



## Itinerary and Overview

### Pathfinder Cross Country Skiing & Southwest Canyon Backpacking – 30 Days – Ages 18-25



Welcome! You're in for an experience of a lifetime! Imagine snowshoeing through pristine snow, sharing alpine meadows with mountain goats and climbing windswept peaks. Imagine scrambling down surreal slot canyons in Southern Utah, then settling down for the night under a thick blanket of shimmering stars. Each day you will be getting to know your expedition team better, learning about the area and yourself, laughing with your crew mates, and exploring some of North America's most mesmerizing and famous landscapes. You don't need to have previous snowshoeing or backpacking 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 backcountry snow travel and camping, 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 employ your newly learned skillsets in the southern Utah desert as you and your crew mates take greater ownership over course.

The Pathfinder course is specifically designed for young adults searching for a direction in life. This course offers a purposeful wilderness adventure approach to develop three primary outcomes:

- **INCREASE SELF KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS**
- **IMPROVE GOAL-SETTING AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES**
- **DEVELOP PERSEVERANCE AND SELF-EFFICACY**

Your Instructors are highly qualified and dedicated outdoor 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.



## Course Activities

**Wilderness First Aid Course** – You will spend two days in a classroom at our high mountain basecamp, learning about wilderness medicine. You will have the opportunity to gain a Wilderness First Aid (WFA) certification during this course, which is considered a standard for many entry level jobs in the Outdoor Industry.



**Rockies Snowshoeing Expedition** – Spring in the Rockies is very winter like - deep snow covers the mountains, and temperature dip below freezing every night. Even daytime temps can be single digits. This section begins at our premier mountain basecamp in Leadville, Colorado, with a few days of dormitory and dining hall-supported outings. After mastering the basics of winter living, you'll embark on a multi-day backcountry snowshoe expedition. You'll camp in tents, melt snow for water, and develop resilience while enjoying gorgeous views of snow-capped peaks.

**Nordic Skiing** – Building upon snow travel competencies and gained physical endurance, you will apply and grow your winter backcountry knowledge while developing a new skill. Nordic skiing will have your group gliding into new challenges as you explore the snowy terrain along your expedition. This section will begin back at our Leadville basecamp and include instruction and day trips to develop the skills needed to travel through diverse backcountry terrain before heading out on a multi-day Nordic ski expedition.

**Peak Attempt** – Your expedition will include at least one peak attempt. Peak attempts are major enterprises and typically require early morning starts and take all day to complete. Weather, or other factors including group dynamics and physical ability, may preclude even an attempt to ascend a peak

**Canyon Backpacking** - Exploring the canyon environment is done through backpacking, as well as hiking through narrow and picturesque slots. Backpackers carry everything they need – food, shelter, clothing and gear – allowing them to go deep into the wilderness where few people go. Backpackers feel a sense of freedom from deadlines and tasks as they grow accustomed to eating when hungry, setting up camp when tired, and having complete control over what they accomplish each day. The simplicity of hiking gives students the opportunity to focus both internally on their own thoughts and self-reliance, as well as externally to connect deeply with others as they talk, sing, problem solve, and spend time together without distraction.



This course will begin with lessons in basic travel and camping techniques. Along the way, students learn Leave No Trace techniques, map and compass navigation, and camp craft as they get a feel for the human and natural history of the area. Students backpack along canyon rims and through deep canyon bottoms, sometimes shedding their backpacks for smaller daypacks to navigate into jaw-dropping narrows or explore thousand-year-old cliff dwellings and rock art. Crews camp on expansive rock slabs with views of the otherworldly landscapes and stop along the way to explore microclimates and canyon ecosystems. Most importantly, students spend time in an incredible area where modern life has been stripped down to the essentials of travelling through a landscape of rock, sand, sky - feeling the sunshine on their face and watching the sun set as the Milky Way lights up the night sky over this magical landscape.



**Solo** – 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.

**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 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. When you emerge from this final phase of course you will understand a truth: For the rest of your life you and your team will understand that there is more in you than you ever thought possible.

**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.

**Guided Reflection and Transference** – At Outward Bound we believe there is no learning without reflection. Throughout course, you will be prompted to reflect on what you're experiencing on course, and what it means in the greater context of your life. Sometimes this is a journaling exercise, sometimes a group sharing experience, and sometimes a moment of solitude to think for yourself. You spend focused time towards course end exploring how your new knowledge, skills and attributes can apply to your life after course.



## Course Areas

### Rocky Mountains, Colorado

The Rocky Mountains, one of the most famous mountain ranges in the world, stretch 3,000 miles from Alaska to New Mexico. These legendary peaks have had a profound influence on the development of the continental United States. The Colorado Rocky Mountains has the greatest concentration of high peaks in the lower 48 states, with hundreds of 'Thirteeners' (13,000 plus foot tall mountains) and 54 'Fourteeners.' The state is famous for its abundant wilderness adventure possibilities, from skiing to rock climbing to mountaineering. Colorado courses may take place in The Gore, The Holy Cross, The Sawatch, The Elks, The Sangre de Cristos, the Rawah, or the San Juan mountains. Each of these Colorado ranges present unique challenges, but they are all beautiful, wild and rugged. These regions are within the [ancestral lands](#) of of the Núu-agma-təvə-pų (Ute), Cheyenne, Arapaho, Očeti Šakówiŋ (Sioux), Eastern Shoshone, Jicarilla Apache, and Pueblos nations.

### Canyon Country

The most spectacular aspects of the Utah landscape are the hidden treasures found within its vast canyon networks, formed by millennia of wind and water. The canyonlands of Southern Utah are still as stunning, mysterious and wild as they were for the Ancestral Puebloan and Fremont Native Americans who roamed these lands over 800 years ago, and whose cliff dwellings and rock art still abound in the canyons. The canyons are composed of a spell-binding labyrinth of alcoves, fins, pinnacles, buttes, towering walls, ledges and arches just waiting to be explored on course. Canyoneering courses also venture into narrower, deeper chasms sometimes as narrow as two feet wide with walls rising several hundred feet on each side. These sandstone slot canyons are a geological playground for scrambling, teamwork, and rappelling. The routes we travel have been used for thousands of years and are within the ancestral homelands of the Núu-agma-təvə-pų (Ute), Pueblos, Southern Paiute, Diné, and Hopi nations.





## 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.

**Days 1-4** - Course start and basecamp training in Leadville, CO – day outings from our campus, sleeping in dormitories, eating in a dining hall, and your Wilderness First Aid Course and Certification

Curriculum includes:

- Basic navigation
- Basic first aid
- Snowshoeing
- Avalanche Awareness Theory and Rescue Techniques
- Self-awareness
- Awareness of others
- Developing inclusive group culture
- Basic team decision making
- Outward Bound philosophy and history

**Days 5-14** - Rocky Mountain Winter Expedition

- Applied leadership practice
- Applied avalanche awareness
- Conflict resolution
- Personal resilience
- Winter backcountry travel on snowshoes
- Winter backcountry camping
- Winter backcountry travel on Nordic Skis

**Day 15** - Transition to Utah

**Days 17-24** - Canyonlands Backpacking and Solo

Curriculum includes:

- Advanced navigation
- Advanced decision making
- Goal setting
- Time management
- Peer leadership
- Self-Awareness
- Transference to home life

**Day 25-28** - Final Expedition – Apply all you've learned to a final group challenge

**Day 29** - Personal challenge event, course end celebration

**Day 30** - Departure home



## Expedition Life

**Group Living** – Living and working with a small group is an opportunity to make lifelong friends and enjoy memories that will last a lifetime. For some, it can also be a source of friction and challenge. You may feel frustration or annoyance with your teammates at times as you and your group attempt to meet your goals and make decisions big and small. Students step off the bus with varying levels of motivation, fear, and doubt. Once the trip starts even the most eager students may become reluctant to take a certain risk or try their best. Investing in working out differences in your group, sharing insights from your challenges and laughing your heads off over the most delicious dinner you’ve ever tasted (hunger is the best spice) are all part of why students walk away from their Outward Bound course with a deeper understanding of life, living, themselves, and each other.

**Food** – You and the other members of your group will learn to cook tasty and nutritious meals over portable gas stoves. Our meals are sometimes meat-free (meat is heavy and spoils quickly) and consist of grains, pasta, nuts, beans, cereals, and other light, dehydrated foods. The food may seem unfamiliar at first—we don’t pack many processed foods or “junk food”—but you will find that it tastes good and gives you energy at the end of a long day. A typical breakfast might be granola or oatmeal; lunch would include tortillas, cheese, and summer sausage or peanut butter and jelly; dinner might be macaroni and cheese or bean, rice, and cheese burritos. We can accommodate some special food needs, but only if we know well in advance. If you have a particularly unusual diet, we may ask you to bring some of your own foods.

**Camp** – As this is not a guided trip, all group members will work together to do camp chores, including cooking, washing pots, setting up tarps, and cleaning boats. You’ll find that as the expedition progresses, your mastery of these camp craft skills will enable you to operate more efficiently and effectively around camp and on the trail.

**Hygiene** – A common misconception about the backcountry is that you have to be dirty all of the time. Not true—it is entirely possible to stay clean and semi-fresh smelling while in the field, as long as you are willing to take the time to get clean. Your instructors will demonstrate clean-up options and explain more about backcountry hygiene when you arrive.

**Typical Day** – A typical day involves rising with the sun, starting the day with stretching, making breakfast, packing up camp, and hitting the trail. You will be busy all day. Once you stop for the day, group members will divide and conquer to get food cooked and camp set up. After dinner, you may meet to address the next day’s plans, or to discuss leadership and teamwork methods, before crawling into your sleeping bag for a well-deserved rest.

