



Itinerary Overview

Colorado Rockies Alpine Backpacking and Service – 15 Days – Ages 16-18



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 exploring remote landscapes 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 one of North America's most famous mountain ranges. As you travel through these amazing places you will also have an opportunity to give back to them, through trail work and other local volunteer projects, your service will not only leave you better as a person, but will also leave the places you explore better than you found them. You don't need to have previous backpacking experience to fully embrace this extraordinary expedition, which combines beautiful environments and exciting activities with an emphasis on individual growth, service 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 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 challenging, but rewarding. 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 Activities

Service – Service is an integral part of Outward Bound values and curriculum. This course has a strong service component, with multiple projects on and off trail. Designated service projects are coordinated with land managers like the US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to collaborate on land restoration projects. Some projects are more social services based, and participants may work in Outward Bound’s local community to provide service there. We also 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. Additionally, we explore service to your community through teamwork and support of your expedition mates. We hope you’ll bring this ethic home and exhibit leadership in your local community.

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.

Solo – Depending on your course length and environmental factors, your solo may range from a few hours to an overnight experience. 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 have time to journal, rest, reflect, and look ahead to future goals. Your solo site will be close enough to the instructors 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. Many students are initially nervous about solo, but later recall solo as one of the highlights of their entire course.

Peak Attempt – Your expedition will include at least one peak attempt. Peak attempts are exciting 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.

Challenge Event – There are no “set in stone” final challenges, as each course has to fit to the conditions of its 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 can still go given the challenges you have already accomplished.



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 have you grown? What new strength will you bring with you? What challenges await you back home? We’re excited for you to find out!



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.



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 and Service

Day 1 – Arrive, camp at Outward Bound's basecamp

Day 2 — Teambuilding, and low and high ropes course, backcountry lessons, camp at basecamp.

Day 3 – Local Service (Service on base or local trails), camp at basecamp

Day 4 – Local Service (Service on base or local trails), camp at basecamp

Day 5 – Into Backcountry, start backpacking

Day 6 – 10 – Backpacking/Peak Attempt

Day 11 – Out of Field, camp at basecamp

Day 12 – Community Service (Service at a partner provider), camp at basecamp or at the partner provider

Day 13 – Community Service (Service at a partner provider), camp at basecamp or at the partner provider

Day 14 –Course End Activities

Day 15 - Depart