance. We recommend Global Rescue and Travel Guard. <a href="#">Click here to find links to each.</a>

# General Trip Information

## Payment

1. A 20% deposit is required for all international treks and expeditions. Deposits are due when registering for an expedition, and can be paid by check made out to "Alpenglow Expeditions, LLC". All payments should be mailed to Alpenglow Expeditions at P.O. Box 3122, Olympic Valley, CA 96146 or sent via wire transfer. If wiring payment, please contact us for bank details and be certain that you are covering ALL fees!

Deposits are non-refundable and non-transferable. This is not a flexible policy. Planning our trips takes significant time and has non-refundable costs as well.

2. Balances are due 90 days before the expedition departs from the United States. Payment should be made as described above.
3. The cost of your trip includes your land costs (excluding in-town meals). This includes: double occupancy lodging while in town, meals on the mountain, scheduled transportation while in the countries we are visiting, group camping and climbing equipment, individual technical climbing equipment (boots, ice axes, crampons, helmets, harnesses), and guides.
4. The cost of your trip does not include: park permit\*, flights to/from the city where the expedition begins, airport taxes, visas, in-town meals, immunizations, tips for guides or local staff, travel, rescue, or any other type of insurance, hospitalization or evacuation costs, single supplement charges, excess baggage charges, alcohol, or other personal expenses.

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5. The costs of delays or changes to itinerary that are beyond the control of Alpenglow Expeditions or its agents are not included.

## Cancellations

1. We reserve the right to cancel any trip at any time. Reasons for cancellation might include (but are not limited to) political instability, natural disasters, or inadequate enrollment. If we cancel a trip prior to its start for low enrollment, we fully refund your payments. If we cancel your trip prior to its start due to political instability, natural disasters, or other reasons of that nature, we will refund all but non-recoverable costs. Changes to a trip itinerary made by our guides for any reason do not constitute a cancellation, and no refunds will be made in this case.
2. If you cancel your trip more than 90 days prior to departure, Alpenglow Expeditions will refund your payment minus the non-refundable deposit. 60-89 days prior, Alpenglow Expeditions will refund 50% of your payment. Fewer than 60 days prior, there are no refunds or credits.

3. On any trip, our guides reserve the right to remove any person, for any reason. These reasons generally stem from a person jeopardizing the safety of themselves or another team member. This includes a person who is not physically able to climb at the level necessary for the chosen route. In all these cases, there are no refunds whatsoever, and the client will be responsible for any additional costs incurred in leaving the trip.

## **Flights**

We recommend using Kayak.com as a primary source for finding low-fare airfares. If you prefer to work with a travel agent, we recommend Jane Chauvin at Penny Pitou travel: (1-888-526-4488) or [jane@pennypitoutravel.com](mailto:jane@pennypitoutravel.com). She is fast, efficient and affordable and intimately aware of the challenges of booking mountaineering trips.

**\*\*Please confirm your itinerary with Alpenglow Expeditions before you purchase it.\*\***

## **Insurance**

We require that all participants carry rescue insurance, travel insurance, and health insurance. Your policy numbers must be provided to us prior to leaving the USA. Homeowner/Renter's insurance is also recommended.

- Rescue Insurance- For US citizens, we recommend obtaining rescue insurance through American Alpine Club and upgrading that service via Global Rescue. Visit [www.americanalpineclub.org](http://www.americanalpineclub.org) to become a member and obtain the appropriate level of coverage based on the altitude of the peaks you will be climbing with us. Helicopter rescues in foreign countries, while unlikely, can cost up to \$20,000. International climbers have several options as well for rescue insurance. Our recommendation is Global Rescue as we have had great success with them in the past. Your insurance must not have a mountaineering exclusion and must cover up to your trip's highest altitude. This coverage is very important.
- Travel Insurance- Coverage should include lost/damaged baggage, unexpected delays, accident/life, and trip cancellation. Trip cancellation will cover you for non-refundable air and land costs should you need to cancel your trip due to an emergency. Since our costs are often not refundable, this coverage is very important as well, and should be purchased as soon as possible after registering for an expedition.
- Health Insurance- All members of our teams are required to have current health insurance. This insurance should cover emergency hospitalization abroad as well as domestically.
- Homeowner/Renter's Insurance- While unusual, thefts can occur while overseas. We recommend a policy to cover these losses.

## **Medical**

All of our expeditions and treks are physically demanding. Regardless of the skill level or experience needed, it is essential that you arrive in good physical shape, and prepared to handle extreme conditions, including cold, heat, and long tiring days. Alpenglow Expeditions, LLC and its guides reserve the right to remove any member of our trips at any time if we do not believe they are ready for the rigors of the trip.

Our guides are certified in wilderness medicine, CPR, and are experienced in client care in remote high altitude locations. However, Alpenglow Expeditions, LLC is not a medical facility and Alpenglow Expeditions, LLC assumes no liability regarding medical care.

You are responsible for your own medications, inoculations, and deciding whether you are physically able to participate in an Alpenglow Expeditions trip. You should discuss your participation in this trip, and the dangers involved, with your physician.

Some of the medications you may consider carrying with you include:

1. Tylenol – a simple painkiller for headaches and minor pains.
2. Ibuprofen – mild altitude headaches, along with body aches and pains, are common.
3. A cold and flu remedy of your choice (strong decongestant).
4. Pepto Bismol - for minor stomach upset, best taken in caplet form.
5. Immodium AD – to control diarrhea, when necessary. Again, tablets are preferred.
6. Cough Drops – the air at altitude is very dry, and many climbers develop hacking coughs.
7. A laxative agent of your choice.
8. Dramamine (or equivalent) – an anti-motion sickness agent of your choice as bus/plane rides to our trailheads are often very bumpy.
9. Diamox (Acetazolomide) required – prescription medication often used prophylactically to prevent altitude sickness. You should have a large enough supply to take 250mg/day (best as scored tablets so you can take 125mg twice a day).
10. Z-pack required – a broad spectrum anti-biotic.

Also be sure to discuss vaccinations with your doctor. Often a travel clinic has the most up-to-date information on which shots are necessary for the country you are visiting. Be sure to mention that most of our trips explore only the highlands and capital cities. This might mean that you need fewer immunizations, and anti-malarials are often not necessary. Determine this with your doctor, and refer to your trip itinerary for the exact locations we will be visiting. At the very least, your tetanus shot should be up-to-date and you should have protection against Hepatitis A.

### **Aerobic Conditioning**

We cannot stress enough the importance of being in excellent aerobic condition before arriving on your trip. Arriving fit will increase your safety on the trip and reduce the risk of medical issues. It will also dramatically increase your enjoyment and learning during your trek or expedition. At the minimum, we recommend an exercise regimen that includes a minimum of 3 one-hour workouts per week (biking, running, swimming) along with a few long days hiking as you get close to your departure date. Please call us if you would like to discuss a specific routine to fit your needs.

## Money

The countries we visit can still be challenging places to use a credit card or find an ATM. While you may choose to bring these for backup, we recommend you bring enough cash and traveler's checks for your planned spending. Traveler's checks can be exchanged in most of the countries we travel to, however they often have lower rates of exchange and can be a hassle. American dollars are still the easiest way to carry money. Be sure you carry clean, new bills and have some smaller denominations. Carry your money and important documents in a hidden waist pouch under your clothes.

The amount of money you need varies by how many presents you plan on bringing back! In addition to souvenirs and gifts, plan on spending on airport departure taxes, alcohol and snacks, and tips for local staff and your guides.

### Additional Notes

- Single Supplement - If you prefer a single room while we are in hotels, please let us know as soon as possible. There will be an additional cost associated for this.
- Cameras – digital cameras are an excellent option. Be sure to bring enough batteries and memory space for your entire trip. We have found that small pocket cameras are much better than big SLR's for summit days. You need a simple light system, and the new generation of digitals take great photos. If you are a photo buff, definitely bring your big SLR or video camera as well. The treks into our mountains and hanging in basecamp are great times to fulfill your photographic aspirations!
- Be sure to create a data sheet of all of your essential information – passport, credit card or ATM numbers, airline ticket information, visa number (if applicable), etc. This sheet should then be photocopied and scattered amongst your luggage. If any of your documents are stolen, having this information will be essential.
- Rental Equipment - Alpenglow Expeditions offers a limited number of mountaineering boots, crampons, ice axes, helmets, harnesses, carabiners, perlon, and belay devices for use by our clients. There is no additional charge for using this equipment, but please let us know as soon as possible if you intend to use Alpenglow Expeditions' equipment. Check your expedition's equipment list to see what technical climbing equipment is necessary for your climb or trek. Rental gear from Alpenglow is only available for shipment within the US. Rental gear must be taken home by the renter and shipped back to Alpenglow within two weeks of end of trip at the renter's expense.