

Vinson

Antarctica | 4,897m



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Vinson

Antarctica | 4,897m



Due to its utter isolation **Mount Vinson**, 4,897m, in the **Ellsworth Mountains** of **Antarctica** was the last of the **7 Summits** to be climbed, in 1966. To achieve it is a feat of outstanding mental and physical courage.

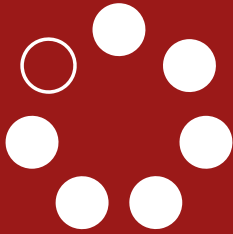
The reasons for Vinson's late addition to the 7-summit list become obvious on arrival: plummeting temperatures, desolate ice-fields and rarely visited mountain ranges are as far from a comfort zone as it's possible to imagine. Though technically Vinson offers little to thwart a determined climber, Antarctica presents a challenge like no other terrain. Taking a spectacular flight from **Punta Arenas** in **Chile** to **Union Glacier**, we land on ice. From there we fly to **Branscomb Glacier** and **Vinson Base Camp**. Using fixed lines on the steep sections, we climb the northern spur of **Branscomb Ridge** for amazing views of

Mount Shinn and the glacier below. From high camp the summit ascent is up **Vinson Valley**, onto the short steep slope to the rocky summit ridge. The route is exposed with risk of high winds so we may find ourselves hunkering down waiting for a weather window.

As we make our final ascent and attain the highest point of this remote continent, the views over the Antarctic are unsurpassable and our efforts are more than rewarded.

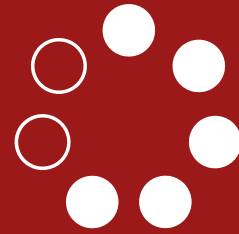
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Physical - P6

Extremely physically demanding. Heavy pack weights and long days combine to test you to the limit. Not for the faint hearted. Long days of 10 hours plus with pack weights up to 20-25kg means that sheer exhaustion is likely. When in Nepal pack weight is greatly reduced due to help from porters.



Technical - T5

Competent Alpine climbing ability. Should be comfortable on Scottish Winter III ground or Alpine AD. Complete understanding and confidence in use of your technical kit will be required.

Please note that the grading system used is a rough guide only.



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ITINERARY

DAY 1 : Depart UK - if flights booked through 360

Depart London and fly to Punta Arenas.

DAY 2 : Arrive in Chile

We arrive in Punta Arenas in Southern Chile – the rest of the day is yours to relax.

DAY 3 : Punta Arenas - gear check

A mostly free day but there will be a comprehensive gear check organised. One of the team will meet you at your hotel to go through your clothing and gear with you and help with getting your gear sorted into the right bags.

DAY 4 : Punta Arenas - luggage pick-up and briefing

We'll be picking up your luggage in the morning ready to be loaded onto the plane for departure, the rest of the day is free. In the evening there will be a full team safety briefing as well as more information about the logistics of the next few days.

DAY 5 : Fly to Union Glacier

If the weather is favourable, enjoy the 4½ hour flight on the Ilyushin-76 over Drake's Passage towards the frozen continent, to the Union Glacier ice runway. We may transfer by Twin Otter to Vinson Base Camp the same day, or stay at Union Glacier depending on our arrival time and the weather.

DAY 6-7 : Fly to Vinson Base Camp

Assuming we didn't go yesterday, the Twin Otter takes us to Vinson Base Camp. If we're already there, we'll have a day to relax at Base Camp, acclimatise and pack and prepare our pulks for the journey towards the mountain.

DAY 8-9 : Move to Low Camp (2,700m)

The Branscomb Glacier rises gently – ideal for pulling our pulks, and we'll be travelling roped up due to potential crevasse hazard. Once we reach Low camp we'll build ourselves a mess shelter to act as a windbreak. We'll either stay here or cache equipment and return to Vinson BC to better acclimatise.

DAY 10 : Low Camp to High Camp (3,945m)

If there's stable weather ahead we make the move to High Camp. We'll either do it in one hit taking all our gear with us or do a load carry, cache, and return to Low Camp. The route is up a broad spur off the northern end of Branscomb Glacier, ascending fixed ropes up a slope of about 40 degree incline. From the top of the fixed ropes, there's a final 1½ hour walk along the ridge, which is exposed to weather and the wind can pick up, to High Camp sitting on a large col between Vinson and Mount Shinn.

Once at High Camp we rest and acclimatise, getting ourselves ready for our potential summit push the following day.

DAY 11-12 : Vinson Summit (4,897m)

Your team will make its summit attempt on the best weather day possible based on forecasts predicting good visibility and low winds. The route to the summit is along the Vinson summit valley and up a steeper snow and ice slope. This leads out onto the rocky summit ridge ending at a broad and impressive ledge. The views from the summit are nothing short of spectacular, as you look out of sharp peaks rising out of the ice sheet, with Shinn, Gardener, Epperly and Tyree in the foreground and the great pristine Antarctic continent surrounding you. Finally we return to High Camp. The round trip is about 9 miles and 9 hours up and 3 hours down.

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ITINERARY

DAY 13 : Descent to Vinson Base Camp

The return to Vinson Base Camp can normally be done within the day, getting us there with good time to celebrate our achievements. The route is exactly as we came up, retracing our steps back down the fixed lines and along Branscomb Glacier.

DAY 14 : Return to Union Glacier Camp

The Twin Otter will return us to Union Glacier Camp, with its relative luxuries. There's time to explore the area before our potential flight back to Punta Arenas the following day.

DAY 15 : Fly to Punta Arenas

The Ilyushan will pick us up (with six hours warning) and return us to Punta Arenas and the comfort of our hotel where we have a welcome bath, beer and celebratory dinner in town.

DAY 16 : Depart Chile

Today we will take an overnight flight from Punta Arenas to London.

DAY 17 : Arrive UK

Today we arrive back home.

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KIT LIST

Bags & Packs

Duffel bag 120ltr-140ltr

A 120-140L duffel bag to transport kit. A duffel bag is a strong, soft, weather resistant bag without wheels but with functional straps for carrying. Suitcases and wheeled bags are not suitable

Daysack

At least 60 – 80L capacity fitted with a waist belt

Drybags

Nylon rolltop bags (or even just large plastic bags) that keep fresh clothing and other important items like passports and iPods dry in the unlikely event of water ingress into your kitbag. Good for quarantining old socks

Sleeping Gear

5 Season sleeping bag

You should get a sleeping bag rated to -40C and choose a sleeping bag that functions within the comfort rating of this temperature. A silk sleeping bag liner will enhance this rating on the coldest nights

Sleeping mat

Full length inflatable Thermarest and closed-cell foam sleeping mat

Headwear

Warm headgear

This can be a warm hat, beanie, balaclava, anything to reduce the heat loss from your head

Neck gaiter

Neck gaiter, headover or scarf

Wide brimmed hat

Wide brimmed hat or baseball cap, optional but keeps the sun off exposed areas like ears and the nape for the neck and out of the eyes on sunny days

Sunglasses

Cat 4 with side and nose protectors and glacier goggles. Do NOT bring out metal framed glasses which can cause cold injuries. Julbo is our preferred supplier

Face mask

To prevent cold burn and frostbite

Sunblock

Buy the highest SPF you can find as UV intensifies with altitude

Lip salve

Buy the highest SPF you can find as UV intensifies with altitude

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KIT LIST

Upper Body

Hand and foot warmers

Bring a pair of chemical warmers for each day

Base layer

This is the layer closest to the skin and its principal function is to draw (wick) moisture and sweat away from the skin. You can also get thermal base layers for use at higher altitudes that provide an additional insulative layer while still drawing sweat during times of high exertion

Mid layer

These are thermal layers; firstly take a lightweight microfleece or similar technology that provides varying degrees of warmth and insulation without being overly bulky or heavy to pack. Secondly take out something thicker that provides greater warmth than a microfleece. This could be a (preferably) lightweight down or primaloft jacket or a thick fleece jacket or smock. Finally, a fleece gilet may provide additional warmth when the first two are over the top

Gilet (optional)

Optional - A great low volume additional layer to keep your core warm, whether down, primaloft or fleece

Soft Shell

This will probably be your outermost layer for much of the expedition. These must be windproof (not all are), and insulative. They must also be highly breathable, as it's crucial to reduce the effects of sweat to a minimum. They are mostly made of soft polyester and sometimes resemble a neoprene finish which makes them very mobile and comfortable to wear. Waterproof fabrics like Gore-tex are manageable, but they don't breathe well in extreme cold, plus they are heavy and most people don't find them as comfortable. Make sure that pockets are big enough for spare liner gloves, sunscreen, lip salve etc

Down jacket

Generally made using feathers, these are the ultra-warm and insulated layer that are used when at camp or in extremely cold environments. Those with a windproof outer fabric will provide the best insulation. Ask advice in the shop (or from us) when buying the jacket and mention you want it rated to -25C and the assistant will recommend the correct fill for you

Liner gloves

You will need two pairs of thin and two pairs of thick liner gloves

Thick system gloves

Waterproof shell gloves with pile liners

Down expedition mitts

Over sized arctic mitts

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KIT LIST

Lower Body

Mountaineering Soft Shell trousers

These tend to be polyester so they dry quickly weigh little in your pack. Consider a Schoeffel fabric or similar which is warmer and wind resistant

Down trousers

As per the jacket: lightweight, compressible, to provide effective lower body insulation once at altitude, ensure they are windproof and water resistant

Long Johns

Thermal insulation for the lower body, take different weights

Underwear

How many pairs you take is entirely up to you, consider long-legged and NOT cotton

Feet

Expedition double boots with built-in gaiter

E.g. La Sportiva Olympus Mons or Millet Everest

High altitude socks

These are especially thick wool or wool blend to provide maximum insulation. Bring several pairs, keep one pair clean for summit day

Trekking socks

Thinner trekking or liner socks to wear in combination with mountaineering socks

Camp Booties

So you're not clomping around in your plastics the whole time

Trainers or light boots

These are nice to wear in the dining tents

Technical Equipment

Mountaineering ice axe

60-75cm, technical ice climbing axes are not suitable for Vinson

Ski poles

Adjustable

Snap gate Karabiners x 5

Type of karabiners used for climbing

Screwgate karabiners x 4

Screwgate HMS karabiners

12m Perlon cord 7mm

To make prussic etc

Climbing harness

With adjustable leg loops

Handled ascender

Cow's tail

Made from 7mm Perlon. Please do not bring daisy chains

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KIT LIST

Steel crampons

Adjusted to boots, can be step-in or strap-style. Do NOT bring aluminium crampons – they are not strong enough

Hydration

Water bottles / bladder

2L equivalent – Camelbaks are not recommended as they will freeze up, Nalgene bottles are better

Thermal bottle insulators

Toiletries

Wet wipes

Preferably biodegradable, these are great for washing when modern shower facilities become a thing of the past

Alcohol gel

A must have for good camp hygiene

Medications

Personal first aid kit

Blister patches, zinc oxide tape, plasters, antiseptic, painkillers etc

Personal medication

Please bring enough for your trip, PLUS an additional 4 weeks' supply

Miscellaneous

Thermal flask

Insulated Thermos flask 1L

Pee bottle (+ optional Shewee for the girls!)

A good idea if you are storm bound at higher camps. A 1ltr Nalgene bottle is a good option but do make sure you label it as your pee bottle!!

Head torch

We recommend Petzl head torches. Bring spare batteries.

Camera

Bring plenty of spare batteries and memory cards

Penknife (optional)

Cutlery

Bowl & insulated alpine mug with lid

Sewing kit (optional)

Snacks

You will be fed very well and given snacks each day however we advise bringing a small selection as a little bit of comfort. For summit night it's always good to have a few extra chunky bars for that extra boost. Energy gels and protein bars are not suitable

Eyeshade

For sleeping in 24-hour daylight

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KIT LIST

Ear plugs

For protection against the inevitable snorers!

Handkerchief

Avoid getting snotty gloves and sore noses when the drip sets in

Thermarest Repair Kit

Camp chair (optional)

Entertainment

Of course optional, but most trekkers like to bring an iPod, book, Kindle, cards etc for evening entertainment.

Solar Charger

These are useful to keep electricals charged but are a luxury rather than a necessity

Documentation

Passport

Don't forget this! Your passport should have at least 6 months validity. With your passport expiry date at least six months after the final day of travel.

Copy of passport

Just in case

Passport photos x 4

Dental check up

We recommend you have a dental check-up before your trip. New fillings can be an issue at altitude if there is an air pocket left in the gap

Money

We recommend you take around \$1,000. This will allow for tip money plus any extras such as satellite phone calls, additional hotel rooms and emergency funds

Travel insurance

Copy of own travel insurance details and relevant contact numbers. Please ensure you have appropriate insurance for your intended trip to include medical evacuation from Antarctica and coverage up to an altitude of 5,000m We recommend looking into deals offered by the BMC, the Austrian Alpine Club or similar insurers. Team members should take out private insurance that covers you against cancellation due to medical or personal reasons and it is important that the insurance contains coverage for medical evacuations. Many other insurance providers are available and we do recommend that you shop around to get the best cover for you on the expedition you are undertaking. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the appropriate insurance for your intended trip. Please contact the office if you have any queries on insurance for this expedition. We are happy to help.

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FAQ'S

Country

What is Punta Arenas like?

There are a few gear shops in Punta Arenas in the event that you need to get a few last minute supplies, but they are not well stocked and shouldn't be relied upon. It is however a fun place to knock around in before and after the expedition. You'll welcome a few beers there to celebrate the – hopefully successful – completion of the expedition before flying back to the UK.

Food and Water

What is the food like on the mountain?

You will normally be having an expedition ready meal such as a dehydrated meal prepared by adding hot water or 'boil in the bag' that is heated in boiling water. A usual pattern is to have one of these meals in the morning before setting off a long day on the hill and another in the evening after setting up camp.

In between you will consistently be on the move so it is recommended to bring a few personal daily snacks such as high-energy bars or sweets to keep you going. These types of snacks will be particularly useful on summit day as enroute there may be not be a chance for a long leisurely stop. High energy snacks like these are quick and easy to eat and will give your body a regular energy top up to help you keep going longer. There will be opportunity to purchase snacks on arrival in Punta Arenas before heading to Antarctica.

Where does the drinking water come from?

All drinking water will be made by gathering clean snow and then boiling this to produce purified water. It is up to you whether you wish to bring your own personal purification such as iodine or chlorine but normally boiling is the best method of purification.

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Accommodation

What's the drill with keeping clean and answering the call?

There are no shower facilities once you're out of Punta Arenas. There is the potential for sponge baths at Base Camps, but producing the water is energy-intensive, and the production of grey water should be kept to a minimum.

There are lavatorial facilities for both sexes at Base Camps, designated pee holes at the camps on the mountains, and number twos are done into waste bags which are removed from Antarctica at the end of the expedition. Boys – DO NOT just pee anywhere you like, however primeval you're feeling out there. There are very strict guidelines about human waste both at and between camps. Essentially, ONLY pee in a pee bottle or designated pee hole, and ONLY poo in a bag. NOWHERE ELSE!! Hand gel is spread liberally around camps, please use it. Out in the field there are little shelters around the "throne" to maintain a modicum of civility.

In addition to this, please check that things like boots are spankingly clean before you set foot on Antarctica – ideally before you leave home. Nearer the time you will be sent the Antarctic Biosecurity and Equipment Cleaning Guidelines, please READ them and adhere to them.

How warm is my tent?

Sleeping tents are passively warmed by the sun. Temperatures will vary depending on the time of day, weather and the type of tent.

Larger "clam" tents can warm to between 15C and 20C during the daytime, a comfortable temperature when you're wearing thermal and fleece layers. Temperatures are cooler on cloudy, stormy days and may drop to near freezing at 'night', when the sun is less intense.

Small, mountain tents used away from Base Camp can be C25° on a sunny, windless day – almost too warm to be inside! Inside temperatures are cooler on cloudy days, when the ambient air temperature is very low, or when the sun drops behind a mountain ridge.

Health and Safety

You advocate taking a small first aid kit, what should it have in it?

We advocate self-help on the mountain. Your own first aid kit should be small and light avoiding unnecessary weight, it should contain: A basic blister kit, plasters, your own personal medication, basic pain relief (paracetamol and Ibuprofen). We advocate only a very small and light personal first aid kit as weight will become an issue at altitude. Your Leader will be carrying a more comprehensive first aid kit including emergency high altitude medication should you require treatment.

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FAQ'S

What happens if there is a problem on the mountain?

There is no rescue service on the mountain and every team is expected to be self-sufficient and self-reliant. There are emergency caches placed at designated spots in the event of real emergency, but you are in your own and your leader's hands. Altitude problems, dehydration from extremely dry air, the threat of frostbite injury, the potential for weather changes are all potential hazards, but ones that your leader is well versed in looking out for and aiming to prevent or deal with. Your leader is equipped with a VHF radio to connect with Vinson Base Camp, Iridium satellite phone and GPS receiver to monitor exact position.

Am I likely to suffer from altitude sickness on this expedition?

The southerly latitude of Mount Vinson means that thinning of the atmosphere will make it seem significantly higher. Many observe that Vinson feels like 5,500m in the Himalayas.

Our gradual itinerary allows people to acclimatise properly. Although our acclimatisation regime ensures that everybody enjoys the best possible chance of getting high on the mountain, altitude related problems can happen.

The most common of this is acute mountain sickness (AMS). The most common symptoms for this are headaches and nausea.

In all this sounds quite dramatic but generally this is just the process your body naturally goes through to adjust to the higher altitudes and the reduced partial pressure of the atmosphere. For some people the acclimatisation process is a little longer and harder than others.

For our leaders this is all part and parcel of ascending a mountain like Vinson.

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FAQ'S

What should I do if I start suffering from AMS?

There are some basic measures you can take to help yourself should you start suffering from AMS. As headache is the most common symptom of AMS try taking a simple painkiller such as paracetamol or ibuprofen to relieve the headache. If the headache disappears all well and good.

Please remember to inform your Leader of any altitude symptoms you may have and any medication you have taken as a result so they can keep an eye on you and advise accordingly. Most AMS symptoms will be mild but should AMS develop into a severe form, your team will be versed in dealing with this and will be carrying relevant emergency altitude medications.

Should someone develop severe AMS the only cure is descent and as safety is our priority you will be taken down appropriately.

AMS might sound frightening but our leaders are fully trained (and experienced) in helping to relieve your personal symptoms and provide advice on how to best proceed.

What can I do to help prevent AMS?

Reducing the chances of AMS can be helped by following some simple yet effective guidelines:

- Drink lots of water
- Move slowly
- Stay warm
- Eat well

The most important thing is not to fear it, but to respect it and to know how to deal with it and more importantly tell your guides how you feel.

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FAQ'S

Should I bring Diamox on the expedition with me?

Although we recommend you come armed with a course of Diamox or other high-altitude drug on this expedition, we do not recommend that take you these as a prophylactic during the trek or climb. We view Diamox as a treatment drug rather than a preventative medicine. Most adventure medics give similar advice, however we do appreciate this can be confusing, as many GPs (who aren't necessarily mountaineers) do suggest taking it as a prophylactic.

We pride ourselves on designing all our itineraries with acclimatisation very much front and centre and this expedition itinerary has been carefully designed to allow for your body to adjust to the altitude gradually, safely and comfortably. However, if you find that you are still having problems adjusting to the altitude (see our FAQ on Altitude Sickness) then your expedition leader or expedition medic will recommend the correct course of action regarding taking Diamox.

Should I take Diamox?

It is far preferable to take Diamox if and when needed during the course of the expedition. If you are already taking it and then start having altitude related problems you are left with few options but to descend to a more comfortable altitude which sadly often means that the summit is not attainable.

Furthermore, Diamox is a diuretic, meaning you will have to drink a lot of fluid to prevent dehydration. Of course, the upshot of this is you'll have to pee more which means you'll probably be having to get up more in the night and take cover behind rocks during the day. Another quite common side-effect is that it can cause your extremities to "buzz and tingle" including your fingers, toes and lips which can feel quite unsettling. Other side-effects can include dizziness and light headedness with loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea. Although all these side-effects are manageable when you have symptoms of altitude sickness, we personally believe it is counter-intuitive to take it unless necessary.

Of course, it is totally up to you, this is just our recommendation and we're not doctors. If you do decide to take Diamox on the advice of your doctor then please do let your leader know in situ so they are aware of this. We also suggest you take the drug for a couple of days a few weeks before travelling so you can experience the symptoms before taking them during the trek.

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FAQ'S

Kit

Will we have to carry group gear on top of our personal equipment? How much will my pack weigh?

On top of your personal gear you will be expected to carry two group food bags (12 – 18kg each) and a handful of group gear such as shovels, wands, cooking gear, fuel, etc. On the lower mountain we will split our gear between our backpacks and a pulk or sled that we drag behind us.

Climbers typically put about 60% of their weight in the sled and 40% in their pack on lower-angled slopes. Most climbers start out with between 55 to 75kg of gear and food to manage.

Much of a climber's pack weight is made up of personal clothing and equipment, and so climbers with lighter and more modern clothing and equipment will carry less weight than those with older, more bulky kit.

How warm does my sleeping bag need to be?

Your sleeping bag should be as warm as possible and at least rated down to minus 40°C comfort rating. Vinson can be bitterly cold! Ensure you get a sleeping bag that has this temperature rating at the comfort rating rather than at the extreme rating. Remember that your sleeping bag can be further enhanced by the use of a silk or fleece liner. Sleeping bags work through the air being warmed up by your own body temperature.

Once you have warmed up the bag, the down will retain the heat and tries to ensure that you sleep at a temperature as close as possible to your own body temperature. To start with on the mountain it could be best to wear as little as possible when inside your sleeping bag. Our leaders will often only wear a set of thermals in their bag. It is important for the bag to trap the heat. If this doesn't work they may add several layers but ensuring the sleeping bag around them isn't too tight. If all else fails then it may be necessary to wear your down jacket in addition.

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FAQ'S

Is it possible to rent equipment before I go?

It is possible to rent climbing equipment both in the UK from Outdoorhire.co.uk. However, we recommend the use of personal equipment whenever possible. This is so you know your equipment as best as possible and, while it's probably fine, we can't guarantee the quality of rented equipment. You will not be able to rent equipment when in country before heading to the mountain. We strongly recommend to have all your equipment prepared, tried and tested before setting off to Chile.

Does my luggage go into the Ilyushan hold like any other flight? Do I need to separate my luggage?

You need to separate your luggage into 4 categories:

- 1.Set of Antarctic clothing that you will wear on the day of the flight
- 2.Hold luggage
- 3.Hand luggage
- 4.City clothes and any other items you want to leave in Punta Arenas

What do I include in my Hold luggage and Hand luggage?

Hold luggage includes group gear, food, extra clothing and personal equipment for use in Antarctica, including knives and sharp objects. Please tag your bags with your own name, program code (Vinson), and our company name – 360.

Hold luggage will be loaded the day prior to the flight and will remain on the plane until weather conditions permit us to fly to Antarctica. You will not have access to these items before or during the flight. Since weather delays are the norm do not put anything in your hold luggage that you might need during your stay in Punta Arenas.

Luggage will be weighed and collected shortly after the briefing. Antarctic flights cannot be held for clients who arrive late or have lost or delayed luggage.

DO NOT include: medications, perishable foods, passport, credit cards or cash. All fuels are prohibited by international flight regulations.

Hand luggage includes items you carry aboard in a reasonable-sized day pack or on your person. These are things like your passport and other items that you want to keep with you until flight day or to have handy during the flight: all medications, cameras, sunscreen, money. No sharp objects.

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FAQ'S

Any advice on city clothes and items left in Punta Arenas?

City clothes and any other items you want to leave in Punta Arenas should be left at your hotel. Please make sure to tag all left luggage with both your name, as well as "RAAL" in case we need to retrieve your luggage for you when you return from Antarctica. Make sure you can give an accurate description of the number and type of bags you have left in your hotel if need. Do not leave valuables in your left luggage.

What should I include in my set of Antarctic clothing

One set of Antarctic clothing that you will wear on the day of the flight. Includes: various under-layers as well as your down jacket, soft-shell trousers, Antarctic boots, gloves, hat, goggles or sunglasses. Keep this with you until flight day.

The Weather

Will it be cold?

You said it! The interior of Antarctica has a cold, dry, windy climate. Average mid-season temperatures at base camp range from C-12° to C-4°. On a sunny windless day it can feel quite warm but, when the wind blows, you will be glad of warm layers and a wind jacket. As you head for Mount Vinson prepare for extreme temperatures of C-40° and severe storms.

Once we hit the mountain we radio in every day for an updated weather forecast and to check in with Base Camp giving them our current position, state of wellbeing and anticipated next moves.

Insurance

Do I need special insurance?

You must carry individual travel insurance to take part in the expedition. We cannot take you on the mountain without proof of insurance.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the appropriate insurance for your intended trip. To include medical evacuation and coverage up to the maximum altitude of this trip.

Your insurance details are requested on the booking form, however this can be arranged at a later date. 360 Expeditions will be requesting your insurance details 8 weeks before your departure.

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FAQ'S

Training

How can I best train / prepare for climbing the mountain?

Obviously the best way to train for any expedition is to recreate the conditions of the climb as closely as possible. This can be difficult depending on where you are based geographically and we appreciate people have busy lives with work and family commitments.

Ideally you would have both altitude and severe climate experience from previous climbs and the more experience the better. Technically, you will need to be able to move competently using crampons on steep snow or ice and be able to perform an ice axe arrest. You should also be familiar with moving together roped up, have knowledge of basic knots and rope-work and have knowledge of crevasse rescue techniques, as well as some knowledge of how to build a snow anchor and set up a basic hauling system. If you are concerned about any lack of knowledge in these areas, we recommend doing a winter skills course with us in the Pyrenees before you attempt Vinson.

The main area to focus physically is to build up as much endurance as possible. This can be developed by long hill days with your rucksack on your back carrying your kit. To simulate pulling the pulk some people train by pulling a tyre. The more miles you clock up in the hills prior to Vinson, generally the more endurance you'll have that will give you something in reserve when it counts during a long day on the mountain.

Electronics

Can I keep my camera and iPod charged out there?

If you have a light solar charger it's worth bringing one out. There are also limited charging facilities at Base Camp, for which you will need a 12V car adapter.

I take it there is no phone reception out there?

In a word, no. We carry satellite phones which you are welcome to use for a fee (Iridium is expensive), although the priority lies on keeping them charged and topped up in case of emergency use.

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TRAINING PROGRAM

To begin 6 months prior to the expedition where possible.

1. CVS: Cardiovascular exercise which is low impact such as swimming, cycling, cross trainer, rowing.

2. Weekend walk should be done over undulating terrain. Only a light rucksack needs to be carried.

3. For specific exercises it is worth doing static squats and heel raises on a regular basis to improve leg muscles prior to the trip. Static squats are especially useful to help protect the knees. Please remember that it is still important to have a well balanced workout using a variety of muscle groups.

4. It is worth winding down and resting in the week leading up to the trip, doing several light walks to keep things going.

5. When walking going at a pace of a brisk walk with a light sweat and enough to feel breathless is recommended

6. During the program, rather than step up suddenly each month (example, going for 3 one hour walks each week during the weekdays in April to 3 one and half hour walks suddenly in May) it is better to build up gradually each week so there isn't a large transition (example, going for 3 one hour walks during week 1 in April, going for 3 one hour and ten minute walks during week 2 in April, going for 3 one hour and fifteen minute walks during week 3 in April, going for 3 one hour and twenty minute walks during week 4 in April)

6. It is important you seek medical advice prior to starting any training program, especially if you are not used to regular physical exertion

All the best with your training!

MONTH 1

OPT 1

2 x 30 mins weekday walk
1 x 1 hour weekend walk
1 x 10 mins CVS

OPT 2

1 x 30 mins weekday walk
2 x 1 hour weekend walk
1 x 10 mins CVS

MONTH 2

OPT 1

2 x 45 mins weekday walk
1 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

OPT 2

1 x 45 mins weekday walk
2 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

MONTH 3

OPT 1

2 x 45 mins weekday walk
1 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

OPT 2

1 x 45 mins weekday walk
2 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

MONTH 4

OPT 1

3 x 1 hour weekday walk
1 x 4 hours weekend walk
3 x 15 mins CVS

OPT 2

2 x 1 hour weekday walk
2 x 4 hours weekend walk
3 x 15 mins CVS

MONTH 5

OPT 1

3 x 1.5 hours weekday walk
1 x 5 hours weekend walk
3 x 20 - 25 mins CVS

OPT 2

2 x 1.5 hours weekday walk
2 x 5 hours weekend walk
3 x 20 - 25 mins CVS

MONTH 6

OPT 1

3 x 2 hours weekday walk
1 x 6 hours weekend walk
3 x 30 mins CVS

OPT 2

2 x 3 hours weekday walk
2 x 6 hours weekend walk
3 x 30 mins CVS

360

EXPEDITIONS



"Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty & well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out & loudly proclaiming 'Wow! What a Ride!' "

Dream it. Plan it. Live it.