



COURSE DESCRIPTION

7 DAY SOUTHWEST CANYONEERING

In General - Welcome, you're in for an experience of a lifetime! You will soon find yourself in magical narrows, walking in the footsteps of ancient cultures, and making your way through an obstacle course for grown-ups, here in beautiful Southern Utah. It's not necessary to have previous backpacking or canyoneering experience to enjoy this extraordinary expedition which combines jaw-dropping scenery with exciting activities that place an emphasis on individual growth and community. Many students on these courses find their potential to be far more than they had previously conceived. You will learn the necessary skills for wilderness travel—how to pack appropriately, hike, set up tarps, how to negotiate canyon hazards, and navigate. Your course will begin the moment you are picked up at the meeting location, and will continue into the wilds of Utah, where the real magic takes place.



Canyoneering involves the exploration and descent of canyons that are often narrow, sinuous, and steep. Descending these canyons requires a combination of scrambling and down-climbing over boulders, rappelling, lowering packs, and hiking. Traveling through a technical narrows section requires teamwork and delicate decision-making on the part of group members. Environmental responsibility is a focus as you learn and witness the immediate and lasting impacts that travel can leave on the land. You will learn advanced map-reading and route-finding as you successfully negotiate canyon country. The heart-wrenching beauty of finding yourself in a glowing golden narrows section may redefine your concepts of beauty. The spell-binding silence will speak volumes and invite students to reflect upon their experiences and themselves.

While still focusing on the group dynamics and individual growth, this course is often more rigorous in its itinerary and does more technical activities compared to our other short courses. This course is held in areas where the canyons demand a high level of technical activity just to negotiate the terrain.

Your instructors are highly-qualified canyoneers. They will serve as teachers, trainers, and mentors as you learn the skills required for canyon travel. Through daily discussions, they will also help you and your group to discover the larger lessons that apply when you return home. You will discover much about yourself; how you adapt to change and deal with stress or challenge, how you work with others, and your true potential.





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 the challenges. It can literally take every waking moment to get from point A to point B. From getting up early to pack your bag and cook breakfast to negotiating canyon obstacles, traveling in the wild 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 the course, ultimately allowing you to take full advantage of your expedition.

The Colorado Outward Bound School (COBS) is indeed a school, though it will likely look radically different from schools you have attended in the past. Our "classrooms" are beautifully inspiring and rather than memorization for tests, our curriculum focuses on skills for the wilderness and most importantly for our students' everyday lives when they return home. Through challenge and adventure in a supportive environment your instructors will use teachable moments, experiential learning, and time for reflection to create progressions of skills and responsibilities. Many traditional schools may teach to specific mathematical or linguistic hard skills, but in addition to teaching whitewater rafting, backpacking, climbing, and canyoneering, COBS aims to develop the character of each student; building resilient, optimistic, compassionate, and resourceful leaders. We explore, role model, highlight the merits of, and encourage examples of our values:

- Tenacity in Pursuit
- Readiness for Sensible Self Denial
- Indefatigable Spirit
- Enterprising Curiosity
- Compassion

COURSE AREA

Canyon Country, Utah (Robbers Roost, San Rafael Swell, or Dark Canyon Wilderness) – 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 erosion. The canyonlands of Southern Utah are still as stunning, mysterious, and wild as they were for the first Western frontier explorers. Imagine yourself and a team scrambling, climbing, and rappelling within a geological playground of pinnacles, narrow slot canyons, immense cliffs, and arches when you turn a corner and are met face to face by Native American cliff dwellings and rock art from 800-2000 years ago....



ITINERARY OVERVIEW

Each course is as unique as the individuals who form the group. Your course itinerary may vary, depending on weather and the skill level of your group.



Canyoneering – Upon your arrival at the trailhead, you will meet your instructors, divide into small groups, and will be issued food and gear. You and your backpack (weighing 45-65 pounds) will be traveling four to eight miles per day (often with a much lighter daypack, carrying only one day's necessities) through the challenging sandstone and slickrock terrain and stop along the way to explore sinuous side canyons and interesting geology.

To meet the demands of the terrain, instructors begin teaching with the foundational skills necessary for efficient travel such as basic movement over rock, packing a backpack, and spotting techniques. The instructors then teach more advanced movement on rock (such as stemming, chimneying, and bouldering) and roped techniques such as rappelling, knot-tying, and rope handling. These skills, along with the basics, are then put to use on the steep slickrock crossings and technical descents that must be negotiated as you



travel through more challenging terrain.

Solo – A solo of 12-24 hours 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 the 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.

Final Challenge Event – Your group may end the course with a Final Challenge Event—a physical or mental push. There are no “set in stone” final challenges, as each challenge throughout course has been tailor fitted to the current conditions and participants, but it may take the form of a run or team-building challenge amongst many options. This event is your personal challenge to finish successfully and with style, by embodying the lessons you have learned during your Outward Bound course. You may be surprised by how far you have come and now how far you can go.

SOUTHWEST CANYONEERING - 7 DAYS (SAMPLE ITINERARY):

The following is an example of what your 7 day itinerary may look like. Your actual course plan will vary according to weather, student skills, abilities, and instructor preferences.

- Day 1** Course start
- Day 2-6** Canyoneering, day hikes, backpacking, rappelling, solo
- Day 7** Possible Final Challenge Event & Course End



“There is much to be said for a philosophy which aims at living a full life while the opportunity offers. There are few treasures of more lasting worth than the experience of a way of life that is in itself wholly satisfying. Such, after all, are the only possessions of which no fate, no cosmic catastrophe can deprive us: nothing can alter the fact if for one moment in eternity we have really lived”. - Eric Shipton

