

Cerro Aconcagua False Polish Guanacos Variation Route

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International Mountain Guides(IMG) is the oldest and most respected high-altitude guide service in the world, successfully operating since 1975, and is American Mountain Guides Association accredited. IMG's principals, Phil Ershler, Eric Simonson, and George Dunn, have lead and organized over 300 expeditions world wide. Each is an AMGA certified alpine guide with Himalayan experience including Mt. Everest, K2, Kanchenjunga, Shishapangma, and Cho Oyu. IMG's Aconcagua programs are organized and directed by Phil Ershler. Phil has lead and organized literally hundreds of international expeditions including over 20 to Aconcagua.

In choosing International Mountain Guides for your Aconcagua climb, you are choosing the highest quality expedition, the most capable and qualified guides, and a highly personalized guide service that strives towards Safety and Success as our two main priorities. Of course we'll have some fun, too!

International Mountain Guides has been guiding on Aconcagua continuously for longer than any other guide service. In fact we were one of the first companies to pioneer the Relinchos Valley route more than twenty years ago when there was almost no one on Aconcagua. We also had some of the first guides in the Guanacos Valley almost a decade ago and ever since.

Over the course of more than 20 years IMG has had one of the highest, if not the highest success rates for reaching the top. We are pleased to announce we had a **nearly 80% success rate** on Aconcagua last year; this is approximately twice the summit success rate for all Aconcagua climbers, and substantially higher than other guide services. The reason our success rate is so high is not an accident. We intentionally do not run dozens of Aconcagua expeditions a year, nor do we run hundreds of clients through our program. We focus on a personalized, professional experience. We want to build a relationship with our clients and give them the best possible service, with the highest chance of success. Also, our guides simply love to summit! There IS a difference between our expeditions and those of other guide services. We welcome you to look more closely at what we offer and see why we are the company for you.

We have an impeccable safety record and an unmatched success rate due to the expertise and professionalism of our IMG leadership and guides. We feel that our guides are an integral part of our program and help to create an unforgettable experience for you. Thus, IMG employs only world-class guides who adhere to strict American and International guiding standards. IMG is an American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA) accredited guide service.

Aconcagua: Just The Facts

Summit:

22,841' • 6962m

Set Your GPS:

32° 39' S • 70° 14' W

Size Does Matter:

Aconcagua is the highest mountain in the Western hemisphere.

First Boot-Prints on Top:

Mathias Zurbiggen, became the first to climb Aconcagua on an 1897 expedition organized by Edward Fitzgerald who never got to the top.

First by the Polish:

The Polish Glacier was first climbed in March 1934 by the Polish team of Otrowski, Narkiewicz, Daszinski, and Osiecki on the 8th successful ascent of the mountain.

By Any Other Name:

Aconcagua means "The White Sentinel" in Quechua and "The Sentinel of Stone" in Aymara.

Bring A Jacket:

Temperatures range from balmy to -25°C, but frequent and severe winds can take the windchill to -15°C. The proximity to the Pacific Ocean brings frequent storms to Aconcagua, and a particular phenomenon on the mountain is a strong, humid wind that engulfs the peak from the west at high altitude (above 18,000') forming a huge mushroom cloud of micro ice-crystals. Locals consider it highly advisable to descend when this formation is visible.

Don't Provoke the Wildlife:

The Guanaco is a large mammal that lives in South America and is related to the llama. It lives in the mountains, eats mostly grass and spits when provoked.

ACONCAGUA: THE MOUNTAIN

The summit of the Stone Sentinel, or Aconcagua, is the highest point on Earth outside of the Himalayas and a coveted prize for many mountain climbers. Its height is nearly 7000 meters (6962m or 22840ft) and its flanks hold some of the most difficult big mountain routes in the world. There are several easier, non-technical routes to the top, as well. Many people from around the world converge on Aconcagua each year to try their hand at summiting. It is a challenge of a lifetime and an adventure that will send you home with memories of majestic vistas, the rigors of taking on one of the world's greatest mountains, and climbing teammates that have become great friends.

The mountain is hosted by the unique and welcoming country of Argentina; a culture known for its great food and wine, relaxed nature, and hospitality. The city of Mendoza is an excellent staging point for Aconcagua expeditions and offers all the amenities needed for a great stay. At International Mountain Guides we have spent years perfecting our logistics in order to offer you the best expedition possible, taking advantage of all the mountain and area have to offer. In doing so, we have created an almost unparalleled success rate while maintaining our flawless safety record. We welcome you to put your trust in International Mountain Guides.

WHY CHOOSE IMG FOR YOUR ACONCAGUA EXPEDITION?

Climbing Aconcagua is serious business. We are very proud of the way we conduct ourselves, and feel that we provide the best package available. We encourage you to contact us personally to discuss the details of our program. We know we are not the cheapest deal around, and we don't want to be. We spend more providing the best personnel, equipment, logistics, and safety measures – things that many lower-cost programs cannot afford and do not have. We don't cut corners. However, we feel we provide the best value on the mountain, without question. We invite you to shop around and compare the quality of service with the price. There is a difference between our expeditions and the expeditions of our competitors and an enormous difference between us and local outfitters. Please consider the following:

- 1) IMG is the longest continuous guide service on Aconcagua.
- 2) IMG's expedition success rate is one of the highest on the mountain, if not the highest.
- 3) New Route! We are now guiding the Gunacos Variation of the False Polish route exclusively.
- 4) Most Experienced Guides.
- 5) IMG is accredited by the American Mountain Guides Association.
- 6) Safety and Success
- 7) IMG offers the most personalized service as well as professional office & travel support
- 8) IMG's logistics are unmatched.
- 9) IMG is the best value expedition.
- 10) IMG brings advanced technology to the mountain.
- 11) IMG provides updated dispatches for friends and family while you're on the mountain.
- 12) IMG guides are medically trained.
- 13) IMG expeditions live well and eat well while on the mountain.
- 14) Pulse-Oximeter
- 15) We use the best mule and transportation support
- 16) IMG complies with all local, state federal and international regulations for the countries in which we climb.
- 17) IMG offers an extended itinerary for better acclimatization and more contingency days for a summit bid
- 18) IMG Traverses the Mountain.
- 19) IMG's [References](#)
- 20) IMG is a licensed dealer of [travel insurance](#)

For more details, please see: <http://www.mountainguides.com/aconcagua.shtml>

THE ROUTE

Both our expeditions this year will ascend the mountain via a new variation on the False Polish that IMG helped develop. The Guanacos route is closed indefinitely so we have chosen a different route with possibly more to offer. Come join us on our newly pioneered Guanacos Variation of the False Polish.

Last year the Park Service decided to close the Guanacos route to all climber traffic, guided and not for environmental reasons. After discussing this in depth with park officials it is clear that the route will not be reopened. I have noticed that other guide services are still advertising the route in hopes of it reopening and misleading clientele. In response to the route closure we have developed a new variation. This new route opened in part by IMG guides, approaches through the False Polish camp I and traverses over to the higher camp on the guanacos route. Many that have been on both routes say this is perhaps a better option than the Guanacos itself.

Our Variation of the False Polish approaches the mountain through the Vacas and Relinchos Valleys and uses the first camp on the False Polish. From here it traverses over to the higher camps on the Guanacos route, and uses one more camp than the typical False Polish climb. This route is much less crowded and cleaner. It incorporates shorter days and better climbing terrain than the False Polish. The final camp is higher than the False Polish High Camp which makes for a more "do-able" summit day. We finish by traversing the mountain and descending the normal route to Plaza de Mulas. This allows us to see a different side of the mountain, have an easier decent, and have a shorter hike back out to the road, thus taking off a day off the decent. This new variation offers you the best of climbing on Aconcagua; less people, a cleaner route, shorter days, better terrain, more variation on scenery, and a shorter/easier descent.

LEADERSHIP

The expedition is organized by Phil Ershler. Phil was a member of the 1982 China-Everest Expedition, climbing leader of the Seven Summits Everest Expedition in 1983 and was the first American to climb the North Face of Everest on the 1984 China-Everest Expedition. Phil was also a member of the 1987 and 1990 K2 International Expeditions and climbed the North Face of Kangchenjunga on the 1989 American Kangchenjunga Expedition. He has also guided on Mt. Rainier for over 30 years. In addition, he has led countless trips to Alaska, Mexico, South America, Russia, Africa, Asia and Antarctica.

In May 2002, Phil and his wife, Susan, reached the summit of Mt. Everest making them the first couple ever to successfully complete the seven summits together. It also made Phil the first person to climb the Seven Summits twice. Phil is a partner in International Mountain Guides, a Certified Alpine Guide with the American Mountain Guides Association and a member of the American Alpine Club.

We work closely with IMG Senior Guide Mike Hamill on our Aconcagua programs. Mike's extensive knowledge of Aconcagua and his enthusiasm for the climb add greatly to your enjoyment and success. Please visit the Guides page on our web site to see what a great member Mike is of the IMG Aconcagua team.

OUR GUIDES

At International Mountain Guides we have some of the most qualified and experienced guides in the world. They are all extremely enjoyable to work with and lead expeditions adhering to the highest American and International guiding standards. Most of our guides are American and all are extremely knowledgeable about client care and client satisfaction. We only hire guides that we have complete trust in. Most of our guides have long resumes of certifications beyond their even longer resumes of high altitude climbing experience. They are an integral part of our company and continued success on Aconcagua.

REFERENCES

Joining a high-altitude expedition is a serious decision. You should be completely confident in the organization and leadership before you make that decision. Many of you have climbed with us before elsewhere in the world, and because your experience was good, you've decided to join us again. For those of you who haven't climbed with us before, we strongly encourage you to interview us thoroughly and also talk to our past customers. We are happy to provide you with a complete list of references.

ACONCAGUA: THE STONE SENTINEL AND TOP OF THE AMERICAS

Aconcagua is truly one of the great mountains of the world. At 22,841 feet tall it is the highest mountain in the western hemisphere, and the tallest peak in the world outside of the Himalayas. It lies on the border between Argentina and Chile, gazing out over the southern Andean mountain range. The climate in this range is typically hot and arid in the summer which makes for comfortable and stable climbing weather.

Aconcagua is located several hours to the west of the beautiful city of Mendoza, Argentina, and only a few hours east of the bustling sprawl of Santiago, Chile. Mendoza generally serves as the start and finish point for Aconcagua expeditions. It is a unique and charming city that has all the amenities needed for a great stay. Mendoza is very European in appearance with cafes lining the streets, and beautiful plazas with trees dispersed throughout.

Although there is no proof that the Incans ever summited Aconcagua it is generally acknowledged that they have at least been very high on the mountain. There is evidence of the Incas being at the top of many high Andean mountains and a well preserved mummy was found at 17,060 feet along Aconcagua's Southwest Ridge. However, the first non-native expeditions to the mountain didn't begin until 1833 when a prominent German alpinist named Paul Gussfeldt made an unsuccessful attempt. The first successful summit didn't come until in 1896-97 a team under the leadership of Edward FitzGerald placed one climber at the top of the peak. This was the renowned Swiss mountain guide Matthias Zurbriggen. The Great South Face of Aconcagua later fell to a French expedition under the leadership of Rene Ferlet in 1954, not long after the French summited the first of the 8000 meter peaks, Annapurna.

Today, thousands of climbers make summit attempts on Aconcagua every year. The sheer size and exotic location of this giant attracts adventurers from the far reaches of the globe. Aconcagua is a massive peak that will continue to attract many.

IMG's PHILOSOPHY

Our goal is to safely help as many team members as possible reach their goal, and we invest in the personnel and equipment that will make this happen. We value our reputation as the premier international climbing company and we only put programs in place that measure up to our own highest standards. If you would like to join a world class team on Aconcagua, we encourage you to contact us to discuss your goals and qualifications and secure an exciting role for yourself on our team. Our goal has always been to send our clients away with fond memories of an arduous but enjoyable expedition. Foremost, our concern while on the mountain is always safety and we go out of our way to take all the necessary precautions to be able to deal with any situation that may occur while on the expedition. Our other main goal is to give our clients every reasonable chance of summiting. To achieve this second goal we have chosen a slightly slower on mountain schedule which allows all team member to acclimatize fully and naturally. We have inserted a few rest days in to the itinerary which allows us to acclimatize naturally. We also have scheduled extra summit contingency days to give us more room to deal with inclement weather. The pursuit of these goals has allowed us an impeccable safety record and a success rate that is well above the average of other guided and non-guided mountain groups.

DATES (False Polish Guanacos Variation Route)

~~Dec 18, 2011 - Jan 8, 2012~~ (FULL; led by Eben Reckord)

~~Jan 8 - Jan 29, 2012~~ (FULL; led by Eben Reckord)

Jan 15 - Feb 5, 2012 (led by Josh Tapp)

~~Jan 29 - Feb 19, 2012~~ (FULL; led by Greg Vernovage)

~~Feb 5 - Feb 26, 2012~~ (FULL; led by Mike Hamill)

LANDCOST: \$4,200 US (plus \$500 - \$800 permit fee, depending on season)

With a \$1000 application fee required to confirm a reservation. Final payment must be received **NO LATER** than 90 days prior to the departure of the trip. Failure to do so may result in the loss of your deposit and reservation.

Landcost includes: guide fees, double accommodations in hotels, shared accommodations in tents, group transportation, group equipment including stoves and fuel, ropes, cooking gear, group first aid kit, technical climbing equipment, radios, etc., and meals while climbing except for snack items. We ask everyone to bring their own candy and granola bars and powdered drink mixes for their water bottles.

Landcost does not included: airport taxes, visa fees, meals while not climbing, personal clothing and climbing equipment such as boots, packs, sleeping bag and pad, crampons and ice ax, or items of a personal nature.

**CANCELLATION/REFUNDS**

Cancellation and refund policies are discussed in the General Terms and Conditions sheet that was included in the sign up documents package. We encourage you to read that information carefully. Business realities force us to strictly adhere to the conditions outlined in that document. We highly recommend purchasing [travel insurance](#) to cover the various things that can interfere with your plans before or during your trip.

ROUTE DESCRIPTION

Any climb of this altitude is a **SERIOUS** undertaking. The route is not difficult technically but does **require** basic ice ax, cramponing and rope team skills. Base camp will be established with the help of mules. Two or possibly three additional camps will be established during the ascent. Reasonable time will be allowed for acclimatization and weather contingencies.

CLIMBING SKILLS

Prior knowledge of ice ax arrest, cramponing and rope team travel is **required**. Past experience with cold weather camping and some altitude experience is also quite helpful. This climb is not overly difficult technically, but does require excellent physical conditioning.

CONDITIONING

You cannot over train for high altitude climbing. Concentrate on your heart, legs and lungs. If you are in a position to do any hiking or climbing at higher elevations, do so. An aerobic program of running hills, stair climbing, bicycling, etc. plus a conditioning program for the thigh muscles is necessary. Stair climbing and weight training or similar programs is recommended. You will be safer, increase your chances of success and enjoy the trip more if you are properly prepared. Summit day on Aconcagua is as or more demanding physically than the summit day on Mt. McKinley.

EQUIPMENT

The enclosed Equipment List is for your guidance. Most items are **REQUIRED**, a few are optional. Please consider each item carefully and be sure you understand what its function is before you make any substitutions. Keep in mind that this list has been carefully compiled after years of Aconcagua experience. If you have questions, please call.

FOOD

All meals while climbing will be provided with the following exceptions. We ask each team member to bring his/her own candy bars, granola-type bars and powdered drink mixes. These will be used during the hours on the trail and summit day. We will be bringing all breakfast and dinner foods including hot drinks. We will also bring cheese, meat, crackers and nuts for each day's lunch. Many food items will be brought down from the States, while other foods will be purchased in Argentina. Lower mountain menus, in particular, will be nicely supplemented with local foods. Again, please let me know if you have questions or food concerns. Each individual will be responsible for paying for his/her own restaurant meals when we are not climbing.

WEATHER

January and February are the optimal months for ascents of Aconcagua. Warm weather can be expected on the approach. Very cold and windy weather should be planned for on the upper mountain. Chill factors high on the mountain can be as cold as those encountered on Mt. McKinley. Summit day is often VERY cold and windy.

MEDICAL INFORMATION

A separate sheet regarding medical issues is enclosed. Please consult with your physician regarding the immunizations and the drugs which are mentioned. It is always nice to have a physician in the group but we cannot guarantee one's presence. Oxygen will not be available at any time during the expedition. Each team member must bring their own personal first aid kit containing frequently used items (see equipment list) and we will supply the group first aid kit. Each member should also bring a small bottle of iodine crystals or several bottles of iodine tablets for water purification. These are available at mountaineering stores as a product called 'Polar Pure' or 'Potable Agua'. Both work well, are inexpensive and are easy to handle. Additionally, each participant is responsible for providing his/her own medical insurance. None is provided for you.

Please honestly inform us of any allergies or chronic medical problems on the Medical Information Form that was part of the sign up forms package from the web site.

IMMUNIZATIONS

No immunizations are currently required for entry into Chile or Argentina. Please consult your local health department for their recommendations. I do recommend that you consider the following:

- Tetanus/Diphtheria:** There is no natural immunity to the tetanus toxin and since it is found throughout the world, immunization is a universal recommendation regardless of age. A combined tetanus/diphtheria booster is available and good for 10 years.
- Hepatitis Vaccine:** New vaccines are available for both hepatitis A and B.

Please consult your physician or local health department for their recommendations. You should also ask your physician for a prescription for a course of the antibiotic Ciprofloxacin. Please consider this to be part of your **REQUIRED** equipment.

PASSPORTS

If you do not already have a passport, or if your current passport is due to expire before the trip, you must obtain a new one. **A CURRENT PASSPORT IS REQUIRED FOR ENTRY INTO CHILE AND ARGENTINA.** Also, if your passport is 'well-traveled', make sure there are blank pages available. Passport information is available from your main post office.

VISA INFORMATION

Entry into Chile and Argentina no longer requires an advance visa. You will only be asked to fill out an embarkation/disembarkation card. Chile does have a fee for their entrance cards which is paid in Santiago and is currently \$100. However, you will be in transit while you are in Chile and therefore are not required to pay this fee. An embarkation card and your passport are required for entry into Argentina but currently there is no visa fee.

Again, please make sure your passport is current. We also suggest that you carry a photocopy of the front pages of your passport and a couple of extra passport photos. This simplifies replacement if a passport is lost. Carry these in a place separate from your passport.

PACKING AND TRAVELING SUGGESTIONS

Most of us will pack our gear in two duffel bags. Put your climbing pack in one of these bags. Most airlines limit checked luggage to two pieces each weighing no more than 20-30 kg., depending on the airline. New security measures make it impossible to lock luggage. Use zip ties to close the zipper tabs on your bags. The TSA can easily cut those off if necessary and they will then replace it if they have done so. Then, we suggest you get two small combination locks that you can put on the zipper tabs once we are in South America. These are nice for your peace of mind. They help to prevent pilfering. In addition to these two bags, it's nice to use a small rucksack as your carry on luggage. You'll then have this small rucksack available for while traveling.

We also would suggest that you purchase one of the many light money belts that are available or get one of the pouches that you can hang around your neck and place inside your shirt. This is a little safer way to carry your money and travel documents.

Experienced travelers will also carry a couple of extra passport photos with them as well as a copy of the first pages of your passport. These should be carried in a place separate from your passport. Having them available will greatly facilitate the replacement of your passport if you ever lost it.

Get to the airport early and make sure your luggage gets checked through to the correct destination. Also, make sure that your flight connections aren't too tight. Lost luggage is a pain. Try to keep the number of connections to a minimum when you are making travel plans and use the same airline as much as possible. Leave expensive jewelry and watches at home. We would like everyone to have a wrist watch with an alarm along. They are quite handy. It's convenient to have a pen with you for filling in travel forms. We also like a small flashlight (like a Mini Mag)

"You surpassed all my expectations as a guide and as a human being. You are one of the lucky individuals who make it possible for people like me to live their dreams. Thanks for a memorable adventure..."

—Hank W.

For more comments from IMG climbers, please see our website at: www.mountainguides.com/comments.shtml

FLIGHT INFORMATION AND TRAVEL PLANS

Seats can sometimes be in short supply to South America and flight schedules can change frequently. Because of this, we encourage you to make your reservations early and we **strongly** urge you to contact CTT Destinations. They are linked from our web site or you can contact them at: 800 909 6647 or by email at: img@cttdestinations.com. This is an agency that specializes in group travel. We've worked with them for years and we can highly recommend them to help make your travel arrangements. By knowing our programs, they can do a lot to facilitate your travel plans. It is also beneficial for us to have knowledge of everyone's travel arrangements. Do yourself a favor and check in with them.

You can fly on Lan Chile from Miami or LA to Santiago and then with Lan Chile from Santiago to Mendoza. We'll take the morning Lan Chile flight from Santiago to Mendoza. Pirjo DeHart at CTT Destinations has the current flight numbers and times. We fly back to the U.S. from Mendoza via Santiago on Lan Chile. We'll arrive in Santiago in time to connect with all departures to the United States that same evening.

The group will meet be met upon your arrival in Mendoza. Our guides go down one day early to take care of last minute shopping and will be waiting for you with private ground transportation once you clear customs in Mendoza.

Remember, you are responsible for making all of your own flight arrangements.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Casual attire is the rule for most of our activities. T-shirts and jeans work well. It's nice to have a clean shirt with a collar and a pair of pants for evenings just in case we ever wound up at someplace a bit fancier. Shorts are typically frowned upon for men in South America cities. However, Mendoza is a bit more casual and quite warm. Shorts are not unreasonable to wear while there.

Cash should be carried in the form of U.S.dollars. Bring small bills. Well-known credit cards are also accepted at better business establishments throughout the world. Plan to take about \$500. That's probably more than you'll spend but it's always nice to have extra dollars. We also ask everyone to bring one blank check. It's easy for us to simply put all group restaurant meals on one bill and divide that by the number of participants and guides at the end of the trip.

Also, remember that final payment must be received no later than 90 days prior to the departure date of the trip. All checks should be made payable to International Mountain Guides and sent to our Ashford office.

We hope all this information will be helpful. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

"I want to write to thank you for the great Aconcagua trip. It was the best climbing I ever had, both in terms of sheer pleasure, good companionship and as a learning experience..."

—John N.

For more comments from IMG climbers, please see our website at: www.mountainguides.com/comments.shtml

Aconcagua Itinerary – False Polish Guanacos Variation Route

Most people normally rendezvous in Santiago. After arriving in Santiago, Chile you will fly to Mendoza, Argentina. Everyone needs to be on the morning Lan Chile flight. You will be met by private transportation, go to get our required permit and then have the afternoon to sort personal gear and relax.

Mules will be hired to carry group gear and food to base camp and members will carry only moderate loads to base camp. The approach takes three days. From here, we'll use standard McKinley tactics of climbing high and sleeping low in our attempt on Aconcagua. Several rest days are included. Following the climb, we'll travel back to Mendoza where we'll enjoy a celebratory team dinner, get some rest and be ready to fly for home the next day.

- Day 01** Depart the United States.
- Day 02** Arrive in Santiago, fly to Mendoza, secure the permit and spend the rest of the day enjoying Mendoza and working a bit on individual gear. Hotel night included.
- Day 03** Early departure for Los Penitentes. Day spent packing loads, resting and generally getting ready to start our approach.
- Day 04** Drive to Punta del Vacas and begin approach march.
- Day 05** Continue approach march.
- Day 06** Reach base camp in the Guanacos Valley (13,000').
- Day 07** Rest day at base camp.
- Day 08** Carry to Camp 1 (14,500').
- Day 09** Move to Camp 1.
- Day 10** Carry to Camp II(17,800ft) via the Ameghino col and traverse to the Guanacos Helicopter camp (Guanacos route).
- Day 11** Move to Camp II/Helicopter Camp(17,800ft).
- Day 12** Carry to Camp III/High Camp(Piedras Blancas) at 19,500ft on the Guanacos route.
- Day 13** Rest/acclimatization day at CampII(17,800ft)
- Day 14** Move to High Camp(Piedras Blancas) at 19,500ft.
- Day 15** 1st Potential summit day. Spend night at High Camp after summit.
- Day 16** Contingency Summit Day
- Day 17** Contingency Summit Day
- Day 18** Descend to Plaza de Mulas base camp(Normal Route) from High Camp
- Day 19** Hike out from Plaza de Mulas base camp to Penitentes
- Day 20** Drive from Penitentes to Mendoza and go out for a Celebration Dinner
- Day 21** Fly from Mendoza, Argentina
- Day 22** Arrive home

Please Note: This is a probable but tentative itinerary. Our exact schedule above Camp 2 will be determined on the trip itself. Depending on factors including weather and group, we may well put in a Camp 3 located at approx. 20,000'.

"I had the time of my life on Aconcagua. The trip was absolutely incredible -- two weeks that I will treasure for the rest of my life. I have to say Mike made the trip. He just inspires confidence and security. I knew that no matter what happened up there he could fix it for us. I would climb anything with him..."

—Nicky M.

For more comments from IMG climbers, please see our website at: www.mountainguides.com/comments.shtml

Aconcagua Required Equipment List

Please Read Carefully

- LARGE size internal frame pack
- ice ax (70 cm length is the most useful)
- collapsible ski poles for the approach
- 12 pt. crampons (must be reasonably sharp)
- climbing harness
- climbing hard hat is also required
- 1 locking and 2 regular carabiners
- sleeping bag (down or synthetic) Should be rated to approx. minus 10 degrees F.
- full length foam and/or Thermarest pad
- double climbing boots
- regular gaiters and insulated Supergaiters
- light hiking shoes
- socks for the hike
- sandals for river wading
- three sets of wool socks for the climb
- light hiking shirt. I like Supplex nylon.
- hiking shorts and/or pants. Again, Supplex nylon is a great choice.
- climbing pants
- Gore-tex wind/rain pants with full-length leg zippers
- Gore-tex wind and snow shell-type parka
- medium weight insulated parka with hood (down or synthetic)
- polypropylene underwear -- 2 zip-neck turtleneck tops and 1 bottom
- pile jacket
- wool or fleece stocking hat with ear flaps
- neck gaiter or balaclava
- ski gloves
- polypro gloves
- warm, expedition mittens
- bandana
- baseball cap
- sunglasses AND ski goggles
- suntan lotion (at least #30 protection factor) and lip salve on a neck string
- 2 wide mouth plastic water bottles with insulated covers
- bowl, cup and spoon
- good headlamp with 2 sets of batteries (flashlight is not sufficient) No halogen bulbs.
- camera and film
- personal first aid kit to include at least the following:
 - aspirin antacids moleskin band-aids Ciprofloxacin (**required**)
 - light weight toilet articles and personal medications Imodium (**required**)
 - iodine crystals or tablets for water purification (these are available at mountaineering stores as a product called 'Polar Pure' or 'Potable Agua'.)
- small towel
- a bottle of Purell hand disinfectant. Make sure you bring this.
- toilet paper – 2 rolls
- ear plugs
- 5 very large plastic garbage bags such as the Hefty Steel Sacks.
- pocket knife
- alarm wrist watch (Splurge and get an altimeter watch from Suunto.)

ADDITIONAL MEDICAL INFORMATION

While we always strive to have a doctor as a participant on our trips, we cannot guarantee one's presence and you should be aware of this. It's important that everyone fills out the Medical Information form in the application documents carefully so that we can be made aware of any possible medical problems

In addition to the first aid items listed on the equipment list, there are a few additional medications that you should consider. These should be discussed with your personal physician and will require his prescription. We suggest you discuss the use of Ciprofloxacin for prevention and/treatment of traveler's diarrhea with your physician and you should have a course of this antibiotic with you. You also want to bring some Imodium for treatment of diarrhea. Please consider both of these medications as part of your required equipment list. A mild sleeping medication can also be discussed with your physician. We do not recommend the automatic use of Diamox for altitude sickness but you can also discuss this with your physician and he can make this available to you if you and he deem it appropriate. Any medication should be used only if necessary and use should be discussed thoroughly with your physician and with your guide before you take the medication.

Water purification is also very important. An efficient and effective and inexpensive method is the use of iodine crystals. These are available commercially at mountaineering stores as a product called 'Polar Pure'. Iodine tablets, such as 'Potable Agua' are also available and work well. Filters, such as those made by MSR, are also good. Either can be used or both can be used in combination.

There are some immunizations that you should consider. Your local health department is the best source of information. They are cheap insurance. Start preparations now so that these vaccinations can be spaced out. We **STRONGLY** suggest getting tetanus and hepatitis vaccinations. We would be current with these vaccinations regardless of whether we were traveling or not

We also strongly recommend that each participant brings a small bottle of a hand disinfectant such as Purell. Do bring a bottle. Anything that we can do to stay healthy is worthwhile.

Health issues will be discussed during the expedition and we encourage you to contact us if you have any questions before or during the trip.

"Phil, you did a great job at providing superb leadership, and it's only in hindsight that I realized how much I did learn in the several days that we all worked together. Your concern for safety and the well-being of the group was certainly expressed succinctly and in the end it paid dividends. But, what I particularly liked was your strong emphasis on the fact that we participate together as a team up to the top and back down. We succeeded, and in large part I think, it's due to the fact that you emphasized that we all do it together..."

—Todd H.

For more comments from IMG climbers, please see our website at: www.mountainguides.com/comments.shtml
