



# MOUNT VINSON

## ANTARCTICA'S HIGHEST PEAK

**Imagine** yourself on the summit of Mount Vinson 16,050 ft (4892 m), the highest peak in Antarctica and one of the coveted Seven Summits. Majestic, snow-covered peaks stand guard over vast glaciers below and in the distance, snow meets sky along a noticeably curved horizon. This is a moment to savor. All of the challenges you faced to get here only highlight the vast beauty before you and the sense of accomplishment that comes from achieving the extraordinary.

Mount Vinson lies in the aptly named Sentinel Range of the Ellsworth Mountains, deep in the interior of Antarctica. It was first summited on December 18, 1966 and for many years did not see a second ascent due to the challenges of accessing

its remote location. In 1985, we pioneered logistics to support a private expedition to Mount Vinson and 30+ years later, we continue to guide climbers to the top of the bottom of the world!

You'll ascend the Branscomb Shoulder Route which has become the "standard route", climbing gentle glaciers, 40° snow covered slopes, an exposed high plateau, and spectacular summit ridge. The rate of ascent and daily climbing plan set by your experienced mountain guide will be geared toward the safety and success of your climb. To climb Mount Vinson is to challenge yourself on a mountain like no other, in one of the most remote regions on Earth.



# ITINERARY



**Arrival Day**  
Punta Arenas, Chile



**Pre-departure Day**  
Luggage Pick-Up & Briefing



**Day 1**  
Fly to Antarctica



**Day 2-3**  
Vinson Base Camp



**Day 4-5**  
Base Camp to Low Camp



**Day 6**  
Low Camp to High Camp



**Day 7-8**  
High Camp to Summit



**Day 9**  
Descent to Base Camp



**Day 10-11**  
Return to Union Glacier

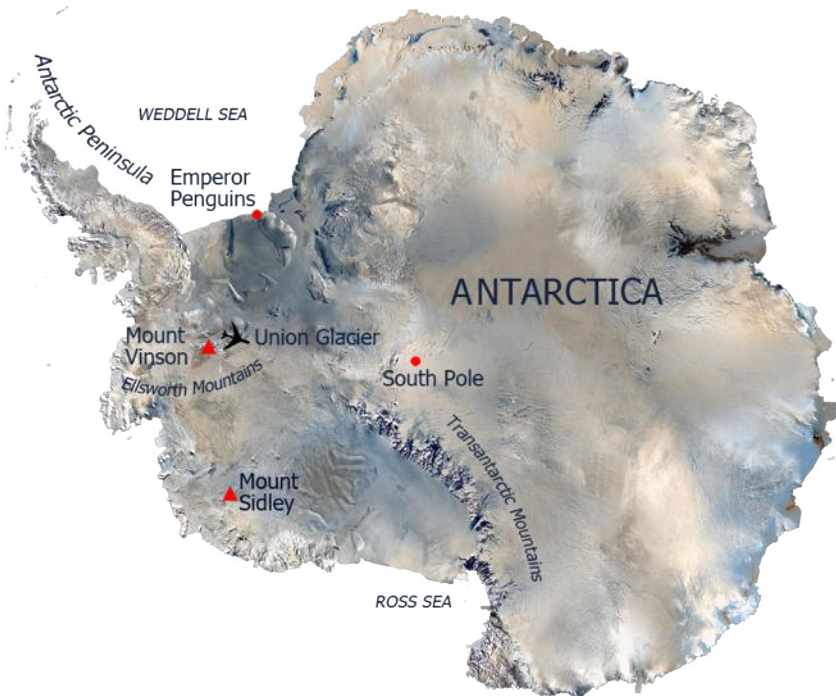


**Day 12**  
Return to Chile



**Flexible Departure Day**  
Fly Home

\*Subject to change based on weather and flight conditions.







## ARRIVAL IN PUNTA ARENAS

We ask you to arrive in Punta Arenas, Chile at least **two full days prior** to your scheduled Antarctic flight in order to fully prepare you for your upcoming experience. These days also allow a buffer for flight and luggage delays should your travels to Chile not go as scheduled. We do not hold Antarctic flights for delayed passengers or luggage.

**Do not forget to collect your checked luggage in Santiago, before clearing customs!** Upon arrival in Chile, you will pass through immigration, collect your checked luggage, go through customs, and then go to the 3rd floor of the terminal and re-check your bags for your domestic flight to Punta Arenas. If your luggage does not arrive, complete a missing form for lost luggage before leaving the Santiago airport.

Upon arrival at Presidente Carlos Ibáñez del Campo International Airport (PUQ), our representative, holding an ALE sign, will be waiting for you at the exit of the luggage claim area and will transport you to your hotel. **Please notify our Punta Arenas team if you are delayed or your arrival time changes:**

### Guest Services Manager

guests.punta@antarctic-logistics.com  
+56 9 6832 7472

### Guest Transport Services

+56 9 9640 0135

### Office Address

Calle Bernardo O'Higgins 568

You will receive a Welcome Pack which includes your **Gear Check** time, your **Luggage Pick-Up** time, and the time of the **Welcome & Safety Briefing**. These events are required and very important steps in preparing you for arrival in Antarctica.

## Gear Check

We will arrange a specific time to come to your hotel and review your personal clothing and equipment. Please lay out all of the items on our **Required Clothing and Equipment List** in your hotel room so we can go through each item with you. We will help sort the items to pack in your checked luggage vs. your carry-on bag and what items to leave behind in Punta Arenas.







## PRE-DEPARTURE DAY

### Luggage Preparations

**Please notify us in advance if you plan to have more than 55 lb (25 kg) of luggage.** Ski aircraft have strict cargo limits and we may not be able to accommodate excess luggage without advance notice. Keep the following requirements in mind as you prepare your luggage:

- All luggage must comply with international air transport regulations.
- Fuels or other hazardous substances are prohibited on flights to Antarctica.
- Spare or loose lithium batteries are prohibited in checked luggage and must be packed in your carry-on.
- For the safety of our staff, individual bags must not weigh more than 66 lb (30 kg).

On the morning before your Antarctic flight, we will come to your hotel at your scheduled **Luggage Pick-Up** time. **Be ready in the lobby with ALL of the luggage you will be taking to Antarctica** including checked luggage and items that will be carried on. We will weigh everything and use these weights to calculate cargo totals for the ski aircraft flight to Vinson. We will only collect your checked luggage at this time.

You will need to separate your luggage into four categories: Checked Luggage, Carry-on Luggage, Gate Check Luggage, and Left Luggage.

#### Checked Luggage

Checked luggage is collected the day before your Antarctic flight in order to preload the aircraft so it is ready to depart as soon as the weather is suitable. Keep in mind, you will not have access to your checked luggage until it is delivered to your tent in Antarctica, even if the flight is delayed. Do

not put anything in your checked luggage that you might need during your stay in Punta Arenas, on the flight, or for the first few hours in Antarctica.

**Your checked luggage allowance is 55 lb (25 kg).** Any checked luggage in excess of this amount will be charged at **\$34 USD per lb (\$75 USD per kg)**. You can pay in US cash or we can invoice you for the excess luggage. Carry-on luggage and clothing worn aboard the aircraft are not included in your checked luggage allowance.

#### CARRY-ON ITEMS

**\*Do NOT pack these items in your checked luggage**

- Passport
- Medications
- Money
- Cameras
- Spare lithium batteries
- Perishable food
- Sunscreen and sunglasses
- Clothing for your arrival in Antarctica

#### Carry-on Luggage

Pack all of your essential personal belongings in your carry-on. The Ilyushin-76 does not have overhead bins, so your carry-on bag must fit below the seat in front of you. **Carry-on luggage is restricted to 18" x 16" x 10" (46cm x 41cm x 26cm).** Carry-on items that do not fit under the seat will be gate checked and may result in additional fees.

We recommend wearing the boots and outer clothing you will need for your arrival in Antarctica to board the aircraft. The temperature on board the aircraft will be adjusted accordingly, so don't worry about getting too hot.





### Gate Check Luggage

Fragile items, like camera equipment, may be carried aboard and gate checked. These items will be tagged and stored behind the last row of passenger seats. You will need to retrieve these items before disembarking the aircraft in Antarctica. Gate check items are considered part of your checked luggage. They will be subject to your checked luggage allowance and may result in additional fees.

### Left Luggage

You can leave luggage in Punta Arenas if there are items you do not need in Antarctica. All left luggage will be stored at your hotel and we will provide **Left Luggage Tags** with a tear-off claim receipt. Please give the bottom portion of the tag to an ALE staff member as you board the bus for your Antarctic flight. In the event you stay in a different hotel upon your return, our staff will need this claim receipt to move your left luggage for you. Please note that ALE is not responsible for lost or stolen luggage.

### Welcome and Safety Briefing

The evening before your Antarctic flight, you are invited to our office for an important safety briefing. At the briefing, we will describe the flight dispatch process, update you on the current weather, and prepare you for arrival at Union Glacier. Please stay to enjoy hors d'oeuvres and pisco sours served over Antarctic ice with your fellow travelers.







## DAY 1 FLY TO ANTARCTICA

We will call you at your hotel in the morning to advise you of current conditions in Antarctica. If the weather is suitable for our flight, we will pick you up at your hotel within the hour. Please meet us in the lobby with hotel bills paid, ready to board the bus.

At the Punta Arenas airport, we board our chartered jet for the 4¼ 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 on 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.

When weather conditions permit, your group will continue by ski aircraft to Vinson Base Camp. Our guides will keep you informed of the weather and when your onward flight is likely to depart. In most cases, you will spend at least one night at Union Glacier Camp before flying to Vinson. On rare occasions, teams may be shuttled to Vinson on the same day you arrive in Antarctica.

**\*Every effort will be made to keep to the scheduled flight date and we will depart as soon as weather and runway conditions permit. Please understand that delays are common in Antarctic travel. All flights are dependent on weather, aircraft serviceability, and local conditions. Our staff will stay in close contact with you and will provide you with regular flight updates.**



DAY  
2-3

## VINSON BASE CAMP

Vinson Base Camp is situated at an elevation of 7021 ft (2140 m) on the Branscomb Glacier and offers you a spectacular setting to relax and recover from your travels to Antarctica while you prepare for the climb ahead. Here you will meet our experienced mountain guides that will be climbing with you.

On the first day, your guide will take your team on a short acclimatization hike which allows you to gain familiarity with the Antarctic environment and refine your clothing and equipment choices for the climb. We keep the team sizes small so our guides can assess individual strengths and challenges for each team member to develop a strategy that maximizes everyone's chance for a successful ascent. The following day, you will pack your personal equipment as well as a small amount of food and fuel.

Your team will ascend Vinson using the Branscomb Shoulder Route (standard route). The climb usually takes 5-9 days depending on weather conditions and how quickly team members acclimatize. Most groups set two intermediate camps on the mountain prior to attempting the summit. Your climb is a team effort and at the end of each day, everyone will help pitch camp. The rate of ascent and daily climbing plan will be set by your guide to ensure everyone's safety and success.

**You'll travel roped together throughout your time on the mountain due to crevasse hazard.**



## DAY 4-5 **BASE CAMP** TO LOW CAMP

From Vinson Base Camp, you'll follow the gradual rise of the Branscomb Glacier to Low Camp (9121 ft/2780 m). This gentle climb is ideal for pulling sleds, allowing you to lighten your pack load. Typically climbers split their 40-49 lb (18-22 kg) loads by carrying 30% in a backpack and 70% on a sled when they leave Base Camp.

The climb to Low Camp takes 4-6 hours and ascends 2100 ft (640 m) where a large dining tent and cached sleeping tents await for your first night on the mountain.

Low Camp is in the shade until the late morning and it is normal for people to stay in bed until the sun hits the tents. After a late breakfast, your guide will lead an excursion to a nearby viewpoint and you may visit the lower section of the fixed lines for some additional training and familiarization. Strong parties may wish to make an ascent of Knutzen Peak (11,066 ft/3373m), a 5-6 hour round trip from Low Camp.







## DAY 6

## LOW CAMP TO HIGH CAMP

When conditions are suitable and the forecast indicates stable weather ahead, your team will leave the sleds at Low Camp and ascend to High Camp (12,402 ft/3780 m) carrying all of your equipment in backpacks. Low Camp to High Camp is 3,281 ft (1000 m) of elevation gain and usually takes groups 6-8 hours to complete.

The route takes you up the broad mixed spur at the northern end of Branscomb Ridge, offering fantastic views of Mount Shinn and the glaciers below. The hike to the start of the fixed ropes takes less than 1 hour. You'll ascend fixed ropes on snow covered slopes up to 45°. Snow conditions can vary from soft to hard and wind-blown with icy patches. The ascent of the fixed ropes takes approximately 4-5 hours. There is a large ledge at the half-way point

where you can stop for a rest and enjoy some food and drink.

The hike from the top of the fixed lines to High Camp takes about 1.5 hours, ascending the gentle slopes of the summit glacier. This final section of the route can be very exposed to the wind, requiring care to prevent cold injury.

The facilities at High Camp are more basic than those at Low Camp. Your guide will prepare simple meals in a cooking shelter and you can eat inside your tent or outside if the weather is calm. The next day is normally spent resting and acclimatizing at High Camp to give everyone the best chance of summiting.





## DAY 7-8 HIGH CAMP TO SUMMIT

Your team will make its summit attempt on the best weather day possible based on forecasts predicting good visibility and low winds. High Camp to Mount Vinson's Summit is 3,648 ft (1112 m) of elevation gain and takes most teams 9-12 hours round-trip. The majority of the route is along the gently angled Vinson summit valley, with a short, steeper snow and ice slope leading to the spectacular, rocky, summit ridge.

Parts of the route are exposed and can be subject to high winds. The summit pyramid can be climbed via two routes. The easiest route is via the left-hand (eastern) ridge which is less steep than the right-hand (western) ridge. Many teams traverse the peak by climbing the right-hand and descending the left-hand route. Your guide will select the route that is most appropriate based on the weather conditions and the abilities of the team.

The views from the summit are breathtaking. Mount Gardner, Tyree, Epperly, and Shinn dominate the foreground, surrounded by impressive peaks that rise from the vast ice sheet below. Here, at the top of Antarctica, the true scale and majesty of the continent are overwhelmingly apparent. Take time for photos and savor the experience before retracing your steps to High Camp.

## DAY 9 DESCENT TO BASE CAMP

The descent to Vinson Base Camp usually takes one day from High Camp, re-tracing your route down the fixed ropes and along the Branscomb Glacier. At Base Camp you'll celebrate your summit with a hearty celebration meal and toast to your team!





DAY  
10-11

## RETURN TO UNION GLACIER

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

Depending on flights, you may have at least one day at the end of your expedition to explore more of Union Glacier. Enjoy a hot shower and celebrate your summit with your team! Here you will receive a certificate to commemorate your Mount Vinson Expedition.

DAY  
12

## RETURN TO CHILE

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



## FLY HOME

We recommend booking your flight home one week after your return Antarctic flight. If you purchase a full-fare ticket, most airlines will allow you to move your departure date. It is important to give yourself a buffer as delays are common in Antarctic travel. Our Punta Arenas team can provide a list of local tour operators and excursions if you wish to explore Chile before you return home.

When it is time for your flight home, our staff will provide transportation from your hotel to the Punta Arenas airport.



### Weather

Possible severe storms with temperatures down to -40°F (-40°C).



### Activity Level

Extremely Strenuous—climbing at high altitudes in cold temperatures carrying a load of up to 49 lb (22 kg) for 5-9 days.



### Requirements

Climbing experience above 14,000 ft (4300 m) on multi-day peaks and in cold environments with movement on snow and ice. Knowledge of glacier travel and crevasse rescue procedures.



### What's Included

- Airport transfers in Punta Arenas, Chile
- Round trip flight to Antarctica from Punta Arenas
- Round trip flight to Vinson Base Camp from Union Glacier
- Meals and tented accommodation in Antarctica
- Group camping and climbing equipment
- Mountain Guide
- Celebration dinner and Certificate of Achievement
- Checked luggage up to 55 lb (25 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
- Personal equipment and clothing
- Expenses incurred due to delays
- Luggage over 55 lb (25 kg)
- Satellite phone charges

