



CLIMB ANTARCTICA

700M / 2,297FT



2026/27 EXPEDITION TRIP NOTES





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2026/27 EXPEDITION DETAILS

Dates: Available on demand from December through to January
Duration: 17 days
Departure: ex Punta Arenas, Chile
Price: From US\$40,125

▲ A huge variety and range of climbs. Photo: Hamish Bohanan

During the southern summer of 2026/27, Adventure Consultants is running an expedition to climb in the Ellsworth Mountains of Antarctica on our Climb Antarctica programme. Climb Antarctica has been hailed as the continent's best kept secret, and presents mountaineers with the opportunity to climb in the world's most remote and pristine environment.

The terrain is unlimited and varied, from technical ascents to easy snow climbs and ridge traverses that offer views over the Ronne Ice Shelf and Polar Plateau. This unique experience of climbing in Antarctica has only been undertaken by a handful of people and the opportunities to attempt new routes and first ascents are a real possibility.

Enjoy this exploration as an expedition in itself, or add-on to our Vinson Massif or South Pole expeditions to complete your Antarctic experience.

HISTORY

Union Glacier is located in the Heritage Range amongst the Ellsworth Mountains, 700 nautical miles from the South Pole. These mountains are the highest in Antarctica and include the continent's highest peak, Vinson Massif (4,892m/16,050ft).

The mountains were discovered on November 23, 1935, by Lincoln Ellsworth on a trans-Antarctic flight, and he named them the Sentinel Range.

The Canadian company Adventure Network International (ANI) opened up this area to private expeditions and operated regular flights to its summer camp at Patriot Hills from 1985. In 2003/2004, they withdrew their Antarctic operations and Antarctic Logistics & Expeditions (ALE) stepped in. ALE is run by some of the same people that initially started ANI back in the 1980s and they now use a new camp at Union Glacier as their base from which to operate in Antarctica.

The terrain and climbing in the area is varied, with routes ranging from easy to technical levels. Under the leadership of experienced Antarctic guides, climbers of varying levels of experience can safely undertake the expedition.



▲ An Illusion lands on the blue ice runway at Union Glacier. Photo: Suze Kelly

MEETING POINT

Expedition members will gather in Punta Arenas, Chile. Daily flights on LAN Chile and Ladeco Airlines connect with Santiago and other points north. As the group must attend an expedition briefing and all equipment must be weighed and loaded at least 1 day prior to departure for Union Glacier, you must schedule your arrival in Punta Arenas on or before Day 1 of the itinerary.

ACCESS TO THE MOUNTAIN

From Punta Arenas at the tip of Chile, we fly by Ilyushin 76 aircraft to the ALE base at Union Glacier. Here the aircraft makes a wheeled landing on a natural blue-ice runway.

Union Glacier Camp, situated at 80 degrees South is a small collection of tents. These have double walls to withstand Antarctic conditions, with a high-tech nylon covering and durable aluminium frame that opens up like a clam shell. They are tall enough to stand up in and incorporate a wooden floor to provide solid footing and insulation from the snow. Guests will also have access to the camp's dining tent where residents gather to share buffet-style meals.

Depending on our climbing objectives, we will travel from Union Glacier into the nearby mountains where we may spend several nights camping.

PREREQUISITE SKILLS

To join our Climb Antarctica Expedition you need to be physically fit and be capable of strenuous exercise for several days' duration.

Expedition members can expect to exert themselves for about 4-6 hours per day and be capable of carrying a 25kg/55lb pack.

Because the climbing is varied and we can tailor the objectives to meet your personal level, members with modest mountaineering backgrounds can join this expedition so long as they have some overall cold camping experience, some basic mountaineering skills and are reasonably fit.

TEAM SIZE

On the Climb Antarctica expedition there is usually a 1:1 guide-to-climber ratio. However should you have a group or climbing partner with similar objectives and experience then we may operate at a higher ratio, depending on the technical difficulty of your objectives. You will find the mountain guides companionable and strong expedition leaders with considerable power and willingness to see you achieve your goals.



▲ Led by qualified and experienced guides. Photo: Hamish Bohanan



▲ Looking across the Ellsworth Mountains. Photo: Lydia Bradney



▲ Enjoy optional excursions from Union Glacier. Photo: Suze Kelly

EXPEDITION DATES

Trip dates are available on request, please enquire with our office for further information.

ITINERARY

The following is an ideal itinerary for our Climb Antarctica Expeditions:

Day 1	Meet in Punta Arenas, Chile
Day 2	Weighing and loading of gear
Day 3	Expedition briefing
Day 4	Fly to Union Glacier, Antarctica
Day 5-7	Expedition preparations
Day 8-15	Climbing expedition
Day 16	Depart for Punta Arenas
Day 17	Depart for home

NOTE: Flights to and from Antarctica are subject to weather. Delays can and often do occur, therefore it is important to allow some flexibility with airline travel arrangements at the end of the expedition.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Days 1-3: Punta Arenas

We will arrange a specific time to come to your hotel and review your personal clothing and equipment. Please lay out all of the items on our Required Clothing and Equipment List in your hotel room so we can go through each item with you. We will help sort the items to pack in your checked luggage vs. your carry-on bag and what items to leave behind in Punta Arenas.

The evening before your Antarctic flight, you are required to attend an important safety briefing to be followed by cocktails and hors d'oeuvres. At the briefing, we will describe the flight dispatch process, update you on the current weather conditions and prepare you for arrival at Union Glacier. Please stay to enjoy pisco sours served over ancient Antarctic ice with your fellow travellers.

Day 4: Fly to Antarctica

We will call you at your hotel in the morning to advise you of current conditions in Antarctica. If the weather is suitable for our flight, we will pick you up at your hotel within the hour. Please meet



▲ Mountains stretch far into the distance. Photo: Mark Sedon

us in the lobby with hotel bills paid, ready to board the bus. At Punta Arenas airport, we board our chartered jet for the 4½ hour flight to Antarctica. Our route crosses the Drake Passage, then follows the west side of the Antarctic Peninsula and the spine of the Ellsworth Mountains. We land on a natural blue-ice runway on Union Glacier where you will take your first steps on Antarctica. Climb aboard one of our specially-adapted vans for the 8km/5 mile shuttle to our main camp. Our friendly staff will provide a welcome tour of camp and show you to your tent.

NOTE: Every effort will be made to keep to the scheduled flight date and we will depart as soon as weather and runway conditions permit. Please understand that delays are common in Antarctic travel. All flights are dependent on both the local and destination weather conditions. Our staff will stay in close contact with you and will provide you with regular flight updates.

Days 5–7: Expedition Preparations

Your climbing team will spend the first few days at Union Glacier brushing up on skills and getting acclimatised to the Antarctic conditions. You'll practice rope work, crevasse rescue, navigation,

weather observations and polar camping skills. During this period, you will also discuss and plan your objectives with your guide and pack your equipment to ready for departure. While based at Union Glacier Camp, you may also have time to join an excursion to one of the nearby scenic destinations such as the Drake Icefall or the beach at Rossman Cove.

Days 8–14: Climbing

It's time to explore Antarctica as it should be: untracked and pristine. Peaks, ridges, and canyons await and your itinerary is up to you and your guide. Together you'll develop an expedition plan to match your skills and interests. You can do local day trips and return home to Union Glacier Camp each evening for dinner, or you can set out on a multi-day expedition to explore the many valleys and peaks of the Heritage Range. Routes vary from technical ascents to easy snow climbs and magnificent ridge traverses with views over the Ronne Ice Shelf and Polar Plateau. Each experience is unique and the opportunities for exploration are endless. Only a handful of people have traversed this remote region and you may be the first person to attempt a new route and marvel at the view below. Once your climbing dreams are fulfilled, you'll return to Union Glacier Camp to enjoy a celebration meal and toast your achievements!

Day 15: Return to Punta Arenas

When weather and runway conditions permit, our intercontinental aircraft will arrive at Union Glacier to transport you back to Chile. Our staff will meet you at the airport and transfer you back to your hotel.



▲ Use sleds to haul gear on overnight trips. Photo: Hamish Bohanan



▲ Tailor the expedition to meet your climbing goals. Photo: Lydia Bradey

Day 16: Departure Day

We recommend scheduling your flight home one week after your anticipated return Antarctic flight. If you purchase a full-fare ticket, most airlines will allow you to move your departure date. It is important to give yourself a buffer as delays are common in Antarctic travel. Our Punta Arenas team can provide a list of local tour operators and excursions if you wish to explore Chile before you return home.

THE ADVANTAGES OF CLIMBING WITH ADVENTURE CONSULTANTS

Adventure Consultants is renowned for the quality of its service and strategy applied to high altitude expedition climbing. Our reputation is attributed to meticulous planning and experienced logistics coordination. We have a philosophy of investing in every expedition to offer our climbers the best possible chance of success.

We employ strong and specialised Expedition Leaders and support staff, who are some of the most pre-eminent in the industry. We pride ourselves on

operating in small teams, with the best back-up and support available. This includes nutritious and ample quantities of food, comfortable Base Camp facilities, reliable communications systems and the necessary medical back up.

Many of our expedition members come to us because they have seen us in action on a previous trip and decide to opt for our level of service and proven experience. Others return because they know we do our very best to make expeditions safe and successful.

VISAS

Expedition members must secure their own visa for multiple-entry into Chile. While Chile claims part of the Antarctic Continent under its sovereignty, it requires that we check through immigration when leaving for and returning from Antarctica; thus a multi-entry visa is required.

HOTELS

Adventure Consultants can make hotel arrangements for you in Punta Arenas; please advise your preferences at the time of booking.



▲ Add on to a Vinson Massif or South Pole Expedition. Photo: Andy Cole



▲ Stay at the unique Union Glacier Camp. Photo: Mike Roberts



▲ Departs from the colourful mariner town of Punta Arenas. Photo: Andy Cole

EQUIPMENT LIST & REFERENCE NOTES

Expedition members will be sent a list detailing all the necessary clothing and equipment to be individually procured, contained within a set of Expedition Reference Notes with all the details for the trip. These notes provide extensive information on everything from the type of camera to bring to training advice for your expedition preparation.

MEDICAL EXAMINATION & INSURANCE

Expedition members will be provided with a medical questionnaire by the expedition doctor and asked to visit their family physician to receive a full medical examination. This information will be sighted only by our Medical Advisor and treated with full confidentiality. We also require members to have rescue insurance and we will consult with individual team members on their insurance needs and solutions for coverage.

PASSPORT PHOTOGRAPHS

Expedition members will be requested to provide 2 passport photographs and their climbing résumé.

ADD ON OPTIONS

For those expedition members who wish to extend their time in Antarctica we have a number of options available. Trek to the South Pole with our South Pole Ski the Last Degree option; climb Antarctica's highest peak, Vinson Massif; spend some time ski touring on our Ski Antarctica programme; stay at our luxury Three Glaciers Camp or simply take a scenic flight to the South Pole. Whether your interest is towards the technically challenging or you simply want to see more of Antarctica then contact our office—there is endless scope for adventure!

THE EXPEDITION FEE

The cost of the expedition, ex Punta Arenas, Chile, is US\$40,125 per person for 1:2 Guide to Climber ratio.

Please enquire for 1:1 pricing.

This is an inclusive cost and covers the following:

- Flights to and from Union Glacier in Antarctica
- All group climbing equipment



▲ All smiles on a Climb Antarctica summit! Photo: Hamish Bohanan

- All expedition organisational requirements
- Tents and food while in Antarctica
- Mountain guides
- Transport of 23kg of personal equipment

The expedition fee **does not** include the following:

- Air travel to and from Punta Arenas, Chile
- Hotel accommodation and meals in Punta Arenas
- Chilean visa and airport fees
- Personal insurance—full travel, medical and rescue insurance is required as well as personal trip cancellation insurance (medical evacuation insurance cover of US\$150,000 is required)
- Personal clothing and equipment
- Additional flights in Antarctica
- Excess baggage transportation charges of US\$77 per kg for any baggage exceeding the personal equipment weight limit
- Expenses incurred due to delays
- Cost of satellite telephone calls whilst on expedition

PAYMENTS

All payments should be made by bank transfer to the following bank and account:

Bank of New Zealand
Offshore Branch
42 Willis Street
Spark Central
Wellington
New Zealand

for the account of Adventure Consultants Limited

Account Number: 1000-594771-0000
Account Type: US Dollars
Swift Address: BKNZNZ22

NOTE: All bank transfer charges are for the remitter's account.

We can also accept your deposit and balance payment by credit card (Visa, Mastercard and Amex) plus a 3% card charge.



▲Celebrating another Climb Antarctica summit! Photo: Lydia Bradey

DEPOSIT

A non-refundable deposit of US\$5,000 is payable to secure a place on the expedition.

BALANCE

The balance is payable 120 days before the trip departure date.

CANCELLATION & REFUND POLICY

An expedition member may cancel their participation on the following basis:

- Cancellations outside of 120 days will result in the loss of the trip deposit.
- For cancellations made within 120 days of the trip commencement date we reserve the right to retain 50% of the balance payment fee.
- For cancellations within 90 days of the departure date a cancellation fee of 100% of the full fee applies.

We strongly recommend you take out trip cancellation insurance via your travel agent if you wish to be covered against cancellation due to medical or personal reasons.

HOW TO JOIN THIS EXPEDITION

If you would like to join one of the Climb Antarctica expeditions, please complete our online booking form and forward your deposit payment at <https://adventureconsultants.com/expeditions/antarctica/climb-antarctica#DepartureBookingBlock>.

CONTACT US

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▲ Heading off into the wild blue yonder. Photo: Lydia Bradey



Adventure Consultants is affiliated to the New Zealand Mountain Guides Association (NZMGA), New Zealand Alpine Club (NZAC) and a corporate member of the American Alpine Club (AAC). Adventure Consultants is a supporter of the dZi Foundation in Nepal for their 'Revitalise a Village' programmes.

Adventure Consultants perform to IFMGA/UIAGM standards and are world leaders in high altitude guiding.

