



COURSE INFORMATION

PATAGONIA-FLORIDA EVERGLADES-BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS GAP YEAR/SEMESTER COURSE

PREPARATION

It is important for you to take time to mentally and physically prepare for your course. Look over the Course Preparation and Physical Fitness guidelines on your course web page. If you have yet to start physically preparing, start now and focus on cardiovascular training. You will be putting yourself at a disadvantage if you postpone or ignore physical preparation! If you are unsure how to begin a fitness regimen appropriate for you, contact your physician for assistance.

Note to smokers and caffeine drinkers: If you smoke, it's essential to quit before you arrive. Using your course as a means to quit smoking is NOT recommended. You will be put in a number of stressful situations and a person suffering from nicotine withdrawal may not be able to effectively deal with those situations. If you drink caffeine, it is also essential to quit or significantly reduce your level of consumption prior to your course start. Caffeine withdrawal may cause severe headaches which can hinder your progress on course.

SHELTER

During course, you will use several different types of shelters: tarps, tents or megamids. You will also be given a ground sheet and a foam pad to place under your sleeping bag.

FOOD

Outward Bound practices Leave No Trace camping ethics. Therefore, we seldom build fires. You will be cooking on gas camp stoves. Your instructors will teach you backcountry cooking techniques and you will be responsible for helping with the preparation of all meals for yourself and your crewmates. Your diet will be a mix of dehydrated foods, fresh fruits and vegetables. We use rice, tortillas, crackers, salami, cheese, peanut butter, jelly, tuna fish, pasta and trail mixes. The amount of physical activity you experience during your course demands a nutritious diet to help fuel your body. Junk food is not available on course. If you have special diet requirements, make sure we are aware by recording these requirements in your Medical Record booklet. For more information on nutrition, refer to the Medical Record booklet.

HYGIENE

You will be outside while on course and won't have access to a shower or bath. You will be able to do basic cleanup every day: brush your teeth, wash your face and comb your hair. At the end of your course, you will be able to do a more thorough cleanup. Our staff are very skilled in field hygiene so please don't hesitate to approach them with any questions or concerns.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Since North Carolina Outward Bound is an outdoor program, you can expect to learn and use Leave No Trace camping techniques. Know that it is natural to have questions regarding sanitation in an outdoor setting. Your instructors will answer your questions and will teach you the hygienic and environmentally safe way to dispose of waste.

PHASE I: PATAGONIA JANUARY 22 - FEBRUARY 13, 2016

Activities during this phase will include the following:

- **Alpine Expedition:** Expect elevation shifts between 2,500 and 8,000 feet as you traverse through Nahuel Huapi National Park, the oldest and largest National Park in Argentina.
 - **Skills:** map and compass navigation, expedition planning, Leave No Trace minimum-impact techniques, first-aid, emergency procedures and weather forecasting.
- **Mountaineering:** Experience and develop snow and glacier travel skills on the flanks of the majestic Mt. Tronador.
 - **Skills:** ice climbing, glacier travel, glissading, self-rescue techniques and advanced rope management.
- **Service:** in-depth cultural exchange projects with local families in the region

General Patagonia Phase Outline (23 days):

- 10-12 days alpine backpacking
- 5-6 days mountaineering
- 1-2 days service projects
- 1-2 days solo
- 1-2 days transition/travel/town

PHASE II: FLORIDA EVERGLADES FEBRUARY 14 - MARCH 3, 2016

Activities during this phase will include the following:

- **Expedition Canoeing:** The Ten Thousand Islands face directly onto the Gulf of Mexico, which creates a perfect area to study weather patterns and various paddling challenges.
- **Skills:** Paddling strokes, chart reading and navigation, equipment maintenance, currents and tides, Leave No Trace techniques and expedition planning.

General Florida Phase Outline (18 days):

- 11-13 days canoeing
- 1 day service
- 1-2 day solo
- 1-2 days transition/travel days

PHASE III: NORTH CAROLINA MOUNTAINS MARCH 3 - APRIL 3, 2016

Activities during this phase will include the following:

- **Backpacking:** Discover some of the finest terrain for outdoor adventure in the country as you backpack through beautiful valleys and across ancient ridgelines to the 6,000-foot summits of the Appalachian Mountains. These mountains once rivaled the Himalayas in stature.
 - **Skills:** map and compass navigation, expedition planning, Leave No Trace minimum-impact techniques, first-aid, emergency procedures and weather forecasting.
- **Rock climbing:** Weather permitting, you may spend up to five days climbing. Start out bouldering then progress to more challenging climbs. Each day that you climb you learn and practice new climbing techniques.
 - **Skills:** climbing safety practices, bouldering, belaying, multi-pitch climbing, rappelling, care and use of equipment and knot-tying.

- **Whitewater Canoeing:** Weather permitting, you may spend up to five days canoeing on the French Broad or Tuckaseegee Rivers. Occasionally we may also use the Chattooga, New and Nantahala Rivers. You will be using tandem (two person) canoes.
It will be necessary for you and your crewmates to perform a rapid swim assessment; as well as a flip and swim (or canoe capsize) assessment in the river. This activity is closely monitored by your instructors and river specialists. It is critical for us to determine your whitewater paddling comfort as you and your crew maneuver challenging rapids. Even if you are a non-swimmer or weak swimmer, you will still participate in this safety assessment. All students will be wearing safety helmets and personal floatation devices (PFDs) during the assessment. Helmets and personal floatation devices (PFDs) are required apparel anytime students are on the water.
 - **Skills:** Basic water safety and rescue techniques; identification and use of paddling equipment; how to work with your paddling partner to successfully negotiate class II and III rapids; advanced skills including flat water and whitewater paddling strokes and maneuvers.
- **Crew-Led expedition:** Put your new skills to the test as you and your crewmates plan and lead your own expedition.
- **Ongoing:** Initiatives, workshops and activities all aimed at developing skills in the areas of personal growth, leadership, teamwork, and communication.

General North Carolina Mountains Phase Outline (31 days):

- 12-15 days backpacking
- 5 days rock climbing and rappelling
- 5 days whitewater canoeing
- 2-3 days solo
- 1-2 days service
- ½ day personal challenge event (7 - 15 mile run)
- 2-3 days transition/travel/town

SERVICE

Service will be a continuous theme throughout your course. The ethic of service is practiced through Leave No Trace camping techniques, reaching out with compassion to your fellow crewmates and working together as a team to overcome the challenges of Outward Bound.

On your course, the ethic of service is practiced in greater depth and often includes a service project. Projects range from campsite restoration and maintaining hiking trails in the wilderness to supporting the surrounding communities by assisting families in need, sharing outdoor activities with disadvantaged children or helping in local wildlife restoration centers. Service projects typically last 6-8 hours. **Alert your instructor AT COURSE START if you need written verification or documentation of service project hours.**

SOLO

Solo will occur during each phase of your course. Solo experiences generally last between 24 and 72 hours. Your instructors will assign each participant an individual campsite within a designated area. You will have appropriate clothing, food, water, shelter, and your sleeping bag as well as your compass and whistle. Your instructors will teach you procedures to follow during solo and monitor you during this experience. You will know the location of your instructors' solo site should you need to contact them; otherwise it is essential that

you remain at your solo site. During solo, you will take time to relax, recharge and reflect on your progress while on course. Solo is also a good time to write in the journals we provide. NOTE: Solo is not a “survival test.”

PERSONAL CHALLENGE EVENT

At the end of the North Carolina and Patagonia phases, you will participate in a personal challenge event. This is a great time to see how much your physical fitness and endurance have improved since you began your course. This event will be a running activity. It is not a race. Your instructors set a certain route for your crew, and you complete the route at a level that will challenge you the most.

BACKGROUND READING

Here are some books that we encourage you to read as you start planning for your course:

Technical Skills:

Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills by Don Graydon and Kurt Hanson

The Outward Bound Wilderness First-Aid Handbook by Jeff Isaac

Leave No Trace: A Practical Guide to the New Wilderness Ethic by Annette McGivney

Knots & Ropes for Climbers by Duane Raleigh and Mike Clelland

The Outward Bound Backpacker's Handbook by Glenn Randall

The Outward Bound Map & Compass Handbook by Glenn Randall

Florida Everglades Culture/History/Natural Environment:

Liquid Land by Ted Levin

Ten Thousand Islands by Randy Wayne Wright

The Swamp by Michael Grunwald

Stolen Water by W. Hodding Carter

Patagonia Culture/History/Natural Environment:

Patagonia: Images of a Wild Land by David Neilson

The Last Cowboys at the End of the World: The Story of the Gauchos of Patagonia by Nick Reding

Patagonia: The Last Wilderness by Axel Bos and Daniel Rivademar