

Alpine Guides

Aoraki/Mount Cook, New Zealand

Mount Aspiring/Tititea

Summer 2009/10



Sunrise on Mount Aspiring and Colin Todd Hut

Mount Aspiring - 3027 metres

5 day Guided Expedition - the "Matterhorn" of the Southern Alps

2 guiding packages, 1:1 or 1:2 ratio

Dates tailored to suit your travel plans

Season: November thru April

Leading New Zealand Guiding Since 1966

Mount Aspiring - 3027 metres

This dramatic 'horned peak' is often described as "the Matterhorn of the Southern Alps", and when viewed from the West looks particularly impressive.

Alpine Guides has a concession to guide in Mount Aspiring National Park and offers a 5 day program designed to afford the best possible chance of climbing Mount Aspiring.

This package describes the degree of difficulty involved, the routes, and the time required.

Experience Required

Even though Mount Aspiring is lower than Aoraki/Mount Cook there is no 'easy' way to its summit. The standard North West Ridge route involves a long day of [climbing, 1220 vertical metres over 10-12 hours, travel across glaciated terrain and pitched climbing.](#)

Alpine Guides offers 2 approaches, based on your climbing experience

Option A - Ratio 1:1

North West Ridge: We will guide clients that have [basic alpine climbing skills](#) - at least to the level of our [Mountain Experience Course](#) (MEC). A high level of fitness is still required.

Or South West Ridge: For experienced climbers, or those who have completed an instruction course like our [Technical Mountaineering Course](#) (TMC).

Option B - Ratio 1:2

North West Ridge : Solid experience with different crampon techniques is essential for a safe ascent with a higher guide:client ratio. We recommend a minimum experience requirement to be the completion of our [Technical Mountaineering Course](#) (TMC), or equivalent.

Costs & Conditions 2009/10

Season: November - April

5-day Mount Aspiring Expedition

- 1 Person **NZ\$3850 per person (1:1 ratio)**
- 2 People **NZ\$2690 per person (1:2 ratio) - North West Ridge only**

Pricing includes the following:

- Guide fees for 5 days
- All meals including snacks and energy bars
- Hut fees and local accommodation
- Hut fees, Aoraki/Mount Cook Village/Wanaka Accommodation as required
- Cost of air access to Bevan Col
- Selection of technical equipment (see equipment list on [page 7](#))
- Alpine Guides Technical Manual (92 pages)

For those who wish to stay in the mountains longer we can add another day (or more) on to this package. Please check with us for a quote.

Conditions:

- A period of 5 days is allowed for and is covered in the cost, even though the summit may be reached in less times. You have the option of retaining your guide and completing another climb or returning to Wanaka/Mt Cook Village. No refund is due in this case.
- Extensions to the 5 days may be possible (dependent on your guides work commitments) - this will be an additional cost of **\$NZ575 per day, which includes food and hut fees.**
- If the period is involuntarily extended, the cost is an additional NZ\$525 per day.

Booking for Mount Aspiring

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 and we can take it from there.](#)

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

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

Hazards

Mountaineering on Mount Aspiring in the summer months has a relatively low objective hazard. The guide's primary concern will always be safety. Decisions on route feasibility and conditions will always be based around this.

Route Descriptions

North West Ridge

- Maximum ratio: 1:2 (1 or 2 clients per guide)
- Grade: 2+
- Season: [November to April](#)

The most commonly guided route on Mount Aspiring is the North West ridge. The climb takes in the order of 10-12 hours return from Colin Todd Hut (1220 metres). The lower section of the mountain can be climbed either by "The Ramp" - pitched climbing up 40° snow, or up the Shipowner Ridge (mixed snow and rock - more rock as the season progresses).

The upper part of the mountain is climbed via the North West Ridge. This involves moderate snow and ice terrain up to the summit. Depending on conditions, your guide will usually short rope you up this.

The descent is down the same route. It requires concentration and good crampon technique.



North West Ridge, Grade 2+ ————
South West Ridge, Grade 3+ ————

South West Ridge

- Maximum ratio: 1:1
- Grade: 3+
- Season: [November to mid-February](#)

Regarded as one of New Zealand's classic ascents, the SW ridge is a challenging ascent for more experienced alpinists. The guiding ratio is at a strict 1:1.

Access on to the ridge is via the Bonar glacier. We will normally bivouac high on the glacier (at about 2200 metres) before the climb. At a point about 150 metres below the summit the South West Ridge runs into a step couloir. This exposed section is climbed with 3 pitches on 55-60° snow and ice, before joining with the NW ridge and ice cap.

Because of snow conditions in the couloir the route is best climbed earlier in the season. The descent route is generally by the NW ridge, to Colin Todd hut. Total time is normally 12-14 hours.



High on SW Ridge. Photo: Lucas Pitscheider

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, conditions can change rapidly.

Access to Colin Todd Hut

The walk in to Colin Todd hut, located at the base of the North West ridge, is a strenuous 1^{1/2} days. Because we believe that it is wise to use favourable weather conditions as quickly as possible [we have built in aircraft access to the expedition fee](#).

By using a helicopter for access, you can maximise your energy on the mountain and time spent climbing. Fresh food can also be taken in to add to the enjoyment of the expedition.

After flying to Bevan Col there is an approximate 1^{1/2} hour walk to Colin Todd Hut across the Bonar Glacier. Please note that camping may be required due to the limited capacity at Colin Todd Hut. Alpine Guides will provide a tent if required.

Egress from the mountains

It is possible to fly out from Bevan Col, but the usual practice is to walk out. This can either be via the Bevan Col route (a very long days walk over difficult terrain) or to the Quarter Deck Glacier and then down French Ridge to French Ridge Hut.

Please be aware that the French Ridge route can take 2 days, and must be undertaken within the time frame of your trip. Your guide will decide which route is most suitable for the conditions at the time.

The cost of a helicopter out from Bevan Col is approx. NZ\$750. If other climbing parties are also flying in at the same time, depending on loadings on the day, this cost may be reduced.

Footwear and walking out

After the descent into the Matukituki Valley floor, the walk to the vehicle pickup point at Raspberry Flat takes around 5 hours. This is a pleasant hike down a river valley on a grass track (although you will have a reasonable pack on your back!).

In this kind of terrain plastic mountaineering boots can be overkill. For your comfort we recommend carrying a light pair of running shoes, or tough sports sandals for this part of the trip. These shoes can also be used as your hut footwear.

For late season Mount Aspiring climbs, especially when climbing on the rocky North West Ridge route we recommend leather mountaineering boots, which are also a more comfortable walking option than plastics!



View down into the Matukituki Valley from French Ridge

What You Will Carry

You will be flying in to your mountain venue, but please keep personal and nonessential items to a minimum. On the ascent, you will be carrying your personal equipment, some food, and emergency equipment, perhaps 7 to 8 kg in total.

You will need to carry all your equipment on the walk out. Your guide will go through your gear when you meet to ensure that you have all the right equipment - but not too much.

Reporting Details & Travel to Wanaka

The Mount Aspiring Expedition is designed to start at 8:30 am on the first day and finish at 5.00 p.m. on the last day of your program. Wanaka, and access to the Mount Aspiring region, is 2 hours drive south of our base at Mount Cook.

Meeting your guide

We can arrange for you to meet your guide at our base in Mount Cook Village, but we recommend meeting in Wanaka.

If you begin your trip at Mount Cook transport to Wanaka will be provided, but is included as part of the 5 days allocated for your climb. Your guide will organise any equipment rental and gear required at the commencement of your trip. This takes an average 1 to 2 hours. After an initial outline of the program and an equipment check, we travel south and fly into the mountains at the first possible opportunity.

If beginning and meeting your guide in Wanaka it is vital that you advise us beforehand of all your rental equipment requirements so that we can arrange for your guide to meet you with all the extra equipment you will require.

Accommodation in Wanaka

If you wish to arrange to meet with your guide in Wanaka, we recommend a couple of establishments:

Matterhorn South

This comfortable lodge has private and shared accommodation. It is popular with backpackers through the summer.

- www.matterhornsouth.co.nz
- 56 Brownston Street, Wanaka 9192
- Tel: +64 3 443 1119
- Email: matterhorn@xtra.co.nz

Brook Vale Motel

Just along the street, with larger and quieter rooms.

- www.brookvale.co.nz/
- 35 Brownston Street, Wanaka
- Tel: +64 3 443 8333 Fax: +64 3 443 9040
- Email: info@brookvale.co.nz

Equipment Checklist

Our programs vary in length and emphasis. Each type of trip may have a different set of equipment/clothing required due to seasonality and objectives.

Refer to the [equipment check-list on page 7](#) for the specific gear list for the Mount Aspiring Expedition and the items of clothing and personal kit you will need. [This is your gear/clothing reference list for this program. Use this list as the guide for your trip and no other.](#)

Use your discretion when selecting clothing. Plan for colder conditions through November, and warmer conditions from December until mid-March. Check the “Notes on Equipment and Clothing” for more details. Contact us if you have any questions.

Optional items: feel free to bring along any of the items listed, if you wish.

Pre-trip Information | Equipment and Clothing

Please ensure you have read our “Pre-trip Information” notes, and notes on ‘Equipment and Clothing’.

These are designed to help you plan and prepare for your Alpine Guides trip and are not specific to the Mount Aspiring Expedition. They include details on travel options, insurance, fitness, accommodation, and so on.

Download these from our website:

Pre-trip Information

http://www.alpineguides.co.nz/download/notes/pretrip_info.pdf

Equipment & Clothing

<http://www.alpineguides.co.nz/download/notes/equipment.pdf>



Equipment & Clothing Checklist

Mount Aspiring/Tititea Expedition

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 ✓
Technical equipment provided free of charge		
Ice Axe		
Ice Hammer		
Crampons		
Belay Device		
Ice Screws 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 4		
Avalanche Transceiver (as required)		

Use our gear free of charge, or bring your own

Calculate your approx. rental cost below based on 5 days.

Equipment and Clothing for rent	Bring ✓	Rent ✓	Cost/day	x # days	Total
Mountaineering Boots			15		
Helmet			3		
Harness			5		
Sleeping Bag			15		
Pack			7		
Storm Jacket			10		
Overtrousers (full length leg zip if possible)			10		
Gaiters			5		
Trekking poles / pair (optional)			5		
Total estimated rental cost					

- Personal Equipment Required (not available to rent)**
- Headlamp
 - Sunglasses
 - Ski Goggles (for white-out conditions)
 - Water Bottle (s)
 - Waterproof pack liner
 - Plastic survival bag (or bivvy bag)
 - First Aid Kit - basic kit, incl blister tape
 - Toiletries, including toothbrush sun screen and lip cream
 - Leatherman or Swiss tool

Personal Clothing required (not available to rent)

- Underwear (2 sets)
- Socks (2 pairs)
- Thermal underwear: 2 tops, 1 x pants
- Mid weight fleece top / soft-shell jacket
- Warm jackets, fleece, down, or soft-shell
- Warm hat / balaclava
- Climbing trousers. Soft-shell are ideal., trekking pants are okay (must be quick drying)
- Waterproof warm gloves (1 pair) + Light-weight (polypro) gloves 1 pair
- Sun Protection: cap, scarf / bandanna, glacier shirt
- Hut footwear (running shoes / sandals / holey soles)

Optional Gear

- Footwear for walk out (use your running shoes)
- Day pack
- Trekking Poles
- Rock shoes (bring if you own a pair)
- Drinking mug (supplied in huts - but you can bring your own)

How long is a "long sling"??

Check our **"Notes on Equipment & Clothing"** for tips on what to look for when choosing gear and clothing for your Alpine Guides trip.

These notes include a price list for pre-ordering items you need through our store - **saving you significant \$'s**