



# SKI SOUTH POLE: MESSNER

## THE ULTIMATE CHALLENGE

Embark on an expedition that will test your strength, endurance, and resolve to join an elite group who have arrived at the Geographic South Pole under their own power. Ski South Pole is the ultimate challenge, a journey that spans an entire Antarctic season and traverses 566 mi (911 km) from the Ronne Ice Shelf, on the edge of the frozen Antarctic continent, to the Geographic South Pole.

This scenic route is inspired by Reinhold Messner's 1989 epic Antarctic crossing and offers a shorter but more committing alternative to the Hercules Inlet route. You'll skirt the western flank

of the massive Foundation Ice Stream and the Transantarctic Mountains then turn south toward your final goal, the South Pole.

You'll travel by ski for 7-10 hours a day and pull a sled with all of your supplies that weighs 132-177 lb (60 - 80 kg). You'll experience all types of weather, facing constant winds, fields of sastrugi, and white-out conditions. The route takes up to 50 days and climbs gradually to more than 9,300ft (2,800 m). Days are filled with 24-hour daylight and an intense solitude and tranquility that can be found almost nowhere else on Earth.



# ITINERARY



**Arrival Day**  
Punta Arenas, Chile



**Pre-departure Days**  
Gear check, Expedition Food Packing, Welcome and Safety Briefing



**Day 1**  
Fly to Antarctica



**Day 2-3**  
Expedition Preparations



**Day 4-23**  
Messner Start to Thiel Corner Skiway



**Day 24-52**  
Thiel Corner Skiway to South Pole



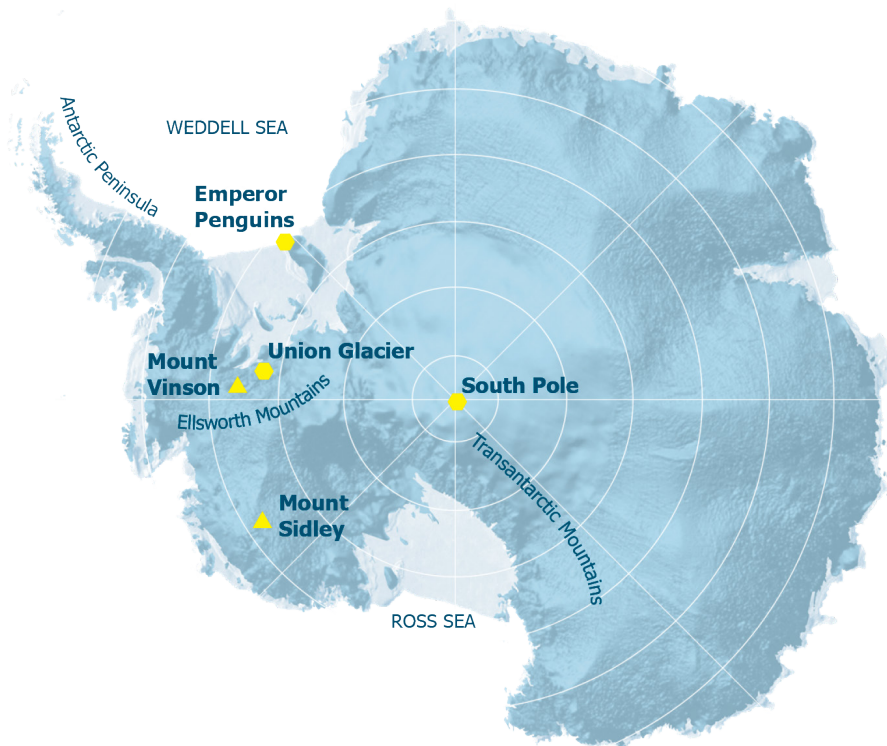
**Day 53**  
Return to Union Glacier




**Day 54**  
Return to Chile



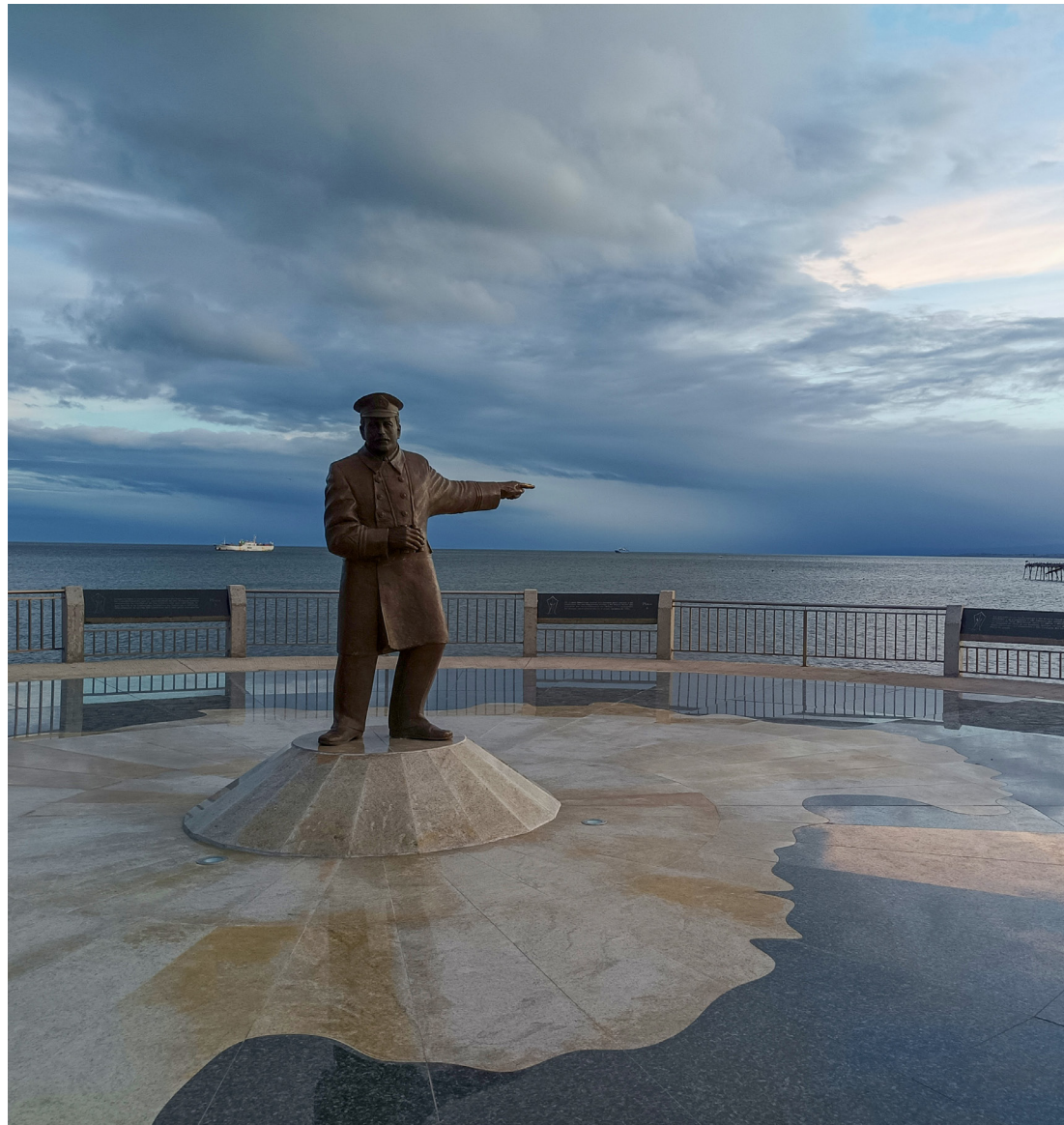
**Flexible Departure Day**  
Fly Home



 All itineraries are subject to change based on weather and flight conditions.



## ARRIVAL IN PUNTA ARENAS



Known as the gateway to Antarctica, all of our flights depart from the Chilean city of Punta Arenas.

We ask you to arrive in Punta Arenas at least six nights prior to your trip start date. Here you will meet your fellow team members, pack expedition food rations, and complete the pre-departure process. The pre-departure period also provides a buffer for flight and luggage delays should your travels to Chile not go as planned. We do not hold Antarctic flights for delayed passengers or luggage.

We will be waiting for you in the terminal when you arrive at Punta Arenas airport and will transport you to your hotel. The following day, you will have an individual Gear Check at your hotel, where we will review the personal clothing and equipment you will need in Antarctica.

The day before your Antarctic flight there is a Welcome and Safety Briefing in the ALE Office. Here we will explain the flight dispatch process, review environmental and safety procedures for your stay in Antarctica, and provide the latest weather updates.



## DAY 1 FLY TO ANTARCTICA

At the Punta Arenas airport, you will check-in for your flight, pass through normal Airport Security then board our chartered jet for the 4 hour flight to Antarctica. Our route crosses the Drake Passage, then follows the west side of the Antarctic Peninsula and the spine of the Ellsworth Mountains. We land on a naturally occurring blue-ice runway on Union Glacier where you will take your first steps in Antarctica.

Climb aboard one of our specially-adapted vans for the 5 mi (8 km) shuttle to our main camp. Our friendly staff will provide a welcome tour of camp and show you to your tent.





DAY  
2-3

## EXPEDITION PREPARATIONS

Your first few days in Antarctica will be at Union Glacier Camp. These days will give you an opportunity to test your clothing and equipment and practice sled hauling on a mini-expedition outside of camp with your team. Then you'll pack your sleds and ready for departure.

DAY  
4-23

## MESSNER START TO THIEL CORNER SKIWAY

The flight to the starting point takes about 90 minutes by ski aircraft. You'll travel east over the Ronne Ice Shelf and land close to 82°20'S 065°00'W, at the edge of the Antarctic continent. Here you'll begin your 566 mi (911 km) ski to the South Pole. On this leg of the journey, you'll climb from sea level to about 4,400 ft (1,340 m). The route skirts the massive Foundation Ice Stream, bordering the Pensacola Mountains, which may be visible on a clear day. Crevasse fields caused by the ice stream's flow extend many miles beyond its margins so you'll steer well to the west to avoid them.



Temperatures will likely hover around  $-4^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) as the onset of the Antarctic summer is countered by your climb to higher elevations. The first few days of travel are especially challenging, as your body becomes accustomed to the rigors of sled hauling.

Your guide will set a structured schedule that allows you to cover a reasonable daily distance. A typical schedule starts with breakfast at 8 am and the team packed and skiing by 10 am. You'll travel as a group, skiing for 7-10 hours with regular breaks to eat and drink. In the evening you'll set up camp and melt enough snow to drink, eat, and fill your water bottles for the following day. Your team will develop its own particular rhythm and your actual travel time and daily distance will depend on your combined strengths, weather, and surface conditions. There may be time in the evening for reading or other camp activities. When the sky is clear, the sunlight will heat the tents to a surprisingly warm and comfortable temperature, allowing you to dry your gear for the next day.

Your first re-supply will be placed at Thiel Corner Skiway  $85^{\circ}05'S$   $80^{\circ}47'W$ . Here you will have the option to take a rest day to repair equipment, re-pack sleds, read letters from home, and celebrate your progress. In good weather, you should be able to see Thiel Mountains in the distance as you approach this significant waypoint.



DAY  
24-52

## THIEL CORNER SKIWAY TO SOUTH POLE

The route now turns due south and you'll make the steep climb up the buried escarpment of the Transantarctic Mountains dividing east and west Antarctica. Further steep climbing near 87°S brings you onto more level ground. By now you will have experienced a variety of snow surfaces, from soft and level snow that provides excellent travel conditions; to hard packed snow; to fields of sastrugi, the wind-blown snow ridges that caused Scott and Amundsen so much grief.

Your second re-supply cache will be placed at about 88° 20'S. Here you may take another rest day, re-pack sleds, and have an opportunity to change into clean clothes that you have included in your re-supply. Ahead of you will likely be the largest sastrugi of the trip which can last for several days of arduous skiing, before you reach better surfaces for the final ski to the Pole.

The final leg of your journey brings new challenges. Your body is tired from many days of travel and the repetitive routine wears on the mind. Your sled and ski stick on the cold, dry snow, making each step an effort and you are reminded of days spent tire-dragging to train for this adventure.

But there is a beauty to this place and those who have travelled here talk of feeling "more alive than ever before" and of experiencing the awe that comes from being in high remote places. The vast, featureless plateau heightens the senses and brings you into the moment, even as your mind wanders to thoughts of historic expeditions or friends back home.

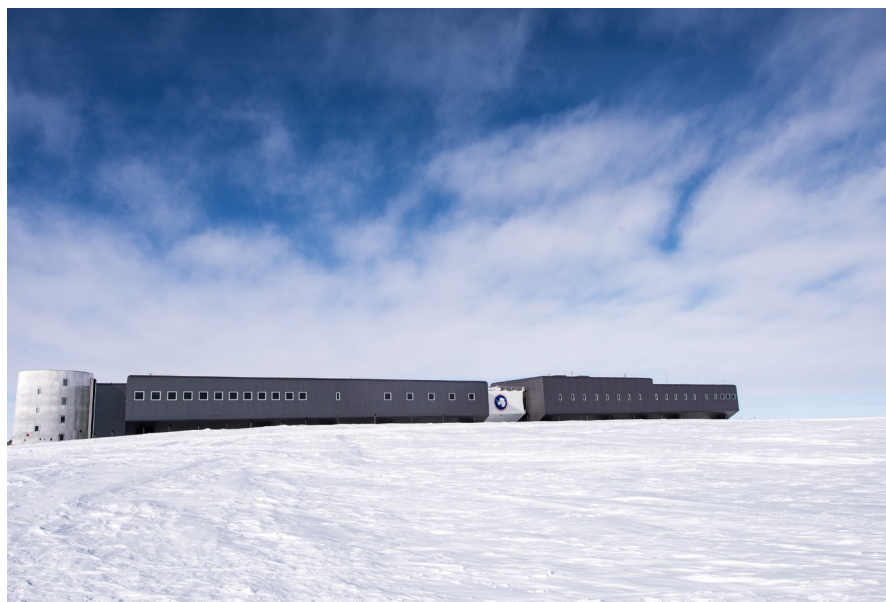




Amundsen-Scott Station at the South Pole will be visible from about 15 mi (24km) away. Those last miles can seem the longest and will take you another 1-2 days of travel. Finally, you'll take the last steps to your goal, joining an elite group who have skied from the Antarctic coast to the South Pole. Feel the satisfaction of having arrived here through your own efforts and the support of your team. The journey with all its highs and lows and the knowledge that you have achieved such a dream, will live with you forever.

The South Pole itself is a special place, steeped in the history of polar travel. There is the famous Ceremonial South Pole, surrounded by the flags of the original Antarctic Treaty nations, and the Geographic South Pole to visit and photograph. ALE has a seasonal camp at the South Pole. You may camp there overnight, until your pick-up by ski aircraft.

The South Pole is an Antarctic Specially Managed Area (ASMA #5). A management plan directs all activities in the Area and specific guidelines apply to all non-governmental visits. We ask for your cooperation in respecting visitor guidelines during any time we may spend at the South Pole.







DAY  
53

## RETURN TO UNION GLACIER

Our field staff will stay in close contact with Union Glacier Camp to identify the best 'weather window' for your return flight.

A celebration event, either at the Pole or at Union Glacier Camp, offers an opportunity to share stories and celebrate your achievement. You will also receive a certificate to commemorate your Ski South Pole Expedition.



DAY  
54

## RETURN TO CHILE

When weather and runway conditions permit, our intercontinental, passenger aircraft will arrive at Union Glacier to transport you back to Chile. Upon your arrival our staff will meet you at the airport and transfer you to your hotel.



## FLY HOME

Your flight home concludes this remarkable adventure. We recommend keeping a flexible schedule due to the possibility of weather delays. Allow yourself to savor your experience without the pressure of other commitments.



### Weather

Temperatures ranging from -13 °F to -40 °F (-25 °C to -40 °C) with wind-chill down to -50 °F (-50 °C).



### Activity Level

Extremely Strenuous—skiing up to 10 hours per day for up to 50 days while pulling a 132-177 lb (60-80 kg) sled.



### Requirements

Skiing and cold weather camping experience as well as a high level of fitness. Participants must undertake rigorous daily training for several months prior to the expedition.



### What's Included

- Airport transfers in Punta Arenas, Chile
- Round trip flight to Antarctica from Punta Arenas
- Flight to Messner Start from Union Glacier
- Flight to Union Glacier from South Pole
- Meals and tented accommodation in Antarctica
- Camping equipment, sled, and harness
- Expedition Guide
- Celebration event and Certificate of Achievement
- Checked luggage up to 66 lb (30 kg)



### Not Included

- Insurance coverage—personal, medical, evacuation, or otherwise
- Commercial flights to and from Punta Arenas
- Airport transfers outside of Punta Arenas
- Meals and accommodation in Punta Arenas
- Additional flights within Antarctica
- Vehicle pick-up and transfer to South Pole if you are unable to complete the expedition
- Personal equipment and clothing
- Expenses incurred due to delays
- Luggage over 66 lb (30 kg)
- Satellite phone charges



### Weather Delay Advisory

*All itineraries are subject to change based on weather and flight conditions. Every effort will be made to keep to the scheduled itinerary and flights will depart as soon as weather and runway conditions permit. Our staff will provide you with regular updates in the event of a delay.*

*Please understand that delays are common in Antarctic travel. For this reason we advise you not to plan any important meetings, functions, or other trips for at least one week following your scheduled return from Antarctica. We strongly suggest that you purchase a full-fare, flexible airline ticket that easily permits date changes without penalty.*

