

From walking along the entire Amazon River to skiing to the South Pole, take a look at some of the 21st century's most amazing adventurers!

Amazing adventurers

Have you ever dreamt of climbing Mount Everest or visiting Antarctica? If so, you're not alone. Every year, thousands of people try to climb the world's highest mountains or walk across continents. In the past, explorers had compasses and maps, but today's adventurers have satellite phones and GPS. They also use their travels to let the world know about climate change and help people in the countries they visit. Let's take a look at some of the 21st century's greatest adventurers.

Amazon adventurer

Ed Stafford from the UK is the first person to walk the length of the Amazon River. He started by a small stream in the Andes mountains of Peru and arrived at the river's mouth in Brazil, two years and four months later. Snakes, crocodiles and jaguars live in the Amazon rainforest, so it's a dangerous place. Luckily, Ed avoided the big animals, but he was bitten by ants and mosquitoes every day. On his trip, Ed had to find food each morning. Sometimes the fruit, nuts and fish he ate were hard to find and Ed often felt weak and hungry.

Technology was essential for Ed. He used a radio to ask local people for food and permission to enter their land. Many of them came to meet him and guide him through the dense rainforest. As he walked, Ed wrote a blog about his daily experiences.

Ed used his walk to let the world know about climate change and raise money for environmental charities in Brazil and Peru.

A mountain climber

Four thousand climbers, aged between 13 and 80, have been to the top of Everest. Climbing high mountains requires a lot of preparation and is very dangerous, but some of the world's best climbers are now looking for new challenges.

Gerlinde Kaltenbrunner from Austria fell in love with climbing as a teenager. When she left school, she worked as a nurse and climbed in her free time. Starting with Everest, she has been climbing all the world's fourteen peaks over 8,000 metres. To increase the challenge, Gerlinde climbs without using oxygen tanks. Low oxygen levels can make climbers ill, so Gerlinde has to climb slowly. Gerlinde is passionate about Nepal and raises money for a charity for poor children and orphans there.

More than one adventure

Some of today's adventurers go from challenge to challenge. Meagan McGrath from Canada has climbed the highest mountain on each continent, ridden a bike across Canada and run a long-distance race in the Sahara Desert. But perhaps her most incredible journey was a skiing trip to the South Pole. She pulled a tent and all her food on a sledge behind her as she skied. On the first day, she fell into a glacier and had to be rescued. Many people would have given up, but Meagan decided to carry on. Skiing through ice storms, she arrived at the South Pole forty days later.

Erik Weihenmayer from the United States is another unstoppable adventurer. He's climbed mountains, ridden a bike through the deserts of Morocco and kayaked through the Grand Canyon. Amazingly, Erik has been blind since the age of 13. Apart from his travels, he helps people with disabilities to live active lives and takes groups of young blind people on climbing expeditions.

Where next?

Despite new technologies, adventurers still have to live with terrible weather, lack of food and wild animals. Preparation and training are essential, but if you have a sense of adventure, there are continents to cross and hundreds of mountains to climb.

Robin Newton