

Alpine Guides

Aoraki/Mount Cook, New Zealand

Ascents Program

Winter 2010 | Summer 2010/11



Suzanne and Sandy high on Mount Tasman, photo by Brad Jackson

One-to-one Guiding - Tailored - Personalised

Flexible date options to suit your travel plans

Summer or Winter Guiding

Individually designed programs - to meet your objectives

Leading New Zealand Guiding Since 1966

The Ascents Program...and you

The Ascents Program is a tailored and personalised one-to-one guiding package. The framework lets us run trips from 5 to 10 (or more) days throughout the Southern Alps.

The Ascents Program is flexible in terms of objectives, and the venue. We base this based upon:

- Your previous alpine experience
- Your aspirations
- The potential peaks and routes - subject to conditions for the time you book

We normally recommend a trip of around **7 or 8 days** duration to get the most out of your time in the mountains.

Some peaks can be climbed given 5 or 6 days, others require longer - especially if a number of peaks are contemplated. For example both Aoraki/Mount Cook and Mount Aspiring together can require 10 to 12 days.

Attempt Serious Routes

Many of our bigger peaks need to be guided on a one to one basis, for safety and speed. For an experienced alpinist the one to one guiding basis allows attempts on to more serious routes, and challenging peaks. **Your guide's local knowledge is especially significant if this is your first visit to the Southern Alps.**

Mix Instruction and Mountaineering

For those newer to mountaineering the Ascents Program can be used for a mix of instruction and climbing, or ski touring/mountaineering.

Refresh Your Technique

The package is ideal as a refresher for those coming back to the mountains after a long period of "urban retirement".

Have Your Sights on a Specific Peak?

We've picked a few of the more significant and inspiring peaks in the Mount Cook/Westland local area. **[These are listed on page 7.](#)**

The Ascents Program price covers all essentials, like hut fees, food, technical gear, and air access (if required).

Ascents Program Advantages

- ☑ **One to one ratio** allows for more challenging objectives
- ☑ **Open schedule** - we will arrange your guide to work around your travel plans
- ☑ **Flexible objectives** – keep your options open, or focus on a specific mission
- ☑ **Tap into your expert guide's local knowledge**

Alpine Guides are the experts in the area, and we have a concession to guide through the major Southern Alps climbing regions. [We are happy to discuss any guiding mission not on our list...](#)

Winter 2010 | Summer 2010/11 Pricing

Goods and Services Tax (GST) in New Zealand rises to 15% on 01 October. Trips booked and paid in full by 30 September will beat the pre-GST rise price

Prices to 30 September 2010

5 days	6 days	7 days	8 days	9 days	10 days
\$3725	\$4325	\$4850	\$5550	\$6095	\$6550

All rates are per-person, in New Zealand Dollars, and include tax

For Ascents Programs beyond 10 days: add NZ\$625 per day

Prices from 01 October 2010

5 days	6 days	7 days	8 days	9 days	10 days
\$3795	\$4395	\$4950	\$5650	\$6195	\$6650

All rates are per-person, in New Zealand Dollars, and include tax

For Ascents Programs beyond 10 days: add NZ\$650 per day

Pricing includes the following:

- Guide fees on a one-to-one basis
- All meals including snacks and energy bars
- Hut fees and local accommodation
- Local road transport (as required)
- Cost of air access (if required)
- Selection of technical equipment (see equipment list on [page 10](#))

We buy fresh produce for every program we run so you are guaranteed to eat well. Most dietary regimes can be catered for. Please make a note of what you like to eat on your booking form.

Why a 5 day minimum?

The Southern Alps has a temperate, maritime, alpine climate. A longer guided trip offers a better chance of being successful, in the event of some bad weather.

Also (and importantly), access and egress by foot from many mountain venues can take more than a day - each way. Walking in/out needs to be done in "reasonable weather." The time to get in and out from your venue must be factored into your trip duration.

We always recommend the correct and appropriate duration for your proposed trip during initial correspondence with you.

Booking for the Ascents Program

We will provide a guide to work around your travel plans (subject to availability). [The first step is to contact us with your proposed dates.](#)

Please note that we do not have guides standing by waiting for work. "Walk-in" and short-notice enquiries may not be filled. We recommend making reservations well in advance for the Ascents Program.

[For our most popular period \(December through February\) at least 2 months advance booking is recommended.](#)

Reporting Details

Unless otherwise arranged, the Ascents Program will start at **08:30** at Alpine Guides shop in Mount Cook Village, and finish at **17:00** on the last day of your program.

A morning start makes most effective use of time, allowing you to fly into the mountains by lunch time.

Alternatively, we can arrange to start at 13:30, and finish at 12:00 noon on the last day, to better fit in with public bus services.

If you take the later start option it is less likely that you will be able to fly into the mountains on the first day. Ensure you choose the right start time on your booking form.

If you arrive in Aoraki/Mount Cook on the day before your trip begins, your guide will probably not be available. Our office staff will be happy to answer any questions you have. Your guide will look after equipment rental, and other gear requirements at the start of your trip. This takes on average 2 hours.

See the "Pre-trip Information Notes" for more details on transport options.

Local Transport

Road transportation around the local area is included in the Ascents Program pricing. This covers any driving needed during your trip. Local transport is also included for programs based in areas outside of the Mount Cook region.

For trips where longer drives (exceeding 75 km) are required (in addition to air access) we will discuss possible additional costs involved prior to booking.

Winter Programs: July - September

Winter is a great time for more experienced alpinists, and those who wish to refine their backcountry ski touring or ice climbing skills. However, this time presents different challenges for climbers and ski/snowboard tourers - deep snow and avalanche risk can make some routes/peaks inaccessible.

The summer season (November – April) in New Zealand offers the best conditions for alpine climbing.

Winter Seasonality

During winter the days are shorter, the weather is colder, and snow cover is at its maximum extent.

Winter Period (July/August)

Early winter offers a greater likelihood of powder skiing. Days are short and temperatures cold – perfect for keeping your powder dry.

Spring Period (September/October)

It is not uncommon to ski powder after a spring storm, but you are more likely to find corn snow. Corn is better suited to first time backcountry skiers. The days are longer and warmer. Snow cover is at its maximum. Also, more terrain can be accessible, due to more stable snow/avalanche conditions.

Aircraft Access & Egress

The cost of air access (if required) is built into the price of the Ascents Program. Where possible we try to combine flights with other climbers to minimise aircraft use, and impact on the mountain environment.

Two options are available at the end of your trip: walking or flying out. Flying out is the more common option, as it maximises time spent in the mountains, and avoids a long and demanding trip on foot.

Your guide will be the final arbiter on this matter. The decision to walk out is based snow and weather conditions as well as your fitness.

Flying Out:

It is possible to fly out from most locations if the weather allows - this cost can be up to approximately \$500 by ski plane, or up to \$950 by helicopter. [Costs can be considerably reduced if sharing with other guided or recreational parties.](#)

The average cost is usually around \$400 - \$500. The alternative is walking out, which can take 1, 2, or 3 days depending on your venue. Our support staff will work to minimise this cost and provide the best price available on the day.

Please note there is no need to "book ahead" for a flight out. Your guide will discuss options available to you, and it will be reassessed as the trip progresses

Walk Out:

You must always be prepared and fit enough to walk out in the event that weather conditions will not allow for aircraft pick-up. Walking out from most locations will be an arduous trip, and will test your fitness and stamina. Be prepared for 8 to 12 (or more) hours on foot each day.

Why is the flight out not included?

Simply, it builds flexibility into the program and keeps the overall cost down for our participants. It also gives the option for people who wish to walk out.

The cost of air transport depends on a host of logistical variables, including: party location, party size, aircraft available, weather and snow conditions, other parties flying in and out who can help share the cost, their location, and so on..

What You Will Carry

Extra possessions not needed in the mountains will be securely stored at Alpine Guides base, or your Mt Cook Village accommodation.

When packing try to keep personal and non-essential items to a minimum. This reduces weight and saves room for important items, like food! Reduced weight is particularly important if you walk/ski out at the end of the program.

Most days in the mountains you will not carry the full load of gear. Equipment not needed will be left at your hut/bivvy site. Your backpack's weight will vary from about 5-7 kg on most days, and perhaps 12-15 kg when travelling between huts or walking out.

[Please go through the equipment check-list \(page 11\)](#), and talk to us before the program begins if you have any questions about gear requirements.

You don't need a daypack while in the mountains. If you choose to bring one it will be useful for village-based activities.

Equipment Checklist

Ascents Programs vary in length and emphasis. Each trip will have a different set of equipment/clothing needs, due to seasonality and objectives.

Refer to the [equipment check-list on page 11](#) for the specific gear list for the Ascents Program.

Use discretion when selecting clothing. Some of the gear listed is only appropriate during winter (e.g. skis and snowboards).

Plan for colder temperatures from mid-March through November, and warmer conditions from December through mid-March.

Please read our "Notes on Equipment and Clothing" for specific details on clothing and equipment items. Contact us if you have any questions.

Optional items

Not compulsory. Feel free to bring along any of the items optional listed, if you wish.

The rest of the details...

You'll find answers to most questions in our additional detailed notes: [Pre-trip Information Notes](#), and [Equipment and Clothing](#).

These are designed to help you plan and prepare for your Alpine Guides trip. Download from our website using the links below.

Pre-trip Information

Includes details on bus travel to Mount Cook, insurance, personal fitness, accommodation, and more...

http://www.alpineguides.co.nz/download/notes/pretrip_info.pdf (600 Kb)

Equipment & Clothing

What to look for when choosing clothing and equipment for mountaineering in New Zealand

<http://www.alpineguides.co.nz/download/notes/equipment.pdf> (750 Kb)



Ascents Program Objectives

The Aoraki/Mount Cook and Westland regions offer any number of great climbing objectives. Below are a fraction of the guided climbs you can consider. Keep in mind that the more time you commit, the more likely you are to achieve your goals, and the more you can do within a given area.

Upper Tasman Glacier Area

This superb location has 2 huts (Tasman Saddle and Kelman). Air access and walking out are straightforward (although the walk is a long one). A 7 or 8 day Ascents Program will allow attempts on one or more of the peaks listed below.

Elie de Beaumont (3,109 metres)

This 3,000 metre peak offers stunning views of the Tasman Sea, and West Coast. This is a great winter, and early season peak, but can become cut-off by crevasses by late-December. In good conditions it can be ascended part way with ski touring equipment. Fly in to Tasman Saddle, fly or walk out.

- Season: August – December
- Classic Route: Anna Glacier
- Grade 2+
- Recommended: 5+ day Ascents Program

Mount Aylmer (2,699 metres) & Hochstetter Dome (2,827 metres) Traverse

These two peaks at the head of the Tasman Glacier make an excellent traverse. During winter/spring Hochstetter Dome offers an exciting ski descent above Lendenfeld Saddle. For first-time visitors to the region they provide a taste of the big-mountain feel of the region. Fly in to Tasman Saddle, fly or walk out.

- Season: August – April
- Grade: 1+ to 2
- Recommended: 5 day Ascents Program

Mounts Green (2,837 metres) and Walter (2,905 metres)

Mount Green offers various routes from the East Face (grade 2) through to grade 3+ on southern routes.

Mount Walter has a number of approaches at grades 2 to 3. Winter and early summer season can offer more challenging ice routes.

- Season: July– February
- Grades 2 – 3+
- Recommended: 5 day Ascents Program



Malte Brun (3,199 metres)

Malte Brun stands out high on the range named after it, east of the Main Divide. After leaving the glaciers below, the approach involves exposed alpine rock ribs and couloirs (up to rock grade AU15).

The West Ridge features the classic 'Cheval', 200 metres below the summit. The North Ridge routes are accessed up the Bonney Glacier with a bivouac at 2,400 metres.

The peak offers stunning views of the Aoraki/Mount Cook massif and the lakes of the Mackenzie region. Other routes are possible - depending on your experience, but 6 days is the recommended minimum for Malte Brun.

Either fly into the upper Tasman Glacier (saving a day's walk) and fly out, or walk in and out with a settled long-term forecast. At least 2 nights bivouac will be required.

- Season: November – April
- Classic Routes: West Ridge or North Ridge, grade 3
- Recommended length: 6+ day Ascents program

Murchison Glacier Area

The head of the Murchison Glacier is a great climbing, and ski touring area. Being east of the Main Divide it can often avoid the worst of westerly weather systems.

Being relatively remote, air access is required, and we recommend at least a 7-day program.

Winter ski touring/mountaineering options include

- The Murchison Headwall
- Mannering Glacier
- Mount Phyllis (2,444 metres)/Classen Saddle
- Mount Sydney King (2,521 metres)

Summer Climbing

Mounts Mannering (2,669 metres), and Broderick (2,669 metres) make good summer ascents, with bivouacs possible at Whataroa Saddle.

Pioneer Hut Area (head of Fox Glacier)

It's hard to find a more spectacular venue for climbing, and apart from access on to Mount Tasman, there are a number of 3,000+ metre peaks close to Pioneer Hut.

Due to the area's remoteness and exposure to westerly weather systems we recommend at least 8 days (including air access and egress) to really make the most of the location.

Possible options include

- Mount Haidinger (3,070 metres). The West Face offers a number of routes at grades 3 to 4+
- Douglas Peak (3,077 metres) at grades 3 and higher
- Mount Lendenfeld (3,194 metres) at grades 2 to 3+
- Various other peaks about from grade 1+ to 2+, like Mount Mallory (2,756 metres), Alack (2,759 metres),

Other Options

Minarets (3,040 metres) from Centennial Hut

- Season: November – March
- Grade: 2+
- Recommend length: 6 day Ascents Program

After flying in to Centennial Hut, at the Head of the Franz Josef Glacier, an ascent of the Minarets offers a wonderful opportunity to journey across the Main Divide.

With Centennial Hut being at 2,400 metres the ascent is only 640 vertical metres. However, once above the Chamberlain snowfields the climbing is moderately steep and sustained - and will test the endurance of your calf muscles!

The vista from the summit offers uninterrupted views to the Tasman Sea and forests to the west, and down the Tasman Glacier to the dry grasslands of the Mackenzie to the east.

Fly in to Centennial, and walk out to overnight at De la Beche Hut, and on to Mt Cook Village. Or fly in and out.

Mount Sefton (3,151 metres)

Mount Sefton towers almost 2000 metres above Mount Cook village. It is seldom guided due to the long approach, but makes a superb challenge for a fit climber keen for a remote wilderness experience.

Access is either on foot via Copland Pass (3 days return), or by Ski Plane to the Horace Walker glacier (saving 1.5 days walk), followed by a walk back to Mount Cook Village.

On foot the route is long and sustained, involving a 2,000+ metre ascent. You need to be very fit, and ready for at least 3 bivouacs and heavy load carrying.

- Season: November – April
- Classic Route: West Ridge, grade 2+
- Recommended length: 7+ days Ascents Program

La Perouse (3,078 metres)

Access and egress is by foot only, so we need to allow 2.5 to 3 days for this alone. After walking into the Hooker Valley to your base at Empress Hut, the route is a long one, involving the ascent of another peak - Mount Jellicoe (2,837 metres) - before ascending the rocky Divide Ridge, or up a steep snow arête to the summit. Other, more difficult route options are available, depending on your experience.

- Season: November – February
- Classic Route: Divide Route, grade 3
- Recommend: 8 day Ascents Program

Multiple Peaks

With the flexibility of the Ascents Program we can put together other extended guiding missions combining more than one significant peak, in more than one geographic location area.

For example:

Mount Cook plus Mount Aspiring – 10 days +

Mount Tasman plus Mt Aspiring – 10 days +

We also recommend taking a look at our other one-on-one and one-to-two guiding ratio options:

- **Local Heros:** 5 or 6 days climbing the notable summits around Mt Cook Village. Walk in and out, 1:1 or 1:2 ratio.
- **Across the Main Divide:** A classically styled traverse across the Main Divide of the Southern Alps. Fly in to Pioneer Hut, climb and walk out to Mt Cook Village.
- **Tasman Glacier Grand Expedition:** an epic scale 12-day expedition for climbing as many peaks as possible, from the head of the Tasman Valley out to Mt Cook village. For 1 or 2 experienced participants. Fly in and walk out. Climb as much as conditions, and your stamina allow!

Please contact us to discuss your ideas.

NZ Alpine Grades

NZ Alpine grades work on a 1 through possible 7 scale, with 1 being the easiest. They also use + and – to further refine the system.

The scale is not just a measure of technical difficulty. It also attempts to include objective hazard, access and route length. Keep in mind that these grades are a general indication only. With the region's temperate maritime climate, snow and ice conditions can change rapidly, potentially increasing route technical 'difficulty'.



Equipment & Clothing Checklist

Ascents Program, 1:1 Guiding

Use the check list below to ensure you bring along the gear specifically for your trip. Requirements will vary with the season, and your objectives. Please try to let us know what you need to rent as soon as possible **before** you arrive. Get in touch if you have any questions.

	Bring ✓	Borrow ✓
1. Equipment provided free of charge		
Ice Axe		
Ice Hammer		
Crampons - 12 point, semi automatic		
Belay Device		
Ice Screw x 2		
Snow stake		
Prusiks x 3 (1 long, 2 short), Sling x 2 (1 long, 1 short)		
Karabiners: large screw-gate x 3, snap-link straight gate x 5		
Avalanche Transceiver (provided if required)		
Snow Shovel (provided if required)		

Use our gear free of charge, or bring your own

Calculate your approx. rental cost below.

2. Equipment and Clothing for rent	Bring ✓	Rent ✓	Cost/day	x # days	Total
Mountaineering Boots (or Ski Touring Boots)			15		
Sleeping Bag - (summer = 3 season, winter = 4 season)			15		
Backpack, 55-65 litres			7		
Helmet			3		
Harness			5		
Bivouac Bag (optional)			7		
Sleeping Pad (optional - required for bivouacs)			1		
Hiking Poles / each (optional)			5		
Storm Jacket			10		
Overtrowsers (full length leg zip if possible)			10		
Gaiters (if required)			5		
Skis with AT bindings, Skins & Poles			25		
Split snowboard, Skins, & Poles			25		
Total estimated rental cost					

3. Required Personal Equipment (not available to rent)

- Headlamp
- Sunglasses - good quality wrap-around
- Ski Goggles (for white-out conditions)
- Water Bottles 2 x 1 litre widemouth (Nalgene)
- Waterproof pack liner
- Plastic survival bag (or bivouac bag)
- First Aid Kit - basic kit, incl blister tape
- Toiletries, including toothbrush sun screen and lip cream
- Leatherman or Swiss tool

4. Required Personal Clothing (not available to rent)

- Underwear (2 sets)
- Socks (3 pairs)
- Thermal underwear: Winter - mid weight or heavier: 2 tops, 1 x pants. Summer 2 x tops, 1 x pants
- Mid-weight fleece jersey
- Warm jacket: Summer - down or fleece. Winter - down plus 200 weight fleece
- Warm hat / balaclava
- Climbing trousers: soft-shell are ideal. Light weight trekking pants (worn over thermals) are okay in summer - they must be quick drying
- Ski/snowboard pants with snow cuffs (only for touring trips)
- Waterproof warm gloves x 1 pair - leather gloves are good for rope work
- Light-weight (polypro) gloves x 1 pair
- Sun Protection: baseball cap or legionnaire hat scarf / neck gaiter (buff) and "glacier shirt"
- Hut footwear - running shoes or sandals / holey soles (must be lightweight)

5. Optional Gear - not required - but recommended

- Day pack approx 20 litre, useful for non-mountain activities
- Telescopic hiking pole - bring one - climbing trips only
- Compass - bring if you own one
- Rock shoes - bring if you own a pair
- Drinking mug. Supplied in huts - but you can bring your own
- Sleeping pad - lightweight (if you want to sleep out)
- Bivouac bag - if you want to sleep out. Survival bag will suffice.
- Soft-shell jacket
- Shorts - worn over long johns is okay in summer