



## Itinerary Overview

### Colorado Winter Expedition for Veterans - 6 Days



Your course begins at the Leadville Mountain Center where we start with a basic introduction to backcountry travel. Then you will journey with your fellow veterans into the high-country wilderness, where the real magic takes place. You do not need to have any previous backcountry, winter, or snowshoeing experience. We teach you everything you need to know to travel in the backcountry—how to pack appropriately, set up camp in the winter, how to navigate avalanche terrain and evaluate snow conditions.

Winter in the Colorado Rockies is unlike anywhere else in the U.S. The high altitude means it is common to hike above tree line, with sweeping views of snow-clad mountains surrounding you. There's a good reason many local adventurers say winter is their favorite season. Many veterans who choose this special environment for their Outward Bound expedition say that their experience gives them a new, valuable, and unexpected perspective.

Travel in this winter environment can be as demanding as it is rewarding. It can take every waking moment to get from point A to point B and will draw upon many of the leadership and teamwork skills you've learned from your time in the service. From getting up early to pack your bags and cook breakfast, to snowshoeing with a loaded pack, to climbing peaks that rise well over 12,000 feet, traveling in the winter wilderness can be difficult. Instructors and past participants agree that arriving physically fit will enhance everyone's experience and ability to do well on the course and ultimately allow you to take full advantage of the expedition.



## Course Area

The Rocky Mountains are one of the most legendary and famous mountain ranges in the world. They stretch 3,000 miles from Alaska to New Mexico. They have profoundly influenced the development of the continental United States. Native Americans were the first to live and hunt among these peaks. In more recent times, the Spanish launched major expeditions into these mountains, searching for gold and precious minerals. Although no one is sure who first climbed them, the first documented exploration of the Colorado Rockies was undertaken in 1776 by two Franciscan priests. From that point on, Colorado became a magnet for prospectors, explorers and pioneers. The greatest concentration of high peaks—hundreds of “Thirteeners” (13,000+ foot mountains), and 54 “Fourteeners” is in Colorado. No matter what peak or high point you may climb, there will be strenuous hiking followed by fantastic views.

## Course Overview

**Basecamp training** – You will begin by acclimatizing and training at our mountain campus, the Leadville Mountain Center, which is located at 10,000 feet. The campus borders the designated Mount Massive Wilderness, which features Colorado’s two highest peaks: Mt. Elbert (14,439’) and Mt. Massive (14,429’). Here you will meet your instructors, get your gear and start building your team of 6 to 10 participants. The first days of the course focus on skills for backcountry camping and traveling, winter environment safety, equipment selection and care, ice climbing and expedition planning. You will also do a shakedown outing to prepare for your overnight expedition.

**Ice Climbing** – If conditions allow, you will spend a day climbing the vertical, blue ice of frozen waterfalls. Colorado Outward Bound School will supply you with all the equipment necessary to take on this premier winter activity. Your instructors will teach you the basics of crampon technique, ice tool use and methods for moving efficiently over vertical ice terrain.

**Backcountry Expedition - Touring and Peak Attempt Section** – After your winter skills training and ice climbing, you and your team will embark on an epic journey: a multi-day tour through the snowy Rockies to summit a high peak. You’ll navigate through avalanche terrain, melt snow for water, and learn how to thrive in one of the harshest climates on Earth. One of the best parts of a winter expedition is carving a cozy camp out of the snow, complete with tables, benches, and even snow cabinets. You will carry all of your food and gear in your backpack or pull it behind you on snow sleds. During this section, you will learn to assess and adapt to varying snow and weather conditions. Depending on weather and snow conditions, you may have the opportunity to see stunning 360-degree views from a high peak.

While much of the course focuses on the hard work of adventuring, you’ll also take time to soak in the beauty of your environment. You’ll hear the forest’s breathtaking silence after a fresh storm and see the red glow of sunset on snowy peaks. Night time is particularly stunning in the winter. The moon glows on open snow fields and the stars shine bright through a cold, clear atmosphere.





## Sample Itinerary

Following is an example of what your course's 6-day itinerary might look like. Your actual course plan will vary depending on weather and terrain conditions.

**Day 1** - Course arrival and preparation. You will arrive at the LMC by bus or van. Your day will be spent acclimatizing, getting to know your patrol mates, organizing and packing your gear and learning specific skills for backcountry camping and travel.

**Day 2** - Day hike: You continue to acclimatize as you do a long day hike with your teammates and instructors. You'll get tree-lined glimpses as well as full views of Colorado's beautiful snow covered high country. You will continue to learn and refresh more winter-specific skills.

**Day 3** - Ice climbing: If conditions allow (and they usually do), you will have an opportunity to experience the exhilaration of ice climbing on a frozen waterfall with crampons and technical ice tools.

**Day 4** - Expedition: You will travel into the wilderness on snowshoes, set up your snow camp and plan for the next day's objective.

**Day 5** - Peak attempt: Weather depending, you and your teammates will attempt to summit a peak or reach a high point on the map. The challenge and hard work to get there is worth it: Standing amid the grandeur of true winter wilderness is something few people get to experience.

**Day 6** - Travel, de-issue, celebrate: This day goes quickly. You'll break down camp, hike back out of the field and return to the Leadville Mountain Center basecamp, where you turn in your gear. Following some paperwork and then a tasty course-end meal with your fellow veterans and instructors, you will have opportunity to honor your time together during a closing ceremony. Then, it's back on the bus to Denver.

