



Peak 11,300 Expedition

Alaska is the goal of virtually all alpinists. Where else can you fly to the base of a Himalayan sized peak and set up a comfortable basecamp and fly back out after climbing thirty to forty pitches of technical terrain.

Of course life is not always quite that simple. Alaskan weather is legendary for it's ferocity with large amounts of snow and tent confining storms that can last for days.

But by carefully selecting the peak you can mitigate many of these problems and climb below the worst of the weather. Selection of a safe route is also important and the ridges generally offer safe travel away from the vast avalanche prone slopes.

Peak 11,300 fits all of our requirements for an outstanding Alaskan expedition. Rising from the west fork of the Ruth Glacier this route has become more popular over the last few years after decades of obscurity since it's first ascent in 1968 by Heinz Alleman and Nicholas Lotscher. The views extend across the west fork to the jumbled ice cliffs of the east face of Huntingdon and down valley to the granite spike of the Mosses Tooth. As we gain elevation the views expand and from the summit we look directly at the gigantic south face of Denali.

The route is some thirty five pitches with a crux rock step of 5.8 with a number of smaller steps at an easier grade. Just below the summit we reach the summit ice fields which offer six pitches of up to sixty degree continuous ice before toping out on the expansive summit. Bivvys are on broad platforms and one in particular has been termed the "worlds best bivvy"; a huge boulder on the ridge crest under which several tents can be pitched behind a berm of snow enabling one to unrope and walk around getting respite from the ever increasing void below.

Itinerary: Alaskan mountains are big and subject to the extremes of changeable weather. So we need to be flexible and prepared to adapt plans accordingly. So do not consider this following schedule as set in stone! We will set up a basecamp after flying to the glacier via ski plane. Camp will be a few yards from where the plane drops us so we can bring in a few luxuries to make basecamp life comfortable and pleasant. Although the route is very safe by Alaskan standards we need to have reasonable snow conditions since large quantities of fresh snow will mean significant avalanche danger and we will have no intention of putting ourselves in harms way from these. The start of the actual climbing is barely an hour from camp and we will start climbing as soon as the weather looks good. We will climb self contained with enough food and equipment for five days on the route. We will be climbing alpine style with no fixed ropes, but starting at the bottom and going to the top in one push.. We will be carrying lightweight tents for camps and everything else needed for existing on the route for the five days so packs may well be heavy if we do not pare down to the minimum.

Meeting place and time: We meet in Anchorage the night before the trip is slated to commence. You are responsible for transportation to Anchorage, but the office will coordinate the different schedules of everyone. From Anchorage we shuttle up to Talkeetna and hope to fly in shortly after arriving there.

Dates and Prices: Check the brochure and web site. Should minimum participant numbers not be reached you will be given the option of paying our private rate, rescheduling, or cancelling. Price includes guiding, permits, all necessary group climbing gear, avalanche beacons, tents, kitchen gear and all meals. You may want to bring your favorite climbing snacks to supplement the one's we bring.

Ratios: The climb will be at a maximum ratio of 1:2

Notes and other information: The best map is Bradford Washburn's "Mt. McKinley" 1:50,000 scale. The best guide is Alaska Climbing by Joe Puryear and published by Supertopo.

Prerequisites: You need to have a high level of comfort in the mountains. You need not have done big peak ascents previously, but should be able to cope with variable and sometimes trying mountain conditions since the snow can be deep offering difficult trailbreaking. Night temperatures can dip below zero but days can be warm. We will be in the snow camping for the entire time and since Alaskan storms are legendary there is the chance of being tent bound for a day or more. So mentally be prepared for this and accept it as a part of the mountain experience. You should be comfortable climbing with snow climbing and French cramponing techniques on slopes up to 50 degrees. There may be some steeper ice with short sections of maybe 70 degrees requiring front pointing skills. We will cover glacier travel skills and prior knowledge of these is not needed.

Equipment List for Peak 11,300 Expedition

We will be flying to basecamp so absolutely minimal equipment is not necessary. But remember that we may have to ski down glacier several miles to fly out so do not bring too much extra. This list provides you with suggestions for lightweight and compact equipment. If you have any questions don't hesitate to call and ask our advice.

Essentials

- Skis: metal edge alpine touring skis are the best ski choice. Better too short than too long. Get them tuned and check the bindings for tightness and boot fit prior to the trip.
- Snowshoes. These can be substituted for skis and skins. A pair with a built in crampon are best in case you encounter icy snow. Pair these up with an appropriate boot. Warm feet are your primary concern.
- Poles, telescoping probe type are best.
- Climbing skins. Close to the width of the skis' waist. Make sure the glue is in good shape. .
- Mountaineering boots. Temperatures will not be Denali extreme but it may be very cold. Ensure that the boots are warm enough.
- Internal frame climbing pack of about 3-4000 cubic inches.
- Sleeping bag. This should be rated to about 0°F. If it bulky put it in a compression stuff sac.
- Sleeping pad system. A foam pad and a 3/4 Thermarest works best.

Climbing equipment

- Technical ice axe. 50-55 cm. Straight shafts are preferable to bent ones for mixed climbing. Must have an appropriate wrist loop.
- Technical ice hammer. 50-55 cm. Straight shafts are preferable to bent ones for mixed climbing. Must have an appropriate wrist loop.
- Crampons. An all round mountaineering type rather than a rigid technical crampons that "balls up" is preferable
- Harness. One large enough to wear over bulky clothing and with buckle style leg loops to get on and off over crampons.
- Helmet. It needs to be able to adjust enough to fit over a hat.
- Belay/rappel device
- Four locking carabiners
- Six regular carabiners
- Prussik system
- 2 Jumars
- 1 daisy chain
- 4 single length slings for clipping in gear and equipment.

Clothing

- 4 pair synthetic liner socks
- 4 pair heavier synthetic or wool blend socks
- Gaiters or overboots. Make sure that they fit properly. Insulated overboots are not necessary you need more foot insulation.
- Long underwear top and bottom. 2 pairs. Capilene or some other synthetic is most desirable

- Warm pants. Tights or Expedition weight Capilene
- Warm shirt. Expedition Capilene or light Synchronilla
- Another fuzzy sweater top such as synchronilla
- Pile jacket
- Pile pants or bibs. 200-300 weight.
- Light down jacket; synthetic fill is second choice.
- Good quality Gore-tex rain/wind pants and rain jacket.
- Warm hat
- Balaclava; silk and/or pile
- Visor hat (for sun)
- Bandanna for something for facial and neck sun protection
- Liner gloves 2 pair for one set gets wet
- Shell gloves
- Mittens and shells for when it gets really cold

Etc.

- Sunglasses, high quality with keeper leash. The type with side shields are recommended. If you wear corrective glasses you might want a second pair
- Goggles for bad conditions
- Ear plugs for noisy tents
- Personal kit; tooth brush...
- Sunscreen and lip screen. SPF 30+. Make sure the lip stuff actually contains a sunscreen. A 2 oz bottle will be sufficient
- Two 1-quart plastic water bottles with insulating jackets
- A small thermos if you have one
- Pee bottle
- Personal first aid kit, foot care, and any required medications. We will have a large group medical kit; go light on your own kit. Bring plenty of blister treatment items.
- Eating and drinking items
- Swiss Army type knife
- Camera, film and spare batteries
- Books, games etc. for the unlikely event storm days in base camp.

Food

- We will provide breakfast, dinner and lunch but bring some snack items like cliff bars, power bars, gorp concoctions. A days worth for most people would be 2 bars, 3 ounces of gorp, and perhaps a candy bar. Don't over do it.

You specifically don't need

- Cell phones. They rarely work anyway.
- Big first aid kits (we have a comprehensive one)
- Deodorant or any toiletries beyond those listed above.
- Items not on this list.

We will provide the following.

- Tents. If you have a tent of your own you can bring it for base camp, but we need to determine that it is appropriate. On the route we will use Biblers.
- Stoves and cooking equipment
- Technical climbing equipment