EXPEDITION GEAR LIST
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Aconcagua Express

Normal Route · 14 Days — Equipment List

Aconcagua is 6,962 m / 22,841 ft — the highest mountain in the Western Hemisphere. On the Express you stage on Cerro Santa Elena (4,595 m), fly to Plaza de Mulas by helicopter, and move through Camp Canada, Nido de Cóndores and Camp Colera to two summit windows. The route is non-technical, but the altitude, wind and cold are severe. At nearly 23,000 feet, gear failure is not inconvenient — it is dangerous.

Stick to the layering principle, and bring a true 8,000 m-rated down parka, a –20 °F sleeping bag and a summit-day mitt system. Substitutions that seem reasonable at sea level often fall short above 18,000 feet.

This list is a guide. Every item is required, but there are multiple brands and models unless we specify otherwise. Boots fully broken in, layers tested over each other, and your pack loaded and adjusted before you fly.

Gear check on Day 1 in Mendoza. Mendoza is your last chance to fix gaps. Double boots, sleeping bags, crampons, ice axes, trekking poles and some insulated clothing can be rented there through our partners — send requests at least three weeks before the expedition.

CONDITIONS

What to expect on the climb

Stage	Day	Night
Mendoza 790 m	28–35 °C / 82–95 °F hot, dry summer	15–20 °C / 59–68 °F hotel, Days 1 & 13
Las Cuevas & Santa Elena 3,200–4,595 m	8–18 °C / 46–64 °F wind on the ridge	0–5 °C / 32–41 °F refuge, Days 2–3
Plaza de Mulas 4,350 m	5–15 °C / 41–59 °F strong sun	–8 to –2 °C / 18–28 °F base camp tents
Canada & Nido 4,909–5,575 m	–5 to 8 °C / 23–46 °F wind picks up	–18 to –6 °C / 0–21 °F tents, Days 7–8
Camp Colera 5,965 m	–10 to 0 °C / 14–32 °F exposed shoulder	–25 to –15 °C / –13 to 5 °F tents, Days 9–11
Summit 6,962 m	–20 to –10 °C / –4 to 14 °F 3–4 am start	Wind chill to –35 °C / –31 °F the Canaleta and ridge

PACKING

A note on packing

Pack your mountain gear in one large duffel — not your backpack, as straps get damaged by baggage handling. Argentine domestic carriers enforce weight limits strictly, and the helicopter to Plaza de Mulas has a baggage limit: the exact figure is in your pre-trip packet.

A second small bag with city clothes stays at the hotel in Mendoza. Keep medication and one set of climbing layers in your carry-on.

Argentine customs restricts fresh food, fruit and plant material. Bring sealed, packaged snacks only — and stock up on the rest in Mendoza.

BEFORE YOU GO

Final pre-trip checklist

- [ ] Start your 4-week Hypoxico protocol on the schedule we build with you
- [ ] Buy Global Rescue + High-Altitude package (required)
- [ ] Passport valid 6+ months beyond return
- [ ] Reserve rental gear at least 3 weeks ahead
- [ ] Book flights to Mendoza (MDZ); land Day 1 by 3–4 pm
- [ ] Send us your flight itinerary and insurance certificate
- [ ] Bring $2,000–$2,800 in clean USD bills — permit, tips, extras
- [ ] Ask your doctor about Diamox
- [ ] Full pack-out against this list

WHAT WE PROVIDE

You don't bring any group equipment

- Hypoxico system shipped to your home
- Tents, cooking systems & base camp infrastructure
- Starlink & Wi-Fi at Plaza de Mulas
- Permit paperwork and park coordination
- Helicopter in and out of Plaza de Mulas
- All meals on the mountain
- Group medical kit & emergency equipment
- Two guides for a maximum of four climbers

You bring your clothing, boots, sleep system, packs and personal technical gear. The Aconcagua permit ($1,285 for 2026–27) is not included — cash only, in USD, at the park office in Mendoza.

01 / PACKS & BAGS

Packs & Bags

Large Expedition Duffel (90–120 L) Extremely durable, water-resistant duffel for all your mountain gear. Flies with you to Plaza de Mulas.	RECOMMENDED Black Diamond StoneHauler 120 · The North Face Base Camp Duffel XL	☐
City Bag (40–70 L) Stays at the hotel in Mendoza with travel clothes.	RECOMMENDED The North Face Base Camp Duffel Medium	☐
Expedition Backpack (60–70 L) Internal-frame pack for the carry to Camp Canada and the moves to Nido and Colera. Without porters you carry up to about 20 kg / 44 lb on upper-mountain days. Fitted to your body and loaded before you fly.	RECOMMENDED Black Diamond Mission 75 · Osprey Aether 65	☐

Summit Pack (~35–45 L, optional)
Lighter pack for summit day. Many climbers use their expedition pack cinched down instead.

RECOMMENDED
Osprey Mutant 38 · Black Diamond Speed 40

☐

Day Pack (optional)
Small, lightweight pack for Mendoza.

RECOMMENDED
Black Diamond Bullet 16

☐

02 / FOOTWEAR

Footwear

Double Mountaineering Boots (6,000 m+)
Insulated double boots rated for Aconcagua's summit cold, fully crampon-compatible and broken in — not new out of the box. Rentable in Mendoza.

RECOMMENDED
La Sportiva G2 Evo · La Sportiva Olympus Mons Cube · Scarpa Phantom 8000

☐

Approach / Hiking Shoes
Light to mid-weight shoes for Las Cuevas, Santa Elena and base camp.

RECOMMENDED
La Sportiva TX Hike Mid GTX · La Sportiva Bushido

☐

Liner Socks (3 pairs, optional)
Super-thin wicking sock that helps prevent blisters. NO COTTON.

RECOMMENDED
Icebreaker Hike Liner Crew

☐

Hiking Socks (4 pairs)
Everyday sock for trekking, camp and town. NO COTTON.

RECOMMENDED
Darn Tough Hiker · Patagonia Lightweight Merino

☐

Warm Socks (3 pairs)
Wool/synthetic blend — a fresh, dry pair for each summit window. NO COTTON.

RECOMMENDED
Darn Tough Mountaineering · Smartwool Mountaineering Extra Heavy

☐

Camp Shoes / Sandals
Comfortable shoes for base camp, the refuge and the hotel.

RECOMMENDED
Crocs · Keen

☐

03 / SLEEPING

Sleeping

Sleeping Bag (–20 °F / –29 °C)
Expedition-quality goose down. Nights at Camp Colera can reach –25 °C. Long enough that your feet don't press the foot-box. Rentable in Mendoza.

RECOMMENDED
Mountain Hardwear Phantom –20 · The North Face Inferno –20 · Feathered Friends Snowbunting EX –10

☐

Inflatable Sleeping Pad (required)
Full-length insulated air mattress. Bring the repair kit and stuff sack.

RECOMMENDED
Therm-a-Rest NeoAir XTherm · Therm-a-Rest NeoAir XLite

☐

Foam Pad Closed-cell foam pad under your air mattress for insulation on frozen ground — and a backup if the air mattress punctures.	**RECOMMENDED** Therm-a-Rest Z Lite	☐
Compression Sack For reducing volume of your sleeping bag and bulky down clothing.	**RECOMMENDED** Sea to Summit Compression Sack	☐

04 / TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT

Technical Equipment

Helmet Lightweight UIAA-approved helmet that fits over a hat or balaclava — the Canaleta is loose.	**RECOMMENDED** Petzl Meteor · Black Diamond Vapor	☐
Climbing Harness Adjustable leg loops so you can put it on over all your layers.	**RECOMMENDED** Black Diamond Zone · Petzl Altitude	☐
Steel Crampons Steel (not aluminum) for mixed snow, ice and scree. Fitted to your boots before you fly. Rentable in Mendoza.	**RECOMMENDED** Black Diamond Sabretooth · Black Diamond Serac	☐
Ice Axe General mountaineering axe, depending on season and snow. Sizing: under 5'7" → 60 cm; 5'7"–6'1" → 65 cm; over 6'1" → 70 cm. Rentable in Mendoza.	**RECOMMENDED** Black Diamond Raven Pro	☐
Trekking Poles Adjustable poles with snow baskets. Essential on the scree and the long descent. Rentable in Mendoza.	**RECOMMENDED** Black Diamond Pursuit FLZ · Black Diamond Trail Back	☐
Locking Carabiners (×2) Lightweight, easy to operate with gloves.	**RECOMMENDED** Petzl Attache · Black Diamond RockLock	☐
Headlamp + Spare Batteries LED headlamp, 300+ lumen. Summit day starts 3–4 am — bring spare lithium batteries (best in cold).	**RECOMMENDED** Black Diamond Storm 500 · Petzl Actik Core	☐
Glacier Glasses 100% UV/IR, side shields, retainer strap, category 4 lenses.	**RECOMMENDED** Julbo Explorer 2 · Julbo Shield	☐
Backup Glacier Glasses Losing eye protection on Aconcagua is serious. Bring a second pair.	**RECOMMENDED** Julbo Explorer 2 · any category 4 pair	☐

Goggles
Amber or rose-tinted goggles for high-wind summit days.

RECOMMENDED
Smith I/O Mag

☐

05 / HEAD

Head

Sun Hat / Cap
For the strong high-altitude sun. Avoid white under the brim.

RECOMMENDED
Benegas Brothers Navy Classic Trucker

☐

Warm Beanie
Warm hat that covers your ears. One must fit under your helmet.

RECOMMENDED
Black Diamond Levels Beanie · Black Diamond Olympus Beanie

☐

Buff / Neck Gaiter
Covers your mouth and protects your airways in dry, dusty air.

RECOMMENDED
Benegas Brothers Buff · Buff brand

☐

Balaclava
Tight-fitting balaclava for summit day. Fits under your helmet.

RECOMMENDED
Black Diamond Dome Balaclava

☐

06 / HANDS

Hands

Lightweight Liner Gloves
Fit comfortably inside your larger gloves and mitts.

RECOMMENDED
Black Diamond Midweight Liners · OR Catalyzer

☐

Midweight Gloves
Windstopper or softshell with reinforced palm. You'll rarely take these off above base camp.

RECOMMENDED
Black Diamond Tour · Black Diamond Arc

☐

Heavy Insulated Gloves
Wind- and water-resistant insulated gloves for cold camps and moving days.

RECOMMENDED
Black Diamond Guide Glove

☐

Expedition Mittens
Down or synthetic Gore-Tex mitts for summit day. Essential — the summit ridge is bitterly cold and windy.

RECOMMENDED
Black Diamond Mercury Mitt · The North Face Himalayan Mitt

☐

Spare Gloves
Emergency backup if you drop or lose a glove. Non-negotiable on summit day.

RECOMMENDED
Any insulated mountaineering glove

☐

07 / UPPER BODY

Upper Body

Lightweight Sun Hoody Hooded, breathable, quick-dry — light color for sunny days.	**RECOMMENDED** Black Diamond Alpenglow Pro Hoody	☐
Base Layer Top Wicking, quick-drying top — synthetic or merino. NO COTTON.	**RECOMMENDED** Patagonia Capilene Lightweight · Icebreaker merino	☐
Midweight Base Layer Fitted, with a zip collar for ventilation. You'll rarely take it off.	**RECOMMENDED** Patagonia Capilene Midweight · Smartwool Intraknit 250	☐
Fleece Mid-Layer Breathable fleece for cold camps.	**RECOMMENDED** Patagonia R1 Hoody · Black Diamond Coefficient Hoody	☐
Softshell Jacket Breathable, wind-resistant jacket for active climbing in dry, cold conditions.	**RECOMMENDED** Black Diamond Alpine Start · OR Ferrosi Hoody	☐
Hard Shell Jacket Waterproof, breathable, with a helmet-compatible hood. Pit-zips strongly preferred.	**RECOMMENDED** Black Diamond Recon LT Shell · TNF Alpine Project	☐
Insulated Jacket Hooded synthetic or down — a layering piece or stand-alone insulation.	**RECOMMENDED** Patagonia Nano Air Hoody · Rab Xenon Hoody	☐
Expedition Down Parka (8,000 m) Hooded, 8,000 m-rated parka in excellent condition. Required for summit day and high camps.	**RECOMMENDED** Mountain Hardwear Absolute Zero · Rab Expedition 8000 · The North Face Summit L6	☐

08 / LOWER BODY

Lower Body

Underwear (×4, non-cotton) Synthetic or merino briefs. NO COTTON.	**RECOMMENDED** ExOfficio · Icebreaker	☐
Lightweight Base Layer Bottoms Wicking, quick-drying tights worn under climbing pants on cold days.	**RECOMMENDED** Patagonia Capilene Lightweight	☐
Midweight Base Layer Bottoms Warmer layer for evenings, high camps and summit day.	**RECOMMENDED** Patagonia Capilene Midweight · Smartwool Intraknit Merino 250	☐

Trekking Pants
Lightweight synthetic pants for Las Cuevas, Santa Elena and base camp.

RECOMMENDED
Black Diamond Notion Pants · Any quick-dry hiking pant

Softshell Pants
You'll spend most climbing days in these. Breathable and water-resistant.

RECOMMENDED
Black Diamond Alpine Pants

Hard Shell Pants
Waterproof and breathable. Full-length side zips strongly preferred.

RECOMMENDED
Black Diamond Fineline Full-Zip · Black Diamond Highline Stretch

Insulated Pants (required)
Down or synthetic puffy pants with full side zips for high camps and summit day.

RECOMMENDED
Black Diamond Stance Belay Pants · Rab Photon Pants

Shorts (optional)
Lightweight, quick-dry — for hot days in Mendoza. NO COTTON.

RECOMMENDED
Any quick-dry hiking short

09 / TOILETRIES & MEDICAL

Toiletries & Medical

- [ ] **Toothbrush & toiletries**
  Toothbrush, toothpaste, biodegradable soap, moisturizer.
- [ ] **Sunscreen SPF 50+**
  Two small tubes. New product only — old sunscreen loses SPF.
- [ ] **Lip balm with SPF**
  At least two sticks; high-altitude sun is brutal on lips.
- [ ] **Hand sanitizer**
  Use before every meal — a stomach bug can end a climb.
- [ ] **Wet wipes**
  No showers above Plaza de Mulas.
- [ ] **Small TP stash & waste bags**
  Aconcagua park rules require waste to be packed out.
- [ ] **Diamox (if prescribed)**
  Decide with your physician, early. Many suggest a short trial at home first.
- [ ] **Travel antibiotic (if prescribed)**
  Ask your doctor about an antibiotic for traveler's diarrhea.
- [ ] **Personal medications**
  Full trip plus a few extra days, in your carry-on.
- [ ] **Ibuprofen / acetaminophen**
  For headaches, sprains, and aches.
- [ ] **Pepto Bismol / Imodium**
  For upset stomach.
- [ ] **Cough drops**
  Dry, dusty altitude air is rough on your throat.
- [ ] **Blister kit**
  Moleskin, second-skin, athletic tape, scissors.
- [ ] **Personal first aid kit**
  Simple and light — guides carry a full group kit.
- [ ] **Quick-dry towel**
  Pack towel for washing at base camp.
- [ ] **Ear plugs**
  For thin tent walls, snorers, and windy nights.

10 / MISCELLANEOUS

Miscellaneous

- [ ] **Water bottles ×2 (1 L wide-mouth)**
  Wide mouth freezes less. No hydration bladders — hoses freeze.
- [ ] **Thermos (½–1 L)**
  Lightweight, unbreakable, for hot drinks on summit day.
- [ ] **Bowl / mug / spoon**
  Personal eating kit; insulated mug preferred.
- [ ] **Electrolyte packets**
  Add to water daily — helps you drink more at altitude.
- [ ] **Power bank**
  10,000 mAh+. Charge at base camp; keep it warm up high.
- [ ] **Ziploc & heavy-duty garbage bags**
  For organizing, waterproofing and packing out waste.
- [ ] **Luggage locks ×2**
  TSA-approved locks for your duffels.
- [ ] **Watch / altimeter**
  Altimeter watches are popular and useful at altitude.
- [ ] **Travel clothes & shoes**
  For the team dinners in Mendoza.
- [ ] **Insulated bottle covers**
  Keep liquids from freezing on summit day. Sleep with bottles in your bag.
- [ ] **Pee bottle (1 L wide-mouth)**
  Clearly marked. Female climbers: a pee funnel is highly recommended.
- [ ] **Snacks (3–4 lbs)**
  Bars, gels, chocolate, dried fruit — flavors you already like.
- [ ] **Hand & toe warmers (6 sets)**
  Chemical warmers — Aconcagua summit day is brutally cold.
- [ ] **Charging cables & adapter**
  USB-C / Lightning. Argentina uses Type C and I plugs, 220 V.
- [ ] **Repair kit**
  Air mattress patches, Gore-Tex patches, super glue, multi-tool (checked bag only).
- [ ] **Apple AirTag**
  Drop one in your duffel — peace of mind in transit.
- [ ] **Camera**
  Phone or compact camera. Keep batteries warm.
- [ ] **Book / journal**
  For rest days at base camp.

11 / RECOMMENDED APPS

Apps we recommend

COMMUNICATION

WhatsApp
We create a group channel for your expedition — guides, office, and the whole team. Works over Starlink and Wi-Fi at Plaza de Mulas.

Google Translate
Download the offline Spanish pack before you fly. Useful in markets, taxis, and when ordering food.

WEATHER & CONDITIONS

Mountain-Forecast
Our guides check summit-altitude forecasts at 6,000 m and 7,000 m bands. It's how we choose between the two summit windows.

NAVIGATION & TRACKING

PeakFinder
Identifies surrounding peaks from any viewpoint — from Santa Elena to the summit ridge.

Strava
Track your training and Hypoxico sessions in the months before, then log the expedition.

TRAVEL & TOOLS

Google Photos
Auto-backs up your photos whenever you have wifi. Don't lose your summit shots if your phone dies.

Apple Find My / AirTag
Drop an AirTag in your duffel before your flights. Peace of mind when bags transit through Buenos Aires or Santiago.

12 / TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Travel Documents

- [ ] **Passport**
  Valid at least 6 months beyond your return date. The original is needed at the permit office.
- [ ] **Argentina entry**
  No visa for US, Canadian, EU, UK or Australian citizens under 90 days. Keep your entry stamp — the permit office checks it.
- [ ] **Rescue & evacuation insurance**
  Required. Global Rescue with the High-Altitude Evacuation Package. Bring proof to the permit office.
- [ ] **Trip insurance**
  Strongly recommended. Confirm in writing it covers mountaineering at this altitude.
- [ ] **USD cash ($2,000–$2,800)**
  Permit $1,285 (cash only). Tips: guide team ~$900 (typically $600–$1,200); base camp staff & porters $60–$80. Clean, unmarked bills.
- [ ] **Optional porters & extras**
  Full porter service ~$1,310 extra, arranged in country. Base camp showers, Wi-Fi and store $50–$150. Cards at base camp carry up to 7% fee.
- [ ] **Copies & BBE confirmation**
  Passport and insurance copies plus your BBE confirmation — needed at the permit office.
- [ ] **Flight itinerary**
  Printed confirmations. Send us your itinerary for your airport pickup.
- [ ] **Emergency contacts**
  Written list of contacts and any relevant medical info.

QUESTIONS?

Get in touch

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