

Denali

Expedition Information Pack

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Standing at 6,190m, **Denali** is the highest mountain in North America and one of the most demanding of the Seven Summits. Unlike many high altitude peaks, it is not defined by technical difficulty or altitude alone. What makes Denali unique is the combination of **heavy load carrying**, **extreme cold**, and living on snow and ice for an extended period.

As **Ireland's most trusted expedition company**, with over 20 years of experience leading high-altitude expeditions, we are excited to put a **team** together from **Ireland** to take on this iconic mountain. Our focus is on **proper preparation**, ensuring each climber is physically and mentally ready for a **long, committing expedition** in a remote environment.

This is about more than reaching the summit. It is about building a **strong, well-prepared team** of like-minded people who are ready for the realities of Denali. You will be camping on a glacier, moving loads between camps, and operating in a **harsh and unpredictable environment**. Success comes down to **preparation, resilience, and teamwork**.

We aim to bring together a team of **6 climbers**, with a maximum group size of **8**.

Why Choose Earth's Edge

Our mission is to support you in exploring our incredible world and experiencing life-changing adventures in the safest way possible. We are passionate about protecting the planet and improving the lives of those we meet along the way.

- We are not just putting a group together. We are **building a team**.
- This expedition is designed for people who want to take on Denali alongside others who share a similar mindset and standards. A **team of climbers from Ireland**, aligned in preparation and intent, makes a real difference on a mountain like this. There is a **shared understanding**, a **bit of craic** when it's needed, and a strong sense of accountability to each other.

- A major part of what we offer happens **before you leave Ireland**.
- You will have direct access to **James McManus** in the lead-up to the expedition. With first-hand experience on Denali and across a wide range of 7,000m and 8,000m peaks, he will guide your preparation and make sure you are focused on what matters.
- Before departure, climbers are invited to take part in both a **training day and a training weekend in Ireland**. This gives you the chance to meet the group, **test your systems**, and dial in your kit before heading to **Alaska**.
- You will also get **priority access to our winter skills courses**, where the foundations for Denali are built. Moving efficiently on snow, managing yourself in cold conditions, and being confident with core skills all feed directly into your performance on the mountain.
- On the expedition itself, you will be lead by highly experienced team of local guides and working at a **2:1 guide-to-climber ratio**, ensuring a safe and well-run climb.
- This is a considered approach to Denali, focused on **preparation, team, and giving you every opportunity to perform when it matters**.
- From the moment you sign up, **you become part of the Earth's Edge team**. Each climber receives an **Earth's Edge team jacket ahead of departure**, a practical piece of kit designed for the mountain and a reminder that your journey begins long before you arrive in Alaska.
- Booking an Earth's Edge expedition entitles you to a discount from our **equipment partners** at [Great Outdoors](#) to ensure that you get the best gear for your expedition.
- Our commitment to care defines how we travel. We operate with **smaller group sizes**, build stronger teams, and work closely with the communities who make our expeditions possible. As a **proud Irish B Corp**, we are dedicated to protecting the planet and supporting local staff through fair pay and responsible practices.

We have a number of environmental programmes and community projects, including;

- A [yearly scholarship](#) that gives porters the opportunity to become guides on Kilimanjaro.
- Our clients in Nepal help to remove waste from Sagarmatha National Park through the [Carry Me Back Program](#).
- We collect [clothing and gear donations](#) for our amazing porters on Kilimanjaro.
- We are striving to increase the number of [female staff](#) across our expeditions.

To read more about our sustainability practices, please visit our [responsible travel page](#).

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Description & Detailed Itinerary

Our expedition follows the classic **West Buttress route**, the most established and least technical route to the summit of Denali.

The expedition begins with a ski-equipped plane flight from Talkeetna, landing on the **Kahiltna Glacier**. From here, you move across a vast glaciated landscape, **carrying heavy packs and pulling sleds** from the outset.

Climbing is based on a **"carry high, sleep low" system**. Loads are moved up the mountain and cached before returning to lower camps. This process is repeated as you gradually gain height and establish higher camps.

Higher on the route, fixed lines are used to climb the **Headwall**, one of the more physically demanding sections. Above this, you reach high camp at approximately 5,200m, where teams move when they are ready to make the summit push.

Summit day is **long and exposed**. You follow the narrow West Buttress ridge, cross the Football Field, and make the final push up Denali Pass to the summit.

Please Note: Our itinerary is intended as a **guideline** and may be adjusted depending on **weather** conditions, **snow** conditions, and the **wellbeing** of the team. We have **seven spare weather days** to maximise your chances of getting a good weather window.

Day 1: Arrive in Anchorage.

Arrival in Anchorage. After transferring to the hotel, there is time to rest after the journey, organise personal equipment and prepare for the expedition ahead. Overnight hotel. Altitude 31m.

Day 2: Preparation Day in Anchorage.

Today is dedicated to expedition preparations. After breakfast we gather for a full expedition briefing and review the plan for the coming days. We then carry out a detailed equipment check, organise group food and equipment, and make any final purchases or adjustments before heading into the Alaska Range. Overnight hotel. Altitude 31m.

Day 3: Transfer to Talkeetna and fly to Kahiltna Glacier Base Camp.

This morning we transfer north to Talkeetna, the staging point for Denali expeditions. On arrival we prepare for our flight onto the glacier, organising and weighing all expedition equipment and supplies. We also complete the final formalities with the National Park Service, including a mandatory pre-climb briefing with one of the park rangers covering safety, regulations and current mountain conditions. We then board a ski-equipped bush plane for the spectacular flight into the Alaska Range, landing on the Kahiltna Glacier at Base Camp. Once on the glacier we establish camp, sort loads and begin settling into life on the mountain. Weather will

determine the exact timing of the flight, as access to Base Camp depends on suitable flying conditions. Overnight camp. Altitude 2,200m.

Day 4: Climb Base Camp to Camp 1, 4 to 6 hrs.

Today we begin the climb in earnest. Roped together and travelling on snowshoes, we drop down on Heartbreak Hill and then ascend our way up the lower Kahiltna Glacier toward Camp 1 while carrying heavy packs and hauling sleds. Although the elevation gain is modest, this is often one of the more physically demanding days of the expedition as we move all of our equipment in a single push. Overnight camp. Altitude 2,380m.

Day 5: Carry above Camp 1 and return, 6 to 8 hrs.

Today we begin the first of our cache carries. From Camp 1 we carry part of our food and equipment higher up Ski Hill, burying a cache before descending back to camp to sleep lower. This carry high, sleep low strategy is an important part of the acclimatisation process on Denali and also helps reduce the loads we need to move all at once higher on the mountain. Overnight camp. Altitude 2,380m.

Day 6: Climb Camp 1 to Camp 2, 6 to 7 hrs.

We pack up Camp 1 and continue up the Kahiltna Glacier toward Camp 2. Moving as a rope team, we travel on snowshoes while hauling sleds and carrying heavy packs. The terrain remains glaciated and crevassed, requiring steady and efficient movement. On arrival we establish camp and continue the acclimatisation process. Overnight camp. Altitude 3,400m.

Day 7: Active Rest Day, 2 hrs.

Today we descend back down the route to retrieve the cache we placed during our carry from Camp 1. After collecting the equipment we return to Camp 2 and reorganise camp. These back-carry days act as active rest days. They are an important part of the expedition strategy, helping both acclimatisation and load management as we move higher on the mountain. Overnight camp. Altitude 3,400m.

Day 8: Carry to cache and return to Camp 2, 6 to 7 hrs.

From Camp 2 we carry supplies higher up Motorcycle Hill, moving steadily through steeper terrain before establishing a cache. After completing the carry we descend back to Camp 2 for the night. This process allows us to reduce the loads required for the next move while continuing to build acclimatisation. Overnight camp. Altitude 3,400m.

Day 9: Climb Camp 2 to Camp 3, 5 to 7 hrs.

Today we move up to Camp 3 or Basin camp. The route continues up the glacier and into a broad basin below the upper mountain. This is a key camp on Denali and we will spend several nights here acclimatising and preparing for the next stage of the climb. Overnight camp. Altitude 4,300m.

Day 10: Active Rest Day, 2 hrs.

We descend to retrieve the cache placed below Camp 3 before carrying it back up to camp. Once back in camp we rest, hydrate and continue preparing equipment. Spending time active at this altitude supports the acclimatisation process and prepares us for moving higher. Overnight camp. Altitude 4,300m.

Day 11: Carry above Camp 3 to cache and return, 5 to 7 hrs.

Today we carry equipment above Camp 3. The route climbs steeply up the headwall using fixed lines before reaching the ridge above. We establish a cache at 4,800m before descending back to Camp 3. This is one of the more demanding and technical days on the route and prepares us for the move to High Camp. Overnight camp. Altitude 4,300m.

Day 12: Rest Day in Camp 3.

A full rest day allows the body additional time to adapt before moving higher. We focus on recovery, maintaining camp and reviewing systems while monitoring weather conditions for the upper mountain. Overnight camp. Altitude 4,300m.

Day 13: Climb Camp 3 to High Camp, 6 to 8 hrs.

Today we move to High Camp. After climbing the fixed lines above camp we continue along the West Buttress ridge to reach our highest camp. While the views on this section are spectacular, the terrain becomes more exposed and requires steady movement as a team. After arriving we settle in, rest and prepare for the summit push. Overnight camp. Altitude 5,240m.

Day 14: Rest Day in High Camp.

Today is reserved for rest and preparation ahead of the summit attempt. We focus on recovery, hydration and ensuring all equipment is ready. Conditions may mean we skip this rest day, but where possible we aim to include it. Overnight camp. Altitude 5,240m.

Day 15: Summit Day. Denali 6,190m. 9 to 12 hrs.

Compared to other mountains, we start slightly later on Denali due to the long days at this time of year. From High Camp we climb steadily toward Denali Pass before continuing through the football field that leads to the summit ridge. This is a long and physically demanding day at high altitude in very cold conditions, requiring sustained effort and focus. On a clear day the views across the Alaska Range from the upper mountain are exceptional. Patience is essential on a mountain like Denali, and the decision to go for the summit will be made by the guide team based on weather, conditions and the strength of the group. After reaching the highest point in North America, we descend carefully back to High Camp for the night. Overnight camp. Altitude 5,240m.

Day 16 - 17: Descend to Base Camp.

Following the summit push we begin our descent of the mountain. From High Camp it typically takes one to two days to descend back through the camps and down the Kahiltna Glacier to

Base Camp. The pace will depend on conditions and how the team is recovering. Once back at Base Camp we prepare for the flight out when weather allows. Overnight camp. Altitude 2,200m.

Day 18 - 25: Spare Summit Days.

A number of spare summit days are built into the itinerary as contingency, to allow flexibility in case of poor weather or unsuitable climbing conditions. These extra days are an important part of the expedition and greatly improve the chances of a safe and successful summit attempt.

Day 26: Depart Alaska.

Once we have flown off the glacier, we return via Talkeetna and transfer back to Anchorage. Accommodation after the climb is not included, as you may choose to travel onward the same day. Assistance will be provided locally if required. Altitude 31m.

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Required Experience

While summit day on Aconcagua is considered harder by some, every other day on Denali is more physically demanding. You will be **roped together, carrying heavy packs, pulling sleds, and managing yourself** in extreme cold over an extended period. This is what makes Denali such a rewarding and respected climb.

The requirements to join our team are as follows:

- Have **extensive** high mountain experience, including **two** expeditions to peaks over **6,000m**
- Have strong fitness and the ability to perform in a physically demanding environment over an extended period. Between your pack and sled, you will be moving over **35kg** at times
- Be comfortable spending **extended time** camping on **snow and ice** in a glaciated environment
- Be **confident** using mountaineering **equipment**, including crampons, harness, and fixed lines
- Have **experience** moving efficiently on glaciers and in cold conditions
- Have completed a **winter skills course**, including **cravasse rescue** skills, within the previous two years

In the months leading up to the expedition, each climber will receive guidance from James, helping ensure they arrive physically and mentally prepared for the demands of Denali.

If you are unsure whether this is the right next step for you, the Earth's Edge team will be happy to discuss your experience and advise accordingly.

Expedition Costs

Total Cost : €11,799

- A **non-refundable and non-transferrable deposit of EUR/USD/GBP 2,999** is taken at the time of booking to secure your spot. We highly recommend cancellation and curtailment insurance.
- A **part payment of EUR/USD/GBP 5,000** is due six months prior to departure.
- The **final balance** can be paid in installments, but is **due 90 days prior to departure**.

For up to date prices in GBP and USD based on today's exchange rate, please [visit our website](#).

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Flights

We'll outline a recommended flight itinerary to Anchorage Airport (ANC) in Alaska. This will be shared with you once your booking is confirmed.

You are free to book any flights of your choosing, provided you are in time for the expedition briefing at 10 a.m on Day 2.

We always recommend booking a flexible ticket as it is highly likely you will change the return date of your flight.

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Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is mandatory for all travellers and it is your responsibility to ensure that you have sufficient personal travel insurance for this expedition. At a minimum, your policy must provide cover for;

- Medical expenses for personal injury or sickness
- Trekking up to 6,200 metres
- Helicopter evacuation in an emergency situation
- Repatriation to one's country of residence

You are required to declare any pre-existing medical conditions to your insurance providers and obtain written confirmation that these conditions are fully covered on your policy.

We strongly recommend securing travel insurance promptly upon booking including cancellation and curtailment cover, to safeguard against unforeseen events such as illness or injury, which could potentially prevent you from participating in the expedition.

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Expedition Inclusions & Exclusions

Expedition Costs Include:

Preparation Before You Travel

- **Personalised training advice** from James in the months leading up to the expedition.
- A **training day and training weekend in Ireland** covering equipment, pacing, and expedition strategy.
- Ongoing **pre-departure support** and advice from the [Earth's Edge office team](#).
- An **Earth's Edge team jacket**, sent to you ahead of departure as a practical layer for the mountain.

Expedition Leadership

- The expedition is led by **highly experienced** local Denali guides working at a **2:1** guide-to-climber ratio, ensuring a safe and well-run climb.

Accommodation, Meals & Logistics

- **Two nights'** hotel accommodation in **Anchorage** in a shared room before your climb.
- **Airport transfers** in Anchorage provided by the hotel.
- Transfers for any **last-minute shopping** or **gear rental** in Anchorage.
- Group transfers between **Anchorage and Talkeetna**.
- **Return flights** from **Talkeetna and Base Camp** on the Kahiltna Glacier.
- Assistance in arranging for **post-climb** activities in Alaska.

Mountain Infrastructure & Climbing Support

- All **food** while on the **mountain** including snacks.
- All **group equipment** required for the expedition including ropes, sleds, tents, kitchen, snow pickets, shovels, group med kit and a sat phone.
- A **carefully selected** team of 6-8 climbers to ensure a strong group dynamic.

Expedition Costs Exclude:

- International flights to and from Alaska
- US visa (ESTA)
- Park fees made up of:
 - Mountaineering special use fee (2026: \$350 for climbers aged 24 and under, \$450 for climbers aged 25 and over)
 - Denali National Park entrance fee (\$15)
- Training weekend accommodation and food
- Training day accommodation and food

- Personal travel insurance and helicopter evacuation insurance
- Personal climbing equipment
- All meals off the mountain
- Accommodation after the climb
- Tips (10-20% of your trip cost)
- Any costs incurred if you leave the expedition early.
- Any costs arising out of unforeseen circumstances which affect the itinerary such as bad weather, landslides, road conditions and any other circumstances beyond our control.

Spending Money and Tipping

Spending Money

We recommend that you bring **USD1000 in cash** plus your **tip** amount. There are **ATMS** in Anchorage and Talkeenta where you can withdraw cash using a debit or credit card should you need it.

Tipping

The recommended tip is **10-20%** of your total trip price payable to the local guides.

Training Day and Training Weekend

We hold training weekends prior to all expeditions where you'll have the chance to meet your fellow adventurers! This weekend will be led by James McManus and will include a comprehensive expedition briefing, two training hikes, and invaluable advice covering everything from equipment to weather conditions!

In addition, a training day covering the skills necessary for the expedition will take place well in advance of departure. Not only are these events educational, but they're also enjoyable, set against the breathtaking backdrop of Glendalough, Co. Wicklow. Please note that food and accommodation for the weekends are not included.

Safety Standards

For our Denali expedition, we work with one of the most **experienced** and **respected** guiding companies operating on the mountain. [Mountain Trip](#) have a long track record of running safe, well-organised expeditions on Denali, with highly experienced guides and strong systems in place. Their approach aligns closely with our own, with a clear focus on preparation, professionalism, and giving each climber the best possible chance of success.

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By combining their on-the-ground expertise with our pre-expedition support and team structure, we are able to offer a well-rounded and carefully considered approach to climbing Denali.

Each expedition is led by a highly experienced team of local guides working at a **2:1 guide-to-climber ratio**, ensuring a safe and well-run climb.

They are trained in **wilderness and expedition medicine**, and are familiar with the locations of local medical facilities and hospitals in each destination. We ask all participants to bring a basic personal first aid kit as outlined in the equipment list. Always follow the guidance of your expedition leader to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience.

On expeditions, the most common cause of illness is gastroenteritis (Delhi Belly), often caused by poor personal hygiene. The good news is that it is easily avoided by practising the following:

- Always **wash your hands** and apply **hand sanitiser** after going to the toilet and before touching food.
- Maintain a **healthy diet** and consider taking **multivitamins and probiotics** for one month before and during the expedition to help your body adjust to changes in your diet and keep you healthy throughout the expedition.

To read more about our safety standards please visit our [safety page](#).

Special Offers

- **Return Customer Offer** - If you have travelled with us before please visit our [return customer](#) page for details on what discount you are entitled to.
- **Refer a Friend Offer** - If you have a friend who wants to travel with us please visit our [refer a friend](#) page for details on our referral programme.
- **Group Discounts** - If you are booking as part of a group please visit our [group discounts](#) page for details on what discount you are entitled to.
- **Couples Offer** - If you are booking with a friend or partner please visit our [couples offer](#) page for details on what discount you are entitled to.

Book Your Consultation

You can now schedule a free trip consultation with a member of the Earth's Edge team! We're happy to talk you through the itinerary, preparation and training, equipment, and anything else you'd like to know. Book your [consultation here](#).

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Expedition FAQ

Do you have a question that wasn't answered in this information pack? If so, please visit our [FAQ page](#) for a full list of frequently asked questions. If you can't find your answer there please [contact us](#).

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