

Mt. Rainier: 5½ Day Fuhrer Finger Summit Climb *Experience Level: Advanced*

© 2021 International Mountain Guides

Why Choose This Program?

The Fuhrer Finger climb is a good choice for the climber with previous mountaineering experience looking to break into more advanced climbing. This climb will help any climber develop their skills through an advanced mountaineering training curriculum. This is a small group climb, limited to 4 climbers and 2 IMG guides. You can be assured that you'll receive the focus and attention from our premier guide staff throughout this program.

While our Fuhrer Finger Summit Climbs are suitable for those with previous climbing experience, this program does require adequate fitness and endurance training in order to be successful.

Climbers on this program have often previously climbed the Kautz route on Mt. Rainier (or similar) and have a working familiarity with the skills required for that program. The Fuhrer Finger route is more technical and significantly more unrelenting than either the Emmons or the Kautz routes. Participants must be confident cramponing in firm and icy conditions on moderate to steep slopes and be familiar with using two ice tools for the steeper sections of the route. This is a challenging climb that ascends the steep Fuhrer Finger Route, a direct line up the South side of the mountain. This program is far more remote than our other programs; it is normal to not see another party on the route. The Fuhrer Finger itself is a chute that narrows down to a few hundred feet across, typically 40-50 degrees in angle. Once above the "Finger," the upper mountain climbs steeply up along the Wilson Cleaver (often including a short section of 60 degree snow and ice) to 13,500 feet before the glacier angles back to a more typical 20 degree slope. Hazards on this route include the potential for rock or ice fall and we climb the exposed part of the chute rapidly to avoid prolonged exposure. The flexible 5-day program curriculum allows enough time to train and complete the climb comfortably, but if you have not climbed on steeper glacier or ice slopes before, we strongly recommend choosing another route as your first attempt of Mt. Rainier. If you are looking for something physically challenging, a chance to improve your technical skills and a smaller group climb, then the Fuhrer Finger route is an excellent program.

IMG employs a light and efficient philosophy for climbing. IMG will provide shelter, stoves, fuel, cookware and group climbing gear (ropes, pickets, shovels, etc.) for the team to carry to each camp. We will help you review your personal climbing gear prior to departure to make sure you are not carrying any unnecessary weight up Mt. Rainier. Total personal gear, including filled water bottles, should be approximately 55 pounds, excluding your boots and trekking poles.

Safety is our number one priority. We make no guarantees with respect to the program objectives. Many circumstances, including weather and abilities of yourself or other climbers may inhibit you from reaching the summit. Our goal is to give each of our customers the best experience we possibly can, regardless of the weather, route conditions, or time of year.

"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 overbearing. 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

Prerequisites:

This is an intermediate climb requiring previous glacier climbing experience. All participants must have prior alpine climbing experience on Rainier or other similar glaciated peaks and be familiar with basic mountaineering skills including cramponing in firm ice and snow conditions. As with all IMG programs, a review of basic climbing skills is incorporated into this program's itinerary. Additional skills will be taught including multi pitch belayed climbing, lowering, and rappelling. Previous experience on multi day backpacking trips is highly recommended. This is a strenuous and more technically demanding summit climb, and is not for first time climbers.

5½ Day Fuhrer Finger Summit Climb

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

Land Cost: \$2,945

Client to Guide Ratio: 2:1 (Max. 4 Group Size)

Trip Length: 5½ days (this program commences at 2:00 p.m. on Day 1)

Cost includes:

- IMG's world-renowned guide staff
- All training curriculum and instruction
- Round trip transportation from IMG Headquarters to the start/end of the climb. *Note that this is subject to change based on Covid restrictions
- Group equipment including tents, stoves, fuel, climbing ropes and group hardware
- National Park entrance and climbing permits
- Hot meals (breakfast and dinner) and hot drinks (coffee, tea, cocoa). *Note that this is subject to change based on Covid restrictions

Cost Does Not Include:

- Personal gear (see [equipment list](#) for full details)
- Lodging the evening prior to the start of the climb or after the end of the program
- Lunch food and mountain snacks. Please refer to our [food suggestions page](#) for more details.

“I would like to express my gratitude to all at IMG for making the Fuhrer Finger climb a fantastic experience. I have climbed with IMG several times and appreciate the professionalism of your organization. This climb was very well organized... Austin and Karl are two Professional guides. They understood the mountain, the snow conditions, and most importantly, they understood the abilities of the clients. With this understanding, they made this the best of climbs. Camping on the Eagles Nest and then in the summit crater was above anything I had expected.”

—Jim W.

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

Itinerary

This itinerary is approximate and subject to change due to conditions.

Day 1 –

Meet in Ashford at IMG Headquarters (HQ) ([Directions](#)) at 2:00pm for your pre-climb orientation. This orientation is instrumental in getting you outfitted, informed, packed and educated prior to departure the following morning. Topics to be covered include an introduction to your climbing team; an introduction to Mount Rainier National Park, its mission and ecology; a safety briefing; the examining, issuing and fitting of gear; and instruction on the proper use of safety equipment including helmets, harnesses and avalanche beacons. Lodging is not provided the night of Day 1.



Day 2 – Meet at HQ at 8:00am for an early departure to the trailhead at Paradise (5420 ft.) in Mount Rainier National Park. Plan on a long day; hiking and climbing for roughly 6-8 hours and gaining about 5,000ft on your ascent to the Lower Castle Camp. Along the way, the guides will review efficient climbing techniques including pace, rest-stepping, breathing, break procedures, clothing layering systems, food and water intake requirements and other essential climbing skills.

Day 3 – This day will be reserved for moving camp up to the base of the route, approximately 8,500 feet, and planning our strategy for the climb to come. One of the options includes an ascent of Fuhrer Thumb, an alternate route that joins the Fuhrer Finger route at 11,500 feet with a descent back down the lower Fuhrer Finger chute. The Fuhrer Thumb route provides an excellent training vehicle to work on rope team skills and efficient movement on steeper slopes.

Day 4 – We may choose, depending on conditions to move camp up Fuhrer's Finger at first light and establish a new campsite at the top of the Finger, approximately 11,500 feet. Otherwise, the team will train, climb and acclimatize in the vicinity of camp. We'll have an early dinner and hold a team informational meeting to discuss our summit climb strategy.

Day 5 – This is the primary summit day. If a high camp is established we will depart at first light for the summit. The round trip will take approximately 8 hours. If we climb from low camp, the team will depart well prior to first light and will take approximately 10-12 hours round trip. Throughout the day, the guides will be directing their rope teams, providing safety feedback and hands on training of safe climbing skills. We'll ascend glacier terrain to the very summit and spend an hour on top, weather permitting. The descent normally takes half the time of the ascent.

Day 6 – 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 will award certificates of achievement.