

## Vinson Massif Antarctica Expedition

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This is the trip of a lifetime. Our goal is the highest peak on the Antarctic continent. Vinson Massif (16,067') requires a solid mountaineering background and a true spirit of adventure. Technical difficulties are not great but the extremes of this environment require team members to have reasonable crampon, rope travel and ice ax experience. Prior time spent cold weather camping and carrying loads is also required.

As equipment for this expedition is extremely important, one full day will be spent in Punta Arenas doing equipment checks prior to our flight to the Ice.

We have been conducting trips to Vinson since 1988. Very few guide services have that length of Antarctic experience.

We fly to Punta Arenas, Chile where the trip begins. From here, we fly in a chartered Russian jet to the Patriot Hills at 80 degrees S. Latitude. We contract with Adventure Network International for this flight and all our logistics in Antarctica. We then fly in a ski-equipped twin-engine Otter to the base of Vinson at 79 degrees S. Latitude. Vinson Base Camp is located approx. 660 miles from the South Pole. The pilots are Antarctic experts. The trip will take a minimum of 20 days (weather permitting) and will be open to only six experienced climbers. Two camps will be required above base camp. We establish each of these camps by making a carry to the new camp prior to moving up. The climbing will consist of extensive cramponing on moderately steep slopes. The ability to camp and take care of yourself in extreme conditions are very important. Temperatures can range to minus 40°. Think of Vinson as a short Mt. McKinley climb.

Antarctica is an amazing place. It's as close as you will ever get to another planet without leaving this one. Vinson is one of the most unique of the Seven Summits adventures. We hope you will seriously consider joining us on a trip to the Ice.

### Antarctica: Just The Facts

**Summit of Vinson Massif:**  
16,067' • 4897m

**Set Your GPS:**  
78° 31' S • 85° 37' W

**First Boot Prints on Top:**  
Nicholas Clinch and team in 1966.

**Most Boot Prints on Top:**  
Dave Hahn has summited Vinson a record 25 times and counting.

**Bring A Jacket:**  
Temperatures range from 10°C in summer to -89.6°C or -128.6°F (the lowest air temp ever recorded.) In the winter extreme, metal can stick to skin, kerosene turns to jelly and fillings can fall out of teeth.

**Maybe a Windbreaker Too:**  
The cold of the interior, the domed shape of the continent and intense low pressure systems around the coast combine to create Antarctica's powerful katabatic winds (some of the strongest on earth.) They can exceed hurricane forces for several days at a time. Maximum gusts of more than 250 km/h have been recorded.

**The Real Estate**  
Total area: 14 million sq. km (just under 1½ times the US)  
Arable land: 0%  
Permanent crops: 0%  
Meadow, pasture: 0%  
Forest, woodland: 0%  
Other: 100% (ice 98%, rock 2%)

**We Knew It Had To Be Somewhere**  
90% of the world's ice (29 million cubic km) and 60-70% of its fresh water is in the Antarctic ice cap.

### International Mountain Guides 2011-2012 Antarctica Guides



Phil Ershler



Mike Hamill



Greg Vernovage

## EXPEDITION DATES

~~Nov 13, 2011—Dec 01, 2011~~  
(Trip full; led by Mike Hamill)

~~Dec 26, 2011—Jan 14, 2012~~  
(Trip full; led by Greg Vernovage)

### **NEW Date:**

Jan 9-26, 2012 (led by Aaron Mainer)

## LANDCOST: \$34,950 US

With a \$7,500 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.

### **Costs included:**

Guide fees, flight from Chile to Vinson base camp and return, two hotel nights in Punta Arenas prior to the flight to Antarctica and one upon our return, all group ground transfers, all meals while climbing with the exception of snacks, all group equipment

### **Costs not included:**

Flights from the U.S. to Punta Arenas and the return, hotels nights required due to weather delays, restaurant meals, visa fees, personal equipment and 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.

## 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 experience. If you have questions, please call.

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*“Sell one of your cars and join us in Antarctica...”*

—Phil Ershler

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## FLIGHT INFORMATION AND TRAVEL PLANS

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](mailto: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.

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

## 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.** Also, if your passport is 'well-traveled', make sure there are blank pages available. Passport information is available from your main post office.

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 Chile. 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).

## MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Casual attire is the rule for most of our activities. T-shirts and jeans work well in South America. 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.

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.

### "MEN WANTED..."

For Hazardous Journey. Small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger. Safe return doubtful. Honour and recognition in case of success..."

—Ernest Shackleton's 1914 Ad

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*"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](http://www.mountainguides.com/comments.shtml)

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*"Not only did IMG seem to have the best guiding, but we were by far the best provisioned. I wouldn't climb with anybody else and will do my best to steer folks your way..."*

—Bruce D.

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## Vinson Massif Climb Itinerary

- Day 01** Depart from the United States.
- Day 02** Arrive in Santiago and connect with flights to Punta Arenas, Chile. Night spent at our hotel in Punta Arenas.
- Day 03** Final equipment checks and preparations. Night spent in Punta Arenas.
- Day 04** Flight to Patriot Hill, Antarctica. Approx. 6 hours. Transfer as soon as weather permits to Vinson Base Camp in a twin engine Otter. Camp at Vinson Base. (7,000 ft.)
- Day 05** Carry to Camp 1. (9,500 ft.) We cache gear here and descend to Vinson Base for the night.
- Day 06** Probable rest day.
- Day 07** Move to Camp 1 and set up camp there.
- Day 08** Carry to Camp 2 at the col between Vinson and Mt. Shinn. (12,500 ft.) This is the location of our high camp and we leave a cache here and then descend to Camp 1.
- Day 09** Probable rest day.
- Day 10** Move to Camp 2 and set up our high camp.
- Day 11** Weather and health permitting, we will make a summit bid. We will return to Camp 2 for the night.
- Day 12** Pack up all gear and descend to Vinson Base Camp. This takes the bulk of the day. We camp here at base camp for the night.
- Day 13** Return flight to the Patriot Hills and connect with the transport plane for our return flight to Punta Arenas. Night spent at the hotel.
- Day 14** Fly from Punta Arenas to Santiago and connect with flights to the United States.
- Day 15** Arrive home.
- Day 16-20** These are contingency days that will be available to us for weather delays, additional acclimatization days or simply days for more climbing. The schedule gives us a fairly good cushion to deal with any unexpected delays or occurrences.

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*“Thank you, Phil for your enormous help towards making our expedition to Antarctica such a spectacular success. You're a caring, kind and thoroughly professional guide and a fine human being...”*

—Leslie B.

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## Vinson Massif Climb Required Equipment List

This equipment list is meant to help you compile your personal gear for an Antarctic mountaineering expedition. Most items are required. Please consider each item carefully and be sure you understand the function of each piece of equipment before you substitute or delete items. Keep in mind that this list has been carefully compiled by Phil Ershler, the expedition organizer. Don't cut corners on the quality of your gear.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> expedition size internal frame pack - it should be in the 6,000 cu in range  | <input type="checkbox"/> Gore-tex jacket (Look at Lowe)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> adjustable ski poles   | <input type="checkbox"/> warm down jacket - get a warm one but don't go too heavy                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ice axe - 60-70 cm is a very useful length for most people (The SMC Shuksan or Himalayan are quite good)   | <input type="checkbox"/> light down pants  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12 pt. crampons - make sure they will work with the boots you use  | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 balaclava   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> climbing harness   | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 wool ski hat with ear flaps   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 jumar  | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 pair of polypro gloves  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 locking and 5 regular carabiners   | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 pair of very good ski gloves (Look at the Alti by Outdoor Research)             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> double climbing boots with foam liners - these can either be good quality plastic boots like Asolo or you could also use the "Everest" type boots that are a double boot and gaiter combined | <input type="checkbox"/> warm mittens (Look at the Alti by Outdoor Research)                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> insulated over boots - not necessary if you are using "Everest" boots  | <input type="checkbox"/> suntan lotion and lip protection  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> regular gaiters - again, not necessary if you are using the "Everest" boots  | <input type="checkbox"/> sunglasses  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> camp booties - down or synthetic   | <input type="checkbox"/> ski goggles - good quality with a double lens                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sleeping bag - rated to minus 20   | <input type="checkbox"/> one 1 litre wide mouth water bottle - with an insulated cover (OR makes the best) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 closed cell foam pads  | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 stainless steel thermos bottle  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 sets of socks  | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 small pee bottle  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> medium weight polypro long johns - top and bottoms   | <input type="checkbox"/> large, insulated drinking mug with a lid  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> expedition weight polypro long johns - top and perhaps the bottoms   | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Lexan spoons  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> pile type climbing pants   | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 good sized plastic bowl for eating  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> heavy pile jacket (Look at the Outer Limits jacket by Lowe)  | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Bic lighter   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> down or synthetic vest   | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 knife   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gore-tex pants or bibs - full length zippers are required (Check out Lowe)   | <input type="checkbox"/> small amounts of personal toilet articles   |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 rolls of toilet paper   |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> small personal first aid kit  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 large plastic garbage bags  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> plenty of stuff sacks   |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> a couple of spare, long straps for packing  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> camera and film   |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> extra batteries   |

**Note:** We are given an allowance of 50 lbs. per man for personal gear. This doesn't include the clothing that you'll be wearing when we get on the plane. When in doubt, bring it and we can do additional sorting in Punta Arenas. Stay in close contact with me regarding all of your equipment choices. Start putting the gear together early and become very familiar with all your equipment. Please do not wait until the last minute, especially with your boots.

## 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. 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 Antarctica. Please consult your local health department for their recommendations. I do recommend that you consider the following:

- **Tetanus/Diphtheria:** You should already have. Do you need a booster? 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, good for ten years.
- **Polio:** You should already have. Do you need a booster?
- **MMR:** You should already have. Do you need a booster?
- **Meningitis:** Recommended. Consult your physician.
- **Hepatitis A:** Recommended. Consult your physician.
- **Hepatitis B:** Not a bad idea. Ask your physician.
- **Cholera:** Ask your physician.
- **Typhoid:** Not a bad idea to be safe. The tablet form, Vivotif Berna, is good for five years.

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.

We recommend that you visit the travel clinic at a major University Hospital or your local Public Health Department for the most up to date info on travel requirements, or check the Center for Disease Control Website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

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*“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](http://www.mountainguides.com/comments.shtml)

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*“I am on my way home from another amazing trip. I want to let you know how much I appreciate the knowledge, safety, and professionalism displayed once again by Greg Vernovage and Mike Hamill. Their interpersonal skills were equally evident. This makes my 3rd trip with IMG, and I just want to give credit where it's due and to say thank-you...”*

—Walt E.

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