



American Alpine Institute

Alpinism 2 - Intermediate Mountaineering

– Sample Program Itinerary –

Meeting Location: The offices of the American Alpine Institute in Bellingham, WA.

Meeting Time: Unless an alternate meeting time has been arranged, you should plan on meeting your guide(s) and the equipment shop staff at AAI's office a few minutes before 7am on the first morning of your program. For climbers staying at our recommended hotel, we will pick you up at 6:40am.

Day 1 – Rendezvous and Introduction to Multi-Pitch Rock Climbing. After a brief meeting and introductions here at our office your instructor(s) will take the first part of the morning to check over your equipment, finalize any rentals and purchases you may need for your program, and get packed up for the day.

From the institute's office we drive to the small town of Mazama (three hours away), which is on the east side of the Cascade Crest, about 20 minutes past Washington Pass. We then spend the day practicing rock climbing skills at a cragging area called Fun Rock. Depending on the group's skill level and goals, we will practice belaying, rappelling, anchor building, placing protection, climbing techniques, and will talk about multi-pitch transitions in preparation for the next day's alpine rock climb.

We will normally camp at one of the Forest Service campgrounds between Mazama and Washington Pass.

Day 2 – Alpine Rock Route. Today we will drive 20 minutes back up to Washington Pass and will climb the South Arete of South Early Winter Spire. Often photographed, the Early Winter Spires (North and South) and Liberty Bell stand out among the granite towers, which cluster south of Washington pass. Although less well known than routes on its famous neighbor to the north, this arête offers a satisfying ascent for less experienced climbers. Our approach takes us through a beautiful larch forest to the southernmost and highest rampart of the Liberty Bell massif. After a challenging 5.5 move early in the ascent, we enjoy stimulating, but moderate class 5 climbing with firm holds and increasing exposure on the way to the summit, where - from 7807 feet - we can trace the course of the Early Winters Creek some 2000 feet below and admire walls of Cascade peaks rising from the valley.

We will camp at the same campground as the night before.

Day 3 – Alpine Rock Route. We'll venture back up to Washington Pass, but this time to climb the Becky Route on Liberty Bell, a true classic. Long famous among the Northwest rock

enthusiasts, the 7720-foot granite spire called Liberty Bell puts a variety of routes at our disposal. This route, up the Southwest Face, is a more sustained climb than the ascent on South Early Winter, but rock climbers who have had some experience (or who have just done the South Arete) will find it very rewarding. The slabs, cracks, and chimney on the route warrant a variety of techniques with moves up to 5.6, and every pitch is different. The summit affords broad views of this very photogenic alpine region.

We will camp at the same campground as the night before. Over dinner, we'll begin planning the final, "student-led" ascent, using guidebooks, maps, and advice provided by your instructor.

Day 4 – Today, we wake, pack, and drive to one of several areas for the glacier portion of this course. Though we typically climb Mt. Shuksan for this portion, we will occasionally climb Eldorado Peak, Sahale Peak, Silver Star Mountain, or another major non-volcanic summit. Day 4 may also, on occasion, be spent doing another day of alpine rock, at the guide's discretion.

After driving to the trailhead for the final ascent, we may hike in and set up our base camp, or we may camp at a Forest Service campground. If there is time, we will start our review of glacier travel procedures. Your instructor will discuss topics such as glaciation, navigation, or geology over dinner.

Days 5 – Student Led Ascent. Today we will hike to a glacier training area and do a full skills review and training. We will review cramponing and ice axe technique, and then, time allowing, may move on to the more advanced skills of snow and/or ice screw anchor building and running protection, and team crevasse rescue. We will also discuss the next day's route to the summit and will go to bed early in anticipation of an early rise the next morning.

Day 6 – Summit Day. We will normally summit either Shuksan via the Sulphide Glacier, Eldorado Peak via the Eldorado Glacier/East Ridge, or Sahale via the Quien Sabe Glacier. We will plan on summiting early, then will return to camp, pack up, hike back to the van at the trailhead, and then drive back to AAI's headquarters in Bellingham. We aim for getting climbers back to town by about 5:30 pm. This can vary a bit based on how the last day of the trip goes.