



## Itinerary Overview

### Southwest Alpine Backpacking – 8 Days – Ages 12-13



### Course Description

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 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 the outdoors. You don't need to have previous experience to fully embrace this extraordinary expedition, which combines beautiful environments 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, tie knots, 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 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

**La Sal Mountains, Utah** – This mountain range rises dramatically out of the desert, towering 9000' feet above the surrounding canyon country and the sporting mecca of Moab. The current name of this range originates from the Spanish explorers who came through the area in the 1500s who mistook the snow on the peaks for salt. La Sals are known for their groves of aspens, rich amount of wildlife, high summits, and incredible views overlooking Canyonlands and Arches National Parks and the Four Corners area. Hidden lakes dot the landscape. Peaks in this mountain range vary between ten thousand and just under thirteen thousand feet in elevation and include some of the highest mountains in Southern Utah.



## Course Activities

**Alpine Backpacking** – In the mountains, you will shoulder your backpack filled with all the items necessary for mountain travel and camping. With your crew, you will climb over high passes, attempt to reach summits, descend into lush, vegetated valleys with alpine streams, and work your way over rugged, rocky terrain, learning to rely on and help each other. The days can be long and difficult, and often require an early start to allow ample time to ascend and descend the summit or pass before afternoon rain and thunderstorms appear. In this section, you will generally travel four to six miles each day, carrying all of your food and equipment in backpacks, as you learn and practice the basics of mountain navigation. The altitude and exertion present a challenge, but the magnificent views, sense of accomplishment, and increase in fitness are a few of many of your rewards.



**Peak Attempt** – You will attempt to summit at least one peak. Peak attempts are day-long enterprises and often entail pre-dawn starts. The peak attempts may start from a camp site that you return to that night so you can leave some of your gear behind at camp for the day. Or, it may be that the peak attempt will be part of a travel day in which you are climbing over a pass from one valley to another and summiting with your backpack. From the summit, you will be able to look out over the La Sal mountain range as well as the vast, surrounding Canyonlands region that you have been



traversing. Weather, or other factors including group dynamics and physical ability, may preclude even an attempt to ascend a peak.

**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 time 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 others that you can get help quickly in case of 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 primarily alone for the duration of your solo. Many students are initially nervous about solo, but many later recall solo as one of the highlights of their entire course. This activity may be abbreviated or eliminated depending on weather or other factors.

**Service** – Service is an integral part of Outward Bound values and curriculum. We encourage an ethic of service to our own close-knit community of expedition mates, our surrounding cities, and to the environment. These find action on a daily basis through acts of compassion, formal service projects, and by leaving campsites cleaner than we find them and practicing Leave No Trace® ethics throughout the course. The formal service project days take this service ethic beyond our course and into the greater community. When these service projects are possible they are either community-based – helping people who live in the area – or environmentally-based; working with land managers (US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, local land trusts, etc.) to restore or improve our wild and wonderful public lands. We hope you'll bring this ethic home to help in your local communities!

**Challenge Event** – There are no “set in stone” final challenges, as each challenge throughout course has to fit to the current conditions and participants, but it may take the form of a run or team challenge. This event is your challenge to finish 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 have come during course and how far you can go.

**Reflection and Celebration** – At the end of your course, after you've persevered through challenge, grown close as a group, and put a lot of miles on your boots, you'll celebrate all you've done. You'll also reflect on returning home. How you have grown? What new strength will you bring with you? What challenges await you back home? We're excited for you to find out!



## 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 Alpine Backpacking

Curriculum includes:

- Basic map and compass navigation
- Basic first aid
- Backcountry living
- Basic leadership
- Basic team decision making
- Group off-trail travel
- Self-Awareness
- Outward Bound philosophy and history

**Day 1** - Course Start

**Day 2** – Team building & Lessons

**Day 3-4** - Backpacking

**Day 5** - Peak Attempt

**Day 6-8**– Backpacking

**Day 9** - Solo

**Day 10-11** – Backpacking

**Day 12** - Peak Attempt

**Day 13** - Backpacking

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

**Day 15** - Transportation home