

# Sunrockice Mount Aspiring (3025m) 5 Day Program

**Available 1 October 2001- 31 March 2002**

The Mount Aspiring program is five days long to give the best possible chance of climbing Mount Aspiring in normal summer conditions. The Guide to climber ratio is 1:1, or 1:2 in exceptional circumstances.

## Experience Required

You must be familiar with glaciated terrain, and fast on crampons, with the ability to move quickly on mixed ground with two ice tools. Our minimum requirement is a high level of fitness, with the technical skills of a successful Sunrockice Private Instruction course participant, or equivalent.

*Mt Aspiring, South Island, New Zealand*      (Photo: Guillaume Dargaud)



## Risk acceptance

Mountaineering is a hazardous activity. The Guide's first priority is always client safety. He or she is trained to decide whether the Mt Aspiring routes can be safely attempted in the prevailing conditions, or if an alternative ascent should be considered.

## Alternative Options

Weather conditions, ice and rock fall danger, the extent of crevasses, snow surface conditions, fitness and experience define the acceptable margins for a Mt Aspiring climb. If Mt Aspiring is not a safe option, your Guide will offer an alternative venue and ascent for your trip.

## Conditions:

1. The Mt Aspiring cost includes Guide, National Park fees, food, fuel, hut fees, and NZ GST tax.
2. The cost does not include rental equipment, or helicopter access.
3. Equipment list sent on receipt of confirmed booking. Standard booking conditions apply.
4. All Guides are trained and internationally qualified through the NZMGA and UIAGM.

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## Route Description

The traditional route is the Shipowner ridge to the North-West ridge from Colin Todd hut (1800m / 5900ft). The gendarmes on the lower NW ridge can be traversed or sidled, and the high buttress turned by a slab on the Therma face.

Above this point a broad easy-angled slab of snow or rock leads towards the short, but narrow and exposed summit ice cap. Height gain to the summit is 1225m (4000ft) from the hut. It is a moderately long and serious climb, rarely taking less than 10-12 hours return.

As an alternative the lower part of the NW ridge and the buttress may be avoided by crossing the Bonar glacier from Colin Todd hut to the steep snow / ice 'Ramp' on the south side of the ridge.

The Ramp may have exposed rock edging the glacier, and is prone to avalanche due to windslab or afternoon 'loose snow' conditions. The 'Ramp' route joins the NW ridge on more level ground above the buttress.

Usually Guide and climber can then move easily together along the NW ridge, above the junction with the Ramp, towards the summit. This part of the climb is mixed snow, ice and frost-shattered rock, depending on the month and the season.

The ice cap, though of moderate angle for three or four rope lengths, is quite exposed. Conditions can vary from easy snow-ice to fragile 'sastrugi' (heavily rimed) ice. While the terrain is low-angled, it is exposed to wind, and requires concentration.

From the high summit of Aspiring you can see both the Pacific Ocean to the east and the Tasman Sea to the west, given clear conditions.

After celebrations and rest, the descent follows the ascent route.

The cap can be reversed by short roping in good conditions, or by lowering if not, and the NW ridge proper descended to the buttress. From here a choice is made to continue either down the ridge, or down the Ramp, and back to the hut.

From the high peak return to Colin Todd hut usually takes 10-12 hours, arriving back in the late afternoon or early evening.

## Fly in

The walk into Colin Todd hut via the French ridge, or Bevan Col, is a solid 1½-day ascent. Helicopters are



an option at an extra and negotiable cost, depending on the loading and flight time.

We prefer to maximize high climbing time by taking a helicopter flight to Bevan Col at the first opportunity, depending on weather and snow conditions. You may then work up fitness and technique on a smaller climb, (such as Mt French), before attempting Mt Aspiring.

## Fly out

It is also an option to fly out from Bevan Col, at extra cost. An alternative is the French ridge descent route, a strenuous 10-12 hours to the road end at Raspberry Flat.

