



Winter Mountaineering

Eastern Sierra, California

PROGRAM ITINERARY

Program Details:

The primary goals of the Winter Mountaineering program is to gain a repertoire of winter camping skills, as well as a winter ascent of 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.

Please keep in mind that this is a standard yet loose itinerary and is subject to change depending on conditions, weather, group dynamic and pace or summit strategies.

Difficulty Grade:

Moderate to Advance

Program cost Inclusions and Exclusions:

Inclusions: Permits and access fees; Guide fee; Group technical equipment; Biffy bags.

Exclusions: Transportation; Food costs; Personal equipment; Lodging costs (for the night before your course starts and the night you come back to Bishop); Personal health, Baggage and Trip Insurance; Gratuity to Guide(s.)

Itinerary:

Day 1 – Rendezvous

Plan to meet your fellow climbers and instructor(s) at Looney Bean Coffee house at 8:00am for a pre-trip orientation and gear check. Your guide(s) will take the time to go over equipment, handle rentals you've requested through AAI, review the itinerary, and ensure everyone is adequately prepared. (If you are picking up rentals through local retailers, you should arrive with them at the Rendezvous for the gear check.)

From here you will pack up, instructor(s) will hop in your vehicle, and you'll and head to the Whitney Portal outside of Lone Pine, CA about 68 miles away. It is not uncommon to consolidate into carpools in Bishop for the drive over. 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.

The first night of camping is usually just inside the 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 – Snow School

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 – Snow School Continued

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 – Summit Attempt

The fourth day of the trip will be reserved for a summit attempt. We will have an early alpine start (Midnight - 3am) and make a push for the summit, this takes anywhere from 10 to 14 hours depending on where we camped, group pace, and conditions.

Day 5 – Hike Out

On the final day of the trip, the team will debrief the summit climb, review any skills that need additional care, pack up camp, descend back to the car, and return to Bishop. Plan to be back in Bishop anywhere between 3pm - 7pm.