



South Pole Hercules Inlet TRIP INFORMATION PACKET

📍 South Pole,
Antarctica

🏔 9,301 ft. (2,835 m)

📅 November 14, 2026 -
January 16, 2027

💵 USD \$95,700

 Trip begins in Punta Arenas, Chile at Presidente Carlos Ibáñez del Campo International Airport (PUQ).

Please follow this 5 step checklist to complete your trip registration:

1. Signed Policies Document
2. Signed Health Questionnaire
3. Signed Release Form

Please fill out these three documents, scan and return them in an email to admin@mtnprofessionals.com.

If you prefer to mail the documents:

Mountain Professionals
PO Box 1468
Boulder, CO
80306

4. Make \$5000 u.s. Deposit to secure your spot
5. Final balance of payment due 100 days before trip

Price Includes

- Mountain Professionals Polar Guides/Expedition Leader
- Pick up at Punta Arenas Airport to your Hotel at the start of the trip
- Flights to and from Punta Arenas to Union Glacier, Antarctica
- All transportation, according to the program
- Personal specialized gear including - Skis, skins, boots, bindings, sleds and pulling harness

- Welcome Dinner in Punta Arenas
- All permits and fees for Antarctica
- All meals on expedition and in Antarctica
- Group equipment, tents, stoves, safety equipment, communications, etc
- Navigation equipment, compasses GPS, maps, etc
- Communication, satellite phones, dispatches
- Mountain Professionals Staff in Punta Arenas
- First Aid Kits, Locator device, Wilderness First Responder Guide, Doctors in Antarctica
- Full base camp services at Union Glacier
- Access to solar panels, charging, showers, full toilet facilities at Union Glacier
- South Pole Camp full facilities
- Internal flights in Antarctica
- Certificate of Completion for South Pole Ski Expedition

Price Does Not Include:

- International airfare
- Food and beverages while in Punta Arenas, outside of the Welcome Dinner
- Lodging Costs in Punta Arenas
- Personal clothing and camping gear on the equipment list
- Emergency Evacuation Insurance (required)
- Satellite phone usage time
- Expenses of a personal nature or due to delays, including extra hotel nights in Punta Arenas
- Guide tips

Projected Itinerary:

Day 1 - November 14: Arrived in Punta Arenas, Chile and met by our staff for transport to our suggested hotel. Gear Check, Rest and Relax. Team Welcome Dinner included.

Day 2: Pack expedition meals for each individual and go over some group gear. General work for the trip. Tent set up and safety procedures run through.

Day 3: Final packing of all personal and team gear, sleds etc.

Day 4: Morning weigh in and check our bags in with ALE for the next day's flight. Time to visit the town and buy last minute items.

Evening meeting with our flight partner for Antarctica Briefing. Learn about the operation and pre-flight information for procedure and Antarctica specific information. Pack our personal bags for flight and be on stand by for flight the next morning to Antarctica - Union Glacier.

Day 5 - November 18: Morning Flight to Union Glacier, Antarctica. Set up tents outside the dining dome, general move in and acclimatization to Antarctica.

Day 6: Morning training ski and camp set up to practice skills as a team, general acclimatization. Prepare for the flight to the starting point the following day.

Day 7: Approximate, Weather Dependent, Fly to the coast at the Hercules Inlet Start on the Antarctica coast mainland. Begin a ski expedition with a short day and establish camp.

Day 8-56: Ski to the South Pole.

Trip Information:

The South Pole ski expedition is an incredible adventure and a huge accomplishment set on the coldest, windiest, and driest continent on earth. Join our qualified Mountain Professionals guides for a ski trip covering 702 nautical miles - 1130 kilometers to the South Pole. Our team is well positioned to offer the highest level of polar guiding experience. Our staff includes polar adventurers with in-depth knowledge gained on multiple North Pole, South Pole, and Greenland expeditions and have specifically guided the Full South Pole ski route in an unsupported fashion which to our knowledge has only been done 2 times in history and our 2016 trip was one of them.

The trip itself begins in Punta Arenas, Chile, where we prepare our expedition sleds, food, fuel and supplies. We take great care in our pre-trip planning to develop a strong and efficient team. It is crucial to have a well prepared, highly functional group for travel in Antarctica.

This will be a supported expedition, meaning there will be approximately 3 resupplies along the way. This helps to keep the sled weight for the individual skiers at a reasonable level.

We fly from the southern tip of Chile to Union Glacier on the continent of Antarctica where we will take some time to acclimate to our new surroundings. This allows an enjoyable and beautiful "warm up" ski tour around the surrounding landscape prior to the flight to our starting point at approximately the Hercules Inlet along the Ronne Ice Shelf.

Our team of guests and guide will travel across large expanses of wind carved snow and ice features on the surface of the Foundation Ice Stream and then navigate along the side of the Thiel Mountains and on to the Antarctica plateau. Each day will involve melting snow for water, making meals, planning our route for the day by following a compass bearing, and skiing as a team from 6 - 9 hours.

We will take care to ease into our schedule as we will be undertaking the ultimate in South Pole ski expeditions, a full length coast to pole expeditions. Our sleds will feel heavy at the start, but as we ski and develop further technique and consume food and fuel, things lighten up as we use our fuel and food supplies.

Each day will include several sections of skiing in blocks of 45 minutes to slightly more than an hour. Our breaks are a time to rehydrate and eat throughout the day and eventually reach camp in the late afternoon. As a group, we will set up tents and begin melting water for dinner and enjoy the comforts of tent life as the sun circles around above the horizon in 24-hour light of the Antarctica Summer.

We will experience a range of temperatures that generally are cold and crisp but should only reach a maximum of -22 degrees F (-30 degrees C) but this can vary greatly depending on the wind and cloud conditions. Antarctica is a dry environment, so when the sun is shining on the tent at night the camping can be relatively comfortable and even quite warm, but also cloudy nights are cold.

As we get closer to the last degree, we may experience varying terrain features but our sleds are lighter and we generally make larger distances. Eventually we spot the South Pole station out on the horizon and feel the anticipation of success at the geographic South Pole! Our goal will be to reach the geographic South Pole in good style and enjoy a safe, successful visit to Antarctica.

The trip will be demanding on us physically. The daily average distance needed based on 52 days of skiing: (13.46 nautical miles).

During the first 2 weeks we will experience aches and pains that migrate around the body from sore feet, to sore knees, shoulders and backs. It is part of the expedition and we just have to deal as best we can. We will take anti-inflammatory meds to help with the aches if needed. It is likely we will have blisters on toes and heels, we just tape them and ski through the pain until it will eventually subside. It is possible we will have sore rubbing on the thighs from skiing day in and day out. Again we put some lotions and gels on in the morning to treat and continue. It is a mental challenge as well as physical. It will be important for us to work as a team, if one person is having a bad day, we pick up the slack for the team and maintain a positive attitude.

We must be positive team mates through the days and also in the tents at night. We will all have good and bad days, but it is much more fun to be with people who see the expedition for what it is, a marathon of a ski trip that has incredible payoffs at the finish!

What's it like:

Each member will use an expedition sled built specifically for Antarctica. Group gear will be split up while in Punta Arenas and thorough discussions about packing, use and care will take place. Once we arrive in Antarctica, our team will pack personal and group gear on their sled bags and practice packing the individual sleds.

Each team member will begin the expedition with approximately 50 kg. Throughout the trip, sled weights will decrease as we consume food and fuel. We will receive resupply drops of food and fuel along the route, which limits our load.

The expedition team members will share tents and melting of water. We ideally will have 2 people in a 4 person tent, which allows a comfortable living scenario. The morning is typically the coldest part of the day. Each tent group will be in charge of melting water for the day, eating breakfast and then breakdown of the camp before packing sleds and beginning the daily ski. Each day we will move for approximately 6-10 hours with regular breaks on the hour for parts of lunch and tea or water. Once we reached our camping location, which is the end of the scheduled number of ski blocks for that day, we put on our big down jacket and set up camp. We learn how to become very efficient at setting up the tents, beginning to melt water and settle in for dinner and rest.

During the first part of the trip, we will have heavy sleds, so our ski blocks will be shorter, maybe 45 minutes. We stop and take a 10 minute break, then continue skiing. We may do 6-7 ski blocks at the start. This will eventually get longer, up to hour long ski blocks and maybe 8-10 of these, depending on our progress. It is all a game of moving forward and making distance. So we do not ski fast, just always moving during the day and working efficiently. We continuously calculate our distance and make adjustments in the morning to have a plan of how many ski blocks we will undertake for the day, so that everyone knows what to expect. This limits the “wondering” how far we are feeling today. If we know that we are going to do 8 hours of 1 hour blocks that day, you know in your head how many more we must do before camp...etc.

Arrival and Departure Info:

Required: Please arrive in Punta Arenas, Chile 4 Days before your Antarctica flight, which is scheduled for down to Antarctica on November 18. .

We ask you to arrive in Punta Arenas, Chile having 4 nights in your itinerary prior to your scheduled Antarctica flight in order to fully prepare you for your upcoming Antarctica experience. These days also allow a buffer for flight and luggage delays should your travels to Chile not go as scheduled. ALE does not hold Antarctic flights for delayed passengers or luggage. It is possible there will be delays. So you must be flexible and able to get additional hotel nights if we must wait to fly to Antarctica.

First Aid:

Our guides will be carrying a complete first aid kit which will include everything from antibiotics, basic dental repair, and everything for cuts, wounds and minor trauma. We are a self reliant expedition and as a team we must be able to deal with small medical issues and continue our journey. We ask you to carry a small personal kit, contents could include:

Any personal prescription medications in their original containers

Over-the-counter anti-inflammatory tablets for daily aches, example: Ibuprofen, Tylenol.

If you have a history of severe allergic reactions-you should see your doctor about it. Epinephrine auto-injector (e.g., EpiPen)

There will be a Medical Doctor stationed at Union Glacier Camp that we can consult with on medical issues.

Please note: If for any reason you choose to or must leave the expedition earlier than our team's scheduled departure, you will be responsible for any costs incurred. This is why evacuation insurance is mandatory to travel in Antarctica.

Leadership:

Our team of guides brings significant polar expedition skills from extensive expeditions to the South Pole, North Pole, Greenland, Canada and Norway. Our Polar expedition guides have a true passion for adventures on the ice and enjoy sharing these unique experiences with others. IPGA Polar Guide, Ryan Waters, is the manager of the South Pole Programs.

Packing Information:

We recommend traveling to Punta Arenas, Chile with your personal gear in two duffle bags, the approximate size of bags would be equivalent to The North Face XXL duffel bags. In Punta Arenas, we will repack for the expedition and bring all the items necessary for the trip to Antarctica. Each team member will wear expedition clothing onto the plane bound for Antarctica. This will all be explained in detail.

Please bring a small backpack for which you can use as a carry on for the flight to Antarctica. This is useful for traveling with clothing items you will need to put on before exiting the aircraft at Union Glacier, carrying your passport and other small items. This bag will be left in Storage at Union Glacier along with items you choose to leave.

During the ski trip to the South Pole, you will travel with Mountain Professionals provided sled duffle bags and these will ride in your personal Acapulka sled with cover.

Each team member can bring approximately 45 kgs. of personal gear in the 2 duffle bags down to Union Glacier in Antarctica. These duffle bags will then be left behind in storage once we have moved into the sleds and duffles we provide for your ski trip.

We recommend you bring a storage bag which you can leave in Punta Arenas at the hotel concierge for storage of clean city clothes and other items not needed on the expedition.

A travel wallet that you can hang around your neck and place inside your shirt is a safe way to carry your money and travel documents. Other tips for this type of travel include the following:

- Carry a photocopy of your passport page.

- Arrive at the airport with plenty of time to ensure your baggage is within weight limits and is properly checked through all the way to Punta Arenas.

Food:

Our expedition food is an extremely important part of a Polar Ski expedition. The battle is to balance the need for calories and energy without pulling a lot of weight. Therefore our menu planning is a finely tuned program that we have developed over hundreds of days in polar regions.

Dinners will consist of high calorie tasty freeze dried meals. Before dinner we like to get some snack food on board which is also a treat to look forward to throughout the day's ski. Things like chips, nuts, even salami, crackers and olive oil, whatever it is that adds extra calories and puts a smile on your face!

Breakfast will consist of pre-packed and weighed out bags of cereal and dried milk. We can add things like oatmeal, sugars, and other flavors for variety. Coffee, tea, and hot chocolate will also be ready to go in individual bags.

Lunch will consist of a glorified large bag of GORP or snack mix. There is no formal lunch stop, only eating bits of your lunch bag throughout the day while stopping at breaks. This will include things like bars and energy blocks, cookies, chocolate, nuts, raisins, and dried fruit etc. We also prefer to make a hearty soup mix in the morning and carry that in a Stanley Thermos that each member will be provided on the trip to get a hot soup at one of the breaks. We will also eat a bit of salami and cheese during the day that adds caloric value and energy.

You will need to bring your own utensils for the ski trip itself such as a bowl, spoon, mug, etc. Refer to the equipment list for these items.

Please have additional small snacks that you really enjoy on hand during evenings. Examples are candy bars, fruits and nuts, or salty snacks. Energy bars are a great supplement for calorie intake. For reference... plan to bring about 10 various servings of assorted snack foods. Many, many snacks and other food items are available for purchase in Punta Arenas at well stocked Supermarkets.

Equipment:

We believe in using and supplying our team with the highest quality expedition gear for the environment on Antarctica.

Our teams sleep in Hilleberg Keron 4 GT tents, two people in a very large 4 person tent, providing lots of room and a comfortable experience. We supply our skiers with Asnes Amundsen Expedition Skis and Asnes Poles, Rotefella Super Telemark Bindings, Fjellpulken Pulling Harnesses, and Acapulka Expedition Sleds with a custom made sled bags designed for the South Pole ski trip. We will supply you with Baffin 3 Pin Guide Pro Ski boots according to your size. If you prefer to bring

your own boots it is a great idea, so that you can assure fit and also if you plan to ski future trips such as the North Pole Last Degree, Greenland, etc. then you may want your own boots.

At Union Glacier Camp:

We will be spending time at the Union Glacier camp run by ALE, the flight operations company. Union Glacier (UG) is a very comfortable place especially in relation to living on Antarctica. We will be camping in our expedition tents while at UG, however, our clients have access to the large ALE dining domes and we will eat all meals while at UG inside the ALE facilities. They staff full time cooks and the food is buffet style, with all kinds of hot and cold drinks, water, limited beer and wine, etc.

Also at the UG camp:

- Shower Facilities are available during certain times. Please bring a small camp towel and soap/shampoo or other basic showering essentials.
- Starlink Wifi
- A basic store for some Antarctica items such as t-shirts, hats, maps, etc. Cash Only.
- If we are delayed during our time spent at UG, you will be able to relax in the long dining tent or the lounge tent with comfortable chairs and library which have snacks, drinks, hot and cold water, games, books and other travelers or staff to pass the time getting to know. So it is a very easy and comfortable place to hang out.
- There are also full toilet facilities at UG.

Communications:

While in Punta Arenas: Plenty of telephones and many internet cafes offer every type of communication. Our hotel has internet for guests as well as wireless internet throughout the hotel.

While in Antarctica: We will have a satellite telephone that you can use at a cost of \$3 per minute.

Our team will bring a Starlink unit for the expedition, though it will be limited due to charging and solar needs, we try to make a schedule to allow potential daily short check-ins.

Our team will post daily dispatches with text and photo descriptions on the Mountain Professionals website under the NEWS tab. Friends and family can follow the adventure there. Please note that there is no Wifi at the South Pole station..

Charging Electronics:

Please think through any cords and chargers you would need as well as a converter for the local plug, while in Chile. Universal kits are available in outdoor/travel stores. We will have access to power outlets that take both USB and 110/220 plugs at Union Glacier. While on the expedition, we recommend you bring a solar power battery with USB options for charging small electronics you wish to keep with power. The guide staff will have backup solar panels and batteries but it is tedious to charge team members items, this is why it is easier for individuals to have their own.

Contact Information:

Mountain Professionals Direct Line: (1) 303.956.9945 admin@mtnprofessionals.com

Main Contact: Ryan Waters, Director

Emergency Contact While on Expedition: Dave Elmore daveelmore@mtnprofessionals.com

Our Hotel Recommendation In Punta Arenas is the Cabo de Horno. This will be the base of operations for meetings and gatherings before the trip. Another option if you prefer the highest end hotel in Punta Arenas is the Dreams Hotel. We will discuss hotel options with you.

Note: We can assist in your hotel reservations, please let us know if you prefer our help.

Useful Resources:

Trip Insurance:

At Mountain Professionals, nothing is more important than our clients' health and safety. Although we do everything possible to ensure our clients have a safe experience, an illness or injury before or during your trip could require a medical evacuation or other unforeseen costs.

Emergency Rescue Insurance is required by the Antarctic Treaty. Each team member must have a personal insurance policy that covers U.S. \$300,000 and we will assist you on getting your personal insurance.

We will recommend the links to purchase Evacuation Insurance from trusted providers upon sign up.

Most all the insurance policies that cover the Rescue/Evacuation Insurance needs for the trip will cost more or less \$300 usd. This is of course dependent on which company and policy you go with, age, and other personal factors when applying for the policy. We will assist you in getting the appropriate policy before the trip.

It is a personal decision to purchase additional trip coverage, such as cancellation or interruption insurance. This will increase the cost of insurance to more in the range of \$4000 usd, because of the expense of the trip. We realize it is a gamble to only purchase the minimum Evacuation Policy. Within 90 days of your Antarctica flight there is no refund from the total trip cost.

* Note: When buying your insurance policy online you will want to make the start date of the policy the day you leave home on flights to the trip and should run through approximately 7 days after the expected end date of our expedition.

Chile Entry Visa:

A passport is required to enter Chile. You must have a minimum amount of 6 months valid on your passport beyond the expected departure date from Chile. Visas are obtained upon arrival in the International Airport.

Please check with your countries requirements for entering Chile and obtaining a visa upon arrival.

We hope you can join us on an adventure to the South Pole! This expedition is an incredible experience and we have lots of conversations with our team members prior to the expedition to lay out a planning, training, and packing itinerary. So please contact us to discuss the specifics further.

Bringing Money:

It is a hard suggestion to make, because personal tastes dictate the amount. However a good general suggestion is to bring \$500 in cash in U.S. bills. This petty cash will be more than needed for small things along your travels, buying presents, beverages, and some meals while in town or on extra days spent upon early return to Punta Arenas. There are ATM machines in Chile. These will dispense Pesos and give a normal exchange rate automatically within your transaction at the true bank rate. So if you prefer to simply take cash out once in Chile, it is all the same.

Tips:

Any Days on your own: While in Chile: At restaurants: it is generally a 10% tip for servers. In taxis: you should not tip taxi drivers, simply pay the rate for the ride.

*Tipping guides; our team of Polar Ski guides are passionate about what they do for a living and work hard to deliver the best expedition experience possible. **Tipping from either individuals or a combined group is not a requirement but is greatly appreciated and is common practice in the American guiding industry as well as for Polar Ski guides in this type of setting.**

Mountain Professionals Antarctica History:

Mountain Professionals is in a strategic position to offer over 15 years of experience leading expeditions to Antarctica. Our guides have lived and worked in Chile for many years and have developed a top-notch trip from arrival to South America through the Antarctica experience itself.

We have operated multiple expeditions each season to Antarctica since 2009.

About Ryan Waters, Director of Polar Programs: In 2010, Ryan and Cecilie Skog completed a 1,117 mile/1,800 kilometer Antarctic ski expedition over 70 days from Berkner Island in the Ronne/Filchner Sea to the South Pole, continuing to the Ross Sea to complete the first ski traverse of continental Antarctica without resupplies or the use of kites.

He and Eric Larsen skied unsupported to the North Pole in Spring 2014, completing the journey in 53 days, making Ryan the first American to complete the True Adventurers Grand Slam with unsupported and unassisted full ski trips to both poles.

He is the first American to ski unsupported and unassisted coastal start trips to both poles and has also guided clients twice on unsupported full South Pole ski trips. A 44-day trip to the South Pole via the Messner/Fuchs route and a 53-day trip to the South Pole via the Hercules Inlet route.

Ryan is the only person in the world to have skied unsupported full length trips to the South Pole via all three of the major routes: Berkner Island start, Hercules Inlet start, and Messner start.

He has also guided multiple Last Degree Ski trips. Ryan has a Master Polar Guide certification with the International Polar Guides Association (IPGA)

We look forward to Skiing to the South Pole with you. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any additional questions.

info@mtnprofessionals.com