



SWS Mountain Guides

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Introduction to Ski Mountaineering Mt. Shasta Backcountry or Lassen National Park 3 Days / 2 Nights



General Description: Run in two different venues (Mt Shasta or Mt Lassen), our Intro to Ski Mountaineering course has been designed to help those who are newer to backcountry skiing/splitboarding. Whether it's your first time or you are just wanting to refine some skills for moving through the backcountry on skis or a board, this course is for you. This course is designed to introduce skills necessary to climb and ski in more complex terrain, which hopefully opens up a larger variety of ski and snowboard objectives for all participants. We have multiple location options for this course based on not only the group ability, but also for the best skiing and riding conditions present during the time frame of the course.

Sample Itinerary

Day 1: We will meet at 8:00 am at a predetermined location to conduct a complete pack check and divide up the group gear before heading to the trail head. Once at the trail head we will skin for approximately 4-5 hours to our base camp location. Along the way you'll learn techniques for how to skin on a variety of snow and slope features. If conditions are challenging or other factors outside of our control present themselves (such as weather, group fitness, avalanche conditions, etc.) we may have to establish camp at a lower elevation. Day 1 is focused on learning skills such as skinning uphill/downhill, route finding, efficient track setting, and camp selection based on weather and snow conditions. All are fundamental skills for the ski or snowboard mountaineer. After establishing camp and settling in we will have dinner and get a good nights rest under a tremendous night sky.

Day 2: Today we start the day with a basic snow school learning how to use an ice axe and crampons for traveling on firm snow conditions. Additional skills covered in snow school include basic climbing techniques, self-belay, self-arrest, team rope travel, which will all be needed for larger objectives. After learning these skills we will go on a short tour working on techniques and tactics for skinning/skiing on steeper terrain, as well as learning identification of basic avalanche hazards. The tour allows us to not only enjoy some skiing/boarding but is also a great opportunity for acclimatization, skill development, snow and gear assessment, and fun. After returning back to our camp location we will have an early evening in preparation for our objective attempt the next day.



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Day 3: We will awake early today and leave camp to attempt our course objective. All of the skills learned on Days 1 and 2 will be applied and refined as we attempt a climb and ski descent that will be determined by the guide. You will learn additional skills and thought processes today that will be applied in your later mountain travels. After the climb and enjoying some turns on the descent we will return to camp. Once at camp you will begin packing for the tour out to the trail head. Generally, we arrive back at the trail head around 4-5PM and share high-fives, collect group gear, and say our good-byes.

PLEASE NOTE: This is a best-case scenario. This itinerary is subject to change at the guide's discretion and depends on mountain conditions/weather, group fitness/experience/expectations, and other factors we cannot anticipate. THIS IS NOT A SUMMIT ORIENTED COURSE BUT RATHER A SKILL DEVELOPMENT COURSE!

Locations: Lassen Volcanic National Park / Mt. Shasta Wilderness Area

Experience Level Requirements: Beginner to Advanced Alpine skiers and/or Snowboarders (Split Boards only). No previous winter experience is required, but recent hiking, snowshoeing, or backpacking experience is highly recommended.

Physical Conditioning Requirements: Participants need to be in good physical condition and able to travel on snow carrying overnight gear. Backpacks generally weigh anywhere from 40 to 50 pounds. Typical elevation gain per day is 4,000 - 5,000 ft. Base camp locations generally are between 8,000 - 9,500 ft. Shasta and Lassen are both peaks with summits over 10,000 ft (Shasta - 14,179 ft, Lassen - 10,457 ft). If you have a history of, or anticipate a problem with altitude sickness please call and talk to us. We have several techniques that may help to avoid, or at the very least, minimize adverse reactions to altitude.

Food Provided: Breakfasts, dinners, and hot beverages while on the course. We will have a variety of options available, however, we cannot guarantee specific choices of flavors or meals. If you have a favorite breakfast or dinner that only requires hot water to be added, you are welcome to bring it. Make sure to bring your own favorite, high-calorie, high-carbohydrate, lunches, and snacks. Examples: bagels, cheese, dried fruit, trail mix, Clif bars, chocolate, etc. Note: you'll need approximately 200-300 calories per hour (4-5 hours for day 1, 7-9 hours days 2 and 3).

Getting Here and Away: The Sacramento Airport (SMF) and Medford International Airport (MFR) are great 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.

Group Size: 1-8 Total Guests (Guide to Guest Ratio: 1:3/4 dependent on objective).

What is Included: Professional instruction/guide, breakfast(s), dinner(s), ice axes, helmets, harness, group climbing equipment including ropes and safety equipment, group camping equipment including tents and stoves, permits, and permit fees including Mt. Shasta summit fees.

What is NOT Included: Skis or Snowboards, Poles, Ski Mountaineering Boots, and Crampons are NOT included but are available for rent either from SWS Mountain Guides (crampons) or locally (skis, poles, boots). For more details about equipment, please see our equipment list for this course or give us a call for rental options.

Ski Mountaineering Rentals are available at the Fifth Season 530-926-3606 or give the SWS Mountain Guides office a call at 888.797.6867 for additional rentals options in the San Francisco Bay Area. V23.0