



ACONCAGUA ITINERARY

Vacas Regular Route

Day 0: Arrive in Mendoza

Arrive in Mendoza, Argentina. Climbers should arrive before 6:00pm. After checking into our rooms at the hotel we will have a pre-trip meeting, introductions, orientation and equipment check. We will then head out onto the streets of Mendoza for the night to sample some local culture and cuisine.

*Most people like to arrive a day prior to the first day of the expedition. We will be more than happy to make hotel arrangements for you.

Day 1: Mendoza to Penitentes

Meet at hotel around 9am. We will then head to the national park office to get our individual climbing permits. After permits have been organized we will have a short time to purchase any missing items found in the gear check the evening prior. At 1pm we will depart for the small mountain town of Penitentes which will be our base for the trip. After checking into our rooms at the lodge that serves as our staging spot we will organize equipment, and pack gear for the mules and hiking. In the morning we will begin the three day hike to base camp. After dinner at the lodge we will settle in for a good night's sleep.

Day 2: Penitentes to Pampa Lena

After breakfast in the lodge we will get a shuttle to Point Vacas (8,000 ft) and then we will trek for approximately four hours up the Vacas valley to our first camp at Pampa Lena (9,200 ft.).

The three-day trek to base camp covers 30 miles from the trail head to Plaza Argentina (13,800 ft), our base camp for the expedition. Mules carry our gear on the hike to base camp. We carry only daypacks on the approach so we can enjoy the trek without heavy loads. The hike is spectacular and takes us through high desert, river forged valleys that are dramatically enclosed between the mountains of the Andes.

Day 3: Pampa Lena to Casa Piedra

Hiking time is approximately six hours to our camp at Casa Piedra (11,000 ft.). The deep valleys open up as we travel forward, and we get our first views of the stunning east face of Aconcagua towering above to 22,829 ft.

Day 4: Casa Piedra to Plaza Argentina

Hike to Plaza Argentina (13,800 ft.) and set up base camp. Hiking time is approximately eight to ten hours.

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Day 5: Base Camp acclimatization day

We spend a rest day at Base Camp to help lay a solid acclimatization foundation for the rest of the expedition. We will spend the day organizing equipment and preparing for the climb, exploring the local terrain and acclimatizing to the higher altitude.

Day 6: Carry to Camp 1

Camp 1 is located on a ridge at 16,200ft. We double carry to keep pack weight down and to help ensure good acclimatization.

Day 7: Acclimatization day

Day 8: Move to Camp 1

Hiking time is approximately six hours. Camp 1 has some amazing fields of penitentes nearby.

Day 9: Acclimatization day

Day 10: Carry to Camp 2 (Guanacos)

Camp 2 is located above the Ameghino pass at 18,200 ft. and provides spectacular views of the surrounding mountains. Hiking time is approximately 8 hours round trip.

Day 11: Move to Camp 2 (Guanacos)

After spending another night at Camp 1, we'll move up to Camp 2. Hiking time is about 6 hours.

Day 12: Acclimatization day

Day 13: Carry to Camp 3 (High Camp - Colera)

Hiking time is approximately eight hours round trip. High Camp is located below White Rocks on the North Ridge. It is an outstanding high camp that is one of the best protected on the mountain. It is less crowded and more sanitary than other high camps, and its placement saves an hour of travel time on summit morning relative to the regular high camp on the normal route.

Day 14: Move to Camp 3 (High Camp - Colera)

Camp 3 is at approximately 20,000 ft. and is located just west of the bottom of the Polish Glacier. We traverse from Camp 2 to meet up with the upper portion of the Guanacos route and Camp 3. Colera possesses the excellent combination of being high enough to keep the length of summit day to an appropriate duration, without being too high and having the increased likelihood of sleeping poorly/difficulty with altitude. The next protected spot for a high camp is much further up and it is too high to sleep well there. Camp 3 offers breathtaking views of many of the highest peaks of the Andes!

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Day 15: First Summit Day!

Summit day begins at 5:00 am. We climb the North Ridge to Refugio Independencia at approximately 21,400'. From there we traverse the West Face and climb up into the Canaleta, an 800' couloir that leads to the summit ridge. From the top of the Canaleta we follow the Guanaco Ridge with stunning views on the traverse to the summit. On top we have a spectacular 360° view. All around you will see the Andes Mountains consisting of several 20,000' peaks, including another of the highest peaks in South America, Mercedario. To the west lies Chile and the Pacific Ocean, and to the east, the plains of Argentina. From the summit you will be able to look directly down the 9,000' South Face of Aconcagua, considered one of the great faces of the world!

Days 16-17: Reserve Days

These days are included to accommodate time for additional acclimatization/rest, and weather days. These extra days are built in to provide the best possible conditions for each individual to summit. They can be used at any point necessary on the trip.

Day 18: High Camp to Plaza Mulas

We'll descend the normal route to Plaza Mulas. We carry all of our equipment in one load for the 6,000 foot descent.

Day 19: Plaza Mulas to Penitentes

We'll hike 18 miles from Plaza Mulas to Horcones Park and return to Penitentes. Again, we'll utilize mules to carry the majority of our equipment to the Horcones Park gate and carry only light day packs. From Penitentes we'll have the option of staying an additional night there at the lodge or continuing all the way to Mendoza.

Day 20: Penitentes to Mendoza

Return to Mendoza to celebrate our time in the mountains and enjoy the comforts of Argentina! If we made it back to Mendoza on day 19 we'll have the whole day to explore and enjoy Mendoza!

Day 21: Flights Home

Mountain Guides International itineraries are intended to provide individuals with a positive high altitude experience. They include ample time for weather and rest days, and our camps are spaced at optimum intervals for acclimatization. This itinerary is intended as a general guideline. It can change at any time due to events or conditions that are beyond our control.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions, or if you would like any additional information.

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