

## Aconcagua trip dossier

On this page you will find all the information you need to know about your Aconcagua climb. Please read the information carefully and if you have any questions don't hesitate to contact us.

Kandoo supports the 'Know Before You Go' campaign from the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO). We recommend that you read the [FCO Travel Advice for Argentina](#) before travelling.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

#### **Local office**

Our office in Mendoza is your first point of contact for any issues that arise once you are on your way to Argentina, and for the duration of your time in country. Whether your flight is delayed, or you need assistance exchanging money, we have English-speaking representatives who will be able to help you with any query, and they have the advantage of being in the same time zone. These contact details can also be found on your itinerary.

#### **Lead guide**

Once you are on your trek, you should speak to your lead guide about any problems, whether it relates to food, equipment or health. We would much prefer you to sort out any problems with them on the spot, rather than allow them to spoil your trek. Your guide is in contact with the office if further assistance is required.

#### **Contact Kandoo Adventures**

If your problem cannot be resolved locally, please either phone or email our UK office and we will do all we can to help you. It is best if you can call within our office hours when we are best equipped to deal with the situation.

Our office hours are as follows (local UK time):

- 09:00 – 17:00 Monday to Thursday
- 09:00 – 16:00 Friday

Contact telephone - +44 (1283) 499980

Contact email – [info@kandoadventures.com](mailto:info@kandoadventures.com)

#### **Contact information for friends and family**

Many people like to leave a contact number with their families should they need to get a message to you while you are trekking. We would only relay messages up to you in an emergency. For most enquiries, it is best if they can contact our office during working hours listed above. If the matter occurs out of hours and is deemed urgent, they should contact the emergency mobile number on your itinerary.

#### **Time Zone**



Argentina has only one time zone. It is four hours behind Greenwich Mean Time (-4 GMT) and +1 hour ahead of New York City.

## **TRAVEL INFORMATION**

### **Travel insurance**

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are fully and adequately insured for the duration of your trip. Please ensure that all activities, excursions and destinations in your itinerary are included in your travel insurance policy, in addition to your regular cover for cancellation and medical expenses. For Aconcagua, this means that you must be covered for trekking to 7000m.

We recommend checking the evacuation section of your policy in the event of severe weather. We ask that you keep a copy of your policy summary (containing policy number and the emergency contact number for your insurer) in your day sack at all times, so that we can access this information should we need to contact the insurer on your behalf.

### **Passport**

Please double check that your passport is valid for 6 months beyond the date of arrival in Argentina. We recommend that you take a photocopy of your passport and keep it separate from the original, as this will be useful if the original is lost while you are travelling.

### **Visas**

Most visitors (including nationals from the UK, Europe, USA, Canada and Australia) do not require a tourist visa to enter Argentina, and will generally be granted a 90 day stay. You will need at least two blank visa pages in your passport. Certain nationalities not mentioned above must apply for a visa in advance, so check with your local Argentinian Embassy.

Although they do not require a visa, citizens of Australia and Canada are required to pay a reciprocity fee prior to travel and must show proof of payment on arrival.

### **Airport security checks**

New enhanced security checks were implemented in July 2014 at a number of international airports, including the UK and USA. In addition to existing security measures, passengers may be required to show that electronic devices in their hand luggage are charged up, and you may therefore be asked to turn on devices such as mobile phones, tablets, laptops and e-books in front of the security team. If the device does not have power, then it may be retained by airport security, or you would need to book onto a later flight once the device has been fully charged. You should ensure that all electronic devices in your hand luggage are fully charged prior to travel. If you are transferring between flights, make sure that you do not deplete the power on your devices on the first part of the journey, as it may not be possible to recharge the device at the transfer airport before boarding your next flight.

### **Deep-Vein Thrombosis**

When travelling on long-haul flights (especially over 8 hours) there are a number of recommendations that are believed to reduce the risk of DVT. These include keeping well



hydrated and avoiding alcohol, stretching and moving around the aircraft, and wearing compression stockings.

### **Travelling to Argentina**

Our number one tip when travelling to Argentina is to wear your walking boots and pack as many essential items as possible in your carry-on luggage. If your luggage is delayed we can do our best to kit you out to start the trek on time, but your worn-in boots are the one thing we cannot replace.

### **ARRIVAL IN ARGENTINA**

#### **Arrival at Mendoza (MDZ) airport**

Once you have cleared immigration and collected your luggage, make your way to the main doors. Your driver will be outside these doors, holding a 'Kandoo' sign.

#### **Lost / delayed luggage**

Our procedure for lost luggage is as follows:

- Establish what items are missing and a contingency plan for each critical item
- If it reaches 6pm on the evening before starting the trek and your luggage has not arrived we recommend buying and/or hiring items immediately as a precaution. These items can be arranged in Mendoza but the quality may not be as high as your own equipment.
- We will take you to a shop where you can buy toiletry items and items of a personal nature.

We will do everything we can to help if your luggage is lost or delayed but all additional out of pocket costs have to be paid locally and should be charged back to the airline or their insurers. This includes the cost of taxis for shopping and/or repeat trips to the airport to collect bags.

#### **Currency**

The Argentinian Peso (ARS) is the local currency of Argentina. Your currency (all major ones like US Dollars, Sterling Pounds and Euros) and traveler's cheques can be exchanged at Mendoza Airport, banks and hotels.

It is advisable to bring some cash for the trip. ATM machines are not always reliable or might have a low daily withdrawal limit. Other miscellaneous expenses in Mendoza may also require cash payments (certain restaurants, tips, etc.). Once on the mountain, US\$ are the best way to pay for porters, tips, a beer, etc.

#### **Pre-trek briefing**

Your guide team will meet you at your hotel the evening before your trek begins, where we'll review the plans for the trek with you, make sure you have all the right gear and answer any questions you may have. You have already certified on your participation agreement that your resting pulse rate is below 100. This will be tested again and if your



resting pulse is above 100 you will be required to see a doctor before starting your trek. If you are arriving on a late evening flight, then the guide will arrange to brief you in the morning before you set off for the trek.

### **Equipment and clothing**

During the booking process we will direct you to the [Equipment List on our website](#). Please double check that you have everything that you need before beginning your trek. If you think you have forgotten a vital piece of equipment, please let our team in Argentina know as soon as possible so they can help you source a replacement.

### **Trekking bag weight**

The ideal luggage combination for an Aconcagua expedition is a large duffle bag, an expedition backpack (70-90L), and a light, small daypack (20-30L). On the hike into Base Camp mules carry most of the gear and supplies. You will carry only a day pack with a few items (water, snacks, camera, jacket, sunscreen, etc.). On the hike from Base Camp to High Camps: expect to carry all of your personal gear plus a share of the common gear (although we provide porters for group equipment). Typically, a fully-loaded Aconcagua backpack weighs 18-22 kg. On the trek all items must be packed in your main equipment bag. They should not be attached to the outside, as we are not responsible if items fall off when the bags are being carried by the porters or pack animals.

## **HOTEL INFORMATION**

### **Hotel accommodation**

Your full day by day itinerary shows what is included in terms of hotel accommodation and meal basis. All of our pre- and post-trek accommodation is based in Mendoza.

### **Hotel safety**

When you arrive at the hotel, take a moment to familiarise yourself with the layout and the procedures in the event of a fire, especially your escape routes and fire exits. If you choose to eat outside your hotel, use your common sense when selecting where and what to eat, and drink bottled water.

### **Valuables**

Please keep all money, passport and valuables on your person at all times. Make sure your hotel room is kept locked, even if you just pop out for a few minutes.

### **Left luggage**

Any items you don't wish to take on the trek with you can be left securely and collected when you return. Please make sure you have a spare bag for any items you are storing. In Mendoza, you can leave luggage at the hotel, in Los Penitentes at our big warehouse with lockers, or in Plaza Argentina or Plaza de Mulas.

### **Electrical sockets**

There are 2 types of electrical sockets in Argentina – type C which are standard European style (2 round pins) – and are 220v, same as the UK and Type I which is the same as Australia and China and a European adaptor will be fine for the type C socket.

## HEALTH INFORMATION

### Vaccinations

The standard vaccinations required are diphtheria, tetanus, typhoid and hepatitis A, but you should always consult your doctor or travel clinic for the most up to date advice.

### Malaria

On the trek itself there is little risk of malaria due to the altitude. However, there is a risk of malaria in areas below 1,500m so we recommend you take advice from your travel GP. In addition to any medication, we would recommend you take every precaution to prevent mosquito bites by wearing long-sleeved trousers and shirts at dusk and dawn when the mosquitos are active, and by using a DEET based mosquito repellent.

### Altitude sickness

Altitude sickness, also called Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), hypobaropathy and soroche, is an illness caused by exposure to low air pressure, especially low partial pressure of oxygen, which many climbers experience at high altitudes. AMS is caused by exerting yourself at high altitudes, especially if you have not been properly acclimatised. It is most common at altitudes above 2400 metres.

All of our trekking and climbing itineraries in the Andes have been designed to aid your acclimatisation wherever possible, but the following will also help your body adjust:

- Slow and steady - You need to keep your respiration rate low enough to maintain a normal conversation. If you are panting or breathing hard, you must slow down.
- Drink much more water than you think you need. Proper hydration helps acclimatisation dramatically. You need to drink at least three litres each day.
- Diamox - There has been a lot of research on Diamox that shows is that it has been reasonably well proven to be helpful in avoiding AMS by speeding up the acclimatisation process. In the UK it is a prescription drug which must be prescribed by a doctor, but some doctors are reluctant to prescribe it. The concern is that by taking Diamox, people believe that they are immune from AMS and can ignore the symptoms. In reality, although Diamox can help prevent the symptoms, should symptoms still develop it means that you are not acclimatising and you have to take notice. Diamox is taken before you start trekking to prevent altitude sickness, not once you are at altitude and symptoms have developed.

### Dehydration

You can easily become dehydrated at high altitudes. The lower air pressure forces you to breathe more quickly and deeply, and you lose a lot of water through your lungs. You will also be exerting yourself, and sweating, and may even suffer from diarrhoea. As a result, you'll have to drink much more water than you normally would and you should drink at least 3 litres of fluids every day while trekking. Even when you don't feel thirsty you have to drink this amount as a minimum – preferably more. Stay on the look-out for signs of dehydration in yourself and your fellow climbers. The most common symptoms include thirst, dry lips, nose or mouth, headache and feeling fatigued or lethargic.



## **ON YOUR TREK**

### **The Guide's word is final**

Once you set foot on the trail, your Lead Guide has overall responsibility for your health and welfare. You must listen carefully to all his instructions and follow them carefully. The Guide's ruling on any matter is final, especially in relation to an early descent.

### **Daily health checks**

You will have a twice daily health check with your guides in which we fill out a Lake Louise AMS scoresheet, a well-tested method for assessing the symptoms of altitude sickness. This is supplemented by a pulse oxymeter test to measure your pulse and blood oxygen saturation. It is imperative that you answer all of the guide's questions honestly and report any changes in your health that may affect your ability to continue with the trek.

### **Drinking water**

On the trek we filter all the water that we give to you for drinking. You may wish to bring purification tablets as an extra precaution but they are not essential. Every morning we will fill up your water bottles or hydration bladder with at least 2 litres of water. Your guide will also be able to filter more water at your lunch stops if required.

### **Hygiene**

It is important to maintain a high standard of hygiene in what is a very difficult environment, to try to reduce stomach upsets. Hot water is not always available, so it is worth carrying anti-bacterial hand gel with you.

### **Temperature**

Throughout the trek, temperatures vary considerably with the altitude and time of day. A mountain range the size of the Andes creates its own local weather, which can be extremely variable and impossible to predict. Therefore, regardless of when you trek, you should always be prepared for wet days and cold nights.

### **Crew tips**

It has become customary practice to tip the guides, cooks and porters who have assisted you throughout your trek. The decision on how much to tip should be determined by how well the team served you while you were on the trek. Tips are always discretionary and if you are not happy with the service you have received you do not have to pay tips

### **Descent protocol**

Your guides will do everything they can to help you complete your trek, but their number one priority is your health. If you are showing signs of ill-health they will monitor the situation to see if things improve, before they make the decision for you to descend. For trekkers whose condition is mild we will bring you down on foot with a team member. For more serious conditions, an emergency evacuation by helicopter will be required. Helicopter evacuation must be covered by your travel insurance, so make sure you are aware of the procedure required by your insurance company, or you may end up liable for the cost of the helicopter. Any additional costs incurred as a result of descending early must be paid locally.

