

SKI SOUTH POLE: AXEL HEIBERG

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF AMUNDSEN

Test your limits on an extreme expedition marked by deep snow, steep climbs, and complex route-finding. Traverse the same terrain Amundsen discovered more than 100 years ago. Climb the steep Axel Heiberg Glacier, bounded by majestic peaks on both sides, and navigate your way around the infamous maze of crevasses known as the Devil's Ballroom.

While Amundsen traveled by dog sled, you'll travel by ski for 7-10 hours a day and pull your own sled weighing 132-177 lb (60-80 kg). The challenges continue on the polar plateau where elevations reach almost 10,500 ft (3200 m) and temperatures plummet. You'll experience all types of weather, facing constant winds, fields of sastrugi, and white-out conditions. The rewards for your effort are tangible as you reach the Geographic South Pole in the footsteps of Antarctica's great explorers.



ITINERARY



Arrival Day
Punta Arenas, Chile



Pre-departure Days
Gear check. Flight Check-in and Baggage Drop-off
Welcome and Safety Briefing



Day 1
Fly to Antarctica



Day 2-4
Expedition Preparations



Day 5-14
Axel Heiberg Glacier



Day 15-46
The Polar Plateau to South Pole



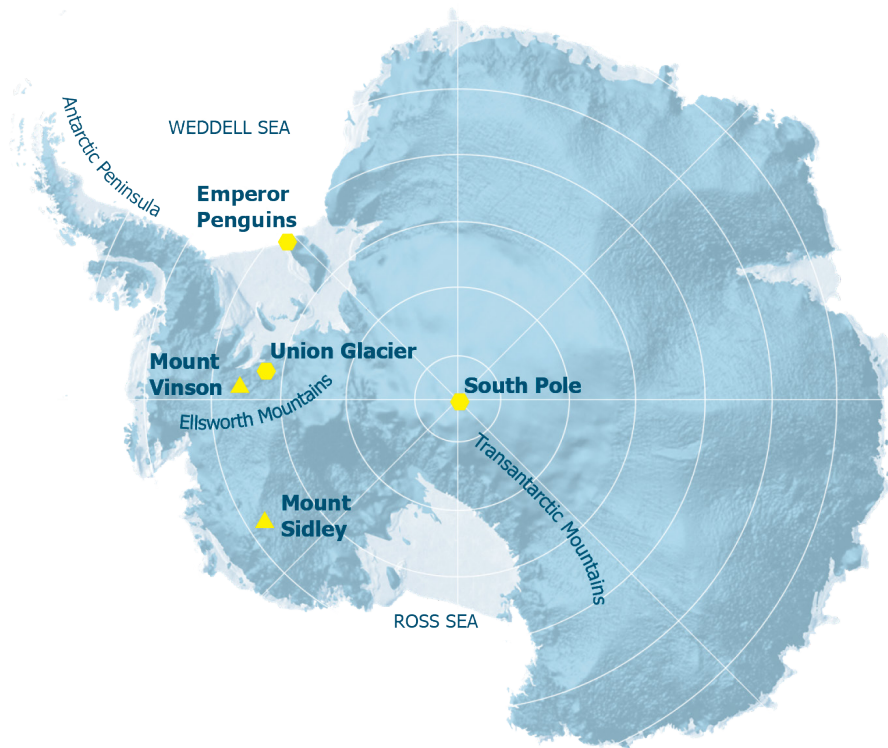
Day 47
Return to Union Glacier




Day 48
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
2-4

EXPEDITION PREPARATIONS

You will spend several days at Union Glacier to test your clothing and equipment and practice sled hauling on an overnight mini-expedition outside of camp with your team. Then you'll pack your sleds ready for departure.

DAY
5-14

AXEL HEIBERG GLACIER

The flight to your start point takes you over the empty expanse of West Antarctica. Nearing the coast, you'll cross the Queen Maud Range and land on the Ross Ice Shelf near the base of the Axel Heiberg Glacier. The glacier tumbles down between magnificent snow-covered summits and Mount Fridtjof Nansen towers above you at nearly 13,353 feet (4,070 m). In Amundsen's words, "Shining white, glowing blue, black crevices lit up by the sun; this land looks like a fairy tale." This is your gateway to the polar plateau, beckoning you south.



Your guide will set a structured schedule that allows you to cover a reasonable daily distance. A typical schedule starts with breakfast at 8am and the team packed and skiing by 10am. You'll travel as a group, making a series of eight, 1-hour marches with 5-10 minute rest/snack breaks in between. You will stop by 7pm to set up camp and cook supper. Your team will develop its own particular rhythm and your actual travel time and daily distance will depend on your combined strengths.

The lower part of the glacier is gently sloped, but deep, soft snow makes sled hauling a challenge. Soon the terrain becomes very steep and broken. You may need to relay sledges as you wade through deep powder and wind your way between yawning crevasses to find a route up to the first terrace below Amundsen's Icefall.

You'll follow Amundsen's line around the chaotic jumble of ice, heading for the base of Mount Don Pedro Christophersen, then curve around onto the upper terrace. Looking back down the glacier, "The wildness of the landscape...is not to be described; chasm after chasm, with great blocks of ice scattered promiscuously about, gave one the impression that here Nature was too powerful for us."

You'll trace the sweeping curve of the upper terrace and, passing between Mounts Fridtjof Nansen and Engelstad, leave behind the Axel Heiberg Glacier.



DAY
15-46

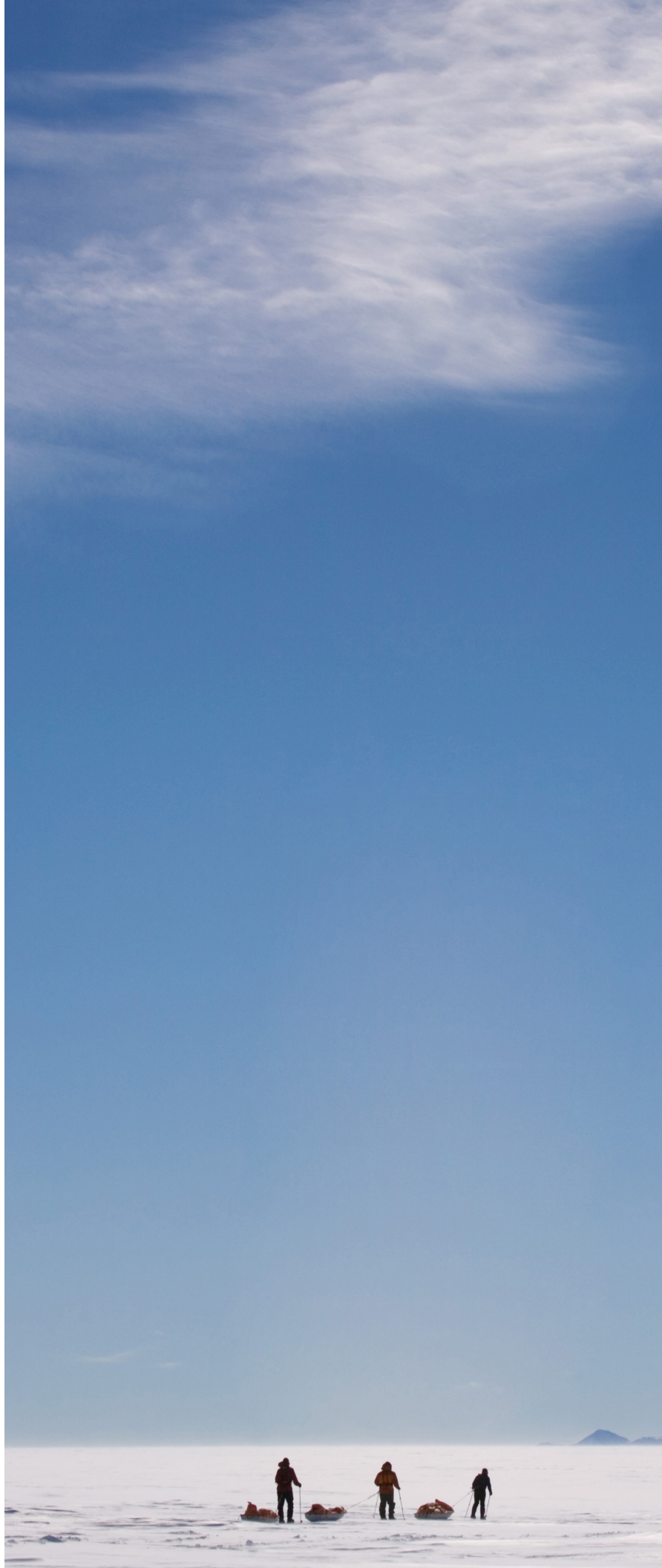
THE POLAR PLATEAU

Here on the plateau you'll face a new set of challenges. You have climbed quickly from sea level to 9,200 ft (2,800 m) and will feel the effects of altitude. The air is much colder, the wind constant, and of the snow surface Amundsen wrote, "A sledding trip through the Sahara would not have offered a worse gliding surface."

As you leave behind the mountains and set off across the plateau, you'll trend west to avoid the Devil's Glacier and Ballroom. These heavily crevassed areas waylaid Amundsen in whiteout conditions, slowing his progress south.

Temperatures plummet as you continue south and gain elevation, climbing to 10,171 ft (3,100 m) on Titan Dome. Wind, cold and white-out are our constant companions, challenging body, mind and spirit.

At 88° 23'S you'll reach Shackleton's Furthest South. Amundsen paid tribute here to Shackleton—the first man to penetrate the Antarctic Mountains and set foot on the polar plateau. Imagine Amundsen's feelings as he skied further south than any human being had been.





The last two degrees to the Pole may be the hardest as you spend hours alone with your thoughts and anticipation builds. Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station will be visible from about 15mi (24km) away. Those last miles can seem the longest and will take another 1-2 days of travel.

Finally, you'll take the last steps to your goal, completing one of the most challenging expeditions imaginable. Feel the satisfaction of having arrived here through your own efforts and the support of your team. Embrace the spirit of those first men who pioneered your route to the Pole.

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
47

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
48

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 over 30 days while pulling a 132-177lb (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 Axel Heiberg Glacier 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 66lb (30kg)



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
- Personal equipment and clothing
- Expenses incurred due to delays
- Luggage over 66lb (30kg)
- 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.

