



Itinerary Overview

Alaska Pathfinder – 30 Days – Ages 18-25



Welcome, you're in for an experience of a lifetime! Imagine hiking through rolling forests, sharing alpine meadows with mountain goats, Dall sheep and caribou, and climbing windswept peaks as you explore one of North America's most iconic mountain ranges in Alaska. Each day you will be getting to know your expedition team, learning about your surroundings and yourself and laughing with your crewmates. Each day you'll be getting stronger, physically and mentally, as you learn about your strengths, who you are and who you want to become. The Pathfinder course is specifically designed for young adults searching for a direction in life. This course offers a purposeful wilderness approach to build leadership, character, self-confidence and a service ethic. The focus is on learning leadership skills (such as communication, collaboration, decision making and conflict resolution) and cultivating self-awareness (values, priorities and goals) from expedition activities.

On this course, you will encounter adventure and challenge in backcountry wilderness as well as in the classroom. You'll take a 2-day Wilderness First Aid (WFA) course, a standard medical certification in the outdoor industry. The WFA focuses on responding to remote backcountry medical issues and is ideal for outdoor enthusiasts.

You don't need to have previous backpacking or climbing experience to fully embrace this extraordinary and transformational expedition, which combines beautiful environments and exciting activities with an emphasis on individual growth, personal goal-setting 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 treeline and stop often to admire awe-inspiring vistas.

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; how you approach leadership; and what true potential exists inside you and is waiting to be unlocked.

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 this life-changing expedition.



Course Areas

Chugach National Forest, Kenai Peninsula, Alaska –

Everything is bigger in Alaska: the mountains, the wildlife, the rivers and even the days. During your course, you may have nearly 24 hours of sunlight! This can make sleeping difficult, but you'll have plenty of time for adventuring. The Kenai Peninsula extends off the coast of southern Alaska. The Chugach National Forest, where your course will take place, encompasses nearly 7 million acres of wild land. Above tree line you'll have expansive views of alpine tundra, lakes, and reindeer lichen. Glaciers are still carving this lush landscape, and if you're lucky you could see moose, grizzly bears, salmon, Dall sheep, eagles, and more! While classic Alaska weather is a drizzly rain, some courses have experienced whole weeks of sunshine, so be prepared for anything.





Course Activities

Alpine Backpacking – Alpine backpacking means moving through high mountain terrain mostly above tree line. This course teaches 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. Expect to carry a backpack on and off trail that weighs approximately 40-50 pounds depending on your weight and fitness. Additionally, you will learn Leave No Trace skills and ethics, backcountry route finding and camping, leadership types, and teamwork. You will also learn about the area's natural history and environment throughout course, including flora, fauna, geology, astronomy, and ecology.

Peak Attempt – You will travel several high ridges and make at least two peak attempts. Peak climbs 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 an attempt.

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 an excellent baseline certification for outdoor enthusiasts.

Solo – Solo provides an important break from the rigors of both the expedition and everyday life. This is a truly once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. With sufficient food and equipment, you'll spend 1-2 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. You will have two service projects on this course – one for each expedition.

Challenge Event – There are no set-in-stone course end challenge event, 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 during course end exploring how your new knowledge, skills and attributes can apply to your life after course.



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.



Day 1 - Course Start

Days 2-9 - Training Expedition-Backpacking

Curriculum includes:

- Self- awareness
- Awareness of others
- Basic navigation
- Basic first aid
- Backcountry living
- Basic leadership
- Basic team decision making
- Outward Bound philosophy and history

Day 10-11 - Service

Day 12 - Deissue and gear maintenance

Days 13-14 - Wilderness First Aid Course and Certification

Days 15-19 - Main Expedition – Peak Climb

Curriculum includes:

- Advanced navigation
- Advanced decision making
- Summit strategies
- Time management
- Peer leadership
- Conflict resolution
- Introspection and Reflection
- Transference of course skills to home life

Day 20 - Resupply

Days 21-27 - Travel, solo, peak climb

Day 28 - Trailhead pickup, Personal Challenge Event

Day 29 - Course End

Day 30 - Departure home

