



## Course Overview

### Yosemite Alpine Backpacking

**On this expedition**, you'll backpack through towering trees in Yosemite, swim in alpine lakes and sleep under countless stars. If you are looking to develop your leadership, learn outdoor skills, and challenge yourself, this is a great course to step into backcountry travel.

Yosemite National Park, located in the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range, is famous for breathtaking views of waterfalls, massive granite domes, and peaceful alpine meadows. These regions are the **ancestral lands** of the Northern Paiute, Western Mono/Monache, Me-Wuk (Central Sierra Miwok), and Me-Wuk (Southern Sierra Miwok) nations. While this course steers clear of the crowded Yosemite Valley, dramatic alpine scenery can be seen in the horizon like peaks rising from the valley to elevations above 12,000 feet.

#### **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 cross 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**

Students must come prepared for a physically, mentally and emotionally demanding yet equally rewarding experience. Alumni often report that the more time they spent preparing for course, the more successful their course experience was. One of the best ways to enhance your experience and set yourself up for success is to arrive physically fit. Reference our physical prep guide for ideas!

#### **Pack Weight**

Packed backpacks weigh between 40 and 60 pounds, ideally this is 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 backcountry travel, both interpersonal and technical skills. For more details please read [Attending Outward Bound](#).

Technical skills: 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.

Interpersonal skills: 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.

## **Youth Courses**

For younger travelers, Outward Bound may be your first time away from home. Others may be veteran travelers. We plan our Youth courses to set you up for success no matter where you are on the spectrum of backcountry 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 including community roles such as Leader of the Day.

## **Overview**

**Course Start** – There is a 2 to 3-hour drive from the airport to the course start location on windy mountain roads, typically on a bus. If you are prone to motion sickness, make sure you plan for this accordingly! 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. As this is not a guided trip, all group members will pitch in to do community tasks including cooking, washing pots and setting up tarps.

**Peak Attempt** – Some groups will attempt to summit a peak. These peak attempts often require pre-dawn starts, waking as early as 4am. You will typically launch from a basecamp so that you can leave some of your gear at camp. For all of the effort and teamwork they require, peak attempts can be one of the most rewarding experiences on 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 thus far. You'll spend time alone at a location your instructors designate with water, some snacks and gear to make sure you are comfortable. You will not be camping or sleeping by yourself. 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 though you will mostly be alone for the duration of your solo. On middle school courses, the solo will not be overnight and could range from 2 to 8 hours. On all other courses, 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 as instructors assess the weather, terrain, or other factors that could affect the outcomes of solo.



# OUTWARD BOUND CALIFORNIA

**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 or challenge of some kind. Near the end of course, if you and your group have demonstrated the necessary leadership, team problem-solving and backcountry living skills, you may be given the opportunity to travel with more independence, or participate in another kind of culminating challenge as a group. This is your opportunity to demonstrate the skills you have acquired in the previous weeks. Outcomes are to work together, problem solve, and accomplish a goal independently, while utilizing all the skills you 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 being mindful of our impact. We coordinate service projects with land managers (US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, local land trusts etc.) Service projects can last a few hours up to a full day.

**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.

**Note** – On the first and last day of course there will be other Outward Bound groups at the same starting and ending locations as your crew. Typically, several crews will meet simultaneously at the airport to transport to the course start location. With the exception of course start/end travel and activities, you will be contained within your course-specific crew.

Outward Bound courses are physically and socially demanding. Students who are unmotivated or struggle with inappropriate behaviors on course may be dismissed. Students who are dismissed are not eligible for a refund. Please see our [Payment, Cancellations & Admissions Policies](#) and the Behavior Agreements in your application materials for more details. You and your family should be prepared to make a commitment to being in a challenging, formal educational setting for the entire length of the course.

## 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.

### 10-Day Itinerary

Day 1	Course Start – review gear, meet and greet group/instructors
Days 2-4	Training backpacking expedition: Introduction to backpacking, navigation, and camp craft, etc.
Days 5-7	Main backpacking expedition, peak attempt, solo
Days 8	Final backpacking challenge
Day 9	Clean and de-issue gear, Graduation
Day 10	Course End and transportation to airport