



Itinerary Overview

Yosemite Backpacking - Adult

The Sierra Nevada Range extends 400 miles from north to south. It is filled with granite domes, jagged peaks, cool alpine lakes and lush meadows. Yosemite is home to such namesakes as El Capitan, Glacier Point and Half Dome. Because of the beauty reflected in both moon and sun light, conservationist John Muir referred to these areas as the “Range of Light.”

We currently use Yosemite National Park for our Wilderness to Urban courses, courses do not take place in Yosemite Valley. Your specific course could take place in another location, depending on weather, permit availability and instructor preference.

Weather

The Sierra Nevada offers fairly stable and beautiful weather. Rain is rarely forecasted, but afternoon thunderstorms are always a possibility. June courses may encounter lingering snowfields and cold temperatures with overnight temperatures near freezing. Mosquitoes are at their worst during this time. Between the low humidity and higher elevations of the High Sierra, the sun always feels warm during the day and precaution should be taken to minimize UV damage. In July and August temperatures become more moderate with daytime highs in the 70s to 80s (Fahrenheit) and evening lows in the 40s to 50s.

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.

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 typically weigh between 30-40% of your body weight. This varies person to person based on size, stature and physical ability.

Instruction and Skills

Previous backpacking experience is not necessary. We will teach you the skills for wilderness travel both soft and hard skills. Hard skills include: how to pack appropriately, load a backpack, set up tarps, camp craft, navigation, how to sleep warm in your sleeping bag and how to cook your group meals over backcountry stoves. Soft skills include group travel, 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 participants through an intentional progression. As the course advances, instructors will take on more of a ‘coaching’ role. This provides a safety



net for participants to work through their decision-making and risk management development. Read about the culminating Final Expedition below.

Overview

Course Start – There is a 1-2 hour drive from the airport to a campground en route to your 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. On the morning of Day 2, the group will be transported the remaining distance to Yosemite National Park then the hike into the backcountry begins. As this is not a guided trip, all group members will pitch in with camp chores including cooking, washing pots and setting up tarps.

Solo – The solo experience provides an important break from the rigors of the expedition, and a chance to reflect on your course thus 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 other group members for safety reasons. 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. Solo on courses for adults may be integrated into the daily flow of course or may take place for a set amount of time. This activity may be abbreviated or eliminated if instructors determine the weather, terrain or other factors could make a solo unsafe.

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 participants culminating with a "Final Expedition." Near the end of course, if your group has demonstrated the necessary leadership, team problem-solving and wilderness living skills, you may be given the opportunity to travel without your instructors immediately present. Crews will receive a 2-way radio or satellite phone as a means to communicate with your instructors. This is your opportunity to demonstrate the skills you have acquired in the previous week. Outcomes are: working together, problem solving and accomplishing a goal independently.

Final Days - In preparation for your travel back home, the last morning of your course will be spent de-issuing and cleaning any remaining Outward Bound clothing and gear followed by a special meal and graduation ceremony. You will have the opportunity to shower before returning home. Groups will leave for the airport mid-morning.

Sample Itinerary

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

5-Day Itinerary

- Day 1 Course Start
- Day 2 Training Expedition (Introductory lessons to backpacking, camp craft, navigation, etc.)
- Day 3 Main Expedition, Solo
- Day 4 Final Expedition (see section on Training, Main & Final above)
- Day 5 Gear de-issue gear, Graduation Ceremony, Transport to airport

7-Day Itinerary

- Day 1 Course Start
- Day 2 Training Expedition (introductory lesson to backpack, camp craft, navigation, etc)
- Day 3-5 Main Expedition, Solo, Peak Attempt
- Day 6 Final Expedition
- Day 7 Gear De-issue, Graduation Ceremony, Transportation Home