



# **Itinerary Overview**

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## **Yosemite Backpacking to San Francisco Urban Service**

**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.

The city of San Francisco is a world’s top tourist destination. Over a third of San Francisco’s inhabitants were born in other countries, most significantly from Asian and Spanish-speaking countries. San Francisco is the leading cultural center of Northern California and is recognized as a center for political activism, notably in the realm of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender rights

### **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.

Weather in San Francisco and the Bay Area varies dramatically from mile to mile. In the city itself, expect cool mornings and evenings nearly always, often accompanied by fog. Midday temperatures can range from the 50’s to the occasional 80’s. The fog burns off much of the time between 11am and 3pm.

### **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 or 35 – 45 pounds. 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 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 (14-16 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. Depending on the course area and activity we often incorporate time at a "base camp" to acclimatize. 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 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 to do 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 may last in duration from a few hours to a full 3-days depending on age and course length. 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 if instructors determine the weather, terrain, or other factors could make a solo unsafe.

**Transition Day** – In between the "wilderness" section of your course and the "urban" section you will shower, change into clean clothes, and "de-issue" any clothing and equipment that you will not need while in San Francisco. As part of your service back to future students, you will clean and re-organize any Outward Bound gear that you borrowed.

**Urban** – The urban section of this course provides the opportunity to explore the varied neighborhoods and cultures of San Francisco. During the day you'll engage in service projects such as serving food to homeless individuals and maintaining trails in the city's parks. A new challenge will be to find your way around the city using the navigational skills you learned during the backpacking section of your course (while still carrying your expedition backpack!). There may be opportunities for "food challenges" where you and your group members have an allotted budget to buy and prepare food for your meals. At night, camp at a diverse array of "sleep spots" – which may include an urban campground, the Chinatown YMCA, the San Francisco Zoo or Angel Island. All of these elements are designed to teach leadership skills and provide opportunities for self-discovery. Though you will be in an urban environment, you will not be allowed to use electronics or phones and you will immerse yourself in urban living.



**Final Expedition** – Outward Bound believes that an appropriate amount of independence is a powerful educational tool. In order to deliver that benefit, our instructors purposefully and gradually transfer certain leadership responsibilities to the students culminating in a “Final Expedition.” Near the end of course, if the group has demonstrated the necessary leadership, team problem-solving and map-reading skills, you may be given the opportunity to navigate your way through San Francisco without direct assistance from your instructors (or smart phones!). Outcomes are: the group learns to work together, problem solve and accomplish a goal independently, while utilizing all the skills they have acquired.

**Personal Challenge Event** – Outward Bound courses typically end with a Personal Challenge Event – an individual final physical push. It might be a run through Golden Gate Park and a dip in the Pacific Ocean.

**Final Days** - The second-to-last afternoon 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 in the morning.

**Mail while on course**

Your mail will be delivered to you at the end of your course or during a resupply (see packing list for info about resupply). Any undelivered mail received after the course will be forwarded to your home address. Mail to Midpines can take about a week. Packages are subject to opening prior to delivery to the student.

22 Day Course Only, During Resupply

**USPS Mail (Small Packages and Letters)**

Name & Course Number c/o Outward Bound  
P.O. Box 150  
Midpines, CA 95345

**FedEx or UPS (Larger Packages)**

Name & Course Number c/o Outward Bound  
6617 Hwy 140  
Midpines, CA 95345

14 Day Course/22 Day Course San Francisco Portion

Name & Course Number c/o Outward Bound  
1539 Pershing Drive  
San Francisco, CA 94129

**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.

|                |            |  |
|----------------|------------|--|
| <b>14 Days</b> | Day 1      | Course Start, Duffel shuffle, transport to campground                                    |
|                | Days 2-8   | Backpacking expedition (Introductory lessons to backpacking, camp craft, and navigation) |
|                | Day 9      | Transition to San Francisco  |
|                | Days 10-13 | Urban section (Service, food challenges, navigating through the city)                    |
|                | Day 14     | Course Graduation, Depart for airport  |

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| <b>22 Days</b> | Day 1      | Course Start, Duffel Shuffle, Transport to campground  |
|                | Days 2-6   | Backpacking expedition (Introductory lessons to backpacking, camp craft, navigation, and an overnight solo experience) |
|                | Day 7      | Backcountry Resupply   |
|                | Day 8-13   | Backpacking Expedition Continued   |
|                | Days 14-15 | Rock Climbing (knots, belaying, movement technique)  |
|                | Day 16     | Transition to San Francisco  |
|                | Days 17-20 | Urban Section (service, food challenges, navigation through the city)  |
|                | Day 21     | Course Graduation  |
|                | Day 22     | Depart for Airport   |