



## Itinerary Overview

### Yosemite Backpacking & Rock Climbing

**The Sierra Nevada Range** extends 400 miles from north to south. It is filled with granite domes, jagged peaks, cool alpine lakes and meadows. Because of the beauty reflected in both moon and sun light, conservationist John Muir referred to the mountain range as the “Range of Light.”

We currently use the backcountry of Yosemite National Park and the adjacent Ansel Adam Wilderness for our Middle School courses. Please note courses do not take place in Yosemite Valley. Course location is subject to change depending on weather, environmental considerations and permit availability.

#### **Backpacking and Course Terrain**

Traveling through mountain terrain is exhilarating and often physically exhausting. Travel days are generally very long and require great stamina and endurance. Expect to travel primarily on high quality trails through beautiful alpine lake areas. You may ford waist deep rivers where no footbridges are present. Note: Terrain covered and peaks attempted on our backpacking courses generally do not require roped travel or use of technical equipment.

#### **Rock Climbing**

The rock climbing section may occur at either a concentrated frontcountry crag or a wild and remote backcountry location. During this section, your days will include a mix of teaching and climbing with students learning how to climb, belay and rappel safely. There may be opportunities to camp on top of granite domes, experience amazing free-hanging rappels or explore stunning river gorges. With practice and focus, you can become an informed, skilled rock climber. You will experience a wide variety of climbing styles, including crack-climbing, face climbs and bouldering.

#### **Miles Traveled Daily**

As a general guideline, expect to travel approximately 3-7 miles a day. Crews may cover 10+ miles per day as terrain and fitness allow.

#### **Physical Fitness**

Participants must come prepared for a physically, mentally and emotionally-demanding yet equally rewarding experience. One of the best ways to enhance your experience and set yourself up for success is to arrive physically fit.

#### **Pack Weight**

Packed backpacks weigh between 40 and 60 pounds, ideally between 30 - 40% of your body weight. This varies person to person based on size, stature and physical ability.

#### **Instruction and Skills**

Previous backpacking and climbing experience is not necessary. We will teach you the skills for wilderness travel both interpersonal and technical skills. Technical skills include: how to pack appropriately, load a backpack, set up tarps, camp craft, rock climbing including belaying, and rappelling, navigation, how to sleep warm in your sleeping bag and how to cook your group meals over backcountry stoves.

Interpersonal leadership skills include group travel dynamics, risk management, weather and hazard assessment, communication skills and learning how to work as a team.



## **Training, Main & Final**

Fundamental in Outward Bound's educational outcomes is the concept of "Training," "Main," and "Final." Our hope is to transfer leadership and decision-making skills over to students through an intentional progression. As the course advances, Instructors will take on more of a 'coaching' role. This provides a safety net for students to work through their decision-making and risk management development. Read about the culminating Final Expedition below.

## **For Youth Specific Courses (12 - 14 years old)**

For younger travelers, Outward Bound may be your first time away from home, for others, you may be veteran travelers. We plan our "Youth" courses to set you up for success no matter where you are on the spectrum of wilderness experience. The mental, social and physical challenges you will encounter are very real and meeting them is a genuine accomplishment. Instructors will create a highly structured environment with clear expectations and a daily routine like chore rotations or Leader of the Day.

## **Overview**

**Course Start** - There is a 2 to 3-hour drive from the airport to the course start location. You will spend the first day gearing up for the field and meeting the other members of your team. Group gear like food, tarps, kitchen equipment and first aid supplies will be divided up among group members. Depending on your specific itinerary, you may hike a few miles on Day 1. All group members will pitch in to do camp chores, including cooking, washing pots and setting up tarps.

**Peak Attempt** - Most groups will attempt to summit at least one peak. These peak attempts often require early morning starts, sometimes waking as early as 4am. You will typically launch from a basecamp so you that you can leave some of your gear at camp. For all the effort they require, successful peak attempts are often the most rewarding experiences of an Outward Bound course.

**Solo** - The solo experience provides an important break from the rigors of the expedition, and a chance to reflect on your course so far. With sufficient food and equipment you'll spend time alone at an assigned campsite to rest, reflect and practice the camp craft skills you have learned on course. Solo sites are chosen to have as much solitude as possible, within earshot of your Instructors for management considerations. You will not travel during this time and your Instructors will check on you periodically, but you will be mostly alone for the duration of your solo. On this course, the solo time will not exceed 12 hours. Many students are initially nervous about solo but most are ready for a break from the group when the time for solo arrives. This activity may be abbreviated or eliminated as Instructors assess the weather, terrain or other factors that could affect the outcomes of solo.

**Final Expedition** - Outward Bound believes that an appropriate amount of independence is a powerful educational tool. In order to deliver that benefit, our Instructors gradually transfer leadership responsibilities to the students culminating with a "Final Expedition." Near the end of course, if you and your group have demonstrated the necessary leadership, team problem-solving and wilderness living skills, you may be given the opportunity to travel without your Instructors immediately present.). This is your opportunity to demonstrate the skills you have acquired in the previous weeks. Final Expeditions can last for one to five days, depending on staff assessment of students' abilities and terrain. Outcomes are to work together, problem solve, and accomplish a goal independently, while utilizing all the skills they have acquired.

**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. We coordinate service projects with land managers (US Forest



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Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, local land trusts, etc.) as well as with select social service agencies (nursing homes, hospitals, organic farms, etc.). Service projects can last a few hours up to a half day.

**Personal Challenge Event** - Outward Bound courses typically end with a Personal Challenge Event—a final, individual, physical effort. This might take the form of a run or a triathlon-style challenge. Expect to participate in a 2-5 mile run.

**Final Days** - In preparation for your travel back home, the second-to-last afternoon of your course will be spent de-issuing and cleaning all Outward Bound gear followed by a special graduation ceremony. Simple backcountry showers will be offered. Departure from the trailhead will be between 6am and 8am.

## Sample Itinerary

The following is an example of what your itinerary may look like. Your actual course plan will vary according to permitting, weather, student skills and abilities, and Instructor planning/assessment.

### 12-Day Itinerary

Day 1	Course Start
Days 2-4	Hike into backcountry, introductory camp craft & navigation lessons
Days 5-6	Main Expedition (cont. backpacking section, peak attempt, solo)
Day 7	Front Country Resupply
Days 8-9	Rock Section (rock climbing, rappelling, belaying)
Day 10	Final Challenge, Peak Attempt
Day 11	Personal Challenge Event, Clean and De-issue Gear, Graduation Ceremony
Day 12	Course End and Transportation Home