



**Alaska Mountain Guides
& Climbing School Inc.**

MT. VINSON PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION

PUNTA ARENAS

Punta Arenas is the starting and ending place of our trip. The southernmost city on Earth, overlooking the Straits of Magellan, is commonly considered the most interesting city in Patagonia. Along with being one of the most prominent Antarctic starting points it is well endowed with a large commercial fishing port.

PATRIOT HILLS

We fly south along the Ellsworths to their southernmost extension, the Patriot Hills, where our runway comes into sight. The wheeled aircraft lands on an area of blue ice that is approximately 2600 ft (800 m) above sea level. The blue ice remains clear of snow due to high winds. From Patriot Hills we fly on a twin otter into the Mt. Vinson basecamp.

AIRLINE TICKETS

Make certain that your ticket matches the full name on your passport. Plan your arrival in Punta Arenas not later than the morning of the first scheduled day of the trip. If time permits, we recommend arriving one day early to provide leeway for any flight or baggage connection trouble. Please make certain that we have your flight and arrival information so that we can meet you at the airport! Make certain to reconfirm your flights. The guide will meet you at the airport with an 'AMG' sign.

AIRLINE ROUTING

Most flights go through LA, or Miami, to Santiago Chile, and then connect to Punta Arenas. It is also possible to schedule flights through Buenas Aires, Argentina.

VISAS

No tourist visa is required U.S. citizens before arriving in Chile.

IMMUNIZATIONS

There are some suggested immunizations, but none that are required. We recommend that you check with your doctor for the most current immunization information. If you have received immunizations, either in the past, or for this trip, make certain to bring your immunization book/card.

PHOTOCOPY ALL DOCUMENTS

Make certain to copy your passport, airline tickets, credit cards, traveler's checks, immunization book etc. This can be very helpful in the event that anything is lost or stolen.

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BAGGAGE

Flying to and from the U.S. you are allowed two 50 lb. bags. If you travel through other countries for a stopover you will be charged excess baggage fees for anything over 44lbs. (20 kilos) each flight. If possible, pack your backpack and gear inside a large duffle bag. This protects your things more as you are traveling, and is more secure for loads on the mules and buses.

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE TAXES

Currently there is no arrival tax in Chile. There is a departure tax for leaving the country, which is approximately \$20.

CURRENCY

There are about \$525 Chilean pesos to \$1 U.S. Costs are similar to those in the United States.

SPENDING MONEY

We recommend bringing at least \$400 cash or travelers checks for Punta Arenas hotels, restaurants, gifts, and travel after our climb. Always carry a credit card for emergencies as well.

HOTEL

If you are planning on arriving in Punta Arenas early, or, if you wish to extend your stay after the trip, we would happy to assist you with hotel reservations in town.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

While in Punta Arenas, we will head out to visit the penguin rookery and local historical sights.

INCLUDED

Hotel in Punta Arenas. Flights from Punta Arenas to Mt. Vinson basecamp. All food while in Antarctica. All group expedition equipment: tents, ropes, etc...

NOT INCLUDED

Restaurant food while in Punta Arenas. All personal climbing equipment and cold weather gear.

LANGUAGE

Spanish is the language in Chile, but English is common.

TIME ZONES

Punta Arenas is East Coast time +2 hours. Patriot Hills operates on the same time zone.

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CLIMBING DIFFICULTY

Climbers should have basic mountaineering skills including self arrest, glacier travel, and crevasse rescue. Difficulties include climbing at high altitude, snow slopes of moderate steepness, extreme cold, and high winds. Climbers must be in strong physical condition and be able to carry 65 pounds. Basic mountaineering skills required include self-arrest, glacier travel and crevasse rescue. You need to have winter camping experience before you go in order to know how to manage your gear and body temperature.

TRAINING

As with any strenuous trek or climb the appropriate training before hand will ensure you the best possible experience. In addition to your regular fitness routine, we recommend that you take day hikes carrying a 40-50 lb pack and wearing your plastic boots. Don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions on specific training programs.

CLIMATE

The climate on Vinson is generally stable due to the high pressure system fostered by the polar ice cap. However, as in any arctic climates, high winds and snowfall are possible. The Katabatic winds (caused by temperature differences between ice and sea) can be quite fierce. During the summer season, November through January, there are 24 hours of sunlight. The temperature differences between shadow and sunlight are extreme and the average during these months is -20 degrees F.

PHOTOGRAPHY

A small, lightweight, 35mm camera with three to ten rolls of film, or a small digital camera, depending on how much you like to shoot. Remember to keep the bulk and weight to a minimum.

LOADS

Generally, loads will be around 50-60 lbs. This weight is distributed between your pack, and a sled.

FOOD

We bring most of the food from the U.S. in an effort to provide as good food as possible. We will fly to Antarctica with plenty of extra food and fuel to ensure that everyone eats healthy. The food is nutritious, and carefully planned to provide the energy we need. Climbing and trekking at altitude require three to four times the caloric intake necessary to perform the same work at lower elevations. In order to meet these caloric demands we will be eating more high calorie food than usual. Please let us know if you have any dietary restrictions.

DRINKING WATER

All of our water will come from melting snow and ice.

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MEDICAL

Please make certain to answer the questions regarding health on your registration form. We also recommend that everyone check with their doctor to learn about the possible effects of high altitude and hot climates. If you require any personal medications, or, have any pre-existing medical problems, make certain to re-confirm with your guide upon arrival.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We highly recommend purchasing travel insurance for your trip. Travel insurance policies frequently cover costs associated with plane tickets, personal or medical emergencies, rescue, evacuation, trip cancellation, and theft. Any associated rescue or evacuation costs are the responsibility of individual participants. Resources for this insurance include Access America 800 284 8300, Travelers Insurance 800 243 3174, and the American Alpine Club 303 384 0110.

Do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions, or if you would like any additional information.

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