

Overview

This backpacking expedition will take students along the crest of the Cascade Mountains of Central Oregon – some of the most beautiful country laden with wildflowers and snow-capped peaks. While exploring diverse mountain habitats among the volcanoes of the Central Cascade mountain range, you will learn basic backpacking and campcraft skills. 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

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.

Course Activities

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.

PEAK ATTEMPT – If weather, terrain, and student abilities permit, your course may include a peak attempt. Peak attempts are day-long enterprises often entailing pre-dawn starts. Successful peak climbs require patience, efficiency, communication, teamwork, and commitment to skill mastery to reach the

summit. On backpacking courses we do not climb peaks that require technical gear or ropes, but the peak hikes we attempt are challenging and beautiful.

SERVICE – Service to others and the environment is a core value of Outward Bound and is integrated into each course. Participants follow Leave No Trace ethics as service to the environment and do acts of service while leading and supporting fellow participants. Students develop a value of service, seeing the impact of their actions firsthand, and transfer this desire to serve their communities back home.

SOLO – In order for profound learning to take place, there must be time to reflect on the experience. Within course, the solo is that opportunity. It is a chance to experience solitude in the wilderness without distraction while also taking a break from the physical rigors of course. Students experience time away from their group for short periods of time throughout the course. These “mini-solos” are at solo sites chosen by instructors to provide as much solitude as possible (within emergency whistle-signaling distance of other group members). Participants have all necessary equipment, food and water. On this course, solos range from 30 minutes to no more than 24 hours.

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

OUTCOMES – This course will introduce students to the ideas of leadership, character development, and service that are integral to Outward Bound. Students will begin to develop these skills in an expedition setting so that they can continue to grow once they return home. Instructors will work to challenge students to try new things and step outside their comfort zones. As a team, each group will work together to complete difficult tasks necessary for backcountry travel.

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	Travel to mountain trailhead, learn how to pack a pack, treat water and trail etiquette.
Day 3	Camp breakdown, lessons on how to travel in mountain environment, navigation and map reading, camp craft skills, cooking and hygiene. Lessons on group dynamics, leadership, and communication.
Day 4	SOLO
Day 5	Depending on group cohesion and interest there is an opportunity to climb one of the mountains in the course area.
Day 6	Personal challenge event, de-issue gear, de-brief, course end celebration and graduation
Day 7	Travel Home