

## Mt. Rainier: 6½ Day Denali Expedition Seminar

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This program is designed as an introductory skills and training seminar for persons seeking a good primer in general cold weather mountaineering skills as well as those with aspirations of greater climbs in the future. As the name implies, this is excellent base level training for a Denali expedition or other high altitude, glaciated, technical peaks. The Denali seminars climb expedition style, working their way up the mountain from camp-to-camp to put the team in position to summit, and to familiarize the group with expedition logistics. Sleds are used to haul loads to the first camp just like on Denali. The seminar teaches and reviews basic climbing skills then progresses on to more advanced training such as anchors, crevasse rescue, ice climbing, and fixed line ascension. A summit climb is attempted as conditions permit, and is used mainly as a training vehicle to learn and practice additional climbing techniques, avalanche hazard evaluation and route finding skills. The chance of summiting Mt. Rainier in early season is not high, but the potential for training during the attempt is the major goal. The majority of the seminar will be conducted at 10,000 foot Camp Muir for the best possible training on the surrounding glaciers.

Topics to be covered include:

- Expedition gear and its use
- Snowshoeing
- Basic skills with ice axe and crampons
- Sled rigging and use
- Expedition camp building and maintenance
- Construction of snow caves and snow shelters
- Ascending and descending fixed ropes
- Building snow anchors and anchor systems
- Expedition glacier travel and route finding
- Crevasse rescue practice
- Lectures on high altitude medicine and prevention of cold weather injuries
- Avalanche hazard evaluation

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*“I was very impressed with how everything was so well organized. It seemed like every little detail was covered. I know you guys have tons of experience with guiding and expeditions and it shows! I've used other guide companies for my previous trips, and I will state emphatically that I will never use another outfit other than IMG. 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](http://www.mountainguides.com/comments.shtml)

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## Why Choose This Program?

This is an excellent introductory program for anyone aspiring to climb Denali or other large, glaciated, technical peaks. Unlike our normal climbs, this program is not solely focused on the summit. The primary focus is teaching valuable expedition climbing skills. The Denali Seminar offers hands-on base level instruction and training, lectures, and informal discussions in a smaller group setting. It is a great way to immerse yourself in a big mountain environment and learn through hands on practice about expedition climbing. This is invaluable training from our internationally renowned guide staff.

One fundamental aspect of the Denali Seminar is that the itinerary varies from course to course. The guides will determine the route of ascent and the course profile prior to the seminar and it will be dependent upon the weather, conditions, ability of the group, and skills they want to highlight. There is real opportunity to get away from the crowds and experience cold weather, big mountain training. The seminar progresses up the mountain establishing at least one mountain camp below Camp Muir. Sleds will be used to establish this camp and travel will be with the aid of snowshoes up to 10,000'. The group will ultimately occupy Camp Muir, from which the team will make a summit attempt, weather and conditions permitting. The guides will determine which day is most suitable to attempt the summit. Most of the days will be centered on training, skill exercises, lectures, and informal discussions at camp.

IMG provides breakfasts, dinners and hot drinks for the group on the mountain. As part of the program we provide bunk space for the first night in Ashford and a continental breakfast the next morning prior to heading up the mountain. We feel this adds a lot to the experience in terms of value, convenience, comfort and camaraderie.

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). The seminar is led by one of the veteran expedition leaders from IMG's renowned staff of guides.

### Prerequisite:

No previous experience is required as basic mountaineering skills are taught as part of the program. However, previous cold weather camping and overnight backpacking trips carrying up to 60 pound loads is strongly recommended. A prior climb of Rainier during the summer months or comparable training is advised.

**Dates:** February - April (Please see the IMG website for [specific, available dates.](#))

**Landcost:** \$2,482

**Client to Guide Ratio:** 2:1

**Trip Length:** 6½ days

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*“The professionalism demonstrated by IMG's guides as well as the high standards that they hold their clients up to maximized our chances of reaching the summit...”*

—Greg Y.

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## Proposed Daily Itinerary:

**Day 1** – Meet at IMG Ashford Headquarters ([Directions](#)) at 2:00 p.m. This pre-climb meeting of 4-5 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. Review personal clothing and equipment. Review group food and gear and sort loads. Demonstration of rigging and loading sleds and expedition packs. Practice basic knots and construct prussik slings. Practice self rescue with both prussiks and mechanical ascenders. Learn standard operation of avalanche transceivers. Review of additional critical climbing skills. Bunk space is provided to all participants at Headquarters this night. IMG will provide a quick breakfast (muffins, instant oatmeal, coffee or tea) as well. Some participants may prefer to stay at a nearby B&B or motel at their own expense.

**Day 2** – Meet at IMG Headquarters at 8:00 a.m. Load up the IMG van and depart for Paradise (5,400 ft.). The group will don snowshoes, full packs, and share in hauling sleds up to the first camp site, typically located at around 7,000 feet. The team will learn to set up a winter camp with tents and a cook kitchen. As time allows the group will practice use of avalanche transceivers.

**Day 3** – As weather and conditions allow, the team will attempt a move up to Camp Muir at 10,000 feet. If not, training will continue with an introduction of mountaineering skills and construction of snow shelters.

**Day 4** – Glacier training day in the vicinity of Camp Muir. Anchor construction, glacier travel and rescue skills, fixed rope ascension.

**Day 5** – The team normally uses this day to scout the intended route and assess conditions. If conditions are very good, it is also a possible summit attempt day, weather and conditions permitting. During the ascent there will be hands on training in route finding, avalanche hazard assessment, cold weather survival and glacier travel. If no ascent is attempted, the team will continue with training after scouting the route for the following day.

**Day 6** – Final summit attempt day.

**Day 7** – Pack and descend to Paradise. During the descent the group will practice navigation including map and compass and gps. The party will hope to return to Ashford Headquarters by 2-4:00 p.m. but weather and snow conditions may effect our return time.

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*“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.

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