

Overview

The Oregon Rafting & Rock Climbing for Girls course offers students an opportunity to challenge themselves while exploring amazing wilderness areas. The first days of your trip will be spent building critical competencies in teamwork and outdoor skills. Amidst towering geologic formations at the world-famous Smith Rock State Park, you will learn climbing techniques, as well as use of basic gear, knots, and rope systems to keep you safe. Along the wild and scenic Deschutes River, your team will learn paddling methods, river hydrology, raft captaining, and self-rescue techniques. The course emphasizes leadership, character development, and an ethic of service. Whether navigating rapids, hiking long distances to reach climbs, or keeping calm when exposed to heights, 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.

This course is open to non-binary and gender expansive identifying students. We strive to create an inclusive environment for all our students.

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.



SMITH ROCK STATE PARK, OREGON – Smith Rock State Park is a world-renowned climbing destination that attracts climbers of every ability level. The Crooked River winds its way through the canyon, and to the west, the snow-capped volcanoes of the Cascade Range rise on the horizon. Eagles nest in the rocks and the area is abundant with incredible wildlife. 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.



Course Activities

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.

ROCK CLIMBING – Students will receive individual instruction and test their skills against the vertical cracks, steep faces and boulders of Smith Rock State Park or one of our favorite backcountry climb sites. Among the skills students will learn are: basic climbing equipment, rope management, wearing harnesses, tying knots, belaying and rappelling techniques, and movement on rock.



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.

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.

Day 1	Course Start, welcome and introductions, duffle shuffle, course overview
Day 2-6	Whitewater Rafting: Fitting and use of PFD, safety topics, captaining a raft, reading water, swim assessment, navigation, and camp-craft skills. Practice with captaining a raft, flip drills, scouting, throw bag drill, swimming activities. Opportunities for a day hike, rock jump, rock climbing, rappelling. These activities are dependent on student and instructor outcomes for the course.
Day 7	Complete the 96-mile river rafting section by taking out at Deschutes State Park. De-issue river gear. River closing and celebration.
Day 8	Travel to Smith Rock State Park. Orient to new environment and new equipment.
Day 9-13	Rock Climbing: Introduction to rock climbing systems. Movement on rock, belaying, top roping and lowering. Development of climbing technique. Experience various types of rock climbs and difficulties. Continue to work on belaying and supporting other climbers. Continue building community within your group.
Day 14	Personal challenge event, de-issue gear, de-brief, course end celebration and graduation.
Day 15	Transport home

