



# SOUTH POLE SKI THE LAST DEGREE EXPEDITION 2018 / 2019 TRIP NOTES





## **SOUTH POLE SKI THE LAST DEGREE Expedition Notes**

**Trip 1: December 15 - 30, 2018**  
**Trip 2: December 31, 2018 - January 15, 2019**

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**The South Pole Ski the Last Degree Expedition is a fabulous expedition for those who would like to ski to the South Pole without the time constraints of the full South Pole expedition. If you are someone who loves being in the wildest environments on earth, then this expedition is a 'must do' adventure of a lifetime.**

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### **About the Last Degree**

The Last Degree is effectively the process of making the journey over the last latitude of distance to the South Pole from 89° South. The actual distance is 60 nautical miles being 111km or 69 miles. We fly to the start point at 89° South to begin the trek. The trip initiates in Chile and involves a flight by jet into Antarctica's interior, followed by a fixed wing (Twin Otter) flight to the start point of the trek.



The South Pole itself is at an elevation of 2835m/9,301' above sea level but due to the very cold air mass, has an effective air pressure elevation much higher than this.

For this reason we need to acclimatise to the thin air and the exertions we expect on the trek to the Pole. Training is provided on polar survival and travel techniques once we arrive in Antarctica and prior to the expedition getting underway.

Once we have flown to the start point of the trek, we take time to adjust to the cold and the thin air as well as becoming familiar with the rigours of expedition life

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## Getting Started

The group meets in Punta Arenas, Chile at the tip of South America for briefings and gear checks, prior to flying into the interior of Antarctica. From Punta Arenas, we fly by Ilyushin 76 aircraft to the ALE base camp at Union Glacier. Here the aircraft makes a wheeled landing on a natural blue-ice runway.

Our flights to Antarctica are operated by Antarctic Logistics (ALE) who are the sole providers of aircraft access into the region. We have worked with them since their inception in the early 1980's, when Adventure Consultants founder Rob Hall provided them assistance establishing the Vinson Massif routes and camps.

The Union Glacier base camp is situated at 80 degrees south and is a small collection of tents. The dining and kitchen tent have a wooden floor and is heated with a kerosene stove. We sleep overnight in our own mountain tents but gather for meals in the warmth of the dining tent.

Your guides will hold a briefing on the logistics and safety protocols of the upcoming adventure and cover all aspects of the trip not already addressed in the initial briefing held in Punta Arenas. We pay special attention to the environmental considerations required to leave the continent with as minimal an impact as possible. Following the briefing, we will sort sufficient equipment for an overnight practice tour to consolidate the skills needed for the trip itself. This is an ideal time to sort out last minute equipment queries and to familiarise yourself with the environment, and how we best manage ourselves when we are out in it.

Following our tour we will finalise packing of the group supplies and equipment to divide this amongst the team onto sleds. We must then wait for sufficiently fine weather to start the long flight to the beginning of the trek. Conditions need to be clear and calm along the route with good visibility for landing and taking off. There can be delays of several days and sometimes more, so it is vital you are prepared for this eventuality and that you can relax at these times. Antarctica is not predictable or tameable and no amount of enthusiasm or pressure to get started will change her.

Once the weather forecasters give us the green light, we load into the ski-equipped Twin Otter aircraft for the six hour flight south into the heart of Antarctica. Along the way we stop at the Thiel Mountains to refuel the aircraft from a specially placed fuel cache, and then continue our flight the remainder of the distance to 89° South.

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## Your Responsibility as a Team Member

Your guides will train you in the techniques and skills to enjoy the adventure. They are there to guide you and to educate you in the requisite skills. It is however up to you to absorb that training and to follow their leadership and instructions. Failing to do so, will likely lead to serious consequences. We are after all, in one of the most extreme habitats on earth.

Your survival and well-being requires you to manage yourself responsibly and to be extremely vigilant in your personal self care. It is up to you to regulate factors such as your food and hydration levels to ensure you have sufficient energy to complete the journey. There will be sufficient food and fluids available for you to ingest, but you must discipline yourself to eat

and drink as insufficient intake can lead to a deteriorating condition. You must take extra care to not remove gloves and other protective layers at the wrong time, as this may lead to frostbite when exposed to the elements. Your feet will also require diligent attention to ensure you do not get blisters. You will have to pay particular care to not allow a single blister to occur as they will likely get worse rather than better as the trip progresses. A seemingly small oversight by you in looking after yourself can lead to you failing to complete the trip or suffering personal damage. These considerations consume us as we travel and our responsibility to the group is to ensure we stay in good shape to continue on towards the objective.

You also have social responsibilities to the other team members. There may be stresses on the journey that you are not familiar with and it is important that you join the expedition on the understanding that you will contribute to the emotional and physical well being of the other team members. Conviviality and respect for others is tantamount to a successful expedition outcome.

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### **Daily Routine on the Expedition**

As we will be arriving high onto the polar plateau, we will encounter effects of altitude that may make us feel a little weak to begin with. Everyone will be towing a sled loaded with their personal and expedition equipment, and we will have a short day to stretch our legs then establish our first camp. We will begin slowly on the expedition to bring everyone up to an optimum pace for remainder of the journey. There will be no rushing as it is vital that we avoid injury and burnout, so that we have the stamina to finish the expedition.

Each day we will awake around 7.30am for breakfast and hydration, before we begin to break camp and pack our belongings. We travel for around 8 hours every day with a break every hour for food and drink. Everybody travels together and the pace will be slow, steady and not hurried. The objective is to maintain an optimum body temperature; too cold and we burn too much energy; whilst too hot will cause sweating that promotes hypothermia when you stop, in addition to dehydration issues. At the day's end you will have travelled 10-15km (6-10 miles).

On arrival at our camp site, the group will set up tents and build protective snow walls and contribute to snow melting and meal preparations. Team members will share tents in either 2 or 3 person tents and each tent 'team' will have their own stove for cooking and snow melting. Everyone is involved and working to get the camp ready for habitation. The bonus is that you will stay warm by helping out! Once inside your tent you will be sheltered from the wind and the 24 hour daylight will enable clothes to be dried in the midnight sun.

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### **Experience Required**

To partake in the Ski the Last Degree Expedition, you need to be physically fit, have strong mental stamina and be capable of strenuous exercise at altitude for several days duration. You don't necessarily need to be an experienced skier as there is little technical requirement on the flat, however the days will be physical and you must train well before joining to ensure you have an enjoyable trip. Sleds are hauled each day carrying personal and group equipment,

weighing approximately 30kg. Expedition members can expect to be exerting themselves for about eight hours per day, with another hour establishing camp and another hour preparing food and drinks.

Undertaking a [Polar Training Course](#) prior to your South Pole expedition can be extremely beneficial in terms of adjusting to the challenge of polar travel. Courses include cold weather camping skills, sled hauling, glacier travel and self-rescue, navigation and more. Contact our office for more information.

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## Meeting Point

The expedition members will gather at Punta Arenas in Chile. Regular daily flights on LAN Chile and Ladeco Airlines connect with Santiago and other points north. As the group gear must be weighed and loaded at least 1 day prior to departure to Union Glacier as well as attend the expedition briefing, you are advised to schedule your arrival in Punta Arenas accordingly. Thus, we recommend **arriving the day before** the official start date of the expedition or at the very least, arriving on the morning of Day One.

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## Itinerary

**Dates:** Trip 1: December 15 - 30, 2018  
Trip 2: December 31, 2018 - January 15, 2019

- Day 1 Meet in Punta Arenas, Chile
- 2 Weighing & loading of gear
- 3 Expedition Briefing
- 4 Fly to Union Glacier, Antarctica
- 5 Acclimatisation day
- 6-7 Training days
- 8 Fly to 89° South
- 9-12 Ski to the South Pole
- 13 Arrive at the South Pole
- 14 Fly South Pole to Union Glacier
- 15 Return to Punta Arenas, Chile
- 16 Depart for home

**Please note: Flights to and from Antarctica are subject to weather. Delays can and often do occur therefore it is important to allow some flexibility with airline travel arrangements at the end of the expedition.**

*Every effort will be made to ensure the expedition itinerary is adhered to, but Antarctica is the most remote and isolated continent on earth. The above program is subject to change as it may be affected by weather conditions, aircraft serviceability and other factors out of the hands of Adventure Consultants or its staff and contractors. While every effort is made to ensure the expedition is run to schedule, acceptance onto the expedition is based on your acceptance of those conditions. Having stated that, our track record in Antarctica is*

*impeccable but it is a sign of our respect of Antarctica's environmental omnipotence that we alert you to those possibilities.*

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## Hotels

We stay in a small and modest hotel in central Punta Arenas, which is a good hub for the team members while we await our flight to the 'ice'. It is only 2-3 stars but has a relaxed local atmosphere and the staff are very friendly. Let us know if you'd like us to book a room for you. If you would prefer a greater degree of comfort during your stay in Punta, we can arrange this for you and please advise us at the time of booking of your preference. Meals and hotel expenses in Punta Arenas are not included in the trip cost.

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## Visa Requirements

Expedition members must secure their own visa for multiple-entry into Chile. While Chile claims part of the Antarctic Continent as its sovereignty, it requires that we check through immigration when leaving for and returning from Antarctica, thus a multi-entry visa is required.

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## Team Membership

The team will have a **minimum size of 4 members and 1 guide** and a **maximum size of 10 members and 2 guides**.

Adventure Consultants are the longest serving guiding company in Antarctica and were integral in pioneering early ascents and journeys on the continent. You will find the Adventure Consultants guides companionable and strong expedition leaders with considerable power and willingness to see you achieve your goals. The number of guides is determined by the team size but the normal ratio of guides to members is 1:5.

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## The Expedition Fee

**The cost of the expedition ex Punta Arenas in Chile is US\$63,000.** This is an inclusive cost and covers the following:

- Flights to and from Union Glacier in Antarctica
- Flights from Union Glacier to 89° South and from South Pole back to Union Glacier Camp
- All group equipment including sleds, cooking gear etc
- Skis, poles & skins
- Tents and food while in Antarctica
- Mountain guides
- Access to our satellite telephone for outgoing calls

- Dispatch webpage updated throughout the trip for friends & family to follow
- Transport of 23kg/51lbs of personal equipment

The expedition fee does **not include** the following:

- Air travel to and from Punta Arenas, Chile
- Hotel accommodation and meals in Punta Arenas
- Chilean visa and airport fees
- Personal insurance – full travel, medical and rescue insurance is required as well as personal trip cancellation insurance. Medical evacuation insurance cover of US\$300,000 is required.
- Personal clothing and equipment including ski boots (a full equipment list is provided on booking)
- Excess baggage transportation charges of US\$75.00 per kg for any baggage exceeding the personal equipment weight limit.
- Cost of satellite telephone calls whilst on expedition
- Personal expenses incurred on the expedition
- Gratuity

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### **Deposit**

**A non-refundable deposit of US\$10,000** is payable to secure a place on the expedition.

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### **Balance**

The balance of **US\$52,500** is payable **120 days** before the trip departure date.

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### **Payments**

All payments should be made by bank transfer to the following bank and account:

**Bank of New Zealand  
Offshore Branch  
1 Willis Street  
Wellington  
New Zealand**

for the account of **Adventure Consultants Limited**

Account #                   **1000-594771-0000**  
Account Type:           **US Dollars**  
Swift Address:           **BKNZNZ22**

Note: All bank transfer charges are for the **remitters account**.

We can also accept your deposit and balance payment by credit card (Visa, Mastercard, or Amex), plus a 3% credit card fee.

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### **Cancellation and Refund Policy**

An expedition member may cancel his/her participation on the following basis:

- Cancellations outside of 120 days of the departure date incur the loss of the deposit payment.
  - Cancellations between 119-90 days of the departure date incur 50% of balance payment.
  - For cancellation made within 89 days of the departure date there will be no refunds.
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### **Trip Cancellation Insurance**

Team members should take out private cancellation insurance if they wish to be covered against cancellation due to medical or personal reasons. This is called Trip Cancellation Insurance and can be obtained through your normal travel agent. We will also provide advice regarding travel and rescue insurance and trip cancellation insurance

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### **Equipment List**

A full clothing and equipment checklist will be sent to all expedition members once their booking is confirmed. The expedition leader will be available prior to the trip to discuss individual equipment questions.

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### **Medical Examination**

Expedition members will be provided with pre-trip medical advice and a medical questionnaire and asked to visit their family physician and receive a full medical examination. This information will be sighted only by the expedition leader and our medical adviser and treated with full confidentiality.

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### **Documentation and Photographs**

Expedition members will be requested to provide 2 passport photographs and a copy of their outdoor résumé and a medical questionnaire. You must also provide proof of rescue insurance to the value of US\$300,000.

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## Climb Antarctica Option

Some expedition members may wish to extend their time in Antarctica and climb unclimbed peaks on the frozen continent. Whether your interest is towards a more technically challenging ascent or a wander up a gentle and unnamed summit, Antarctica has endless scope for first ascents.

Our Climb Antarctica Expedition is an ideal add-on to your Antarctic adventure, contact our office for more information.

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## The Advantages of Expeditioning With Us

Adventure Consultants is renowned for the quality of its service and strategy applied to high altitude expedition climbing and polar travel. Our reputation is attributed to meticulous planning and experienced logistics coordination. We have a philosophy of investing in every expedition to offer our climbers the best possible chance of success.

We employ strong and specialised Expedition leaders and support staff, whom are some of the most pre-eminent in the industry. We pride ourselves on operating with small teams, the best back-up and support available. This includes nutritious and ample quantities of food, comfortable base camp facilities, reliable communications systems and the necessary medical back up.

Many of our expedition members come to us because they have seen us in action on a previous trip and decide to opt for our level of service and proven experience. Others return because they know we do our very best to make expeditions safe and successful.

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## How to Join This Expedition

If you would like to join the South Pole Ski the Last Degree Expedition please complete an [Expedition Application Form](#) and forward along with your climbing résumé and the deposit.

If you require more information, please contact us at:

**Adventure Consultants Ltd**  
PO Box 739, 20 Brownston St  
Wanaka, 9343  
New Zealand

Ph + 64 3 443 8711 Fax + 64 3 443 8733

Email [info@adventure.co.nz](mailto:info@adventure.co.nz)  
Website [www.adventureconsultants.com](http://www.adventureconsultants.com)



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