

Mount Aconcagua

Leisure, Sports

Country : Argentina December 2008

The most beautiful pictures





Aconcagua, the highest peak in the Andes, reaches 6961m above sea level. The Aconcagua is located in Argentina, in the province of Mendoza. It is in December 2008, just before the end of the year holidays, that this beautiful adventure took place, between high mountains and wild nature of the south.

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Introduction

The Andes Mountains have **the highest peak in all the Americas**, Mount Aconcagua. Located in Argentina, not far from the city of **Mendoza**, it peaks at **6961m** in altitude. Mendoza is most certainly the best place to start such an adventure. There are all kinds of agencies and specialized stores selling all the

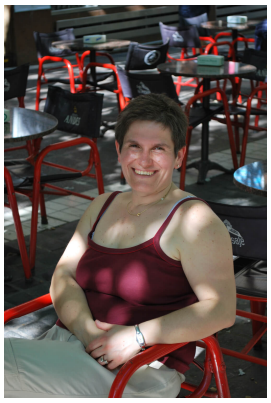
necessary equipment for such an expedition, in case you miss something. But before climbing the mountain, a quick tour of the province of Mendoza.

Mendoza

Mendoza is about 1000km away from the capital Buenos Aires The city of just under a million inhabitants (in 2008) is located at the same longitude as Buenos Aires, separated from neighboring Chile by the Andes Mountains. The province of Mendoza is not only a mountainous region, it is also home to vast vineyards. Argentina produces excellent wines, including the famous Malbec. The sunshine here is excellent.

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Mendoza, during the Christmas season






Mendoza, land of vineyards

The Aconcagua

To approach the Aconcagua from Mendoza, you must start by driving to the **"Parque Provincial Horcones"**, located at 2850m. It is on this same road that we cross the border to Santiago de Chile, via **Upsalatta**. After **200km** of bumpy road, everyone goes down to the place called **"Puento del Inca"**.













Puente del Inca, preparation of the bags and market

Confluencia (3350m)

From Lake Horcones, the first views of the southern slope of Aconcagua appear. The base camp of Confluencia is only a few hours' walk away. This is where we practice pitching the tent, always placing a rock on top when it's lying on the ground. The guide explains the reason: At high altitude, strong winds can blow it away while you are busy fixing the guy ropes. Also, the rocky terrain is not suitable for the pegs. So, the guy lines are secured by wrapping the rope around a large, fairly heavy rock.

The equipment is split in two. Shoes, crampons and ice axes will be carried by mules, the rest on men's backs.






Confluencia Camp

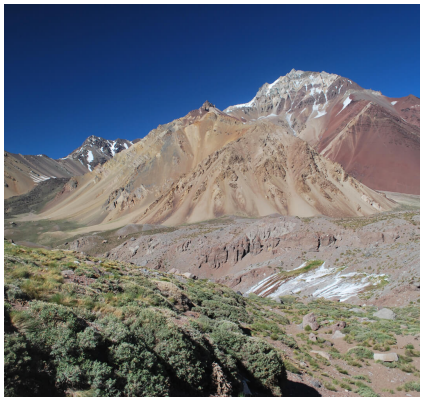
Plaza Francia (4050m)

Plaza Francia is not really on the summit route, but it allows us to acclimatize by making a round trip from Confluencia. A second night is planned at Confluencia, before attacking the rest.









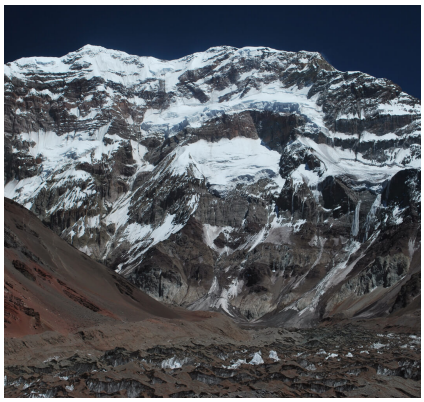

Acclimatization and transport mules

Plaza de Mulas (4350m)

The road to Plaza de Mulas is a long **15km** desert road in the dust. Only the final stretch is uphill.









Long approach walk and camp in Plaza de Mulas

Transportation of equipment

The next few days will allow us to transport the gear to high altitude and acclimatize before attacking the summit. The camps follow each other but are not alike. There will be the**"Cerro Bonete", at 5004m**, then the **"Plaza Canada", at 5050m**. And back to Plaza de Mulas. The efforts made on the way up and back down put the organisms to a severe test.





With a smile

Plaza Nido del Condor (5400m)

After another day of rest, the final ascent finally begins. The second base camp is set up at**"Plaza Nido del Condor"**, from which we can see the access path to the summit.



The light in the early morning is the most beautiful

Colera camp (5970m) and summit (6961m)

The **"Colera"** camp is the last base camp before the summit. The snow and cold are inviting to the party. The summit day begins early in the morning to reach the **ruins of Independencia (6400m)**, to the foot of the famous **"Canaleta"**, a rocky and icy corridor that must be taken to reach the summit.





Aconcagua under the snow and at sunset

Getting Down

The descent is done in two days. We return initially to **Plaza de Mulas**, then to **Puente del Inca.** It was a beautiful adventure.



Some of the participants

Ushuaia

Ushuaia is the capital of Tierra del Fuego, located at the southernmost point of Argentina. It is the southernmost city on earth. Its population is about **56,000 inhabitants (in 2008)**. The **"Alberto Dagostini"** and **"Tierra del Fuego"** National Park are right next door, making it a good place to go hiking.

Mate is a very bitter infusion made from **Yerba** leaves. It is drunk with a pipe in a wooden bowl. You either like it or you don't!















Ushuaia and Mate

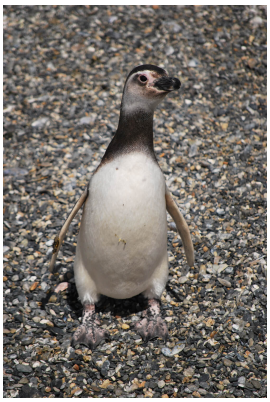
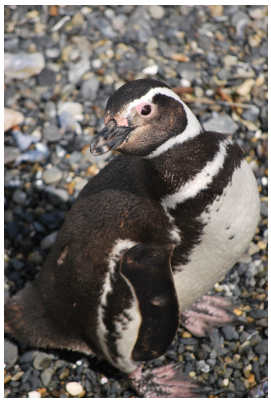
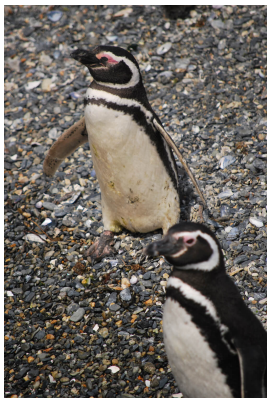
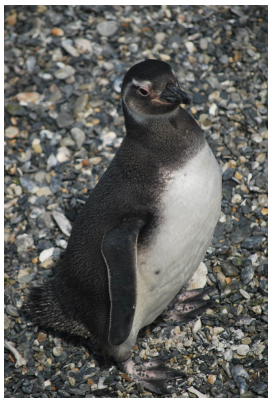
The national park of "Tierra del Fuego"

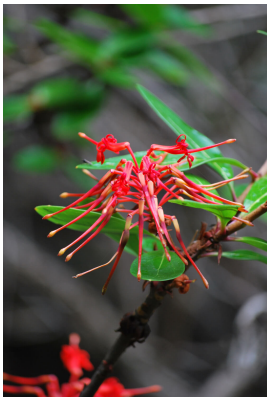














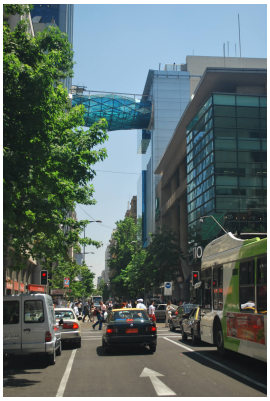


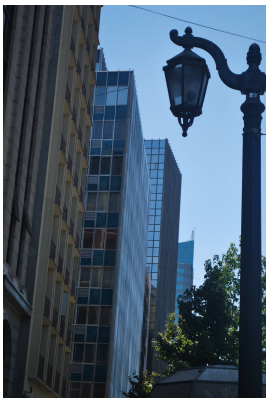

Tierra del Fuego, its flora and fauna

Santiago

On the way up from Ushuaia, the plane made a stopover in Santiago, Chile, before heading back to Europe. For the short time spent in Santiago, the city did not leave me with an unforgettable memory. After the three weeks spent in the high mountains and at the end of the world, the return to civilization and its bureaucratic hassles were hard to be accepted. For having dared to carry a few apples in her backpack, Isabelle was almost thrown in jail. After hours of deliberation and especially the refusal to play the game of corruption, the missed flight, postponed to the next day with the good understanding of the company, allowed us to return to Switzerland. A somewhat bitter ending, but all's well that ends well.









Santiago de Chile