Mt Olympus, Olympic National Park

Olympic National Park is a vast area of exceptional beauty and varied ecosystems covering more than 900,000 acres of land. It was named a World Heritage Site in 1981. The Park, bordered on the west by the Pacific Ocean, is home to the longest stretch of undeveloped coastline in the lower 48 States. Rising from this coastline is an old growth rain forest system surrounding isolated snow clad peaks. In the very midst of this, remote to all except those willing to make the journey, lies Mt. Olympus, one of the great isolated peaks in the Pacific Northwest. The mountain rises almost 8,000 vertical feet from the ocean, 30 miles distant.

To climb Mt. Olympus is to fully experience one of the greatest National Parks in the U.S., unique in its biodiversity spanning terrain from ocean coastline to alpine summit.

Your small team of 6 climbers led by 2 IMG guides will utilize lightweight gear and Leave No Trace training to travel through the Park with minimal impact. The climb takes two days to hike in 17 ½ miles to high camp. The summit attempt occurs on day three and the final two days are reserved for hiking back out again in an unforgettable five day round trip journey.

“I was very impressed with how everything was so well organized. It seemed like every little detail was covered. IMG is way better than the others. Way better! You guys are the best in the business...”

—Jim P.

For more comments from IMG climbers, please see our website at: www.mountainguides.com/comments.shtml
The Mountain
Mount Olympus is one of the most iconic, big, isolated mountains in the Pacific Northwest. Located in the center of Olympic National Park and far from any roads or viewpoints, many locals have never seen the mountain in person and relatively few climbers have ventured to its lofty summit. Mount Olympus is the third most heavily glaciated peak in Washington State, even more impressive due to its relatively low height. The high level of annual precipitation (140 inches and more each year) in the Park is responsible for heavy snowpack on the mountain in the winter months and is the reason for the formation of the extensive glaciation on Mt. Olympus. Sadly, the glaciers are slowly wasting away, and have lost 15% or more of their total volume in the past 30 years due to climate change. For more information on the changes occurring in Olympic National Park and on Mt. Olympus follow this link to the NPS website https://www.nps.gov/olym/learn/nature/glaciers.htm.

The Challenge
The actual height of Mt. Olympus, 7,980 feet above sea level, may not seem impressive at first, but the challenge of Mt. Olympus becomes obvious when you consider the approach hike starts at an elevation of 573 feet. In a distance of 22 miles, the total elevation gain to the summit is over 7,000 vertical feet! A big part of the allure of climbing Mt. Olympus involves starting at low elevation in the Olympic Rain Forest and hiking up through the forest zones into the alpine zone to experience the full spectrum of wilderness environments.
Skill Level

On the climb we will be carrying our full load of gear in to high camp. We will utilize lightweight tents, cook gear and food for the trip, but expect to carry 15 pounds of group gear in addition to your personal equipment. Total load for your pack will be as much as 60 pounds depending on how light you are able to keep your personal gear. All participants must be in excellent physical condition.

The need to train for this climb cannot be overstressed! For several months prior to the start of the climb, training should include lots of long, slow distance runs (or bike rides, or hikes) over hilly terrain, an hour or more in duration. Add additional weekend outings carrying an increasingly heavier pack (35-60 lbs.) up steep hills or stairs. These sessions should eventually gain 2-3,000 feet over 3 to 5 miles one way. Come prepared to hike 10 miles of flat terrain with your full pack on the very first day!

Prior experience with crampons, ice axe and roped glacier travel is recommended, but a short review will be conducted prior to and during the summit day. The glacier terrain is moderate in angle with some belayed rock scrambling up the final steep, exposed rock ledges near the summit.

Dates and Prices

Dates:  
June 10-14, 2019  June 24-28, 2019  
July 8-12, 2019  July 22-26, 2019  

Landcost: $1,350

Private trips are available on your schedule:  
- 4-5 climbers, Landcost: $1,500 per person  
- 6-8 climbers, Landcost: $1,350 per person  

Included in your fee are dinners and breakfasts during the climb and all group equipment including shared tents, stoves, climbing ropes and safety gear.

Not included is personal clothing and equipment, transportation to the trailhead, lodging the evening prior to the start of the climb or the last night of the trip, or meals other than breakfasts and dinners on the program.

Maximum group size: 6 (1 guide per 3 climbers) for a small, compact team.
Mt. Olympus Itinerary

You will need to arrive in the greater Seattle area or SeaTac Airport no later than the evening prior to your scheduled climb. Lodging this night is at your expense. You will be responsible for transporting yourself the approximately 200 miles (4½ hours driving time) from Seattle to the Hoh Rainforest Visitor Center. Best option is probably to make the drive the night prior and either camp out that night or stay at a local motel. IMG will share the group contact list approximately one month in advance and recommends carpooling.

Day 1: Meet at the Hoh Rainforest Visitor Center at 8:00 a.m. for group registration, a quick gear check and distribution of group gear. Hike in approximately 10 miles to camp at Lewis Meadows (1,000'). Dinner and early to bed.

Day 2: Rise early, breakfast and hot drinks and hit the trail again. Climb to high camp at Glacier Meadows (4,300'), only 7 miles but 3,000+ feet of elevation gain.

Day 3: Summit day! Up pre-dawn and head up the glacier. Summit day will be up to 12 hours.

Day 4: Sleep in! Leisurely breakfast and then hit the trail back to camp at Lewis Meadows.

Day 5: Hike the remaining 10 miles out to the trail head. Pack up the vehicles and head to the nearest lunch spot. Return to Seattle.

"Thank you for a professional, safe and successful climb. We had the experience of a lifetime. I learned a lot and appreciated the way you strategically and tactically approached the mountain..."

—John H.

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Mt Olympus Equipment List

Clothing
- Long underwear top and bottom (light weight)
- Expedition weight long underwear top
- Soft shell or Fleece jacket
- Climbing pant - dense weave nylon (Schoeller fabric pants)
- Waterproof/ breathable shell with hood
- Waterproof/ breathable pants (full side zips preferred)
- Warm, roomy down or synthetic jacket with hood
- Wool or fleece hat
- Insulated climbing or ski gloves
- Light fleece or synthetic gloves
- Two pair wool hiking socks with optional liners
- Baseball or sun cap
- T-shirt (light color, synthetic)
- Hiking shorts (or zip-off hiking pants)

Gear
- Full size internal frame pack, 65 to 80 liter capacity for carrying up to 60 pounds weight.
- Sleeping bag with compression stuff sack, rated to at least 20 degrees F. Down is lightest.
- Sleeping pad, preferably lightweight and inflatable.
- Single leather/synthetic climbing boots- must be crampon compatible, insulated and waterproof. A good example is the La Sportiva Trango S Evo boot – a lightweight, more flexible climbing boot. You’ll carry these boots up to high camp. Double plastic mountaineering boots are not acceptable!
- A sturdy, waterproof pair of trail shoes for the approach hike up to high camp and return.
- Full length gaiters to protect boots, trail shoes and legs from mud on the trail and snow on summit day.
- 12 point crampons with strap on type plastic heel and toe piece. fitted to your boots
- Sunscreen and lip balm, minimum SPF 20
- Ice Axe, 60 or 70 cm. in length, wrist leash optional
- Climbing harness with adjustable leg loops.
- Climbing helmet
- 2 Carabiners (One locking pear shaped)
- Adjustable trekking or ski poles with baskets
- LED Headlamp with new batteries.
- Dark glasses, UV rated; wrap around or with side shields
- Double lens ski goggles or spare glasses
- Two wide-mouth plastic water bottles, 1 liter capacity
- Pocket knife
- Plastic bowl, plastic insulated mug, spoon
- Digital camera. The smaller and more convenient the camera the more opportunity you will have to photograph during the climb.
- Personal lunch food for each day. Bring a variety of your favorite easy to eat trail snacks.
- Light toiletries: toothbrush and paste, small roll of t.p., ear plugs for sleeping
- Personal FA kit to include blister pads, a few Band-Aids, tape, aspirin, Advil, etc. Water purification tablets (IMG will provide a water filter). Also bring insect repellant
- 1-2 large heavy duty plastic garbage bags and/or a waterproof pack cover.
- Consider a small compact umbrella for the hike in through the rain forest (just in case).