



Course Overview

The Northwest to Himalayas Rafting and Trekking course is an extraordinary expedition combining beautiful environments and challenging activities in Oregon and India. This expedition begins on either the Salmon River in Idaho where you explore the renowned “River of No Return,” or the wild and scenic Deschutes River in Oregon. On the river you build critical skills in rafting, teamwork, group dynamics and camp craft, that you carry with you rafting in India. Transitioning to the first mountain section of your course, you 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 put to use teamwork and camp craft skills learned on the river and learn basic mountaineering and backpacking skills.

Once you have built your foundation for rafting and backpacking, you travel to New Delhi, India. This international expedition connects to local culture and communities. You will trek in the Himalayan mountains and raft the Ganges River. The course ends in New Delhi, India, giving you the opportunity to extend your time in India and travel on your own if you choose. Wilderness travel can be challenging, but with appropriate pre-course preparation - - using tools we provide - - adults of various ages and body types can be successful. Arriving as physically fit as possible 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 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.

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 to the Columbia River and then on to the Pacific Ocean. The Lower Deschutes is a popular river for both whitewater rafting and fly fishing. 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 IV, mostly class II-III, and are excellent for learning paddling skills and teamwork. 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. These glaciated peaks run north and south and create perfect mountaineering objectives for this section of the course. 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 region, with a total of nine major volcanoes in the area. One can find a unique blend of dry east side and wet west side weather conditions which allow diverse types of vegetation to flourish. The area has a complex geologic history that continues today. Active glaciers methodically carve away the mountains and the dramatic traces of avalanches that altered the landscape can be found throughout.

KUARI PASS TREK, GARHWAL (UTTARANCHAL) INDIA – The trek over the Kuari Pass was the route followed by Eric Shipton and Bil Tilman in 1934 on their way to the Rishi Gorge, and by other mountaineers en route to the peaks on the Indo-Tibetan border. Also known as the Curzon Trail, this trail was named after Lord Curzon, who was a keen trekker, and it is said that the path was specially improved so that he could do the trek. The crossing of the Kuari Pass is a fitting conclusion to a trek that takes in three lesser passes and crosses five major rivers - the Pindar, Kaliganga, Nandakini, Briehiganga and the Dhauliganga. This trek takes students over mountain passes, through dense forests of oak, pine, rhododendron, fir and deodar, traversing bugayals - wide open meadows typical of the region which serve as high altitude summer grazing grounds - and numerous streams. Throughout the trek students will experience truly spectacular views of the Himalayas.

ALAKNANDA/GANGES RIVER, INDIA– Students will raft the Alaknanda River to its confluence with the Bhagirathi, and from there on to the actual Ganga River. Getting a feel of the grand river and her environs, students camp on sandy beaches, check out small villages and look for elusive bird and wildlife as they negotiate the challenges of some amazing Class III and Class IV whitewater.

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.

MOUNTAINEERING/TREKKING– Mountaineering and trekking 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. During this section of the course, students start by learning backpacking skills including on





and off trail travel, map and compass navigation, and campsite selection. In India, we embrace the tradition of large expeditions using horses and support staff to move through the mountains, allowing participants to travel with light day packs and enjoy the surroundings without the burden of a heavy pack. Please note that peak attempts are dependent upon variables such as weather, group dynamic, and course outcomes.

CULTURAL IMMERSION/TOWN DAYS – During this course, “town days” provide opportunities to explore the area and take care of any needs. In Oregon the course will visit the town of Bend. In India, there is an urban navigation exercise in the town of Rishikesh, followed by the opportunity for students to explore the area in small groups. Rishikesh is known as *the gateway* to the [Garhwal Himalayas](#) and is the Yoga capital of the world. In Rishikesh the course attends the evening ritual worshipping the Ganga. Also, students have the opportunity



to travel south from New Delhi to the town of Agra and see the Taj Mahal. The Taj Mahal is regarded by many as the best example of [Mughal architecture](#) and is widely recognized as “the jewel of Muslim art in India.” It is one of the world’s most celebrated structures and a symbol of India’s rich history.

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. Students see the impact of their actions firsthand, and develop an appreciation of service and transfer this desire to serve their communities back home.



Sample Itinerary



The following is an example of what your course itinerary might look like. Your actual course plan will vary according to weather, student skills and abilities and instructor preferences.

- Day 1** Course Start, welcome and introductions, course overview
- Day 2-9** Whitewater Rafting: Travel up to 100 miles on the beautiful Upper and Lower Deschutes River.
- Day 10** Prep for mountains
- Day 11-17** Mountaineering: Travel in mountain environment. Continue to learn and practice both technical and human skills with opportunity to climb one of the mountains in the course area.
- Day 18-21** Wilderness First Aid Course - Working with an instructor from the Wilderness Medical Training Center, you will learn basic wilderness first aid skills for remote environments.
- Day 22-28** Mountaineering and SOLO: Longer courses have the opportunity for a 3 day/2 night solo. Length of SOLO is up to the discretion of the instructors and will be no longer than a 72 hour period
- Day 29** De-issue and clean mountain gear.
- Day 30** Town Day: Visit the town of Bend Oregon, opportunity to purchase any gear necessary for the remainder of the course.
- Day 31-32** Travel to India
- Day 33-36** Introductions to India, visit the Taj Mahal. Meet Outward Bound Himalaya staff and make preparations for trekking and river sections of course. Opportunity for exploration of Rishikesh.
- Day 37-40** Trekking Section: Meet support staff and familiarization of gear and systems that will be used during section. Travel through small villages with opportunities for cultural interactions with local villagers. Move through the foothills of the Himalaya towards the Kuari Pass.
- Day 41-45** Cross the Kuari Pass and continue trekking through the Himalaya.
- Day 46** Travel to the Alaknanda River. De-issue mountain gear and the re-issuing of river gear.
- Day 47-51** River Section: Follow the Alaknanda River to the Ganges River, learning about cultural and natural history along the way.
- Day 52** De-issue of river gear, pack to travel back to Delhi.
- Day 53-55** Explore Old Delhi by rickshaw. Course closing and celebration. Course ends at 5:00pm at the airport.