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## **Alaska Mountaineering – Mt. Bona Expedition**

If you've ever dreamt of standing on top of an Alaskan giant, here's your chance! As the fifth-tallest peak in the US at 16,550ft (5040m), Mt Bona delivers an unbeatable experience to the budding mountaineer looking for a uniquely challenging objective. Once your ski-plane has safely dropped you off on the



Klutlan Glacier, tie into your rope team as you spend the next 10 days in the true Alaskan wilderness! Enjoy the thrills of traveling across heavily glaciated terrain, through winding crevasse fields, around gigantic seracs (as big as a house!), and building winter camps to brave the Alaskan elements, all while testing your lungs at high altitude as you ascend over 8000 vertical feet! As a bonus, the non-technical aspect of Mt. Bona will cater to an array of learning opportunities from your experienced guides who are eager to share their knowledge. Some previous mountaineering experience (Mt. Rainier or equivalent) is recommended along with strong physical fitness and a sense of adventure!

### **Trip Highlights:**

- Experience true remote mountaineering in the ultimate Alaskan backcountry
- Watch and learn how to navigate through glacial terrain
- Experience the challenge of an objective over 16,000 ft!
- Perfect first Alaskan expedition for the budding high-altitude mountaineer
- Ample opportunities to learn and practice crevasse rescue, route-finding, whiteout navigation, and many other skills!

## Mt. Bona Expedition – Detailed Itinerary

The following is a sample itinerary for this trip. Due to individual abilities and goals, as well as the demanding environment of Alaska, all of our trips are customized as they unfold. The guide will constantly make decisions based on weather, logistics and group dynamics to maximize each day's experience. There can be quite a bit of variation, but we always strive to make every trip your best ever.

*Some facts about the mountain...*

Mt. Bona's massif is covered almost entirely by icefields and glaciers. It is the principal source of ice for the Klutlan Glacier, which flows east for over 40 miles (64 km) into the Yukon Territory of Canada. The mountain also contributes a large volume of ice to the north-flowing Russell Glacier system.



Mt. Bona was named by Prince Luigi Amedeo, Duke of the Abruzzi in 1897, who saw the peak while making the first ascent of Mt. St. Elias about 80 miles (130 km) to the southeast. He named it after the Bona, his racing yacht. The mountain was first climbed in 1930 by Allen Carpe', Terris Moore, and Andrew Taylor, from the Russell Glacier on the west of the peak. The current standard route is the East Ridge; a climb of nearby Mt. Churchill is a relatively easy addition via this route as well

**DAY 1** - After a nice breakfast at your hotel in Anchorage, one of our friendly guides will pick you up so you can begin your journey to our small mountain town of McCarthy! The views will change quickly as you exit Anchorage and head east along the Glenn Highway, paralleling the snow-capped Chugach Mountains. As you descend from Chickaloon Pass, the rugged Wrangell Mountains will become visible and soon you will arrive at the infamous McCarthy Road. 60 short miles later, you will be eagerly greeted by your guide who has been preparing for your trip for the past couple of days!



**DAY 2** - Before heading out into the mountains, it's important to refresh all the mountaineering skills you will be using once your boots hit the snow. For this reason, it's no big deal if you forget all the knots or how to use a prusik because

you will get to spend today with our experienced guides refreshing all your knowledge and learning the specific techniques we apply due to the remote nature of mountaineering in Alaska. You will even get to ascend a rope as if you were climbing out of a real 'crevasse'! This will also give you and your guide an opportunity to thoroughly go through your gear to ensure you have everything you need, it works properly, and you're not forgetting anything! This will also be your chance to ask any questions you have about anything!

**DAY 3** - After a night of pleasant dreams about all the adventures awaiting you, today will be the day where your dreams become reality! You will head to our local airport first thing in the morning to prepare for the 30-minute flight into the University Range. Landing with a modified bush plane at 10,000ft on the Klutlan Glacier, you will quickly forget about the warm sunshine in McCarthy and quickly adapt to your new world of snow and ice! You will undoubtedly feel a sense of true remoteness as the sounds of the plane's propellers fade out of earshot and you and your guide are left alone in an endless sea of mountains! Depending on time, you may be able to move your gear closer to the base of the mountain, or perhaps set up your first winter camping spot right where you landed.







**DAY 4** - Eager to get an early start after your first night under the midnight sun, today you will carry your gear to establish a basecamp! A hot breakfast will give you the energy needed to get out of your sleeping bag and start the day. You will review the skills you learned at the powerhouse as you tie yourself into the rope and along with your tow-behind toboggan carrying all your things, work your way to the

base of Mt. Bona. Your journey will take you from 10,000ft up 6,500 vertical feet over almost 4 miles to 16,421ft!

**DAY 5** - As you fall into the rhythm of the trip, slow progress is the goal. Going from sea level in Anchorage to 10,000ft so quickly will likely be a shock to the system so ensuring adequate time to acclimate to your new altitude is very important! During this time on the glacier, you will become a pro and making and breaking camp, packing your backpack as well as your sled, and mastering the status of rope ninja!

**DAY 6** - This is when the magic really starts to happen! The routine has you feeling like a well-oiled machine - Everything has a place in your pack, your gear is working as it should, and best of all, the summit is coming into view! As you begin to feel acclimated, it's time to move up the mountain to 12,000ft. Careful, calculated decisions about when and how far to climb will determine your success!





**DAY 7** - Today will be another acclimatization day. A welcomed rest after all your hard work and a good excuse to wipe the dust off the book you've been hauling around but haven't had time to read yet! After a mix of relaxing, hydrating, and practicing your mountaineering skills, this would be a great time to introduce snow anchors and belaying techniques. These skills will come into play

during your summit day so best to learn and practice lots in the meantime!

**DAY 8** - Feeling rested and acclimated, today we push to 14,000ft and set our sights on high camp. Loads will still be heavy as it's important to carry lots of food and fuel in the likely event you are pinned in a classic Alaskan storm. At 14,000ft, the more food and fuel you have, the longer you can wait out a storm and better chances you have of making it to the summit when the weather finally breaks! Lucky your winter camp building skills will be dialed by this point so there won't be any issues braving the winds.

**DAY 9** - With the summit so close, it's hard to think about anything else. Having a day at high camp focused on recovering from the physical and mental exertion, hydrating, and further acclimating will serve you well. Once the weather presents a sufficient window, it won't take long before you hear "Everyone out of the tents...it's time!" and you better be ready!

**DAY 10** - Today will be your summit day! Feeling rested, hydrated, and acclimated, you'll be ready to give the summit your best shot! With all your preparations and practice, it won't be long before your crampons are laced up and you're out the door. Bask in the wonderful scenery of the University Range, the giant massif of Mt Bear, and even Canada as you crest the summit of the 4th tallest peak in the US! After hugs, high-fives, and photos have been taken and shared, you'll return to high camp for a short rest before descending all the way back down. Exhausted but pleased with your accomplishment, there is sure to be a well-deserved smile plastered across your face!

**DAY 11** - No matter how good the trip was, you can't help but let your mind begin to wander and think about the comforts awaiting you back in civilization. With a tired mind and sore body, you'll finish walking all the way back to the pickup at 10,000ft and look back up towards the summit with a whole new appreciation for the mountains! The only difference is you'll notice much quicker progress working with gravity instead of against it!



**DAY 12** - You spend the morning preparing all your things for the flight back to civilization. The relaxed atmosphere is a welcomed change after the intensity of climbing such a magnificent mountain. Soon you hear the whirling of the planes propellers, pack everything up and wonder how a trip could go by so fast! You land back in McCarthy and head straight for hot, wood-fired sauna which has already been warmed up by the same guides wishing you good luck at the beginning of your trip. What a nice place to come back to!

**DAY 13** - Feeling totally exhausted but entirely fulfilled and proud to have completed a once-in-a-lifetime mountaineering trip in Alaska, you head back to the airport and once again marvel at the mountains beyond the windows in front of you. It's hard not to find yourself imagining new ascent routes as you dream of your next visit. As you figure out how you can possibly describe your experiences to your friends and family who are eagerly awaiting your stories upon your return, we drop you off at the airport in Anchorage and wave goodbye...for now!



**What's Included:**

- Guiding and instruction from skilled professionals. Our guides have extensive experience, as well as medical, rescue, and avalanche training.
- Round trip transportation between Anchorage and McCarthy.
- Ski plane flights to and from the mountain range.
- Delicious breakfasts, lunches, and dinners while in the mountains.
- Group equipment: stoves, tents, ropes, fuel, etc.

**What you're responsible for:**

- Personal gear – check the gear list for this trip for a complete description.
- Lodging for the nights before and after your trip (see below).
- Food while not on the mountain.
- Guide gratuity – Please let us know if you have any questions about this.

If you would like us to arrange your transportation to/from McCarthy/Kennecott and/or lodging while in the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, we offer this as a free service to our multi-day clients. Please email or give us a call to discuss the details.