



DENALI - LOW RATIO

6,190M / 20,308FT



2026 EXPEDITION TRIP NOTES





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2026 EXPEDITION DETAILS

Dates: Departures throughout May and June, see page 5 for details

Duration: 25 days

Departure: ex Anchorage, Alaska

Price: US\$12,900 per person

▲ Spectacular views from the summit of Denali. Photo: Steve Moffat

Denali, "The High One" is the highest mountain in North America. Located in Alaska at latitude 63 degrees north, 390 miles from the Arctic Circle, the summit is at 6,190m/20,310ft. Denali is one of the much sought after "Seven Summits".

Adventure Consultants offer guided expeditions to Denali ascending the West Buttress route. Our Low Ratio Denali trips are run in conjunction with Mountain Trip—one of the original National Park Service approved Denali concessionaires.

An ascent of Denali is ideal for those wishing to experience high altitude expedition mountaineering. Climbers must have intermediate technical snow and ice climbing experience, glacier travel, winter camping skills, and be in great shape and able to carry 20kg/50lb+ packs.

HISTORY

The Athabascans, Alaska's indigenous people, named the mountain Denali—"the high one". Denali was first climbed to the true summit in 1913 from the north via Karstens Ridge, by Karstens, Stuck, Harper and Tatum. No other routes were pioneered and very few reached the summit until 1951 when Bradford Washburn and team pushed through

the West Buttress route. Washburn's extensive cartography and photography were key in determining this route. This landmark ascent used a ski plane to establish a Base Camp on the Kahiltna Glacier at 3,048m/10,000ft paving the way for their ascent and the most successful route today.

THE CLIMB

Our team will drive from Anchorage to Talkeetna, where we will fly to our Base Camp on the Southeast Fork of the Kahiltna Glacier at 2,225m/7,300ft, at the foot of Denali. We start the climb of the West Buttress from this camp, in traditional expedition style. During the next few weeks, we establish five or six camps on the mountain. Some double carries will be necessary between most camps below High Camp. This will allow the team more time to acclimatise and manage loads up the mountain. Our team will then be in great position for the final summit push when the most favourable weather conditions are



▲ Glorious views of Mount Foraker and the Alaska Range await. Photo: Mountain Trip

present. The summit is never a guarantee, as Denali can experience very extreme weather conditions with very cold temperatures and high winds. Storms can last a week or more, but the days can also be quite hot and clear with the long Alaskan daylight hours in the summer.

WHY CHOOSE LOW RATIO?

Our Low Ratio option gives you the best chance of success in summiting Denali. By reducing the standard guide to client ratio to 1:2 we create a smaller team, which on the mountain equates to increased efficiency, increased safety and increased chance of summit success. These smaller, more exclusive teams with a maximum of 6 climbers and 3 guides, allow us to create efficiencies and move faster on the mountain. Teamwork is still an essential part of our Low Ratio formula, and all members are still expected to contribute towards the overall functioning of the expedition, including the setting and dismantling of camps. Denali is a serious undertaking, and our Low Ratio option is suited to those people looking to optimise their chances of summiting by joining a team committed to working together to achieve their goals. Call or email our office if you wish to discuss this further, we can help you find the trip that best suits you!

PREREQUISITE SKILLS

To climb Denali, you need to be physically fit, have a strong mental stamina and be capable of strenuous exercise for several days' duration. Expedition members need to be capable of carrying a 20kg/50lb+ pack, as well as an additional 15–18kg/35–40lbs on a sled. Prospective climbers must have intermediate technical snow and ice climbing

experience, glacier travel and winter camping skills. Generally, we will have expected climbers to have completed a climbing course and a minimum of 1–2 climbs in the seasons prior to Denali to ensure their climbing skills and fitness are current.

Previous experience climbing at altitude is an advantage. Climbing at altitude affects people differently; most climbers notice a lower performance rate than normal. Our climbing days are up to 8 hours in length, with recovery periods of only 8–12 hours before another day of demanding exertion. A high level of stamina is required to maintain this demanding pace for 21 days. An ascent of Denali requires a climber to have a good baseline fitness level and be willing to build on this by undertaking a training regime for at least 6 months prior to departure. Climbers need to be mentally and physically prepared to go the extra mile when necessary and the ability to cope with weather changes, team emergencies and summit bids.

Climbers should understand and be ready for the mental demands of a Denali expedition. This includes having patience and empathy with fellow climbers and guides, understanding expedition life, being prepared for weather delays that require spending long hours in a tent, pushing yourself to your limits, and having a good understanding of personal care (from frostbite prevention to maintaining adequate nutrition and hydration intake) for the duration of the expedition.

TEAM SIZE

The maximum climber to guide ratio is 1:2. The team will have a maximum size of 6 members and 3 guides.



▲ Climbing up the Autobahn to Denali Pass. Photo: Mountain Trip



▲ Braving regular storms is a big part of climbing Denali. Photo: Mountain Trip



▲ Access to the Kahiltna Glacier is via ski plane. Photo: Mountain Trip

2026 TRIP DATES

Trip 1: May 8 to June 1	Trip 9: June 5–29
Trip 2: May 10 to June 3	Trip 10: June 9 to July 3
Trip 3: May 15 to June 8	Trip 11: June 11 to July 3*
Trip 4: May 18 to June 11	Trip 12: June 14 to July 7
Trip 5: May 22 to June 15	Trip 13: June 17 to July 9*
Trip 6: May 25 to June 18	Trip 14: June 19 to July 13
Trip 7: May 29 to June 22	Trip 15: June 21 to July 15**
Trip 8: June 1–25	

* Quick Ascent—contact us for details

** Ski Approach—contact us for details

ITINERARY

Weather, climbing conditions and acclimatisation all dictate our progress during the climb. The following itinerary is a guideline of the schedule we follow however, guides may elect to move from this itinerary to give you the best shot at summiting.

Day 1	Travel to Anchorage
Day 2	Team meeting and briefing
Day 3	Travel to Talkeetna and fly to the glacier, establish Base Camp
Day 4	Single carry to Camp 1 (2,300m/7,800ft)
Day 5	Haul loads up to Kahiltna Pass to cache
Day 6	Move everything up to Camp 2 (3,400m/11,200ft)
Day 7	Back-carry day
Day 8	Haul loads around Windy Corner
Day 9	Move to Camp 3 (4,350m/14,200ft)
Day 10	Back-carry day
Day 11	Climb up the headwall to the ridge
Day 12	Rest day
Day 13	Move to High Camp (5,250m/17,200ft)
Day 14	Rest day
Day 15	Summit day
Days 16–17	Descent
Days 18–24	Contingency days
Day 25	Return to Anchorage—trip ends



▲ Leaving the Genet Basin towards Windy Corner, Mount Foraker looming beyond. Photo: Steve Moffat

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Travel to Anchorage

We stay at the Lakefront Anchorage (formally the Millennium Alaska Hotel) which is centrally located and includes free airport transfers.

Day 2: Team Meeting And Briefing

Our Team Meetings are generally scheduled at 10 am for an expedition orientation and equipment check. This is an essential meeting which all climbers must attend.

Day 3: Travel to Talkeetna and Fly to the Kahiltna Glacier

We provide transportation to Talkeetna for all of our Denali climbers, using our own vans and trailers so we are not tied to a third-party's schedule. The drive takes a bit over two hours, and we'll stop for coffee and snacks along the way. Once in Talkeetna, we'll need to unload, organise, and weigh all our equipment and supplies in preparation for our flight to the glacier. We will also finish the registration process with the National Park Service (NPS) and attend a pre-climb orientation provided

by one of the NPS Climbing Rangers. After finalising all the NPS admin steps, we'll fly to the glacier, weather permitting. Once on the Southeast Fork of the Kahiltna Glacier, we'll be busy establishing our camp for the night.

Day 4: Single Carry to Camp 1

Departing Base Camp, we'll drop down the infamous Heartbreak Hill and onto the broad Kahiltna Glacier. Our goal will be to move to Camp 1 at about 2,300m/7,800ft, near the junction with the North East Fork of the Kahiltna Glacier. This is a moderately tough day of about 9 miles round trip and is a good shakedown for the upcoming days. Depending on the team and weather, we may or may not carry loads and return to Base Camp. Throughout the expedition we will typically follow the "climb high, sleep low" technique for better acclimatisation; however, the altitude difference between Base Camp and Camp 1 is minimal enough to permit us to generally "single-carry" this stretch. On the late May and June expeditions, we may be doing our climbing early in the morning to avoid the excessive heat and soft snow conditions on the lower glacier.



▲ Sled hauling at dawn on the Kahiltna Glacier. Photo: Mountain Trip

Day 5: Haul Loads Up to Kahiltna Pass

We'll head out of Camp 1 and carry loads up the 550m/1,800ft Ski Hill. Several options exist for cache sites between 2,700m–3,350m/9,000–11,000ft, depending on weather, snow conditions, and team strength. This is a moderately difficult carry of 7–9 miles round trip, with 600–900m/2,000–3,000ft of elevation gain and a return to Camp 1 for the night.

Day 6: Move Everything to Camp 2

Our second overnight camp is beyond the cache at Camp 2 in the 3,400m/11,200ft basin at the base of Motorcycle Hill. This is an incredibly beautiful location that basks in alpenglow when the sun travels around the north side of the mountain.

Day 7: Back-Carry Day

This is an "active rest day" during which we drop back down and pick up the cache we left near Kahiltna Pass. It also helps give us another day to acclimatise before moving higher.

Day 8: Haul Loads Around Windy Corner

Steep snow climbing up the 300m/1,000ft high Motorcycle Hill rewards climbers with spectacular views. The total distance for the day is about four miles round trip with a little over 600m/2,000ft of elevation gain. Fun climbing with crampons and ice axe gets you around Windy Corner (4,000m/13,100ft) where the upper mountain comes into view. Have your camera ready!

Day 9: Move to Camp 3

This is usually a long, hard day. Our next camp is generally located at the well-equipped Camp 4 (4,350m/14,200ft) in the expansive Genet Basin. Loads are getting lighter and the air is getting thinner. Upon arrival, everyone will need to pitch in to build our camp, as we need to fortify our tents due to the possibility of severe winds.

Day 10: Back-Carry Day

This is another "active rest day," during which the team will descend from Genet Basin to the Windy Corner cache and bring everything up to Camp 3. We'll spend the afternoon going over climbing techniques that we will use in the upcoming days.

Day 11: Climb Up the Headwall to the Ridge

Our goal is to cache supplies up on the ridge above us and return to Camp 3. Climbing up the "Headwall" (the section of the route with fixed lines running from 4,600m–4,900m/15,100ft–16,100ft) with a heavy pack makes this one of the more strenuous days of the trip because of the steep terrain, heavy pack and thinning air. The views from the ridge can be as breathtaking as the rarefied air!

Day 12: Rest Day

It is often prudent to take a rest/acclimatisation day prior to moving up to High Camp. Many climbers feel this day really helps their acclimatisation.



▲ Team members must be proficient in glacier travel. Photo: Mountain Trip

Day 13: Move to High Camp

Weather and team strength will again determine this decision. While there is a camp site at 4,900m/16,100ft, it is very exposed, so we usually push for the 5,250m/17,200ft site which is more secure and the better choice for camp. This is a really tough day, as our loads are big and some of the terrain we will negotiate is steep. Rewards for our work are in the awesome climbing along the ridge. Weaving in and out of the rocks and occasionally walking a knife-edged stretch of ridge, combined with big exposure make this day one of the most memorable of the route.

Day 14: Rest Day

Moving to 5,250m/17,200ft and getting High Camp established can be a huge day, so we usually take a rest day before attempting the summit. Circumstances could be such that we do not take this rest day, but if possible, we prefer to take it.

Day 15: Summit Day

If the weather is favourable, we'll push for the summit. It is important to be patient on a big peak like Denali and we will only try for the summit when the weather is good; meaning mostly clear

and calm. Our guide staff are the most experienced on the mountain and your guides will make this difficult decision. The round-trip climb will take eight to twelve hours or more. Usually, you will depart camp early (7–10am), climb up to Denali Pass (5,500m/18,000ft) and follow the route past Arch Deacon's Tower and the Football Field to the slopes leading to the Summit Ridge. On this spectacular ridge, you can often see down into the Ruth Glacier with views of beautiful peaks such as Moose's Tooth, Mt Huntington and Mt Hunter.

Day 16–17: Descent

The descent from High Camp takes from one to two days, depending on the team's strength and motivation to get home. The descent can beat you up more than the ascent, as we often shoulder our heaviest loads of the trip as we hike down from High Camp to Camp 2. Weather dictates when we can fly out to Talkeetna for food and showers. Not much beats a steak and salad at the West Rib Tavern after working hard on Denali!

Day 18–24: Contingency Days

We build seven "contingency days" into our schedule. Denali has a well-deserved reputation for Arctic weather and it is common to take weather days at some point on the mountain

Day 25: Return to Anchorage and Fly Home

We will provide group transportation back to Anchorage and assist in making any necessary lodging reservations; however, lodging expenses after the climb are your responsibility. As we cannot predict when we will come off the mountain, we cannot arrange lodging ahead of time. This is a true transition day from the intensity of the mountain to the relative "big city" life of Anchorage.



▲ Heavy load carrying above Base Camp. Photo: Steve Moffat



▲ Climbers high on the West Buttress of Denali. Photo: Mountain Trip

SUMMIT DAY

Summit day on Denali is a serious undertaking; numerous factors need to align to allow a summit bid. In addition to weather and snow conditions on the mountain, everyone on the team needs to have demonstrated their ability to reasonably attempt the summit. Summit day is the most arduous of the expedition, and the ultimate decision as to both the timing and those capable of attempting the summit bid lies with the guide. While such decisions can be difficult to deal with at the time, it is important to remember that safety of all the team is the overriding factor in the decision-making process.

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 preeminent in the industry. We pride ourselves on operating with small teams, the best backup 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.

FOOD

During the expedition, you will enjoy high quality and nourishing food. Please indicate any specific dietary requirements you may have on your application form.

MEDICAL EXAMINATION

Expedition members will be provided with a medical questionnaire and asked to visit their family physician and receive a full medical examination. This information will be sighted only by our medical adviser and treated with full confidentiality. Advice on immunisations will be provided at this time.

VISAS

Generally, entry Visas are not required for travellers staying less than 90 days, however you may need to complete an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorization), please check with your travel agent. Climbing permits are a separate matter dealt with by the expedition agent.

EQUIPMENT LIST

Expedition members will be sent a list detailing all necessary individual clothing and personal equipment to be provided.



▲ A happy climbing team on the summit of Denali. Photo: Mountain Trip

EXPEDITION FEE

The cost of the expedition is US\$12,900 per person ex Anchorage, Alaska.

This is an inclusive cost and covers the following:

- Mountain guides at maximum 1:2 ratio
- All expedition organisational requirements
- Return transport between Talkeetna from Anchorage
- Round-trip mountain flight
- Group equipment: stoves, tents, ropes etc. and all supplies necessary to make a safe and strong bid for the summit.
- A dispatch page following the climb on the Mountain Trip website
- All food while on the mountain
- Up to two nights (shared) accommodation at Lakefront Anchorage prior to the climb
- Airport transfers as provided by Lakefront Anchorage
- Uphill Athlete 24-week Training Program

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

- Round-trip airfare to Anchorage, Alaska
- Meals while not on the mountain

- National Park Service Mountaineering "Special Use Fee" (US\$430)
- Denali National Park entrance fee (US\$15)
- Additional lodging in Anchorage following the climb and beyond the 2 nights included prior to the climb
- Personal clothing and equipment
- Personal trip cancellation/medical evacuation insurance
- Excess baggage
- Any rescue costs
- Any costs associated with early departure from the expedition
- Extra expenses incurred from weather delays in Talkeetna
- Gratuities

NOTE: This expedition is organised for Adventure Consultants by Mountain Trip Alaska LLC, an authorized concessionaire of Denali National Park and Preserve. Trip prices are subject to change, due to ongoing contract negotiations with the National Park Service.



▲ Denali High Camp. Photo: Mountain Trip

PAYMENT DETAILS

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 by credit card (Visa, Mastercard or Amex) plus a 3% credit card fee.

DEPOSIT

A deposit of US\$3,000, which includes a non-refundable \$1,500 administration fee, is payable to secure a place on the expedition.

BALANCE

The balance is due 120 days from the departure date.

CANCELLATION & REFUND POLICY

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

- Cancellations outside of 120 days of the departure date will result in the loss of the administration fee.
- Cancellations between 120 and 90 days of the departure date incur 50% of any monies paid, less the deposit.
- For cancellation made within 90 days of the departure date there will be no refunds.

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 these expeditions, please complete our online application form at <https://adventureconsultants.com/expeditions/seven-summits/denali-low-ratio-departure#DepartureBookingBlock> and submit this along with your climbing résumé and the deposit for the trip.

CONTACT US

If you require more information, please contact us at:

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▲ Denali and the Kahiltna Glacier from the air. Photo: Mountain Trip



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.

