

Course Overview

The Oregon Rafting, Mountaineering & Rock Climbing course is a 30-day expedition through some of Oregon's most beautiful and renowned wilderness areas. Your journey will begin the moment you are picked up at the Redmond airport. Whether you start on the river, the rocks, or in the mountains, the first days on course allow students time to build critical skills in teamwork and camp craft that will carry over to the remainder of your journey. At the world famous Smith Rock State Park, you will learn climbing techniques, as well as the basic gear, knots, and rope systems that keep you safe amidst the grandeur of towering geologic formations. Along the wild and scenic Deschutes River, your team will learn paddling methods, river hydrology, raft captaining, and self-rescue techniques. The mountain expedition will bring you through diverse mountain habitats among the volcanoes of the Central Cascade Range. During this section, you will put to use the teamwork and camp craft skills learned in the previous sections while learning to navigate using a map and compass.

You do not need to have any previous experience but students should be highly motivated. 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.

From getting up early, packing your bags and cooking breakfast to hiking up a mountain, traveling in the wilderness is demanding. It can take every waking moment to get from point A to point B. 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

SMITH ROCK STATE PARK, OREGON – Smith Rock is a world-renowned climbing destination that attracts climbers of every ability level. It is widely considered to be one of the top sport climbing areas in the country. Smith Rock is a uniquely beautiful area that commonly graces postcards and calendars. The Crooked River lazily winds its way through the canyon, cutting a path through the cliffs and spires. To the west, the snow-capped volcanoes of the Cascade Range rise on the horizon, above the flat checkerboard of irrigated plains. One of the most striking features is a prominent spire, Monkey Face. Given the dry and temperate climate, rock climbing is feasible most of the year.

DESCHUTES RIVER, OREGON – The Deschutes River is part of the national Wild & Scenic Rivers System. The river flows north from the Oregon Cascades, 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 flow and cold water. Excellent geologic evidence is present all around this area. This course will travel the entire 96-mile stretch of the Lower Deschutes River. 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 over 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 eastside 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 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.

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.

ROCK CLIMBING – Students will receive individual instruction and test their skills against vertical cracks, steep faces and boulders. Camping will be in a front country site at Smith Rock State Park among the multicolored cliffs and spires. Students will learn about basic climbing equipment, rope management, wearing harnesses, tying knots, belaying and rappelling techniques, and movement on rock.

MOUNTAINEERING – Mountaineering courses move through high mountain terrain and focus on preparation for a peak attempt that may require the use of ropes, technical equipment, and possibly rock climbing or snow travel. During this section of the course, students will start by learning backpacking skills including on and off trail travel, map and compass navigation, and campsite selection. In progression, you will learn basic mountaineering skills. Depending on the season and the course area, you may learn about route finding snow travel, ice axe use, rope team travel, or movement on fixed lines. In late July through August, snow and glacier travel is still possible, but less frequent than with the earlier season courses.

PEAK ATTEMPT – Peak attempts are day-long enterprises often entailing pre-dawn starts. Your course will include at least one peak attempt and is highly dependent upon the weather, the student's physical preparedness, and group performance on course. Successful peak climbs require



patience, efficiency, communication, teamwork, and commitment to skill mastery to reach the summit. Depending on the time of year, the peak attempt may involve roped climbing on snow and/or rock, utilizing technical mountaineering skills.

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.

FINAL EXPEDITION – Outward Bound believes that an appropriate amount of independence is a powerful educational tool. In order 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—if you and your group have demonstrated the necessary leadership, team problem solving, and wilderness living skill—you may be given the opportunity to travel without immediate guidance from your instructors. During the final expedition, instructors maintain overall risk-management for the group with check-ins and advanced scouting. Many of our students feel this phase of the course was the most rewarding, as the group learns to work as a team, problem solve, and accomplish a goal independently, while utilizing all the skills they have acquired.

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, Bureau of Land Management, and National Park Service 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 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 or triathlon-style challenge.

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, gear check, Course Overview
Day 2-7	River Section
Day 8	Cross Over to Rock Section, Service Project
Day 9-16	Rock Climbing
Day 17-21	Mountain Section, Main Expedition
Day 22	Resupply
Day 23-28	Solo, Final Expedition (peak attempt)
Day 29	Final Challenge Event, De-Issue gear, Graduation and Celebration
Day 30	Course End, Transportation Home