



## Overview

The Oregon Rafting and Backpacking course offers students an opportunity to challenge themselves physically and mentally while exploring amazing wilderness areas. The first days of your trip will be spent on the wild and scenic Deschutes River building critical skills in teamwork and outdoor skills, as well as learning paddling skills, river hydrology, raft captaining, and rescue techniques. Trading your wet shoes for hiking boots, you will explore diverse mountain habitats among the volcanoes of the Central Cascade mountain range, learning basic mountaineering and backpacking skills as well as navigation using a map and compass. The course also includes an emphasis on leadership, character development, and an ethic of service. From navigating through rapids, paddling into headwinds, to carrying a heavy pack, wilderness travel is demanding. You do not need to have any previous experience but arriving physically fit and excited for the opportunity for personal development will enhance your experience and allow you to take full advantage of the expedition.



## Outcomes

Outward Bound promotes character development, leadership, and service in the most engaging classroom possible ... the wilderness. In real time, students experience the effects of their decisions on themselves and the other members of their group as they work to complete difficult tasks necessary for wilderness travel and group cohesion. Instructors challenge students to try new things and step outside their comfort zones. They also provide feedback that students implement on course and when they return to their communities.

## Course Area

**DESCHUTES RIVER, OREGON** – The Deschutes River is part of the national Wild & Scenic Rivers System, flowing north from the Oregon Cascades to the Columbia River and then on to the Pacific Ocean. Courses generally travel anywhere from fifty to one hundred miles along the Lower Deschutes. The rapids on the Deschutes are rated to class IV, mostly class II-III. The group camps each night along the banks of the river.

**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. The Central Cascade Range is home to the Three Sisters, Broken Top, Mt. Washington, Three Fingerted Jack, and Mt. Jefferson. Active glaciers, traces of avalanches, and the volcanoes themselves are the perfect setting for learning the more technical aspects of mountaineering and backpacking. Depending upon the peak, your summit attempt may necessitate glacier and roped-team travel.

## Course Activities

**BACKPACKING** – Our backpacking courses focus on wilderness skills such as navigation, natural history and living in the remote and beautiful backcountry. 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.



**WHITEWATER 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 learn to read currents, anticipate obstacles, and scout rapids. Students will also learn river hydrology, swimming in currents, and paddle techniques. There may also be an opportunity for short day hikes.

**SOLO** – In order for profound learning to take place, students spend time reflecting on their experience, and Solo is that opportunity. The Solo experience provides an important break from the rigors of the expedition and gives students the opportunity to reflect on their Outward Bound experience. With sufficient food and equipment, students will set up camp at sites of their own, using the wilderness skills learned during the first portions of the course. The amount of time students spend on Solo is based on course length, weather, student condition, age, and Instructor preference. Solo campsites are chosen to offer as much solitude as possible (yet be within emergency whistle-signaling distance of other group members). 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. Instructors check on each participant at regular intervals, as safety is always a top priority.

**SERVICE** – Service to others and to our environment is a core value of Outward Bound and is integrated into each course. Groups follow Leave No Trace ethics as they engage in acts of service while leading and supporting fellow participants. 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, hospitals, and organic farms. Students see the impact of their actions firsthand and may develop a desire to continue service in their home communities.



**FINAL EXPEDITION** – Outward Bound believes that an appropriate amount of independence is a powerful educational tool. During the travel sections of this course, Outward Bound instructors purposefully and gradually transfer certain leadership responsibilities to the students culminating with our “Final Expedition.” Near the end of course—if the group has demonstrated the necessary leadership, team problem solving and wilderness living skills—students may have the opportunity to travel without instructors immediately present. Many of our students feel this phase of the course is 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.

**PERSONAL CHALLENGE** – We typically end our courses with a Challenge Event—an individual final physical push. This typically takes the form of an endurance run or triathlon-style challenge.



## 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.*

### 15-DAY COURSE

- Day 1 Course Start, welcome and introductions, duffle shuffle, course overview
- Day 2-6 Whitewater rafting: Use of PFD, safety topics, captaining a raft, reading water, swim assessment, navigation, and camp-craft skills. Practice captaining a raft, flip drills, scouting, throw bag drill, swimming activities, run rapids. Opportunity for a day hike, rock jump, rock climbing, rappelling.
- Day 7 Complete the 96 mile river rafting section and take out at Deschutes River State Park. De-issue river gear, close out river section. Issue mountain equipment.
- Day 8 Travel to the mountains. Intro to pack-packing and hiking. Hike from the trailhead.
- Day 9-11 Backpacking Section: Lessons on how to pack a pack, travel in mountain environment, navigation and map reading, camp craft skills, cooking, water treatment, hygiene, travel and etiquette.
- Day 11-12 SOLO: depending on group and itinerary, SOLO can be a couple hours or up to an overnight.
- Day 13 Backpacking: Travel towards course end
- Day 14 Personal challenge event, de-issue gear, de-brief, course end celebration and graduation
- Day 15 Travel home

