

American Alpine Institute^{Ltd.}

Aconcagua Equipment List

The equipment list for your climb is a comprehensive list of required gear. You will need everything on it in order to participate.

During your expedition in Argentina, you will encounter a very wide range of temperatures and weather conditions. At one end of the spectrum is the pleasantly warm and beautiful town of Mendoza, while at the other end is the cold and often windy weather on the summit of the Western Hemisphere's highest peak. As such, the equipment you bring must function well in a wide variety of conditions. Your clothing should be warm, lightweight, dry quickly, and allow good freedom of movement. The layering principle, based on several thin layers of insulation (rather than one thick one), meets these requirements well. Please take time to choose your clothing and equipment carefully; it may make the difference between a comfortable and successful trip and one that could have been more enjoyable.

On the Aconcagua Expedition, the nighttime temperatures at high camp typically range from -5F to 5F. Daytime highs on summit day usually are between 5F and 15F, normally accompanied by a strong wind. During our three-day approach hike to base camp, days are usually very warm, with nights becoming increasingly chilly as we gain elevation. The sun can be very intense both on the approach and on the upper parts of the mountain. On this expedition mules carry the bulk of our equipment up to Base Camp at about 13,500 feet. Above this height we will make double carries and establish caches, allowing time for team members to acclimate to the higher elevations.

Please take the time to properly label and identify all items of personal gear. With up to twelve climbers all sharing a single campsite, it can be very easy to forget which water bottle or set of gloves belongs to you. Many of items of gear that climbers bring are almost identical. Be sure to mark your name on a clothing tag. Colored tape or fingernail polish is excellent on other items. If using tape or colored markers, make sure your labeling method is durable and water resistant.

All items of clothing should be inspected to make sure that the seams, stitching, and waterproof properties of the garments are intact and adequate for the rigors of an expedition. Used articles of clothing including shell jackets and softshell items should be cleaned and treated with a durable water repellent (DWR) such as Nikwax TX Direct or Gore-Revivex. Gloves with leather or synthetic palms should be treated with a leather-waterproofing agent such as the Nikwax product for leather and suede. Make sure all of your packs and bags have buckles and straps that are in good working order. Bringing an extra buckle or two in case one should break in the cold weather is recommended. Most outdoor equipment stores have a selection of Fastex buckles and straps.

When preparing your equipment for travel to the Argentina, protect your equipment by covering your ice axe, crampons, and trekking poles with cardboard or other protection to prevent puncturing or tearing less durable equipment.

At AAI we take equipment and its selection seriously. Our Equipment Services department is expertly staffed by climbers, skiers and guides. Additionally, we only carry products in our store have been thoroughly field tested and approved by our guides. This intensive process ensures that all equipment that you purchase from AAI is best suited to your course and future mountain adventures. Please contact us to select equipment for your expedition.

Equipment items that are available for rental are designated with an (R). Please contact the Equipment Shop at 360-671-1570 for assistance in selecting equipment for your course. Any rentals must be rented and shipped to your home address before you leave for your trip so you can take the items with you.

Clothing & Footwear

Base Layer Top: Bring two. This will be your base layer and should be "lightweight" or "silk weight" synthetic or wool. No cotton.

Weight: 5 - 8 oz / 140 - 225 grams

- Materials: Synthetic, wool.
- Example: Patagonia Capilene 2

Base Layer Bottom: Look for the same features as your Base Layer Top. Bring one.

- Weight: 5 - 8 oz / 140 - 225 grams
- Materials: Synthetic, wool.

Undergarments: Most climbers wear them underneath their base layer. Up to 4 pairs depending on personal preference for changing.

- Materials: Synthetic, wool

2nd Layer Top: A lightweight fleece or wind shirt. A chest pocket is a helpful feature of this multi-use layer.

- Weight: 13 - 16oz / 368-454 grams
- Materials: Nylon, fleece, wind stopper
- Examples: Patagonia Houdini, Golite Wisp, Outdoor Research Marvel

Expedition-Weight Bottoms: A thicker pair of bottoms that will serve as an additional insulating layer. One-piece suits (Farmer-John/Union Suit) are ideal but require more planning and effort when answering the call of nature, and they work best with other layers designed for using the bathroom without removing layers. Windproof/Windstopper pants are not as ideal, due to bulk in your pack, but are acceptable for this layer.

- Weight: 5 - 8 oz / 140 - 225 grams
- Materials: Powerstretch 100, wool, fleece

Soft Shell Jacket: A thin, light, stretchy, breathable but wind and snow-resistant layer that is comfortable to wear is ideal. This will be your 'action layer' and the outer layer that you spend the most time in. Hoods are optional but highly recommended. Size your jacket to be trim fitting, but large enough to fit over your base and second layers. Light to moderate insulation/thickness is recommended. This layer will go over your base and insulation layers, but under your shell and parka.

- Weight: 18 - 26 oz / 510 - 737 grams
- Materials: Schoeller, Powerstretch, Powerdry, or similar
- Examples: Arc'teryx Gamma MX, Patagonia Figure 4 and Ready Mix, Patagonia Core Skin, OR Mithral

Soft Shell Pants: Look for the same features as your soft shell jacket. This will be your outermost layer most of the time for your legs. A thigh pocket is a useful feature for storing small items. Your base layers need to fit under these pants comfortably.

- Weight: 16 - 30oz / 450 – 850 grams
- Materials: Schoeller, Powershield, Powerdry, or similar
- Examples: Patagonia Guide pants, Black Diamond Alpine Pants, Arc'teryx Gamma LT Pants, Mammut Champ

Light Insulating Layer, Top: The goal for this piece is to add warmth to your layering system. Depending on your clothing system, you may fit this layer underneath your shell gear (e.g. fleece sweaters) or over your shell gear (lightweight insulated jackets). If choosing fleece, pick modern garments with waffle-grid patterns and avoid "windproof fleece" – it is not breathable enough. The weight and design of this piece will vary based on the other items of climbing that you are bringing.

- Weight: 10 - 20oz / 283 – 566 grams
- Materials: Primaloft, down, fleece
- Examples: Patagonia Puff Jacket or Micro Puff pullover, Patagonia R3 or R4, Montbell Thermawrap, Wild Things Primalight and EP jackets.

Shell Jacket: Choose the lightest, most packable, waterproof shell that will still get the job done. Avoid extra pockets (one or two chest pockets is perfect), 3-layer Gore-Tex, and hanging linings. Your hood should fit over your climbing helmet. Your shell should fit comfortably over your other base and mid-layers (minus your insulating layer).

- Weight: 8 - 20oz / 227 – 566 grams
- Materials: eVent, Gore-tex, h2No, or similar
- Examples: Rab Latok Alpine, Patagonia Jetstream, Westcomb Mirage

Shell Pants: Made of a waterproof/breathable material, your lightweight shell bottoms should have full or hip-length side zips. This garment should be extremely lightweight and packable. A zipper fly is a nice optional luxury.

- Weight: 8 - 16oz / 227 – 453 grams
- Materials: eVent, Gore-tex, h2No, or similar

Expedition Parka: Sometimes called a "belay jacket", these consist of a baffled parka with a hood; these come in many shapes, sizes and temperature ratings. If you tend to get cold easily, opt for a slightly warmer and more substantial parka.

- Weight: 20 - 40oz / 556 – 1133 grams

- Fill Materials: Primaloft, down
- Shell Materials: nylon, epic, eVent
- Examples: Feathered Friends Frontpoint Parka, Patagonia Down Parka and DAS parka, and Marmot Plasma.

Insulated Pants: Sized to fit over your bottom layers, these pants are the last line of defense in extremely cold temperatures. Full-length side-zips are a critical feature. Down pants are preferred for their lighter weight and packability.

- Weight: 16 - 24oz / 453 – 680 grams
- Fill Materials: Primaloft, Polarguard, down
- Example: Mountain Hardwear Compressor Pant

Fleece Gloves/Glove Liners: Bring more than one pair of varying thicknesses. One lighter pair and one medium weight pair is ideal.

- Materials: fleece, Powerstretch, or similar

Mid-weight Fleece/Schoeller/Leather Gloves:

The most desirable glove is one that is comfortable and dexterous, so that it can be worn all day. It should be durable enough (leather palms) to handle ropes, ice axes, and a bit of rock scrambling. Choose a mid-weight model.

- Weight: 4 – 8 oz / 110 – 200 grams
- Materials: softshell, windstopper fleece, leather or similar

Expedition Gloves: Composed of heavy-duty waterproof shells with extremely warm liners, these modular gloves MUST have removable liners. These gloves must be dexterous enough to handle ropes, carabiners, and jumars. Gauntlets should extend to mid-forearm. These gloves should have “idiot loops,” or keeper strings, so they’re not dropped. No mittens allowed.

- Weight: 9 – 14 oz / 255 – 400 grams
- Shell Materials: Gore-tex, Schoeller 3x, or similar

Summit Day Mittens: Make no compromise with these as they are the first and often last defense against frostbite. These are expedition-weight modular mittens, down or synthetic, with a storm-proof shell. You want your mitts to be extremely warm and thick. This is more important than dexterity. Gauntlets should extend to mid-forearm. These need to be large enough to allow for liner gloves to be worn underneath. Please attach keeper loops to them.

- Weight: 12 – 16 oz / 340 - 453 grams
- Fill Materials: Down, Primaloft, Polarguard 3D
- Shell Materials: Gore-tex or similar

Sun hat: A baseball cap or visor serves well. Models with a “tail” provide increased sun protection.

Beanie Hat/Toque: A thinner warm hat that will fit under your climbing helmet and over your balaclava. Consider bringing a second warm hat for use in camp.

- Weight: 2 – 4oz / 56 – 112 grams
- Materials: fleece, wool, windstopper, windpro

Lightweight Balaclava: A balaclava is a warm hat that can be pulled over the head to the shoulders. It completely covers the head except for an opening for the face. It should provide excellent wind protection for the chin, ears and neck. A Buff (described below) can substitute for this

- Materials: Powerstretch, fleece, polypro, windpro

Buff: "Buffs" are a multifunctional neck gaiter that can substitute for a lightweight balaclava. Buffs are worn on the head more than any other item. On summit day they can make a good facemask, and can prevent sunburned lips and tongues.

Socks: Bring three complete changes. Many climbers prefer to wear a very thin liner sock underneath a thicker hiking/mountaineering sock. Adjust your sock system ahead of time to perfect your boot fit. Bring three additional changes of socks for your approach shoes. No cotton.

- Materials: wool, synthetic

Gaiters: (R) These gaiters should be knee-high in length and fit securely to your mountaineering boots. Check the fit of the gaiter to the boot in advance of your trip. Weight: 4 – 12 oz / 110 – 340 grams

- Materials: Schoeller, nylon, Cordura

Cold Weather Mountaineering Boots: (R) Double boots are required. These should be designed for extended use in temperatures as cold as 0F. Modern synthetic double boots can be more comfortable, but are more expensive. In plastic boots, thermo-mold liners are warmer, lighter, and more comfortable than standard liners.

- Shell Materials: Synthetic, plastic
- Liner: Thermo-moldable (Intuition)

NOTE: There are many of makes and models out there and not all are created equal. Please consult with our Equipment Shop if you are uncertain about the acceptability of your chosen model.

Trekking/Hiking Boots: High top, lightweight, trekking boots are required. Leather/nylon combination is fine as long as they offer good ankle support. Some of the treks and approaches can be on very rough and rocky trails. Please break these in thoroughly before your expedition.

Old tennis or running shoes: These are used for river crossings. Other recommended options are sandals or "Crocs," which are more comfortable as camp shoes.

Long Sleeve Shirt: Bring a very lightweight long sleeve shirt made of synthetic material that is light in color for sun protection.

Travel and Town Clothes: We occasionally like to go out to good restaurants and you may want something other than your climbing clothing or jeans. It's quite warm in Mendoza.

- Light cotton or other pants (either slacks or a skirt are fine for women).
- Light cotton or other shirt.
- Footwear other than sneakers or hiking boots

Climbing Equipment

Trekking Poles: (R) Two telescoping trekking poles are required.

Carabiners: Bring one locking carabiner.

Climbing Helmet (optional): (R) Lightweight, well ventilated, and comfortable. Models with a plastic shell are more durable, but are heavier than all-foam models. Must be UIAA approved for climbing.

- Examples: Petzl Elios, Black Diamond Half Dome

Ice Axe: (R) A variety of axes are suitable. Your axe should hang down to between your mid-calf and ankle (50-65cm).

Steel Crampons: (R) Flexible or semi-flexible. New-matic crampons are the easiest to put on with cold fingers. Only modern strap on, step-in, or 'new-matic' crampons are acceptable. Older Scottish style strap-on crampons are not adequate.

- Examples: Petzl Sarken, Grivel G12, Black Diamond Sabertooth

Camping Equipment

Duffel Bags: (R) Bring one that is large and sturdy with a good zipper. Durable coated nylon is best. This will be tied on the back of a mule during the approach and severely abused. Models with wheels are not allowed.

- Volume: 7000-9000 cubic inches
- Materials: Coated nylon, pack cloth, Cordura, ballistic cloth

Sleeping Bag: (R) Bring a bag that is rated to at least 0°F.

- Weight: 2.25 – 4 lbs / 1 – 1.8 kg
- Materials: Down, Primaloft, Polarguard 3D

Compression Stuff Sack: Used to shrink your sleeping bag into the smallest size possible.

- Weight: 2-4 oz / 56 – 110 grams
- Materials: SilNylon, eVent, or similar

Sleeping Pad: (R) Bring two pads. You will likely be camping on snow and rock during this expedition. The ideal system is one full-length closed cell foam pad and one $\frac{3}{4}$ length lightweight inflatable pad. Extra thick or wide inflatable pads are not ideal since they are heavier and are harder to get into or onto your backpack. Please bring a patch kit for inflatable pads.

- Weight: 8-20 oz / 225 – 565 grams each
- Examples: Cascade Designs Ridge Rest, Thermarest Prolite 4

Internal Frame Pack: (R) Make sure it will hold all of your personal equipment with room to spare for your share of the group equipment that will be divided during your

expedition. A pack around 85 liters in size is ideal. Make sure it will hold all of your personal equipment with room to spare for your share of the group equipment that will be divided during your trip.

- Weight: 3.0 - 6.5lbs / 1.6 – 2.9 kg
- Volume: 75-90L / 5000-6000 cubic inches

Trekking Pack: (R) This is a 1500 – 2000 cubic inch daypack used for trekking and a summit pack.

- Examples: Grivel Air Tech 28, Cilogear 30l worksack

Eating Utensils

Spoon: Bigger is better. Lexan is lighter, but metals spoons are more durable.

Thermal mug: 16-20oz with a lid. Optional.

Bowl: A lightweight Tupperware-type bowl is recommended. The new, ultra-light folding plastic contraptions are excellent. Avoid metal bowls, they are expensive, and make your food get cold very fast in cold temperatures.

Water Purification: Bring tablets or liquid purification. Bring at least 80 tablets or the equivalent. Filters are heavy and should not be used.

- Examples: Aqua Mira, Potable Aqua

Hydration: Bring at least two 1-quart wide mouth Nalgene bottles and a hydration bladder like a Camelbak. Have 3 liters of storage capacity. Two of the liters must be bottles since it is too cold to use the bladder on summit day. A frozen drinking tube is a poor reason to have to descend.

Water Bottle Parkas: These insulating jackets are for your water bottles to help prevent freezing. Bring one for each bottle.

- Example: Outdoor Research Water Bottle Parka

Personal Medical Kit

For sunburn, blisters, headaches, and minor cuts and scrapes.

Personal Medications: (notify AAI of all medications and prescriptions)

- 20 tablets of Tylenol, Ibuprofen, or Aspirin
- A few Benadryl
- If you are severely allergic to bees, or if you suffer from Asthma, please notify AAI and your guide regarding the location and presence of your epi-pen and/or albuterol inhaler.

The following drugs require a physician's prescription (except Immodium). Be sure to discuss the use and precautions for each drug with your doctor.

- Loperamide (Immodium) - For diarrhea.
- Acetazolamide (Diamox) - For prevention or treatment of Acute Mountain Sickness.

Choose one of the two antibiotics below, depending on personal allergies.

- Trimethoprim-Sulfamethoxazole (Bactrim or Septra)
- Ciprofloxacin (Cipro)

NOTE: you cannot use codeine or sleeping pills at altitude.

Cuts & Bruises kit:

- 10 assorted Band-aids
- one 1 1/2 inch roll of cloth athletic adhesive tape
- 3 inch Ace bandage

Blister Kit. Bring a comprehensive blister kit. This includes:

- Plenty of Compeed, Bandaid, or Dr. Scholl's blister pads
- A packet of moleskin (note: some people are allergic to the glue on moleskin and other medical adhesives.)

Personal Toiletries & Other Essentials

Bring a toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, a small towel, hand sanitizer (bring 3-4 containers), biodegradable soap, and a washcloth. Bring one roll of toilet paper. We supply the TP while on the mountain. TP is a precious commodity in third world countries.

Personal snack food: Please don't bring more than about a pound or two of special snack foods. You'll have a chance to buy snacks before the climb as well. Please see the Extra Notes section of the registration packet for more information about snacks and meal planning. If you bring dried fruit, do not claim it to customs agents, as they are looking for fresh fruits and veggies only.

Hand Sanitizer: Any alcohol based product for hand sanitizing work well. Bring a couple travel- sized bottles.

Sunscreen: With SPF 30 or higher. A couple of 1 oz. tubes are adequate. Several small containers are better than one large one.

Lip Protection: Bring 2 containers/applicators with the highest SPF available. Some models of chapstick have SPF15 or higher.

Hand/Foot Warmers: Recommended for people that are susceptible to cold hands and toes. These should be small, disposable type products like the ones made by Grabber Mycoal. Bring a couple sets.

Glacier Glasses: Choose a model with 100% UVA/UVB protection and side shields. If you have an extra pair, bring them too. Climbers using contact lenses should bring a pair of prescription glasses in the event that your contacts or solutions are lost or damaged.

Ski Goggles: These should be dark and block 100% of UV light. If you wear prescription glasses, these must fit comfortably over your glasses.

Garbage Bags: Bring two or three large ones. They serve a variety of uses, especially while mules are carrying your gear. Trash compactor bag, if available, are more durable.

Headlamp: Choose a small, high output LED model that runs on AAA batteries. Bring one set of extra batteries. Flashlights and older halogen headlamps are not acceptable. Examples: Petzl Tikka XP, Black Diamond Spot

Pee Bottle: Maintaining hydration at night is critically important. Bring a container that can be used at night so you don't have to get out of tent. This should be at least 1-quart in volume, but a collapsible 2L Nalgene is recommended. Use it carefully and make sure the capacity is adequate. Label your pee bottle well. Women should also bring a pee funnel; Freshette makes a tried and true model.

Repair Kit: At a minimum this kit should include a stove repair kit for your stove, Thermarest repair kit (for Thermarest pad users), 10 to 20 feet of lightweight nylon cord, small sewing kit, duct tape (wrapped on water bottles or trekking poles), and a pack waist buckle.

Multitool: Any multitool similar to a Leatherman is great. These are used for emergencies, and for slicing cheese, salami, and opening packages.

Travel Items

Passport: Required. This must be valid for six (6) months after your scheduled return date.

Passport/Money Pouch: Bring a low profile money pouch or belt to protect your essential documents, credit cards, and money.

W.H.O. card: Bring your World Health Organization card indicating the immunizations you have received.

Small Padlock: To fit through the zip sliders of the duffel to secure its contents. Buying a TSA-approved lock is highly recommended. Don't lock your bag when you check it through security at the airport.

Optional Equipment

The items below are not required, but many are nice "luxury" items that can make your trip more enjoyable. Remember that ounces add up to pounds on your back and knees during the expedition.

Handiwipes/Wet Wipes: The mountain shower. For personal hygiene and general use.

Bandana: A cotton bandana has many uses on the mountain.

Entertainment: Books, games, journals, cards, etc. are great for rest days and stormy days in the tent. Music players like mini-disc and MP3 players are popular because the

device and media are small and relatively lightweight. Models with a hard drive (e.g. Ipod) do not work at altitude. Bring a car adapter for any electronic devices to charge on our solar panel.

Electrical adapter: Bring one if you have anything that needs to be plugged in. These kits are available at electronic stores, REI, and travel shops.

Ear Plugs: Defense against snoring and high winds in the area.

Camera: We recommend a small point-and-shoot cameras that can easily be carried in an outside pocket or small case outside your pack. If you can't comfortably and safely carry your camera outside your pack, even in bad weather, you'll miss the best photo opportunities. Though some climbers bring them, SLR cameras are not recommended because of weight and bulk. If bringing a digital camera, consider your battery needs.

Shorts: Lightweight shorts are nice for warm days.

- Weight: 4 - 8oz / 110 - 227 grams
- Materials: Nylon

T-shirt: Light colors are best. This shirt can be synthetic or cotton. If you plan to hike in it, synthetic is better. A cotton shirt can be a nice break from the synthetics in camp.

- Weight: 3 - 7 oz / 85 - 200 grams
- Materials: Synthetic, cotton, blends

Foot Powder: A very small bottle will allow you to treat your feet daily, keep them dryer, extend the life of your socks, and help you avoid blisters/rashes from chronic wet feet.

- Weight: 1 - 2oz / 28 - 56 grams
- Examples: Gold Bond, Dr. Scholls

The Equipment Shop at the American Alpine Institute

The Equipment Shop at the American Alpine Institute provides clothing and equipment for purchase, rental gear, and advice. Shop staff members are great climbers themselves and deeply involved in evaluating and testing gear. They are considered by many outdoor gear manufacturers to be the most expert in the country. They thoroughly understand the needs of climbers who will be rock climbing, ice climbing, mountaineering, or exploring the world on international expeditions. Please consider our staff members a part of your resource team in preparing for your trip. AAI Equipment Specialists are on hand to consult with you on specific gear needs, to answer questions on the latest equipment and innovations, and to make recommendations on best choices of clothing and equipment. They can assure that you are equipped with the best possible gear for your climbs. And if you have any difficulty determining if some particular items of clothing or equipment you already own will serve you well on a particular trip, they can help you answer that question.

Guides Choice International Field Testing

The Equipment Shop at the American Alpine Institute also administers AAI's prestigious Guide's Choice Award. Equipment and clothing that have been awarded the Guides Choice designation have proven to be the top item in their product category. The awards are made on the basis of excellence in design, performance, and durability demonstrated in rigorous international field tests carried out by the professional guides of the Institute. All of the products at the Equipment Shop and on its website, guideschoice.com have been field-tested or have been vetted and are in the process of being field-tested.

Call or E-mail the Equipment Shop for Advice or Gear

Please feel free to contact us and to let us help you get ready for your climbing trip. Our staff members are experts in the field, and the items of gear that we rent and sell are the best made in terms of design, performance, and durability. Your comfort and safety depend on being well equipped. Whether you get your gear from us or just get advice, we're here to help you prepare.

Call: (360) 671-1570

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