

## Mt. Rainier: 5½ Day Fuhrer Finger Summit Climb

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### Why Choose This Program?

The Fuhrer Finger climb is a good choice for an intermediate level climb and mountaineering training curriculum. This program is for anyone with prior alpine climbing experience looking for a more challenging route and skills training on Mt. Rainier. This is a small group climb, limited to 4 climbers and 2 IMG guides.

Climbers on this program have often climbed either the Emmons or the Kautz routes on Mt. Rainier and have mastered skills in the mountaineering training curriculum on those programs. The Fuhrer Finger route is sometimes more technical and always more continuously difficult than either the Emmons or the Kautz routes. Participants must be confident cramponing in firm glacier ice conditions on moderate to steep slopes and using two technical tools for the steeper sections of the route. This is a challenging climb that ascends the steep Fuhrer Finger, a more direct line up the south side of the mountain. The climb gets you away from the majority of the climbers in the Camp Muir corridor. It is normal to not see another party on the route. The crux of the route, the finger itself, is a narrow chute that necks down to a few hundred feet across. The steepest part of the chute is 40-50 degrees in angle. Above, the upper mountain climbs steeply up along the Wilson Cleaver 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 during warming conditions and we climb the exposed part of the chute rapidly to avoid prolonged exposure. The 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 more physically challenging, a chance to improve your technical skills and get off the beaten track, then the Fuhrer Finger 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.

In addition to the continuous daily training on the climb we have added a half day pre-climb orientation and instructional meeting at IMG's Headquarters in Ashford, just outside the park. We incorporate the bulk of the training en route during each day of the ascent. This increases acclimatization, minimizes total days for the trip and allows for training to be conducted on the mountain in real conditions all the way to the summit and back.

Climbing with a 2:1 client-to-guide ratio provides a superior level of support and safety. Our group of 4 climbers and 2 guides is a perfect sized team. IMG provides breakfasts and dinners for the group on the mountain for your convenience and comfort.

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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.

**Prerequisite:**

A review of basic and intermediate climbing skills is incorporated into this program's itinerary. However, participants must have previous climbing experience on snow and glacier ice using two technical ice tools. A previous climb of Mt. Rainier or other major glaciated peaks is required. All candidates must be very fit and have completed multi-day backpacking trips. This is a strenuous and more technically demanding summit climb, **not for first time climbers**.

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

**Landcost:** \$2,445

**Client to Guide Ratio:** 2:1 (Maximum 4 climbers)

**Trip Length:** 5½ days

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*“I found your entire operation to be first-class, from the registration process and intervening communications through the entire climb with your outstanding guides...*

*Beyond our personal group experience, we had the rare opportunity to observe our guides dealing with the unforeseen situations of lost and missing independent climbers in poor weather conditions. Their communications and coordination with base camp, the Park Service, and other guide services on the mountain were reassuring, and I must again say highly professional. It is clear that IMG looks far beyond technical climbing skills and experience when hiring guides — you obviously seek a certain type of high quality individual to lead your clients. In my personal experience I can honestly say, 'Well done.'*

*I may never climb the highest mountains of the world, but after my experiences on Rainier, I certainly am inspired to continue to explore not only the outdoors but my own personal limits. You may rest assured that I will call on you again should I seek a guided climb anywhere in the world, and I will certainly sing the praises of IMG to any friends and acquaintances seeking adventure... I want to thank you for an extremely fulfilling experience where I feel like I reached a personal summit. Keep up the good work.”*

—Jerry V.

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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## Itinerary

**Day 1** - The team meets at 2:00 p.m. the afternoon prior to the climb at IMG's Ashford Headquarters ([Directions](#)) where our training curriculum begins with the pre-climb meeting of 4 hours and 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; instruction in the proper use of safety equipment including helmets, harnesses and avalanche beacons; a review of knots, ropes, rope travel and 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** - 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. Our training continues with the skills needed for safe and efficient travel with an expedition pack. We spend most of the day ascending the lower Nisqually Glacier to the first camp and establishing it at approximately 7,000. The first day takes us through open alpine meadows and snow fields then we drop down onto the lower Nisqually glacier. The Nisqually glacier provides an ideal classroom for practicing roping up and the techniques of safe glacier travel. We will brush up on ice axe arrest practice and introduce other climbing skills enroute to the first camp. Upon arrival at the camp site the guides will teach you how to construct a well sheltered and anchored tent camp on the glacier.

**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. Then off to bed.

**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 in 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 the ascent required.

**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 award certificates of achievement.