

# American Alpine Institute<sup>Ltd.</sup>

## - Program Itinerary - **Winter Mountaineering – Sierra, CA**

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One of the primary goals of the Winter Mountaineering program is to climb Mount Whitney. However, due to the changing weather patterns and potential for avalanche danger, this is not always possible. If weather or conditions do not allow for an ascent of Mount Whitney, your guide(s) will determine an alternative objective that is suitable for your skills and the mountain conditions at the time of your trip.

**Meeting Location:** The Looney Bean Coffee House, 399 N Main St #A, Bishop, CA 93514. 760-872-2326.

**Meeting Time:** Our standard rendezvous time for this program is 8am. Your guide may schedule a meeting time that is earlier or later based on local conditions. If this happens, we will be in contact with you in the days prior to the trip.

### **Day 1:**

Meet at the Looney Bean Coffee house at 8am for a pre-trip orientation and gear check. Pack, drive to trailhead. Begin the approach to Mount Whitney. Depending on the snowpack, we might be able to drive to the trailhead at the Whitney Portal, or we might have to hike a few miles on the road before we reach the Portal. Usually we camp at Whitney Portal or along the North Fork of Lone Pine trail. Upon arrival at our camp we will discuss winter camping and the specific techniques required to stay warm, cook in a winter environment and fortify our camp.

### **Day 2**

On the second day of the program, we will move our camp to a higher location. Before we leave, we will spend some time on snow school. In other words, you will learn how to self-arrest from all positions, you will learn about snow protection and you will develop an understanding of rope team travel. In addition to these skills, the guide(s) will introduce snow-pack analysis and avalanche awareness.

### **Day 3**

If conditions dictate that you must move camp a third time, then you will work up higher on the mountain. On day three, you will continue working on techniques for avalanche awareness including avalanche beacon work, self-rescue and snow analysis. In addition to snow techniques, movement on rock in crampons, protective systems and mixed climbing will be introduced. The latter part of the day will be focused on developing a summit strategy.

### **Day 4**

The fourth day of the trip will be reserved for a summit attempt. Most parties will take 10 to 14 hours round trip from camp.

### **Day 5**

On the final day of the trip, the team will debrief the summit climb, review any skills that need additional care and then descend back to the car at the trailhead.

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## - Program Itinerary - **Winter Mountaineering – Ice Add-On – Sierra, CA**

Many participants on the winter mountaineering course elect to add some days onto the beginning or end of their course to study ice climbing technique. These courses are run just outside of Lee Vining, CA, which is approximately an hour north of Bishop.

Ice climbing course add-ons can be one-day and up. Most commonly people elect to develop their ice skills over a period of two-days.

Ice climbing is cold and wet. While some people choose to camp, it can be difficult to dry out gear and equipment. For this reason, we recommend that participants in the ice add-on choose to stay at a hotel/motel in Lee Vining.

### **Day 1:**

Meet at 8am and drive to the trailhead. It takes about 45-minutes to hike into the ice climbing area. On the first day, a great deal of time will be spent studying selection and use of ice climbing specific gear. Climbers will then learn how to move effectively and keep warm in an ice climbing environment.

### **Day 2:**

Meet at 8am and drive to the trailhead. On this second day, the curriculum will encompass the study of ice oriented protective systems, rappel techniques and the principals of multi-pitch ice climbing. Additionally, we will devote time to mixed climbing movement skills and the specialized protective systems required for mixed climbing.

### **Note:**

Please inquire about backcountry skiing in the Eastern Sierra.

### **Final Note:**

Those who elect to fly into Las Vegas and then drive to the Eastern Sierra should be aware that we also offer rock climbing programs in Red Rock Canyon just outside of Las Vegas. Please inquire with the Institute office for more information.