

aoraki mount cook

australasia's highest challenge 3754m



summer season

october to early february



price

linda glacier route

1:1 from NZ\$4,850

hooker valley route

2:2 NZ\$4,750
per person

2:1 poa



access

hooker valley
walk in, walk out

linda glacier
fly in, walk out



mount cook
maori name

aoraki
height : 3754m



bonus

1 day weather
contingency on fly-in
trips
technical gear provided

An expedition/ascent of Aoraki/Mount Cook with Aspiring Guides will take you to the highest point in

Australasia, you will face challenges physical and mental far beyond those encountered in our everyday lives and relish the rewards of the summit that motivates many mountaineers.

Aoraki/Mount Cook is a serious mountain and not to be under-estimated due to its comparatively low altitude. It is comparable in length and difficulty to Arguille Verte in Chamonix, France and Mt. Huntington in Alaska. This is a two tool climb.

Choose your route:

- ▶ via Linda Glacier --- Grade 3
- ▶ via Hooker Glacier --- Grade 3+ to 4

Aoraki/mount cook national park

The park is a harsh land of ice and rock. Glaciers cover 40% of it. The Aoraki/Mount Cook region has peaks that rise from valley floors that sit at 700m, to well over 3000 metres above sea level. This is a deceptively large vertical gain, and one commonly underestimated. The peaks are sharp and steep, providing classic snow arêtes, ice faces and rock buttresses. The peaks are flanked by fast moving, temperate glaciers which offer perpetually changing conditions, and are battered by ferocious weather systems which keep the best of New Zealand's meteorologists guessing. There are 19 peaks over 3,000 metres in the Aoraki/Mt Cook national park. The western side of the divide is a part of Te Wahipounamu — South Westland World Heritage Area, in recognition of the areas outstanding natural values.

The mountains are seen as ancestors by the Tangata Whenua — the Ngai Tahu people. Aoraki is sacred above all and Maori do not believe that it is appropriate to climb onto what is effectively the head of such an ancestor.

cultural history

Aoraki represents the most sacred of ancestors. Ngāi Tahu are the Maori people of the southern islands of New Zealand.

Ao-raki (Cloud in the Sky) and his brothers, Raki-roa (Long Raki), Raki-rua (Raki the second), and Raraki-roa (Long Unbroken Line) came down in a canoe which was known as Te-Waka-o-Aoraki. They cruised around Papatua-nuku who lay as one body in a huge continent known as Hawaiiiki. Then, keen to explore, the voyagers set out to sea, but no matter how far they travelled, they could not find land. They decided to return to their celestial

home but the karakia (incantation) which should have lifted the waka (canoe) back to the heavens failed and their craft ran aground on a hidden reef, turning to stone and earth in process.

The waka listed and settled with the west side much higher out of the water than the east. Thus the whole waka formed the South Island, hence the name Te Waka-o-Aoraki. Aoraki and his brothers clambered on to the high side and were turned to stone. They are still there today. Aoraki is the mountain known to Pākehā as Mount Cook, and his brothers are the next highest peaks near him. The form of the island as it is now owes much to the subsequent deeds of Tūterakiwhānoa, who took on the job of shaping the land to make it fit for human habitation.

The mountain was also renamed Äoraki / Mount Cook, and was the only name in the Crown's Settlement Offer that had the Maori name before the European one. This name change flows on to the village to be known as Äoraki / Mount Cook Village, and to the national park itself which has become known as the Äoraki/Mount Cook National Park.

The very act of gifting the mountain to the people of New Zealand confirms that the person making the gift has the mana, or power, to do so. The other elements of the redress relating to Aoraki would ensure that the relationship with the mountain is forever recognised and would also ensure an active and ongoing role for Ngāi Tahu in the management of the area.

via the Linda Glacier from Plateau hut (oct-mid jan)

The Linda glacier is the most common ascent route to the High Peak. The base hut for this ascent is Plateau hut (2210m). The climbing route ascends the Linda Glacier which is relatively straight forward apart from route finding through crevasses. At various points the Linda Glacier is threatened by ice fall from seracs. It is not a place to dawdle!

From the top of the glacier the more exposed Linda shelf is crossed to the junction with Zubriggens ridge. Generally we aim to reach here at sunrise. From here 3-4 pitches of moderate ice take us to the Summit Rocks. 3-4 pitches of mixed climbing follow through the rocks to the summit ice cap. The summit ice cap is exposed; generally only short sections need to be belayed. The ice cap leads to the summit.

Generally (depending on year to year conditions) a feature known as the "Chandelier" is the high point 20m or so below the summit. This is due to the unstable nature of the summit after the rock fall of 1991. The summit is only ½ the climb! The descent follows the same route as the ascent with a down climb of the icecap, 5/6 rappels/lowers through the summit rocks and then a traverse across the Linda shelf, often in softened snow. All that is left is the downward weaving between crevasses on the Linda Glacier with the sun beating down (and the sound of falling seracs) on the 1.5km plod across the Grand Plateau to the hut (the last 50m being compulsory uphill).

Do not underestimate the descent.

season	October to late January
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grade	Grade 3
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duration	15-24 hours return
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sample itinerary

day one	Meet your guide in Wanaka. Check equipment. Drive to Mount Cook Village (2.5 hours). Fly into Plateau hut.
day two	Ascent of smaller peak in the Grand Plateau area, e.g. Dixon, Anzac peaks. Practice cramponing and climbing skills.
day three	Rest day.
day four	Either option of an extra early start (1am) to ascend Mount Cook and return to hut; or start later (5am) and ascend half way up the Linda to bivvy under the Bowie ridge.
day five	Ascend Mount Cook from bivvy or rest day.
day six	Walk out via Cinerama Col to Mount Cook village.

access

The flight into Plateau hut is included in the price.

egress

We walk out via Cinerama Col from Plateau hut to Mount Cook village.

experience required

Linda glacier route. Since it is a fully guided trip, under the security of your guide, your experience can be limited to a Mountain Skills Course or a guided ascent, or alpine climbing skills to be detailed on your skills sheet at the time of booking. A good knowledge and execution of cramponing is required. A high level of fitness and stamina is required. Clients should be strong enough to complete a very long day at a constant pace over technical ground with some reserve (summit day).

The Hooker Glacier attraction – the original route (oct-mar route dependent)

The first ever guided ascent of Aoraki/Mount Cook was from the Hooker glacier. On January 2 1913 Freda Du Faur was guided along the summit ridge of Mt Cook by Peter Graham and Darby Thomson. This was a breakthrough ascent, in that doubters said it couldn't be done. Their access to this western side, was via the Hooker Glacier. Something that hasn't changed since 1913 is the remoteness and lack of air access.

- ▲ The valley is serviced by two huts: Gardiner and Empress. Empress hut is new and is perhaps in the most impressive position of all NZ alpine huts being surrounded by Mt. Hicks, La Perouse & Mt. Cook.
- ▲ The walk-in to Empress hut takes 1.5 days and is engrossing and spectacular. Unlike the approach to the Plateau hut on the eastern side of Mt. Cook, the Hooker Valley offers a gradual elevation gain through spectacular mountain terrain.
- ▲ This means climbing the mountain in it's entirety rather than flying into the Grand Plateau.
- ▲ Safety is our priority. Due to this extra commitment we remain with the tradition of two guides with this route (excluding the Linda Glacier route, -which is guided 1:1).
- ▲ Climbing the mountain from the Hooker involves an ascent in the traditional style of climbing via more difficult routes than the air-accessed and popular Linda Glacier route.
- ▲ The Hooker glacier is a "no fly zone sanctuary" in the heart of the National Park and holds some of NZ's finest high alpine terrain (this no-fly zone policy reduces the cost of additional air access).

via porter col

season October to late December

grade Grade 3+

ascent and decent Climbed from Empress hut (2516m), similar in technical difficulty to the Linda glacier route. Up Sheila glacier over Earle's Gap and traverse the Upper Empress shelf to 50° ice gully below Porter Col. From Porter Col traverse summit ridge over the middle peak to the high peak. Descend the same way.

terrain Varied alpine terrain, some mixed sections, icefalls, moderate ice slopes (50°). Length of route 1200m vertical.

via hooker face

season October to late December

grade Grade 4+

ascent and decent Climbed from Empress hut (2516m). Access via Earle's Gap, to Upper Empress Shelf from where route commences. Descend the same way.

terrain 2-3 pitches mixed climbing at the bottom then 50° ice field direct to high peak. Descend via abseil. Length of route 1200m. Requires high degree of fitness and strong calf muscles for front pointing.

via west ridge grand traverse

season January to early February

grade Grade 4

ascent and decent Climbed from Gardiner hut (1755m). A classic Cook climb usually requires a bivvy near the low peak.

terrain Mixed rock & ice to the Low Peak followed by the one mile long grand traverse of Mount Cook over Middle Peak. Descend via the Linda Glacier to Plateau hut. Length of route 2000m. Requires high degree of fitness.

sample itinerary

day one Meet your guides in Wanaka. Check equipment. Drive to Mount Cook Village (2.5 hours). Walk in to Gardiner hut via the east Hooker track, approximately 8 hours. Terrain is varied with the initial 3 hours beside the glacier on top of the moraine wall with a track. We then drop down onto the glacier and have about 1 hour on the moraine before threading our way to the Hooker icefall and climbing to Gardiner hut via Pudding rock. Gardiner hut sleeps 8 and is situated under the west ridge and south face of Mt. Cook. This is the departure point for the West Ridge GT of Mount Cook.

day two We will leave the hut about 8am and rope for glacier travel up to Empress hut approximately 4 hours away. Then terrain and views become progressively more impressive as we gain elevation. Empress hut is the departure point for Porters Col and Hooker Face.

day three	This is a semi-rest day involving either instruction and/or a reconnaissance of the chosen route.
day four	Ascent of Porter col route. This is generally about 15 hours return trip to the hut involving varied terrain of snow and ice. The SUMMIT RIDGE of Mt. Cook is traversed to the middle peak (which is roomy enough to lounge around on).
day five	Rest day and descend to Gardiner hut.
day six	Descend lower Hooker glacier to Mt. Cook village.
day seven	Weather contingency day.
note	Later in the season ascents will be from Gardiner hut and via the West Ridge. This will involve a high bivvy and a traverse from the lower peak to the middle peak & high peak and descent via Linda glacier to Plateau hut.

access

The walk into the Hooker Valley is long and beautiful. We reach Empress hut after 1.5 days.

egress

We walk back down through the Hooker Glacier and through the Hooker Valley "sanctuary".

logistics

grading	Linda Glacier: grade 3 Hooker Valley: grade 3+ to grade 4+
duration	Linda Glacier: 6 days, plus 1 weather contingency day Hooker Valley: 7 days
price	via Linda glacier 1:1 from NZ \$4,850 per person (includes flight in to Plateau Hut) via Hooker valley 2:2 NZ \$4,750 per person 2:1 guide:client ratio poa
access	Linda Glacier: 6 days fly in Hooker Valley: 7 days walk in, walk out
season	October to late January
guide-client ratio	Linda Glacier: 1 guide: 1 client Hooker Valley: 2 guides:1 client or 2 guides:2 clients

prerequisites You should be extremely fit. You should be strong enough to complete a very long day at a constant pace over technical ground with some reserve. A good knowledge and execution of all cramponing techniques is required

accommodation Hut or Bivy

weather contingency A great bonus for fly in routes. This one day could apply to the START of your trip (day one could be delayed a day)

The trip price includes: IFMGA/NZMGA qualified Guide and permit fees, all trip related meals and energy foods, hut fees, some technical equipment. Additional expenses are for any rental equipment (technical equipment supplied), any flights out if required, and flight in for East Ridge trip.

Early confirmation is particularly encouraged for the coming season: we are experiencing a dramatic increase in summer bookings for guides during the short interval that Aoraki/Mt. Cook can safely be guided.

experience required

Linda glacier route & Hooker Glacier route: Since it is a fully guided trip, under the security of your guide/s, your experience can be limited to a Mountain Skills Course or a guided ascent, or alpine climbing skills to be detailed on your skills sheet at the time of booking. A good knowledge and execution of cramponing is required. A high level of fitness and stamina is required. Clients should be strong enough to complete a very long day at a constant pace over technical ground with some reserve (summit day).

bonus extras

- ▲ Weather is always a consideration in the high mountains. We provide an extra 1 day weather contingency for FREE just in case we have bad weather at the start of your trip and are unable to fly in. This means that your 6-day ascent could start a day later. We recommend you include an additional day in Wanaka. This does not apply to Hooker Valley walk-in trips.
- ▲ Most of your technical equipment is included the price of your ascent, making the "extras" affordable.
- ▲ All accommodation during the ascent will be provided: hut, bivvy, tent or lodge (except the last night).

grading system

Standard NZ grading system is used for alpine routes in normal conditions.

grade 1	Easy scramble. Use of rope generally only for glacier travel.
grade 2	Steeper trickier sections may need a rope.
grade 3	Longer steeper sections generally. Use of technical equipment necessary. Ice climbs may require two tools.
grade 4	Technical climbing. Knowledge of how to place ice and rock gear quickly and efficiently a must. Involves a long day.

grade 5	Sustained technical climbing. May have vertical sections on ice.
grade 6	Multiple crux sections. Vertical ice may not have adequate protection. Good mental attitude and solid technique necessary. May require a bivvy on route and be a long way from civilisation.
grade 7	Grade 7 and beyond is possible but not yet established in the region.

about aspiring guides mountaineering

- ▲ Since 1990... our website has details on our team.
- ▲ **We are about action.** We will spend as much time in the mountains as possible actually climbing peaks and developing skills. You don't gain judgment, skills and safe practices in the classroom.
- ▲ We are **specialists** in alpine ascents and instruction courses.
- ▲ Our trips offer the 'wilderness' approach to the mountains. We retain the option to stay in alpine huts ... with fine weather we will base ourselves from alpine camps (often combined with an overnight bivouac). This factor alone offers a greater perception and awareness of the mountain environment.
- ▲ Our **specialist** guides are NZMGA / IFMGA certified. They have impressive backgrounds with inspiring futures. They are friendly and personable; focused on delivering safe, enjoyable and informative trips. In order to gain these qualifications guides must undergo rigorous training and assessment on climbing skills, instructional skills, avalanche training and assessment, wilderness first aid, rescue training and much more. The qualification takes many years (5-7) to attain and ensures you are receiving a professional service.
- ▲ Our activities are based in the Mount Aspiring, Westland, Cook, Fiordland National Parks, one of the most scenic and unspoilt alpine regions in the world. There are numerous peaks and routes of various difficulties making this an ideal training ground for any of the world's mountain ranges.
- ▲ The most important attributes in mountaineering are a solid climbing standard and mountain awareness; sound judgement of your own ability; good preparation and decision-making skills

we care about you

We want to maximise your chance of having a mountain experience that is successful and enjoyable therefore we offer a bonus one day weather contingency on all courses, trips and ascents that involve a flight in to the mountains. Our philosophy here at Aspiring Guides is such that we aim to cover all aspects of a mountaineering trip with you. This includes preparatory housekeeping matters too: let us know what you do/don't like eating, any allergies/medical conditions, and any special requests. We recognise that the world of mountaineering presents a challenge right from the start; namely; getting the detailed information, selecting the right option and having faith in the guiding company you decide to invest your time and money with.

location and itinerary

We will meet you in Wanaka at the scheduled appointment time, usually 8:30am on day one. The Aspiring Guides office is situated at 99 Ardmore Street, Wanaka on the main thoroughfare and only 50 metres from the shores of Lake Wanaka. Wanaka is the gateway to the Mount Aspiring National Park, and the Southern Alps. Our office staff can offer advice with accommodation and shuttle reservations, and of course, local attractions. Wanaka is very popular during the summer months. Please arrange your accommodation as early as possible.

booking and cancellations

NZ\$500 deposit per person confirms your booking. Full payment must be made 60 days before commencement date. Should you cancel your booking for any reason you will receive a full refund less a cancellation fee: more than 60 days NZ\$200 per person, between 60 and 30 days NZ\$500 per person, between 29 and 15 days 75% of the total course or trip fee. Cancellation less than 15 days or during your trip no refund will be given.

weather

How does the one day weather contingency work?

Aspiring Guides is the only NZ Guiding Company that offers this bonus to clients on fly-in trips. Instead of a wasted day doing other activities with your guide (inside or outside) as the weather permits, you can defer your trip for one day and not waste any precious guiding time. You will start the next day with the full number of days allocated for the trip still available. While one day may not be the cure for all bad weather situations, sometimes an extra day at the start of your trip can make all the difference.

The one day Weather Contingency applies only to the start date of your trip. This means your trip could start a day late if you choose to use this option.

Once a trip begins there are no additional weather contingency days allowed. There are also no refunds for bad weather. Check out our excellent website for current mountain and weather conditions. See also our booking terms and conditions.

What happens if the weather is bad?

The mountains are immune to human plans and expectations. We need to make our plans flexible to allow for inclement weather and other unfavourable conditions. When the weather is bad in the mountains we will make a decision whether to attempt entering the mountains on each given day. We do not believe that entering the high country soaked to the skin and a bad forecast is a good idea. Your guides are very experienced and will attempt to the best of their ability to make the best decision they can. In the unlikely event adverse weather prevents a trip from immediately moving into the mountains, you have the opportunity to carry out sub alpine adventures and skill development activities until the conditions improve. This decision will be made by your guides to optimise and make valuable use of your time. Fortunately there is a lot which can be achieved during bad weather from Wanaka. Some of the best rockclimbing in New Zealand is 15 minutes drive from our office. These cliffs are set up with sport climbing routes as well as quality 'natural' lines providing an ideal venue for ropes skills training, developing rescue techniques, and even for working on your rock climbing skills.

In the unlikely event of weather and/or conditions preventing an expedition ascent of Mount Cook from happening, an alternative venue/ascent will be recommended. Any additional expenses (helicopter, transport) will be added to your account. Your guide(s) remains employed for 6/7 days wages, whether or not you want to continue with alternative activities.

In the unlikely event of a trip being held up longer than anticipated in the mountains, for any reason, AN ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF NZ\$450 PER GUIDE PER DAY IS CHARGED (this is a cost price and will be divided between the trip participants). Your guide(s) are working until you return to our offices at the trip finish.

What weather can I expect on my trip?

In summer the general mountain climbing season runs from November through to mid May with the warmest month being January with 16 hours of daylight on the longest day. Temperatures can remain high during this period by day and drop to - 5 degrees Celsius overnight.

In November and December we can expect more snow cover on the routes, and as temperatures warm up into the summer months of January and February, we traditionally experience more settled weather and mixed climbing conditions such as snow, rock and ice). March and April bring late summer conditions which are mainly a combination of rock and ice routes. Generally we experience our first alpine snowfall mid May onwards.

meals and snacks

Energy snacks and nutritious meals are an essential ingredient in helping you perform to your highest standard. We provide excellent meals and plenty of it. We cater for your specific dietary requirements.

maps and guidebooks

We have maps and guide books available for purchase in our office. Alternatively, we can post these to you.

valuables and luggage

Additional luggage and valuables can be securely stored at our office during your trip.

insurance

We strongly recommend that all our clients carry travel insurance which covers you while travelling to and from NZ, luggage mishaps, and in case you have to cancel your trip. The New Zealand Accident Compensation System (ACC) will cover most of the expenses relating to an evacuation and/or medical treatment/rehabilitation in the unlikely event of an accident occurring. This service may not apply to evacuation costs for personal medical conditions. You are not entitled to bulk payments for compensation and you cannot claim damages for costs under the ACC act (no legal action can be made in NZ). Whilst our focus is on safety we will not be responsible for any evacuation or medical costs resulting from any accident. Likewise equipment damage or loss remain your responsibility. Some insurance companies can provide adventure activities' cover – if you wish to investigate this option further, please contact our office for information.

communication and messages

Our climbing trips and courses are in radio and satellite phone communications with our Operations/Safety base and the Department of Conservation local office that manages Mount Cook National park area. We obtain weather information and coordinate helicopters through these channels. In some circumstances mountain radio links are available for the relay of any urgent messages.

fitness & health

To make the most of your learning experience it is advisable to be fit enough to partake in the activities with enough stamina to get the most participation and enjoyment. We have two editorials on our website (Online Magazine) on how to prepare for mountaineering. Your guide places special focus on fitness levels and will regulate the pace accordingly.

how to book

To register for a trip, you can book online through our excellent website. Your deposit of NZ\$500 may be paid by Visa or Mastercard, or bank transfer (NZ only). The forms required can be found on our website. Our booking terms and conditions are detailed on our online booking form on our website.

We will send an appointment email approximately 4 weeks before your trip is due to commence. We will provide final information and ask for more information from you, e.g. dietary requirement, trip objectives and/or concerns, height and weight, fitness and any equipment rental required.

We look forward to sharing your aspirations...
and the opportunity of climbing with you in the future

the team @ aspiring guides

