



Overview

The Oregon Rafting and Backpacking course offers students an opportunity to join with a team of others in challenging themselves physically and mentally while exploring amazing wilderness areas. The journey begins the moment you are picked up at the Redmond airport. You will head straight to the wild and scenic Deschutes River where the first days of your trip will be spent building critical skills in teamwork and outdoor skills. This learning will serve as a foundation and carry over through the remainder of your journey. While on the river, your team will learn paddling methods, river hydrology, raft captaining, and rescue techniques. As you transition into the mountain section of your course, you will trade your wet shoes for hiking boots and explore diverse mountain habitats among the volcanoes of the Central Cascade mountain range. During this section, you will put to use the teamwork and camp craft skills learned in the previous sections while learning basic mountaineering and backpacking skills as well as navigation using a map and compass.



You do not need to have any previous experience. We will teach you the necessary skill sets for each activity and each course area. You do not need to have any previous experience. We will teach you the necessary skill sets for each activity and each course area. The course also includes an emphasis on leadership, character development, and an ethic of service.

Wilderness travel is demanding. It can take every waking moment to get from point A to point B. Backpacking and rafting include numerous challenges, such as navigating through rapids, swimming in cold water, paddling into headwinds, carrying a heavy pack through a pass, making the approach to a peak and more. Additionally, expeditionary travel can pose significant mental and emotional challenges as students must work within a group of diverse individuals, developing their skills as team-members and as leaders. Past students and instructors agree that arriving physically fit and excited for the opportunity for personal development will enhance your experience and ultimately allow you to take full advantage of the expedition.

Course Area

DESCHUTES RIVER, OREGON – The Deschutes River is part of the national Wild & Scenic Rivers System. The river flows north from the Oregon Cascades, feeds into the Columbia River, and then on to the Pacific Ocean. The Lower Deschutes is a popular river for whitewater rafting since the river is spring-fed, which results in an unusually constant water flow and cold water. Excellent geologic evidence is present all around this area. Courses generally travel anywhere from fifty to one hundred miles along the Lower Deschutes. The rapids on the Deschutes are rated to Class III, and are excellent for learning paddle skills and teamwork. The group camps each night along the banks of the river. The Deschutes region has a colorful human history, and a railroad borders much of the length of the Lower Deschutes.





CENTRAL CASCADES, OREGON – Volcanoes dot the spine of the Cascade Mountains, rising as high as 10,000 feet above the forests, lakes, and rivers of the surrounding region. These glaciated peaks run north and south and create perfect mountaineering objectives for you and your team. The Central Cascade range is home to the Three Sisters, Broken Top, Mt. Washington, Three Fingered Jack, and Mt. Jefferson. Four 10,000 foot glaciated volcanoes are present in this course area, with a total of nine major volcanoes. You'll find a unique blend of dry east side and moist west side weather conditions which allow diverse types of vegetation to flourish. The area has a complex geologic history that continues today. You can find active glaciers methodically carving away the mountain and the dramatic traces of avalanches that have altered the landscape. It is these features of the volcanoes that create a challenging playground from which you and your team will learn the more technical aspects of backpacking with the possibility of back-country rock-climbing, learning introductory mountaineering skills, and/or attempting to summit a mountain. Depending upon the peak, a summit attempt may entail 3,000ft of elevation gain in one day, it may require technical rock travel involving harnesses and ropes, or it may necessitate glacier and roped-team travel. Snow could potentially factor into a substantial portion of this section of the course.

Course Activities

RAFTING – Students will travel on the river in four to six person paddle rafts, and learn to “captain” (maneuver) their paddle raft team through Class II to III rapids. After lessons in basic river travel and safety, students will progress into learning to read currents, anticipate obstacles, scout rapids, and negotiate technical portions of the river. Students will also learn river hydrology, swimming in currents, paddle techniques, and expeditionary travel. While on the rafting expedition, there may also be an opportunity for short day hikes.



BACKPACKING – Our backpacking courses focus on wilderness skills such as navigation, natural history and living in the backcountry. Backpacking courses spend time both on and off trail, and travel to remote and beautiful places that are an ideal Outward Bound classroom. Activities include: leadership and communication skill seminars, peak ascents and traveling through mountainous terrain both on and off trail. Leave No Trace camping techniques, navigation and first aid are additional skills students will learn. You will travel over terrain that may reach up to 9,000 feet.

SOLO – In order for profound learning to take place, there must be time to reflect on the experience. The Solo Experience provides this opportunity to reflect, rest and practice the campcraft skills you have been learning throughout the course. Solo length is based on length of course, weather, student condition, age and instructor preference. You will not travel during this time and your instructors will check on you occasionally, but you will be mostly alone for the duration of your solo. Instructors will choose your solo site to offer as much solitude as possible, within a safe distance for emergency contact with them, and you will be provided with sufficient water, food, and equipment. Most students spend their Solo time



journaling, drawing, reflecting, thinking and resting as they process lessons of the course to focus on their goals for the future.

SERVICE – Service to others and environmental stewardship are core values of Outward Bound and are integrated into each course. Groups follow Leave No Trace ethics as service to the environment and engage in acts of service while leading and supporting fellow students. Designated service projects are coordinated with land managers like the US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to collaborate on land restoration projects. Additionally, students may have the opportunity to work alongside select social service agencies like nursing homes and hospitals. Students develop a value of service, seeing the impact of their actions firsthand, and transfer this desire to serve their communities back home.

FINAL EXPEDITION – Outward Bound believes that an appropriate amount of independence is a powerful educational tool. To deliver that benefit, Outward Bound purposefully and gradually transfers certain leadership responsibilities to the students, culminating with our “Final Expedition.” Near the end of course, your group may be given the opportunity to travel without your instructor’s direct guidance. Many of our students feel this phase of the course is the most rewarding, as the group learns to work together, problem solve, and accomplish a goal independently, while utilizing all the skills they have acquired during the expedition. Instructors maintain overall risk-management by using check-ins, careful route planning and accurate assessment of group abilities.

FINAL CHALLENGE EVENT – We typically end our courses with a Final Challenge Event—an individual final physical push. This typically takes the form of an endurance run.

OUTCOMES – This course provides an opportunity for students to learn and practice the ideas of leadership, character development, and service that are integral to Outward Bound. Students will develop and apply these skills in an expedition setting so that they can continue to grow once they return home. As a team, each group will work together to complete difficult tasks necessary for backcountry travel and expedition living. Instructors will work to challenge each student to try new things and step outside their comfort zones, as well as provide feedback that can be acted upon before course end.

Sample Itinerary

Please note that this is an example of activities that might occur on course, not a specific schedule or guarantee. All itineraries will vary depending on student groups, instructor teams, and environmental factors.

Day 1	Course Start, welcome and introductions, gear check, course overview
Day 2	Whitewater rafting: Fitting and use of PFD, safety topics, captaining a raft, reading water, swim assessment, capsize drill, navigation, and camp-craft skills
Day 3	Whitewater rafting: Practice with captaining a raft, scouting, throw bag drill, swimming activities, running scouted rapids
Day 4	Whitewater rafting: Opportunity for a day hike, rock jump, rock climbing, rappelling. These activities are dependent on student and instructor outcomes for the course.



- Day 5 Whitewater Rafting: Day run through the town of Maupin. Largest concentration of rapids. De-issue river gear and receive food and gear for the mountains.
- Day 6 Backpacking: Travel to mountain trailhead, learn how to pack a pack, poop in the woods, treat water and trail etiquette.
- Day 7 Backpacking: Traveling in the mountain environment, navigation and map reading, camp craft skills
- Day 8 SOLO
- Day 9 Personal challenge event, de-issue gear, de-brief, course end celebration and graduation
- Day 10 Transport home