



WINTER MOUNTAINEERING CLIMBING

5-Day Curriculum

Boulder/Rocky Mountain National Park, CO

PROGRAM ITINERARY

Program Details:

Winter mountaineering encompasses one of the most aesthetic and rewarding aspects of the varied sport of climbing. Like all forms of the sport, winter mountaineering has as much to do with mental challenge as it does with physical endurance and the successful application of technical skills. In addition to applying a range of climbing skills, as a winter climber you must also understand and evaluate snowpack stability, avalanche hazard, and mountain weather; do route finding under sometimes difficult conditions; maintain suitable shelters in cold and wind; and attend precisely to the details of climbing technique and protective systems.

NOTE:

Winter conditions in Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) vary greatly day to day, and week to week. Because of this, the order of the course material and objectives may change to take advantage of different conditions. Your guide will be glad to discuss weather patterns of RMNP and Colorado.

Difficulty Grade:

Beginner to Advanced

Prerequisites:

- Good physical condition
- Multi-day self-supported backpacking
- Snow or cold weather/winter camping at 30°F or below
- Ability to cook for yourself on a backcountry stove

Program cost Inclusions and Exclusions:

Inclusions: Climbing equipment (ropes, ice, and rock protection); Permits; Guide; Ice tools and Crampons. If weather permits, we will be backcountry camping on the 4th night of the course, these camping fees are included.

Exclusions: Food costs and personal equipment. For the first 3 nights of the course you are responsible for lodging or camping costs. We recommend booking local Airbnb's or lodges in the Nederland or Estes Park area. Travel along the Front Range can be tricky, and we also recommend renting a vehicle (AWD or 4x4) if you are able.



ITINERARY

Day 1

The goal for Day 1 is to get your gear dialed, discuss our objectives for the week, and answer any questions you may have, and ideally, getting a little ice climbing in too.

We will be meeting at a trailhead for our first day. For each day after, we will discuss our meeting location and time to adjust for weather and our objectives.

Please bring your equipment for the week, food and water for the day, and the mentality that we will be in an outdoor classroom.

We will review basic and moderate ice climbing movement in the morning. In the afternoon we'll discuss basic anchors, protection systems, and rappelling. Throughout the day, we will discuss the physics and physiology of cold weather.

Day 2

Day 2 will be similar to Day 1, but we will have our equipment and systems dialed in.

We usually head out to an ice climbing/mixed climbing location in RMNP. Our goal is to practice the basic skills from yesterday, and add more advanced movement and concepts.

Skills covered on this day include: winter travel skills, ice protection and anchor systems on technical ice.

We again will spend all day outside in the elements, so come prepared.

Possible areas of practice on Day 2 include: Bears Den, Hidden Falls, and Loch Vale Gorge areas.

Day 3

For Day 3, we will be expanding on our skill sets and putting them into action. We will cover avalanche rescue skills, basic backcountry travel skills, and will head deeper into RMNP.

Possible areas for practice include, Thatchtop Mountain, Black Lake Cirque, and Tyndall Gorge.

It will be a bigger day than the first two days of this program, so come prepared to move and practice what we covered in Day 1 and 2.



NOTE: Day 3 may be moved around with Days 4 and 5 based on conditions.

Day 4 & 5

If weather allows, the final two days will be spent attempting a large objective in RMNP. Generally, these objectives will be on Longs Peak, but we may also attempt routes on Flattop or other objectives based on the conditions and our goals.

The overall goal for Day 4 and 5 is to put all of our skills together and spend a night out in the Park before our summit attempt.

Ideally, Day 4 will be a shorter day where we hike in, set up camp, and get some rest before our summit attempt the next day.