



## Itinerary Overview

### Colorado Rockies Rock Climbing & Alpine Backpacking – Ages 16-18 – 15 day



Welcome, you're in for an experience of a lifetime! Imagine hiking through rolling forests, sharing alpine meadows with mountain goats and climbing windswept peaks. Imagine scaling vertical rock cliffs deep in the Rocky Mountains and settling down for the night under a thick blanket of shimmering stars. Each day you will be getting to know your newfound community better, learning about the area and yourself, laughing with your expedition mates, and exploring North America's most famous mountain range. You don't need to have previous backpacking or climbing experience to fully embrace this extraordinary expedition, which combines beautiful environments and exciting activities with an emphasis on individual growth and community. In the mountains, you will learn the basics and finer points of living in the backcountry, as well as working in a team to achieve your goals. You will scale peaks high above tree line and stop often to admire awe-inspiring vistas. You will learn the basics of wilderness travel —how to pack appropriately, cook in the backcountry, set up tarps, and navigate using a map and compass. Throughout the course, you will sleep under a tarp, cook your own food, and take responsibility for the well-being of yourself and your crewmates.

Your Instructors are highly qualified mountaineers and dedicated educators. They will serve as teachers, trainers, and mentors as you learn the skills required for wilderness travel. Through daily discussions, they will also help you and your group to discover the larger meaning in these activities. You will discover new things about yourself: how you deal with uncertainty, stress and challenge; how you can better work with others; and your potential as a leader.

Wilderness travel is demanding. This course may be the hardest thing you have ever done. You should be aware of what you're getting into and be excited about tackling new challenges. It can literally take every waking moment to get from point A to point B. From steep mountain hiking with a heavy pack to waking up well before the sun rises, traveling in the wilderness can be hard. Past students agree that arriving physically fit and mentally prepared to take on challenges will enhance your experience and ability to do well on your course, which ultimately allows you to take full advantage of your expedition.



This course requires no previous experience with hiking or backpacking. However, even if you're an experienced outdoorsperson there is still a lot that can be gained from the instruction and teamwork involved in an Outward Bound course.



## Course Area

Get ready for **Rocky Mountain high country**, where rolling forests, steep rocky slopes and miles of remote, alpine meadows create an adventure wonderland. Over 50 peaks push above 14,000' in Colorado, and countless craggy, peaks and ridges weave between valleys as far as the eye can see. If the timing is right, colorful wildflowers will brighten green alpine tundra snow-melt stream banks. You might share camp with elk, deer, moose and myriad other wildlife. You may even stumble upon relics of Colorado's rich human history: from artifacts of the region's indigenous peoples, to historic mining structures and equipment. All of Colorado's course areas share much in common, but below are some of the unique features of yours:

Your course will begin at **Turkey Rocks** a popular climbing destination in the foothills area drained by the South Platte River. Here you will find an abundance of granite domes and cliffs. These rock formations offer some of the best crack and face climbs in the state and compare well to Joshua Tree (California) or City of Rocks (Idaho). The various rock formations are named with a turkey theme in mind, such as Turkey Tail, Leftovers, and Turkey Perch.

The Alpine Backpacking section of your COBS experience will take place in the **Sangre de Cristo** mountain range. This is the



southernmost subrange of the Rocky Mountains. The Sangres are located in southern Colorado and stretch all the way to northern New Mexico. The name is Spanish for "Blood of Christ" and may refer to the occasional reddish hues observed during sunrise and sunset when the alpenglow occurs. You will be surrounded by some of Colorado's famous 14,000 ft. peaks such as the Crestone Needle, Kit Carson, and Humboldt peak as you make your way through some of the most breathtaking scenery Colorado has to offer.





## Course Activities

**Alpine Backpacking** – Alpine backpacking means moving through high mountain terrain mostly above tree line. The emphasis of this course is to teach you smart and efficient backpacking and alpine travel techniques. You can expect to travel on and off trail over wooded and alpine terrain that can be rough, demanding, steep and exposed and may at times require the use of ropes and ice axes to traverse a slope or ascend a pass.

**Rock Climbing** – You will spend at least 4–5 days exploring and learning the techniques and grace of rock climbing. The rock climbing instruction is for all levels and includes basic climbing techniques, helmet and harness use, climbing commands, tie-ins and climbing knots, belay techniques, basic top rope systems, and rappelling.

**Solo** – A one- to three-night solo provides an important break from the rigors of both the expedition and the distractions from everyday life. This is a truly once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. With sufficient food and equipment, you'll spend 1-3 days alone at your campsite to journal, rest, reflect on the past and look ahead to future goals. Your solo site will be close enough to the sites of the Instructors in case of an emergency, but far enough removed to assure your solitude. You will not travel during this time and your Instructors will check on you occasionally, but you will be alone. Many students are initially nervous about solo, but later recall solo as one of the highlights of their entire course.



**Service** – Service is an integral part of the Outward Bound curriculum. We encourage service to the environment in the form of leaving campsites cleaner than we find them and practicing Leave No Trace ethics throughout the course. Whenever possible, we coordinate service projects with land managers (US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, State Parks and local land trusts, etc.) and select social service agencies (nursing homes, hospitals, etc.). You also practice daily service and compassion to your crew mates, whether that's making hot drinks on a cold morning, or helping someone on with their pack. We hope you'll bring this ethic home and exhibit leadership in your local communities!

**Challenge Event** – There are no set-in-stone course end challenge events, as each challenge will be tailored to the current conditions and participants. The challenge event may take the form of a run or team challenge. This event is your opportunity to finish course successfully and with style, by embodying all the lessons you have learned during your Outward Bound course. You may be surprised by how far you can still go given the challenges you have already accomplished.

**Final Expedition** - The Colorado Outward Bound School believes that an appropriate amount of independence is a powerful educational tool. In order to deliver that benefit, our instructors purposefully and gradually transfer leadership responsibilities to the students. This progression culminates with our "Final Expedition." Near the end of course, if you and your group have demonstrated the necessary leadership, problem solving and wilderness living skills, you may be given the opportunity to travel without your Instructors immediately present. This "Final Expedition" will range from three to five days, depending on course length, student age, staff assessment of student abilities and terrain type. Many of our students love the independence of this phase of course, as the group learns to work together, problem solve, and accomplish a goal independently, while utilizing all the skills they have acquired. Instructors periodically check in with the group to ensure student wellbeing and coordinate travel plans.



## Sample Itinerary

The following is an example of what your itinerary may look like. Your actual course plan will vary according to weather, your group's skills and abilities, and your Instructors' preferences.



## 15-Day Rock Climbing & Alpine Backpacking

**Day 1** – Drive to Turkey Rocks for Course Start

**Day 2 – 6** – Rock Climbing & Lessons

*Curriculum includes:*

- Basic leadership
- Basic team decision making
- Basic camp craft and cooking
- Outward Bound philosophy and history
- Advanced top rope rock climbing skills
- Belaying
- Rappelling

**Day 7-13** - Backpacking and Peak Attempt

*Curriculum includes:*

- Basic map and compass navigation
- Basic first aid
- Backcountry living
- Group off-trail travel
- Peer leadership
- Time management
- Self-Awareness
- Conflict management
- Reflection/Solo

**Day 14** - Challenge Event and Course End

**Day 15** - Transportation home