

Aconcagua Normal Route Information – Dreams in Action 2010

Marshall Ulrich, Dreams in Action (DNA) is pleased to provide the following information for the Aconcagua Climb – Normal Route, January 6 through 24, 2010 (additional days available at the end of the climb).

Mount Aconcagua, elevation 22,841 feet (6,962 meters), is located entirely in the province of Mendoza, in western Argentina. Aconcagua is one of the highest peaks in the world and the very highest outside Asia.

The first climber to successfully reach the summit was Mathías Zurbriggen of Switzerland. He reached the highest point on Aconcagua on January 14, 1897, following the northwest trail (Normal Route), which has since become the most popular path to Aconcagua's zenith.

Over the years, the number of expeditions arriving at Aconcagua Provincial Park, eager to face the challenge of height, strong winds, and extreme temperatures, have increased steadily, making it one of the most popular destinations among mountain climbers the world over. Aconcagua is part of the "seven summits" circuit.

According to some international expert mountaineers that have climbed the Himalayas, the almost 23,000 feet of Aconcagua represent an even greater physiological distance. This phenomenon is due to several factors. The Himalayas, for instance, have vegetation up to 16,400 feet, while in the Central Andes Mountain range the vegetation reaches only to 11,500 / 13,000 feet. The relative ambient humidity is very low and the atmosphere of the Earth is thinner in this region of the globe. All of this makes Aconcagua a terrain appropriate to test and prepare for later expeditions to mountains higher than 8,000 meters.

Climbers attempting to climb Aconcagua must properly equipped and in excellent physical condition.

From the technical point of view, Aconcagua presents all types of difficulties on rock, ice, and snow. And those who confront the ascent should have a good climbing technique, excellent physical fitness, considerable experience, and most importantly, a lot of enthusiasm and perseverance.

General Information

The following information provides an overview of Mendoza, airlines, when to climb, climate, and park permits.

Mendoza

The City of Mendoza was founded on March 2, 1561 by the Spanish Don Pedro del Castillo in an area originally inhabited by the Huarpe Indians.

Three centuries later, in 1861, an earthquake completely destroyed the colonial town. Those who survived the earthquake rebuilt a city destined to become one of the most important metropolitan areas in the country.

Mendoza is located in western Argentina, some 690 miles (1,100 kilometers) west of Buenos Aires and at 2,500 feet (760 meters) above sea level. It has a population of one million and it is home to numerous

industries among them wineries, food processing companies, oil refineries, and manufacturers of industrial machinery. Tourism is also an important economic activity in Mendoza.

Climate: The province has a semi-arid climate. The mountain range on the west of Mendoza works as a natural barrier to humid winds blowing in from the Pacific.

Local Time Mendoza (as well as the rest of Argentina) is located 4 time zones west of the Greenwich meridian.

Getting to Mendoza: Mendoza's airport offers excellent connections to international flights from Buenos Aires, Cordoba, and Santiago de Chile.

The city is an important hub for land transportation. The city's bus station has several daily services to all Argentinean provinces, as well as to Chile.

Language: Argentina's official language is Spanish. English is spoken at most travel agencies, hotels, and tourist information offices.

Power Supply: 220 volts, 50 hertz.

Airlines

The best way to reach Mendoza is via a connecting flight from either Buenos Aires, Argentina or Santiago, Chile. From Buenos Aires it is 2 hours by plane or 13 hours by bus to Mendoza. From Santiago it is 50 minutes by plane or 6 hours by bus. If you come from Santiago you will have the opportunity to survey the Andes as you cross over into Argentina.

When to Climb

Officially, the climbing season is between November 15 and March 15 of every year.

Our suggestion is to climb Mount Aconcagua between late November and late February. This is mainly because of two factors, first because of weather conditions. It is within this period when weather is warmer in the Austral Hemisphere and climate more stable on Aconcagua. Second, because it is when there is availability of all necessary logistics to go ahead with the climbs (mules, base camps supplies, porters, etc).

Before and after, because of the lack of visitors you will probably find no logistics. Regarding weather; large snowfields, strong winds, and major snowstorms are possible.

Climate

Aconcagua generates its own weather. Between late November and late February there is a wide range of temperatures, from warm days to freezing nights; snow and winds (some strong) is the usual on Aconcagua. The humidity is extremely low.

Mount Aconcagua is some 100 miles (160 kilometers) from the Pacific Ocean, which can be seen from the summit on sunny days. Humid winds blowing from the sea generate most of the bad weather of Aconcagua. Temperatures to be expected between early Dec and late Feb range from a minimum of -4°F / -13°F (-20°C / -25°C) to a maximum of 50°F / 69°F (10°C / 15°C), depending on the altitude.

During the winter in the Austral Hemisphere, most of the area is snow covered and is extremely windy. Major snowstorms are quite frequent above 13,000 feet (4,000 meters).

Park Climbing Permits

Permits are issued only at Direccion de Recursos Naturales Renovables, located in the Park San Martin, Mendoza City, and are not included within the land costs.

Permits must be acquired in person. To obtain the permit it is necessary to complete an application with personal information and general details of the trip. For the DNA climb, you will apply for and obtain a Climbing Permit valid for 20 days after entering the park. We will help you obtain the permit in Mendoza, as is required. Your permit must be shown to Park Rangers based at the stations of Horcones (Normal Route).

Overview of the Normal Route

This route is an excellent path up Aconcagua. It is a beautiful, non-technical route; is the most popular; and provides climbers with the best success rate. Climbers from all levels in excellent physical conditions can climb Mount Aconcagua by the Normal Route. The approach to its Base Camp is through Confluencia and Plaza de Mulas.

Fitness and Climb Requirements

Expeditions to almost 23,000 feet (7000 meters) require considerable fitness. For high altitude ascents climbers need good cardiopulmonary (heart and lungs) fitness. This can only be obtained or maintained by a program of intensive exercise such as running, swimming, cycling, etc. This should be done over a period of at least three or four month before the expedition. Aconcagua is a physically demanding expedition. Those who do not do these exercises are unlikely to summit.

On the Normal Route you will face extreme altitudes, freezing temperatures, and hard winds. Our itinerary follows the principles of correct acclimatization before starting the climb. It has also been designed as an expedition-style climb, climbing high and then returning to a lower base camp to sleep.

This is a non-technical expedition which is similar to the Polish Glacier Route, but shorter with less altitude gain, and uses porters to camp Berlin for group equipment (tents, cooking equipment, and meals). Due to the altitude, it can be very tiring and very challenging. There are some brief treks on glaciers, but neither rock nor ice climbing is involved. From camp Berlin at just over 19,000 feet 5900 meters we approach the summit of Aconcagua on summit day. Some factors, such as altitude, freezing temperatures, expedition length, etc, make this climb much more difficult than Mount Kilimanjaro and others in South America. Expedition members will carry packs weighing an average of 30 pounds 13.5 kg for multiple days. Those climbers interested in this expedition must be not only physically but mentally strong. We will have a class on self arresting while on the mountain at Plaza de Mulas to teach and test skills.

In summary: for those interested in this route to reach the summit of this 7 summits peak, our requirements include the following.

- Excellent physical preparation
- Proper equipment
- Basic mountaineering skills
- Knowledge of winter camping
- Being well prepared for a climb that will require perseverance, physical endurance, mental strength, and patience.

We strongly recommend that those considering this climb already have experience climbing up to at least 18,100 feet (5,500 meters).

Mount Aconcagua Normal Route Climb Itinerary and Description

The following itinerary will be used for the 2010 climb of Aconcagua – Normal Route with DNA. This itinerary is intended as a guideline only. Some changes are possible while on a climbing expedition.

Itinerary Heights in feet (and meters). If meals are included they are denoted as:

*B = breakfast, L = lunch, PL = packed lunch and D = dinner

January 6: Leave for Mendoza

Depart your home city for Mendoza in order to arrive on January 7, 2010 (fly during the night of January 6, 2010).

January 7: Mendoza (760)

Marshall Ulrich or a representative from Aconcagua Adventures will be waiting for you at the airport to take you to the hotel. On this day our guide will check your mountain equipment and accompany you to hire the necessary things. You will lodge and enjoy the comforts of one of the best hotels in Mendoza city. (Food is not included)

January 8: Mendoza / Puente del Inca (2.725)

Before going to Puente del Inca, the whole group will apply for the climbing permit with the guides' assistance. You will have lunch and spend the night in Puente del Inca hostel. In the afternoon, the mules are loaded and prepared for the following day. (B, L, D)

January 9: Puente del Inca / Confluencia (3.300)

The group will be taken to the entrance of the Park in a private van. There the permits will be presented and you will start with the trekking to Confluencia Camp. The equipment will be carried by mules. At arrival, you will set up your tent with your partner and will be able to rest. (B, PL, D)

January 10: Confluencia / Plaza Francia (4.000) / Confluencia

Trek to Plaza Francia, base of the south face of Mt. Aconcagua. Here you will enjoy a delicious lunch and a spectacular view. Then you will return to Confluencia. This trekking is considered as part of the acclimatization process, fundamental in our expedition. (B, PL, D)

January 11: Confluencia / Plaza de Mulas (4.260)

The trek to Plaza de Mulas Base Camp lasts around 8 hours. You will stay in our own base camp with the necessary commodities for you to be as comfortable as possible. (B, PL, D)

January 12: Plaza de Mulas

Resting day. You will make a short trek to the glacier so as to improve your use of crampons. These kinds of activities facilitate your success in the mountain. (B, L, D)

January 13: Plaza de Mulas / Camp 1 Canadá 16,108 feet (4,910 meters) / Plaza de Mulas

Acclimatization Trek to Camp 1 Canadá where you will have lunch and then return to the Base Camp. This trek lasts around 5 hours. (B, PL, D)

January 14: Plaza de Mulas

Resting and acclimatization day. On this day you will make sure that your equipment is ready and that you rest so as to be strong for the next days that demand more effort. (B, L, D)

January 15: Plaza de Mulas / Camp 1 "Canada"

After a 3-hour trek, you will reach the Camp 1. The group will have lunch and set up the tents. You will begin feeling the effects of altitude on your body. (B, PL, D)

January 16: Camp 1 "Canadá" / Camp 2 "Nido de Cóndores" (5.250)

Climb to Camp 2. This trek lasts 4 hours. As on the previous days, you will set up the tents with the guides' help. You can rest for the rest of the day. (B, PL, D)

January 17: Camp 2 "Nido de Cóndores" / Camp 3 "Berlín" (5.900)

Climb to Camp 3 "Berlin". This will be a short hike, around 3 hours, but all your strength is needed due to the characteristics of this part of the route. This is the last altitude camp before the summit. (B, PL, D)

January 18: Camp 3 "Berlin" / Summit (6.962) / Camp 3 "Berlin"

Climb from Camp 3 to the summit and return to Camp 3. This is the great day. The group will get up very early in the morning, have breakfast and start climbing. You will get to the summit, where you will live an unforgettable experience, and return to Berlin. You will sleep that night with the satisfaction of having reached your aim. There are two contingency days (see below*) planned in this expedition in case it is not possible to make a summit attempt on this day due to weather or other conditions. (B, PL, D)

***January 19:** Extra day for contingencies that may prevent the normal development of the program.

***January 20:** Extra day for contingencies that may prevent the normal development of the program.

if contingency days are used:*January 19 *21: Camp 3 "Berlín" / Plaza de Mulas**

You will descend to Plaza de Mulas Base Camp. The group will have the day free to share those emotions experienced throughout the expedition. (B, PL, D)

January 20: *22: Plaza de Mulas / Puente del Inca / Mendoza

Descent to Puente del Inca and last leg in the expedition. Your belongings will be carried by mules so you will only take a light bag pack with a jacket and your packed lunch. Transfer to Mendoza City. Lodge in a hotel. (B, PL)

January 21 or *23rd: Mendoza

Breakfast. End of the services. You will surely reflect upon this experience and enjoy the last day in this beautiful city called "La Tierra del Sol y del Buen Vino" (The Land of Sun and Good Wine). (B)

***Contingency Days**

This expedition includes two extra days in case of bad weather. Reserve days come with all meals included and take place in either the altitude camps (Camp 1 or Camp 2) or even at Base Camp (only

before starting the climb). These days can be taken only on Aconcagua. If these contingency days are not necessary they are **not** replaced by hotel nights in any other place (e.g. Mendoza, Puente del Inca).

The extra two days below are extra unless used on the mountain, then they are part of the services.

Final Day/Optional Additional Days

All expedition members should plan on leaving no earlier than January 24, 2010 from Mendoza. ***In case we use the contingency days***

January 24: Leave Mendoza for home

Extra days in Mendoza for those who wish to stay longer at their own expense:

January 24

January 25

January 26 Leave Mendoza for home

Services Included

The following services are included in the DNA climb of Aconcagua 2010 by the Normal Route.

- Transfer from the Mendoza's airport to the hotel.
- Two nights of lodging in Mendoza City (one before the climb and another after), in double room basis. Hotel includes breakfast. Single rooms available at extra cost.
- Assistance in obtaining the Aconcagua Climbing Permit.
- In and out ground transportation between Mendoza and Puente del Inca with mountain guides, by private vehicles.
- One night of accommodation in Hostería Puente del Inca (before the climb) in a dormitory style rooms (4 to 6 people per room) with private bathroom.
- Dinner and breakfast are included in Puente del Inca.
- Help with gear preparation, and packing loads for mule transportation.
- In and out transfer between Puente del Inca and Horcones trailhead.
- Mules will carry climber's personal equipment 66 lbs (30 kg) per person to Camp Confluencia and Plaza de Mulas Base Camp on the way in, and from Plaza de Mulas Base Camp to Puente del Inca on the way out.
- Two camping nights at Confluencia Camp, including sleeping tents.
- Acclimatization hike to Plaza Francia (Aconcagua South Face Base Camp).
- All expedition meals (at Puente del Inca, Confluencia Camp, Plaza de Mulas Base Camp and altitude camps) that are included in the itinerary.
- Five days of camping at Plaza de Mulas Base Camp, including sleeping tents.
- Instruction of crampons use on the Horcones Glacier.
- Permanent radio link between Mendoza and base camps.

Expedition Guides

Guides from Aconcagua Adventures are National AAGM and Province EPGMT School mountain guides. All speak English. Expeditions will be led by Marshall Ulrich, DNA with the assistance of a Lead Guide

from Aconcagua Adventures, and one Assistant Guide from Aconcagua Adventures for every three clients.

Expedition Supplied Equipment

The following equipment will be supplied as a part of the DNA climb of Aconcagua 2010 by the Normal Route.

- Complete cooking supplies for the altitude camps.
- Radio link between the altitude camps, Plaza de Mulas, Confluencia.
- First quality tents in Confluencia, Plaza de Mulas, and altitude camps. Porters for common equipment.
- Professional oversight and guiding from Marshall Ulrich, DNA throughout the expedition.
- Professional Mountain Guides from Aconcagua Adventures accompanying the group from Mendoza and throughout the entire expedition.
- Two extra days (contingency days) with all meals either in altitude or in base camp.
- First quality mountain tents (The North Face, Mountain Hardware or similar).
- Complete medical kit with specific medicine for mountain sickness.

Confluencia Camp

This camp provides food service in dining tents furnished with electric power, tables, and chairs. This campsite has its own bathroom facility and permanent BLU radio link with Mendoza, Plaza de Mulas, Puente del Inca, and VHF radio link with Park Rangers and Rescue Patrols.

Plaza de Mulas Base Camp

This camp provides food service in dining tents furnished with electric power, tables, and chairs. This campsite has its own bathroom facility and permanent BLU radio link with Mendoza, Plaza de Mulas, Puente del Inca, and VHF radio link with Park Rangers and Rescue Patrols.

Not Included

The following are **not** included in the climb.

- Air tickets to and from Mendoza.
- Aconcagua Climbing Permit.
- Extra food and beverages in Puente del Inca, Confluencia, Plaza de Mulas out of the mentioned in the itinerary.
- Vegetarian catering (see Special Services).
- Eating utensils for the upper camps (utensils, plate, jar).
- Abandon of itinerary expenses.
- Sleeping bag and personal gear.
- Travel or another kind of insurance.
- Porters to carry climbers' personal equipment.
- Additional hotel nights if for reasons beyond our control (for example the weather, sickness, etc.) the group returns early.
- Reclaims of Luggage lost by the airline on which you arrive to Mendoza city.

- In this case, you will be responsible for those extra expenses caused by this problem.

Any others service that are not mentioned in the Included Services items.

Abandonment of Itinerary Expenses

If you find it necessary to abandon the itinerary during the DNA climb of Aconcagua 2010 by the Normal Route there will be additional charges payable by you for the following.

- Expenses for extra mules, as the expedition only includes 66 lbs. (30 kg) per person to be used for all the people as a group, not as individual or out of program.
- Expenses for extra nights at Plaza de Mulas or Confluencia camps.
- Expenses for extra hotel nights in Puente del Inca or Mendoza out of the included in the expedition. (If you return earlier than the group, you can use your hotel night in Mendoza city).
- Expenses for ground transportation to Mendoza (expedition includes transportation for the group, but not individual transfers).
- Expenses incurred in the case of a rescue
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Special Services

The following are available upon request, for additional charges. Please ask for these additional charges and include that information on the application form.

- Vegetarian meals.
- Single room, for the hotel nights in Mendoza.

