

IMG Denali West Buttress Expedition

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You asked, and now it's time for us to deliver. IMG Denali, LLC is the newest Denali guide service. We were awarded a ten-year concession contract by Denali National Park and Preserve in July of 2018. What does all this mean? Well, with great excitement and anticipation, IMGD will be organizing four trips on the Great One via the West Buttress Route this coming 2019 climbing season. International Mountain Guides, LLC is the exclusive booking agent for IMGD and we are ready to start climbing Denali! Lace up your boots and pack your duffels because it's time to head up north. At 20,310', Denali is simply the tallest mountain in North America and one of the most coveted of the fabled Seven Summits.

IMG Denali's owners have been climbing Denali since the early 1970's. In fact, they were some of the first to guide on Denali and have 57 successful ascents of Denali between themselves. That's an experience base which is hard to match. All IMG Denali expeditions will be structured at a 2:1 client to guide ratio. Our 3-week expedition is limited to 8 customers led by 4 guides resulting in a more personal experience with your guides.

With only four expeditions scheduled for the 2019 climbing season, you can be assured that you won't be just another number among many. Constant, personal contact throughout the planning stages will be yet another reason to climb with IMG Denali. We have based IMG Denali on the philosophy that personal touch and attention to detail is very important in creating a successful expedition, especially one as serious as Denali, and that is what you'll receive.

Anyone considering Denali is concerned about risk. IMG's record in the mountains is among the best in the business and our guides are world class. We pride ourselves on our reputation for success in the mountains, but even more so for our ability to manage risk for our customers over thirty plus years of operation on many hundreds of adventures spanning all seven continents. Our main priority is helping you to achieve the adventure of a lifetime and then returning you back home at the end of the expedition safely.

Denali: Just The Facts

Summit:

20,310' • 6190m

Set Your GPS:

63°, 07' N • 151°, 01' W

Size Does Matter:

Denali is the highest mountain in North America and one of the Seven Summits.

First Boot-Prints on Top:

Hudson Stuck, Harry Karstens, Walter Harper and Robert Tatum on June 7, 1913. The first ascent of the West Buttress route was made in 1951, by the party of Dr Bradford Washburn. The first winter ascent was made by Dave Johnston, Ray Genet & Art Davidson; the title of their book says it all: *Minus 148°*

By Any Other Name:

Denali (The High One) in Native (Athabascan) American was renamed Mount McKinley for presidential nominee William McKinley by gold prospector, William Dickey, who liked McKinley's politics on gold. In 2015, it was officially reverted back to its native name of Denali.

Air Just Doesn't Get Thinner:

Because Denali is one of the northern-most peaks (its latitude is 63° while Everest's is 27°) and because the troposphere is thinner at the earth's poles, the barometric pressure on Denali is lower than other popular peaks. So on a typical summit day in May, the Denali climber will be at the equivalent of 22,000' (6900M) in the Himalayas.

And It Can Get Brisk:

"Everything was cold, even our souls..." -- Dougal Haston on his 1976 climb with Doug Scott

If Bobby Had Five Pitons:

Bradford Washburn has estimated that above 18,000' (5500M,) a person is reduced to roughly 50% of their mental capacity. During the winter climb of 1967, the three members stranded at 18,200' on Denali Pass for six days required approximately twice as much time to answer a series of subtraction problems as they did at 7000' on the Kahlitna Glacier.

WHO ARE THE GUIDES?

As always, the most important question to ask when considering an expedition is simply “[who are the guides?](#)” Our guide staff is a big attraction to many IMG customers and now you have an opportunity to climb with those same leaders on Denali, the Great One. Our Denali guides are often the same guides leading our Himalayan, Vinson, South American, and Rainier programs. Joining these guides on Denali will allow you to continue a relationship that you have built with them on other programs, or to start building a rapport with guides prior to a Himalayan climb, Vinson expedition, or other trip. Don’t allow yourself to get lost in the shuffle with a company and guide staff you don’t feel completely comfortable with.



A DeHavilland Turbine Otter on wheel/skis at the Base Camp landing strip – 7200 ft on Kahiltna Glacier

WHO ARE THE CLIMBERS?

We personally select the group of 8 climbers based on their resumes and past experience, to set each expedition up for success. We do our best to screen our prospective team members and it is important that every climber is an asset. Please do not sign up for this expedition if you are not ready for very hard work and high altitude in very difficult conditions. We are looking for climbers who are strong and capable of performing well in the hostile environment of Denali.

WHY CHOOSE IMG DENALI?

The expedition leaders are chosen for their past experience, but that is just one part of the equation. These guides have a wealth of climbing knowledge based on years of climbing experience. Our goal is to have a fun trip, make the summit if we can safely do so, and return back home again at the end of the expedition. To that end we screen our prospective team members and invest in the guides and equipment to make this a reality.

NEXT STEPS?

If you are considering a Denali expedition and would like more information on our program, or to determine if you are sufficiently ready to undertake such a difficult and strenuous expedition, please contact IMG Denali Program Director Luke Reilly (IMGDenali@mountainguides.com or 360 569 2609).

“I could go on and on, but the bottom line is that your organization is first-rate in every respect. Thanks for everything... I hope to make use of your services again...”

—Tom G.

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

DENALI EXPEDITION DATES

May 12-June 2, 2019 (4 spots open;
led by Emily Johnston)

~~**May 19-June 9, 2019**~~ (FULL;
led by Andy Polloczek)

~~**May 26-June 16, 2019**~~ (FULL;
led by Austin Shannon)

June 16-July 7, 2019 (4 spots open;
(led by Nickel Wood)



LANDCOST: \$10,500

Costs included:

- IMG guides at a 2:1 ratio
- Bush Pilot Fee
- On-mountain breakfasts and dinners as well as hot drinks
- Group Equipment (tents, stoves, shovels, ropes, sleds, etc...)
- Two nights of lodging in Talkeetna before the trip
- Roundtrip Shuttle Transfer between Anchorage and Talkeetna

Costs not included:

- Airfare to/from Anchorage
- Additional lodging nights for unplanned delays (more than 2)
- Any lodging after returning to Talkeetna from the mountain
- Personal lunch food
- Off-mountain meals
- REQUIRED Travel and Trip Insurance
- Any costs incurred for early departure from an expedition
- NPS Climbing Permit Fee of \$375 (\$275 for anyone 24 and younger).
- NPS Park Entrance Fee \$15/person (16 yrs and up).

CANCELLATION/REFUNDS

Cancellation and refund policies are discussed in IMG Form 1 included in the application package. We encourage you to read that information carefully. Business realities force us to strictly adhere to the conditions outlined in the document.

TRAVEL AND INSURANCE

International Mountain Guides has worked for many years with Ms. Pirjo Dehart and her staff at CTT Destinations to provide professional travel service for participants in our programs. We urge you to contact CTT Destinations at 800/909-6647 or img@cttdestinations.com for help with your plans. IMG Denali climbers are **REQUIRED to carry approved travel insurance that covers technical, high-altitude mountaineering** and includes medical evacuation, repatriation and medical expenses for the duration of their IMG Denali program and understand that IMG Denali provides them with no such insurance coverage. We recommend several plan options that are listed on our website here: mountainguides.com/travel-insurance.shtml We strongly recommend Trip Cancellation Insurance which may provide financial relief should you be forced to withdraw from the program before it starts.

IMG Denali Expedition Itinerary

The expedition will officially commence on day 1 at the Anchorage International Airport with a 2PM shuttle departure to Talkeetna. It may be necessary to arrive in Anchorage a day before the official start date. In which case you will be responsible for arranging overnight accommodations in Anchorage and a transfer to the Anchorage Airport the following day.

- Day 01** Shuttle will depart at 2 p.m. from the Anchorage International Airport to Talkeetna. We will stop along the drive to pick up last-minute perishable snack items. Group will spend the night in Talkeetna. IMG will arrange the shuttle pickup and the group lodging in Talkeetna.
- Day 02** Day in Talkeetna. We will meet with the NPS for a briefing, go over each individual's personal equipment, familiarize ourselves with the group equipment and divide it and get packed for the trip. Second night in Talkeetna.
- Day 03** Our scheduled "Expedition Departure Date." Bush pilot will fly us in to Base Camp on the SE Fork of the Kahiltna Glacier at 7,200 feet, a 45-minute flight. It is possible to move this day, or we may sit and wait until the cooler temperatures of evening.
- Day 04** Load sleds and drag them several miles on the low-angle Kahiltna Glacier to Camp 1 at 8,000'.
- Day 05** Continue dragging sleds and all equipment up "Ski Hill" to Camp 2 at 9,500'. Camp is just below Kahiltna Pass.
- Day 06** As group energy permits, we will move up to Camp 3 at 11,000' or do a carry of gear.
- Day 07** Likely time for first rest day.
- Day 08** Carry extra gear to 13,500' up around "Windy Corner". Sleds go no higher than 14,000', and are light above 11,000' if used at all. Return to Camp 3.
- Day 09** Move up to Camp 4 at 14,000'. This is the location of the NPS climbing ranger post.
- Day 10** Drop down to 13,500' to pick up cache. Second night at 14,000'.
- Day 11** Possible rest day, third night at 14,000'.
- Day 12** Carry one week supply of food and fuel to high camp at 17,200'. Return to 14,000' for fourth night.
- Day 13** Fifth and final acclimatization day if needed at 14,000'.
- Day 14** Group moves to high camp at 17,200'.
- Day 15** Possible rest day at high camp or first summit option.
- Day 16** Likely summit day.
- Day 17** Descend to 11,000', Camp 3.
- Day 18** Descend to Base with pickup by our bush pilot if we are lucky.
- Day 19** Likely pickup by bush pilot. Return to Talkeetna with option of spending night in Talkeetna or return to Anchorage.

This itinerary is approximate. Our rate of ascent will be dictated by the weather, the strength of the group, and our rate of acclimatization. All climbing decisions will be made by the guides, with the best interest of the group as a whole in mind. There will be a cache of food at Base Camp and we will carry 20 days of food with supplements to stretch it to 25 days if necessary. Allow an average of 21 total days for the entire trip, but be flexible enough to extend the trip another 4 or more days if necessary. A perfect weather expedition can take 15 days on the mountain. Average time is perhaps 18 days, and 22-25 days is not unusual.

IMG Denali Expedition Required Personal Equipment List

Climbing Gear

- Climbing harness: Double check that your harness is sized properly to fit over several layers. Adjustable leg loops, belay loop and gear loops are also a plus. You really can't go wrong with either the Petzl Altitude or the Black Diamond Couloir models.
- Climbing helmet that fits comfortably over your hat.
- Carabiners: Two pear shaped locking, and 8 lightweight non-locking.
- Ascender: Petzl Ascension is a good choice.
- 40' of 6mm accessory cord
- Sled rigging: 20' of 6mm cord for towing the sled and 20' of 3mm utility cord for lashing your duffel onto the sled.
- Crampons: 12-point adjustable mountaineering crampons with anti-bot plates. Make sure they stay securely on over your overboots. Pick a crampon that has horizontal front points as opposed to vertical front points. Petzl Vasak or Grivel G12's are both good options. Note: with double boots and overboots, you may need an extender bar to make your crampons fit properly.
- Ice axe: 70 cm. with leash. Two nice mountain axes are the Petzl Glacier or the Black Diamond Raven.
- Trekking poles: 3 section collapsible poles with large snow baskets.
- Snowshoes: Lightweight with traction bindings like MSR Revo or Lightning Ascent.
- Avalanche transceiver with fresh batteries and one spare set that is appropriate for your specific unit; lithium or alkaline (lithium batteries are preferred if your unit is compatible with them). A couple of good options out there are the Marmot Barryvox or the Pieps DSP Sport.

Backpack and Sleeping System

- Backpack: Large (85 to 100 liters) expedition size internal frame. Make sure it fits your body size and shape.
- Sleeping bag: Rated to -20 F **or lower**. If you get cold easily a -40 F bag is recommended. Best and lightest is a water/wind resistant fabric covered down bag. A synthetic bag rated to -20F is going to be very bulky and not recommended. A good compression stuff sack is highly recommended to reduce bulk. The Marmot Col Membrain -20 or Feather Friends Peregrine -25 would both work great.
- 2 Sleeping pads: 1 closed cell foam pad like the Therm-a-rest Z Lite, and 1 inflatable pad such as the Therm-a-rest NeoAir XTherm.

Camp Accessories

- Water bottles: Two 1 liter wide-mouth Nalgene bottles with insulating covers. The Forty Below Bottle Boot is low profile and keeps bulk down in your backpack. Bring a third bottle (well marked) as a pee bottle. Women should consider bringing a Female Urination Device or pee funnel.
- Thermos: Hydro Flask makes a high quality thermos.
- Bowl, cup and spoon
- Pocket knife
- On the mountain toiletries: Toothbrush and small tube of paste as well as dental floss. One or two rolls of toilet paper, each in a Ziploc bag, and a small bottle of hand sanitizer.

Footwear

- Boots: double insulated boots only. La Sportiva Spantik or G2 SM, Koflach Arctis Expe or equivalent. Option: Triple all-in-one mountaineering boots are also appropriate for a Denali expedition; Millet Everest or La Sportiva Olympus Mons. Overboots are not needed with this option.
- Overboots: 40 Below brand overboots are recommended. Suitable models include Purple Haze or K2 Superlight. A good snug fit is extremely important for either choice.
- Gaiters: Make sure that these fit over your double boots. The classic Outdoor Research Crocodile is a trusty go-to.
- Socks: Four complete changes of medium to heavyweight wool or wool/synthetic blend socks. Synthetic sock liners are an option, based on your preference. Alternate two of the pair up to 14,000 feet, then break out the other two for climbing higher.
- Down or synthetic camp booties

Upper Body Clothing

- Base layer tops: Two lightweight to medium weight synthetic or merino wool tops
- Active sports bras (for women)
- Insulating layer-lightweight: Outdoor Research Uberlayer hooded jacket.
- Insulating layer-heavyweight: Outdoor Research Transcendent down hooded jacket.
- Soft shell jacket: you will want to have the heavier option of the variety of softshell jackets on the market. A durable soft shell that has a nice fit is the Outdoor Research Ferrosi Summit.
- Hard shell jacket: You will need a Waterproof Gore-tex jacket like the Outdoor Research Optimizer.
- Down parka: Expedition weight parka with attached hood. Size large enough to wear over all other layers. Do not cut corners on this piece of gear. Your parka should be either a Feathered Friends Khumbu jacket, Mountain Hardwear Absolute Zero or something comparable.

Lower Body Clothing

- Underwear: Two or three pairs of wool/synthetic blend underwear.
- Base layer bottoms: One lightweight and one expedition weight.
- Soft shell climbing pants: Outdoor Research Cirque Pant
- Hard shell pants: These pants should have full-length or waist high zippers and should fit over your soft shell pants. A burly and durable option would be the Outdoor Research Furio pant.
- Lightweight down or synthetic insulated pant. An insulating layer for adding on at camp when the sun goes behind the ridge or a cold summit morning. Feathered Friends Helios Down pants or the Black Diamond Stance Belay Insulated pants will keep your legs toasty.

Outerwear Accessories

- Hat: Wool or fleece hat. This needs to fit under your climbing helmet comfortably.
- Sun hat
- Buff: bring two, having a clean buff to switch to midway through the expedition is a nice treat.
- Balaclava. Although it looks pretty goofy, the Gorilla Balaclava made by Outdoor Research can really add protection when winds pick up.
- Gloves-lightweight: Outdoor Research Stormtracker glove.
- Gloves-medium weight: Outdoor Research Extravert glove.
- Gloves-heavyweight: Outdoor Research Alti glove or Black Diamond Guide glove
- Expedition mitts: Outdoor Research Alti Mitts.

- Glacier glasses: dark with full UVA, UVB protection. Either wrap around or with side shields to completely shield the eyes from glare. Consider a snap on nose guard for sun protection. You can't go wrong with Julbo; the Shield or Explorer 2.0 model both would work great.
- Ski goggles: Medium-dark double lens to prevent fogging. Smith makes some high-quality goggles.
- Suncream/Lipbalm: SPF 50 or higher.

Personal Accessories

- First Aid kit: Each individual must carry a small personal first aid kit to avoid depletion of the group kit. You should have the following: aspirin (or Tylenol); ibuprofen; antacid (Pepto Bismol, Rolaids); anti- diarrhea medication (Imodium); Band-Aids; athletic tape; moleskin, Second Skin or other blister pads. Pick up some earplugs as well just in case you end up rooming with a snorer, or if it is very windy (noisy) in the tent.
- Medications: You will want to consult with your doctor and acquire the following medications:
 - Acetazolamide (Diamox)- enough for two weeks at 125mg/day
 - Nifedepine- (2) 30mg time release tablets
 - Dexamethasone- (6) 4mg tablets
- Lunch food: Bring your own lunch for each day to include items such as energy bars, gorp, candy, cheeses, sausage, jerky, bagels, crackers, drink mix, etc. About 15 lbs. total for two weeks is normal. Variety is the key. This will be used as climbing snacks during the day and at night in the tent. For some guide food tips on what works well in the mountains, check out mountainguides.com/rainier-food.shtml
- Insect repellent
- 5 Large trash compactor bags
- Digital camera, extra batteries and memory card
- Optional items: Kindle, solar charging kit, battery pack, 2-4 disposable hand warmer packs for the upper mountain.

Travel Items

- Duffel bags: the largest, lightest duffel you can find to carry gear in on your sled. The REI Roadtripper duffel bag is lightweight and inexpensive. You will want to have two duffels to pack all your gear in for the trip to Alaska.
- Small carry-on bag
- Casual clothes for hanging around Talkeetna

“If I had to sum up what impressed me the most, I would have to say that it was never once in the entire 2-plus months, did I ever feel like IMG or its people ever cut a corner on anything. Everything was a class act, well organized, and people really seemed thrilled and enthusiastic about being a part of something great...”

—Jeff

“Nothing was overlooked. Safety was always a top priority, and no shortcuts were allowed. And if I didn't immediately recognize this, the contrast couldn't have been more apparent as we moved up the mountain. I was so glad to be an IMG client. I don't want to criticize other services, but there really is a world of difference, and it's worth every penny!”

—Robert M.

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



Notes on Gear for Denali

Acquire all of your equipment well in advance. Pack up your pack completely and weigh it. If it weighs more than 50 lbs. complete, go back through all of your equipment with a fine-toothed comb. Start by eliminating unnecessary luxuries. Bring a compact camera instead of a bulky SLR. Weigh your personal food and eliminate anything over 15 lbs. Check over your clothing for redundancy. You **will** probably want to bring two lightweight tops, one to change halfway through the trip, but nothing extra. Eliminate gizmos that you threw in just because you thought they might be useful. We don't all need Leatherman tools, extensive repair kits and group sized first aid kits. Just bring the items you are likely to need yourself: a small pocket knife, a compact F.A. kit with blister treatment, a roll of tape and non-prescription medications that you normally use. There will be a group repair kit, tools and first aid kit. Don't bring any extra toiletries other than toilet paper, toothbrush and a small tube of toothpaste. One exception: baby wipes can really increase moral throughout the trip and are worth the extra weight.

Pack and repack your gear several times and have a place for everything. Keep your stuff sacks to a minimum and buy them in different colors so that you can easily identify the right bag in your pack. Hint: black is not easy to identify in the depths of your pack. One large sack is recommended for all clothing, one smaller bag for gloves and hats, and one medium bag for food. Keep it simple. Go out on a number of training hikes with your full pack so that you become familiar with the heavy load and retrieving articles from it efficiently.

Keep in mind that in addition to your personal gear you will be issued about 50 lbs. of group gear at the start. It will come in all shapes and sizes, so you must be prepared to fit it in your pack and sled.

There are three items that you must not skimp on: your climbing boots, your sleeping bag and your down parka. These will get you up and down the mountain safely.

The best boots are the ones that fit your feet the best. Try on as many different brands as possible. Often you can upgrade your old boot by purchasing a new liner. The best on the market right now are the appropriately named Intuition Denali. This liner can be heat molded to your foot and is quite comfortable and very warm. Feet tend to swell at higher altitudes so bumping your boot fit up a half is a good idea. When in doubt between sizes, get the bigger one!

Only you can judge how warmly you sleep at night. Bring a sleeping bag that will guarantee you a warm night's sleep. Some climbers like to use a wide cut bag so there is room to fit your inner boots, water bottles, etc. inside as well as your down parka if it really gets cold. A waterproof/breathable fabric covered down bag is the standard for expeditions and is the warmest and lightest way to go. Be wary of temperature ratings on bags. There is no industry standard at this time. The only true test is your own past experience. Many people do nicely in a -20 F bag, but if you are in doubt, go for the warmest bag available. -40F is a bag that will keep you warm all the way up the mountain.

Your down parka will be your best friend in camp. We don't usually climb in them, but when the temperature cools in the evening, it is the first thing to go on. At cold rest breaks during the climb you will want to throw it on to trap body heat and avoid chilling. For that reason, size your parka large enough to fit over all other layers that you might be wearing, including your outer shell. Finally, the best parkas come with attached hoods, not snap-on or zippered.

Acquire your equipment well in advance. Practice with it and use it out in the mountains. Train seriously for the expedition so that when you arrive at the start of the climb, you will be confident that you have done everything possible to prepare yourself mentally and physically. All that will remain is for you to enjoy yourself fully on one of the world's greatest climbs!

“We had climbed roped, simultaneously, front-pointing forever into a revived storm and relentless wind. Everything was cold, even our souls. Frostbite was waiting to jump at the slightest sign of weakness, but both of us played our own winning game with it. McKinley's climate is tough. We were drawing heavily on all our Himalayan experience just to survive, and it was a respectful pair that finally stood on the summit ridge...”

— Dougal Haston on his 1976 climb with Doug Scott
"American Alpine Journal", 1977

International Mountain Guides, LLC provides booking services for IMG Denali, an authorized concessioner of Denali National Park and Preserve.



Authorized
Concessioner