

Mt. Rainier: 4 ½ Day Kautz Glacier Summit Climb 5 ½ Day Kautz (including Advanced MDS)

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Why Choose This Program?

The Kautz climb is a perfect fit for anyone with prior alpine climbing experience looking for a more challenging route on Mt. Rainier. If you are very fit and looking to push yourself physically and technically on a climb other than the standard route this program is for you.

Climbers on this program have often climbed either the Emmons or the Disappointment Cleaver routes on Mt. Rainier and have felt very comfortable on those routes. They must be confident cramponing in firm glacier conditions on steeper slopes. This is a challenging climb that ascends large and imposing glaciers and snowfields, and gets you away from the masses of the Camp Muir corridor. The crux of the route, just above high camp, involves ascending a chute that increases in angle from 30 to 50 degrees over several hundred feet and likely includes a section of firm snow or glacier ice. Later in the season this section can become exposed glacier ice in its entirety. Multiple pitches of belays by the guides from ice anchors are often employed to facilitate passage. The 4-day program allows enough time to do the climb comfortably, but if you have not climbed on steeper ice before, we strongly recommend attending the additional Mountain Day School (MDS) and the Advanced Mountain Day School (AMDS) prior to the trip or the Kautz EX program which includes the AMDS in the itinerary. If you are looking for something more physical, technical and remote then the Kautz Glacier route is an excellent program.

We employ a light and efficient philosophy for climbing on Mt. Rainier. We will help you pare down your personal climbing gear during a pre-climb gear check to minimize weight and make certain you bring only the essentials up the mountain.

Climbing with a 2:1 client-to-guide ratio provides a superior level of support and safety. Our group size is never larger than twelve (8 climbers and 4 guides). IMG provides breakfasts and dinners for the group on the mountain for your convenience and comfort.

Prerequisite:

A review of basic climbing skills is incorporated into this program's itinerary. However, we offer our Mountaineering Day School prior to each of the Kautz programs and recommend participation in it for those who feel they need a refresher or additional skills training. If you have not climbed on steep ice with crampons before, it is strongly recommended that you participate in the Advanced Mountaineering School as well. We offer our popular 2-day crevasse rescue program prior to or just after select Kautz climbs and highly recommend this additional training as well for those who are looking for a maximum of training opportunities.

All participants must have prior alpine climbing experience either on Rainier or on other glaciated peaks, and be familiar with basic mountaineering skills including cramponing in firm ice and snow conditions. Past experience on multi day backpacking trips is also highly recommended. This is a strenuous and more technically demanding summit climb, **not for first time climbers.**

Dates: June – July (Please see the IMG website for [specific, available dates.](#))

Landcost: Kautz \$1,664; Kautz EX \$1,846

Client to Guide Ratio: 2:1

Trip Length: Kautz 4 ½ days; Kautz EX 5 ½ days

Itinerary

Day 1 - The team meets at 2:00 p.m. the afternoon prior to the climb at IMG's Ashford Headquarters ([Directions](#)). This pre-climb meeting of 4 hours is instrumental in getting the team outfitted, informed, packed and educated prior to departure the following morning. Topics to be covered include an introduction of the entire team, an introduction to Mt. Rainier National Park, its mission and ecology; a safety briefing; issue and fitting of gear; personal gear checks and issue of group gear; proper use of safety equipment including helmets, harnesses and avalanche beacons; introduction to knots, ropes, rope travel and a review of additional critical climbing skills.

You are on your own for lodging this night, but IMG offers a convenient and economical option with our onsite [tent camping](#).

Day 2 (Kautz EX only) - Meet at 8:00 a.m. all ready to go with day packs. We ride the IMG shuttle up to Paradise for a day of technical training. The group hikes out to the lower Nisqually Glacier for a day of technical training. This will include steeper angle cramponing skills: flat footed French technique, front pointing, standing in balance on crampons and movement over ice. The use of ice axes in "piolet traction" and "piolet ancre" (anchoring the pick of the axe) on moderately steep slopes will be covered including the use of more technical tools. Anchor construction on snow and glacier ice is covered as well as belaying, anchor management, rappelling and lowering. Descent back to Paradise at end of day and transport back to HQ. You are on your own for lodging this second night, but IMG offers a convenient and economical option with our onsite [tent camping](#).

Day 2 (Day 3 Kautz EX) - We meet at 8:00 a.m. all ready to go, then load up the van and are shuttled up to Paradise, the jumping-off point for our climb. We spend most of the day ascending to the first camp and establishing it at above 7,000 feet. The first day takes us through open alpine meadows and snow fields then drops us down to cross the lower Nisqually glacier. The Nisqually glacier provides an opportunity to practice roping up and the techniques of safe glacier travel.

Day 3 (Day 4 Kautz EX) - We continue training and refreshing the team's glacier climbing skills prior to departing our campsite. Training continues after we pack up and move slowly up to our high camp (at +/- 10,000ft). Once camp is established, we discuss the following day's summit climb and complete our preparations for the morning.

Day 4 (Day 5 Kautz EX) - We begin our climb well before daybreak to allow enough time to reach the 14,411ft summit and descend back to camp during the safest part of the day. Our summit day route normally starts with the guides lowering each member down a vertical rock step to access the Kautz Glacier then onto the steeper and more exposed part of the route. Here the guides may employ fixed anchors or fixed ropes to protect the ascent and descent. This is a great introduction to steeper glacier climbing skills. The upper Kautz glacier becomes more moderate in angle and leads up to the upper mountain and finally Mt. Rainier's summit crater rim. After an hour on top, we navigate the same route back down to high camp to enjoy a well deserved rest after a long and strenuous day.

Day 5 (Day 6 Kautz EX) - The final day is reserved for descent to Paradise where the shuttle waits to bring us back to IMG's HQ facilities. Here we finally have an opportunity to celebrate our climb and the guides award certificates.