

# ADVENTURES

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## Cerro Aconcagua



SUMMIT CLIMB OF  
aconcagua



The highest mountain in South America, Cerro Aconcagua rises up above the high plains of Argentina to the east and the Pacific Ocean and Chile to the west. We meet in Mendoza, Argentina, then drive to the trailhead at Penitentes. We'll hire mules for the 25 mile, 3 day hike up the Vacas Valley to base camp on the north side of the mt. This is the least traveled side of Aconcagua, but by far the most beautiful. From here we slowly make our way up to the summit by either traversing to the normal route at 20,000 ft. or climbing straight up the Polish Glacier, depending on our goals. Our Upper Vacas route is not a technical climb, demanding only carrying loads at high altitude. This is the best non-technical way up and by far the better choice if you want a quality experience, clear of the crowds and trash of the actual standard route which is on the opposite side of the mountain. The Vacas Normal route is a good way to be part of the Polish Glacier side of the mountain, definitely a few more people but still not nearly as crowded as the Horrocones Standard Route. The Polish Glacier is a difficult, demanding, technical snow and ice climb. Both of these routes offer a fantastic way to reach the summit at almost 23,000 ft. We offer multiple departures into the very remote yet technically easy Upper Vacas Valley each season. By far the best choice, yet least known route to the summit of Aconcagua. After the second day of the approach, we will probably not see anyone else till high camp at 20,000 ft. The Upper Vacas Valley is located in a protected area of Aconcagua Provincial Park. Access is limited; we are one of only a few companies currently leading expeditions in this region. So join us for the route of the future, now!

Summit Via the  
remote upper Vacas  
route!

*The Best Access to Both the  
Polish Glacier and the  
Caneleta!*

LIMITING ALL TRIPS TO 6!

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# Highlights of our Aconcagua expedition

## Climb The highest peak in south America!

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**mendoza-** Hot and sunny, Mendoza is located in the center of the local wine country, near the eastern slope of the Andes. A beautiful Latin city well known to be "muy tranquilo"; beautiful plazas, street side cafes and music all offer the traveler a sample of the best of the local Latin culture.

**Penitentes-** We go directly from Mendoza up to this small Andean ski resort community at 9,000 ft. This is the starting point of our trek. We'll stay here in a beautiful lodge near some natural hot springs, great hiking, and excellent scenery.

**Vacas valley-** Mules will carry our gear in for the 25 mile, 3 day trek along the Vacas River into our base camp. A very beautiful hike in rugged multi-colored Arizona style valleys, but with much greater relief. Spectacular, especially as we leave the normal Vacas route behind and enter the Upper Vacas Valley where we normally see no other groups until high camp!

**Upper Vacas valley-** The remote Upper Vacas Valley, or "Quebrada Vieja Alta" (the Old High Canyon) as it's known locally, is located in a protected area of the Aconcagua Provincial Park. A wonderful isolated Valley below the North side of Aconcagua, full of hundreds of Guanacos! From here we climb a technically easy, yet challenging remote approach to our high camp at 20,000 via a series of 4 camps above base camp reaching Piedra Blanca or White Rocks where we link up with the Vacas normal route. This is by far the best route to climb Aconcagua by! We more or less have the mountain to ourselves for most of the trip, a very different experience than both the other normal routes.

**Base camp-** At Plaza Fondo for the Upper Vacas Route (Plaza Argentina, for the Vacas Normal Route), both are located on a large glacial moraine. Excellent views of the route from here. We'll spend a couple days acclimatizing and carrying loads before moving higher up.

**The climb-** A series of 4 camps above Base camp are used, double carrying to minimize loads. 40 to 50 lb. loads and 4-8 hr. days. A good trail leads past huge penitente fields (large towers of ice formed by the Andean sun) and excellent, clean water sources. The camps on this side of the mountain are better protected from Aconcaguas notorious winds. The number of camps and rate of ascent are critical to a safe and enjoyable trip.

**The summit-** Summit day is usually 9 to 10 hrs, but can be up to 12 hrs depending on conditions, with small packs. An amazing view on a clear day of the Andes stretching to the north and south. Also from the summit ridge we can see all the way down the South Face, over 9,000 ft. below! Not to be underestimated, at this altitude it's a difficult day but spectacularly rewarding!

**Polish glacier option-** All departures have the option of trying the Polish Glacier route. A challenging technical climb directly up to the summit from our camp 4. Only for experienced, strong, and well acclimatized climbers. Unfortunately the success rate (for any team) is very low, so we don't encourage this option unless you have been to altitude previously and fully understand what technical climbing at that height involves. December is usually the best month for snow conditions on the Polish.

**Descent and hike out-** We have 2 options for this, a traverse down the normal route through the Plaza De Mules base camp or back down the Vacas valley. The traverse is the best way. It's a shorter hike, there are no time delays for mules to get our gear out and you can see the beautiful Horcocones Valley, more crowded but possibly Aconcagua's most beautiful valley. We actually make a huge loop trek all the way around the mountain doing this! Then back to the ski lodge in Penitentes for showers and a relaxing evening before we head back to Mendoza.

**mendoza-** Back to Mendoza to enjoy the excellent food and sun while waiting for flights home, or we can help you plan any extra time you have with suggestions for things to do and see. There's something for everyone: rock-climbing, hot springs, hiking, volcano trekking, rafting. Visit the beautiful beaches of Chile or the National Parks of Patagonia.

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**INCLUDED:** Transfers, hotels (except Mendoza), local transportation, mules, food on the mountain, group climbing/camping equipment, American guides.

**NOT INCLUDED:** International airfare to/from Mendoza, food and lodging in Mendoza, food at lodge in Penitentes, bottled water, soda, alcohol, personal equipment, personal insurance or rescue cost, climbing permit.

**LENGTH:** Allow 20 days Mendoza to Mendoza; even though we typically finish in 16 to 18 days with good weather.

**DATES:** See current schedule for departure dates. We offer the best choice for scheduled trips!

**DIFFICULTY:** Difficult high altitude trekking with heavy loads. For the Polish Glacier option, technical snow and ice climbing experience required.

**ALTITUDE:** During the climb we will maintain a safe rate of ascent to reach the summit at 22, 841 ft.

**COST:** See current schedule for rates.