



SWS Mountain Guides
110 East Lake St.
Mt. Shasta, Ca. 96067
infor@swsmountainguides.com
www.swsmountainguides.com
Phone: 888.797.6867

MT SHASTA CASAVAL RIDGE ASCENT

3 days / 2 nights



This 3-day ascent of one of the most iconic and classic routes on Mt. Shasta follows a spiny rock ridge known as Casaval Ridge. Best climbed in early to late Spring, when there is plenty of snow coverage on the spiny ridge. Steep terrain and spectacular views await the intermediate climber on this exciting route. Our high camp on Casaval Ridge has some of the best of anywhere on the mountain! Once at base camp, we'll review the skills and techniques needed to attempt this ascent. Determination, excellent physical conditioning, and solid ice axe and crampons skills are essential to this route. Technical steep terrain and variable weather conditions make this an excellent pre-requisite climb for Denali, our Mexico Volcanoes expedition, or any South American expedition.

Itinerary

Day 1: We'll meet at our Mt. Shasta office at 8:00 am and complete a pre-climb pack check. Your guide will also divide the group gear (tents, stoves, etc.). After packing the bags, we will head to the trailhead just outside of town (Bunny Flat) on Mt. Shasta's Southern side. You'll then begin your approach to our base camp on Casaval Ridge:

1. You'll pass the historic "horse camp cabin" along the way.
2. You'll gain elevation and rise above the trees before arriving at your camp, located at approximately 10,000ft overlooking much of the Avalanche Gulch route. Along the way, your guide will provide instructions and explain the terrain, route, and what to expect. Once at camp, we'll review some essential ice axe, crampon, and rope-handling skills needed for the climb.
3. Like the sun, we will tuck in for an early evening as we prepare for an early morning the next day.

Day 2: Summit Day!! We wake early (typically between 12–1 am), have a quick breakfast, and have a hot drink if you'd like (hot chocolate, coffee, tea) before saying goodbye to camp for a while. Generally, we want to leave camp by 2–3 am for the best chances of summiting. From camp, we have approximately a 3 miles distance and 4500 vertical feet of climbing before reaching the 14,179ft summit. Due to the short daylight hours and the higher likelihood of inclement weather moving in, we must summit or turn around no later than 11 am. It's a full day of challenging yourself, fun but difficult climbing, and incredible views. After our summit or turnaround time, we should arrive at the camp around 4–5 pm. You'll share high-fives and stories and reflect on the day while enjoying a second evening under the stars.



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Day 3: Today is more leisurely than day 2. We typically wake with the sun hitting our tents and enjoy a hot breakfast and drinks before packing our things. After breakfast, we'll make our way back to the trailhead while being sure to have a look up at what we had climbed the day prior. Our journey from camp to the trailhead will take a few hours, putting us back in the vehicles by mid to late afternoon.

PLEASE NOTE: This is a best-case scenario - the itinerary is subject to change at the guide's discretion and depends on mountain conditions, group experience/expectations, and other factors we cannot anticipate. For example, we might attempt the summit on Day 3 instead of Day 2, which makes for a long summit day but allows for additional flexibility if the weather is a concern.

Includes: Ice axe, helmet, harness, group climbing equipment (ropes, safety equipment), tents, stoves, breakfast, dinner on the mountain, wilderness permits, and fees.

Group Size: Maximum 6 Guests (3 guests per guide)

Experience Level: Climbers need to have previous mountaineering experience. Solid crampon and ice axe skills and rope team experience are required. Due to the weather likely encountered on these climbs, previous winter camping skills are strongly recommended.

Getting Here and Away: The Sacramento Airport (SMF) and Medford International Airport (MFR) are excellent jumping-off points.

Where to Stay: Mt. Shasta is a great mountain town with several options on where to stay. Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or want recommendations.

Experience Level: Anyone in very good to excellent physical condition wants to reach the summit of Mt. Shasta via a challenging glacial route. Snow or ice climbing experience and previous mountaineering experience are helpful but not required. Hiking and or Backpacking experience is needed.

Physical Conditioning Requirements: Participants must be in excellent physical condition. Backpacks will weigh between 45 to 65 pounds. With a day pack, you must be comfortable climbing 500-600 ft elevation gain per hour for 6-8 hours at a time. While the distance traveled on the ascent is approximately 7 miles, you'll gain 7,302 ft vertical feet from the trailhead. Summit day alone will have over 4,000 vertical feet and cover about 3 miles. Our camp location is generally between 9,500 – 10,000 feet; if you're concerned with altitude sickness, please call or email us! We have several techniques that can help you to avoid, or at the very least, minimize adverse reactions to altitude.

Food: We provide meals while on the mountain. These include breakfasts, freeze-dried dinners, and hot beverages. We have a variety of meal options available. However, we cannot guarantee specific choices of flavors, brands, or dishes (Ex: fettuccine, lasagna, teriyaki chicken & rice, etc.). If you have a favorite breakfast or dinner that only requires hot water, we encourage you to bring it. Also, bring your favorite high-calorie, high-carbohydrate lunches and snacks! The town of Mt. Shasta has a few grocery stores and markets, but having things you're familiar with and in hand when you meet your guide is essential.

Examples: bagels, cheese, dried fruit, trail mix, Protein bars, chocolate, etc.

Note: you will need approximately 200-300 calories per hour (7-9 hours on summit day alone!).

Not Included: Mountaineering Boots, Snowshoes (early season), and Crampons are NOT included but are available for rent from us. We also have backpacks, sleeping bags, sleeping pads, down jackets, and Gore-Tex jackets available to rent. Due to limited supply, it is HIGHLY RECOMMENDED you make your reservation for your rentals online or by phone with us before the morning you arrive. For more details about equipment, please see our equipment list for this course, call us, or email us. We're happy to help!

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