

Mt. Rainier: Ski Mountaineering Seminar

© 2015 International Mountain Guides

Come join us for an unforgettable ski and mountain experience. It is not an exaggeration to say that Mt. Rainier has some of the world's finest alpine ski mountaineering terrain. You will be skiing on a wide variety of fantastic terrain including glaciers, chutes, and long descents. Besides the incredible skiing there will be an opportunity to learn some advanced skills. The guides will cover the latest ski touring and ski mountaineering techniques that will allow you to gain maximum enjoyment traveling in this spectacular environment.

This includes ski mountaineering anchors, steep skiing techniques, and roped and belayed skiing. Winter navigation, route selection, snow pack evaluation and avalanche hazard assessment are also emphasized in this program. The Ski Mountaineering Seminar is designed for people with solid intermediate alpine (downhill) or telemark skiing skills. If you are new to the sport or have concerns about your skiing ability you will want to join our [ski mountaineering training program at Crystal Mountain](#).

Why Choose This Program?

This program is designed specifically for the intermediate or better alpine (downhill) skier or ski mountaineer who wants to ski incredible glaciated mountain terrain. This is also the opportunity to gain valuable experience in winter conditions in the alpine environment. This is an excellent program for persons wishing to prepare for a future ski descent from the summit of Mt. Rainier or ski assisted expeditions such as Denali and Mt. Logan.

Our guides

IMG is accredited by the American Mountain Guides Association. The leader of this program will be chosen from among our AMGA certified ski guides. You can count on the very best of ski instruction from our internationally renowned staff of guides.

We employ a light and efficient philosophy for climbing on this program. We help you go through your personal climbing gear to make sure you are not carrying anything unnecessary up the mountain in order to maximize enjoyment of your ski descents.

Fitness and Skiing Ability

The Ski Mountaineering Seminar is designed for people with strong intermediate alpine (downhill), telemark or splitboard skills. The goal is to ski effortless powder but sometimes you have to ski through less than perfect snow to get there. Ski mountaineering on Mt. Rainier is a serious endeavor and one that demands good physical fitness. It is the most imposing glaciated peak in the lower 48 States and has long been a premier training ground for climbs such as Denali, Aconcagua and the Himalayas. To learn more about training for this trip, please read our Training Suggestions on the [Rainier FAQ page](#). If you are new to the sport or have concerns about your skiing ability, you will want to join our [ski mountaineering training program at Crystal Mountain](#).

Prerequisite

All participants must have excellent physical fitness and strong intermediate or better skiing ability in varied snow conditions.

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

Landcost: \$1,500

Client to Guide Ratio: 3:1

Trip Length: 5.5 days

Itinerary

Day 1 (1/2 day)- Meet in Ashford at HQ at 2:00pm for the pre-trip meeting. This 4-hour session is instrumental in getting the team outfitted, informed, packed and educated prior to going on the mountain 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, L&T, issue and fitting of gear and personal gear checks including ski equipment. We will issue group gear and introduce the proper use of safety equipment including avalanche beacons, probes, and shovels. We also review additional critical ski mountaineering and avalanche safety skills.

Day 2 - After we are shuttled to Paradise we'll begin by ski touring for a few hours to our first camp location and get set up. This camp, above Paradise on the flanks of Mt. Rainier, offers beautiful views of both the mountain and of the rugged Tatoosh range to the South. The afternoon consists of avalanche hazard evaluation and ski mountaineering training.

Day 3 - We make our way to 10,000 feet at Camp Muir. This will be our base camp for the next few days. In the afternoon we rope up and ski on to the Cowlitz. This gives us a chance to practice some good route finding and glacier travel skills on skis.

Days 4-5 – These are ski tour days with the Nisqually, Cowlitz, or Muir snowfield as options depending on conditions. We stop along the way to do some ski anchor and steep skiing and training and practice advanced skills as the terrain and conditions warrant.

Day 6 - The final day affords us an opportunity to head out on a longer ski tour that allows us to use our training from the past three days and, depending upon the group, get into some steeper more exposed ski mountaineering terrain for a ski descent back down to Paradise. We are shuttled from Paradise to Ashford where we celebrate our trip's end.

“The experience was everything I was hoping it would be. The guides were knowledgeable and helpful without being patronizing. They pretty much kept to the schedule without being over-bearing. I would absolutely travel with you again and have already recommended you to a number of my friends. Thanks for a fantastic experience!”

—Becky J.

For more comments from IMG climbers, please see our website at: www.mountainguides.com/comments.shtml

Mt. Rainier: Ski Mountaineering Required Personal Equipment List

International Mountain Guides will supply the necessary group climbing equipment including tents, stoves, ropes, collapsible shovels, avalanche beacons and meals excepting lunches for the program. You will need to supply your own personal climbing equipment such as ski mountaineering, split board or telemark equipment, clothing, ice axe, crampons and lunch food. This Personal Equipment List is for your guidance. Please consider each item carefully and be sure you understand its function; consult with us before you make any substitutions. Several of the more specialized items (i.e. crampons, ice axe) along with shell layers, insulating layers, hand and eyewear can be rented from us at the IMG base in Ashford. Please consult our [Rental Information](#).

- Medium Internal frame pack (in the 4,000 cu. in. or 35-50 liter range) with good hip belt - be ready to carry at least 35 pounds.
- Sleeping bag - warm to 0F.
- Sleeping pad suitable for snow camping (Thermarest, full length closed cell, etc)
- Ice axe 50-60 cm.
- 10 or 12-point crampons with crampon adjustment tools, adjusted to your boots
- Day pack with strapping system for skis or board
- Skis with AT bindings, splitboard or telemark
- AT, snowboard, or telemark boots
- Climbing skins
- Ski poles
- Avalanche transceiver (provided by IMG at no additional cost)
- Collapsible shovel (provided by IMG at no additional cost)
- 1 wool or fleece hat and 1 neck gaiter; or 1 thick balaclava
- 1 sun hat (ball cap and/or bandanna)
- 1 pr. light gloves (not fingerless) and 1 pr. thick insulated gloves (like ski gloves)
- 1 pr. mittens or overmitts with liners
- 1 light or mid-weight synthetic underwear top and bottoms
- 1 synthetic t-shirt (preferably white - for the sun and hot weather)
- 1 expedition-weight or light fleece top
- 1 soft shell jacket
- Gore-Tex (or equivalent) shell jacket with hood
- Down or synthetic insulated parka with attached hood
- 1 pr. ski pants (Schoeller type fabric)
- Gore-Tex (or equivalent) shell pants with side zips and cuffs
- Gaiters (optional if your ski pants cover your boots adequately)
- 2 complete sets of wool or synthetic blend socks
- Personal medical kit: keep it light but include at least: Band-Aids, moleskin, aspirin/ibuprofen, small roll of adhesive tape, antacids, and personal medications.
- 1 pr. glacier glasses, wrap around or with side protection
- 1 pr. double lens ski goggles
- Sunscreen and lip screen, high spf rated
- Foam ear plugs (for the hut), small roll of toilet paper in Ziploc bag, personal toilet articles
- Large insulated drinking cup, plastic bowl, plastic spoon, and pocket knife
- 2 wide-mouth water bottles with name or initials written in indelible ink
- 2 large garbage bags to protect gear from rain/snow
- LED Headlamp with extra batteries.
- Trail lunches and personal snacks for 5 days; bring plenty of snack food, various types of energy bars, dried fruit, nuts, GORP, crackers, cheese, candy, jerky, drink mixes (if desired).

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require assistance with your gear selection.