

Mt. Rainier Ski Traverse

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Come join us for an unforgettable ski and mountain experience. It is not an exaggeration to say that Mt. Rainier offers some of the world's finest ski mountaineering terrain. You will be skiing over a varied landscape including glaciers, chutes, long ascents and descents. This program makes a south to north ski traverse of Mt. Rainier at altitudes ranging from 5,000' up to 10,000' and back down again. During the five days we climb up to Camp Muir at 10,000'; cross the Ingraham and Emmons Glaciers to Camp Schurman at 9,600' and finally around to the Carbon Glacier with a descent along the glacier moraine down to the toe of the Carbon Glacier at 4,000'. We will ski as far as possible then hike the remaining distance out to the Carbon River entrance to the Park in this five-day continuous push.

The Ski Mountaineering Traverse is designed for people with solid intermediate backcountry skiing and boarding skills. If you have concerns about your skiing ability or are looking for additional training you will want to join our [ski mountaineering training program at Crystal Mountain](#) in advance of the program. Most importantly you must be comfortable skiing with a multi-day pack for 6 to 8 hours a day under very rigorous conditions and in potentially inclement weather.

Why Choose This Program?

This program is designed specifically for the intermediate or better alpine and backcountry skier or boarder who wants an incredible adventure traversing the length of Mt. Rainier's glaciated mountain terrain.

Our Guides

IMG is accredited by the American Mountain Guides Association. The leader of this program will be chosen from among our top ski guides with a solid history on Mt. Rainier. You can count on the very best of ski guiding and instruction from our internationally renowned staff of guides. We employ a light and efficient philosophy for climbing on this program. We will pack and prepare at the start of the program to make sure the team is traveling as light and efficiently as possible in order to maximize enjoyment of the entire journey.

Fitness and Skiing Ability

The Ski Mountaineering Seminar is designed for people with strong intermediate/advanced backcountry touring and splitboard skills. The goal is to ski the best sections of the route, 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. Mt. Rainier 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](#).

Prerequisite

All participants must have excellent physical fitness and strong intermediate to advanced backcountry skiing ability in varied snow conditions.

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

Landcost: \$1,695

Client to Guide Ratio: 3:1

Trip Length: 5½ days

Mt. Rainier Ski Traverse 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, Leave No Trace, issue and fitting of gear and personal gear checks including ski equipment. We will sort, plan and 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 – Early breakfast and ready to depart Ashford by 8am as road conditions allow. After we are shuttled up to Paradise we'll gear up and set out on our way up to Camp Muir at 10,000'. This is a 4.5 mile, 4,500'elevation gain journey and a Big Day. We will overnight at the guide bunkhouse at Camp Muir, gladly utilizing the shelter.

Day 3 – After breakfast we'll rope up for travel across the Cowlitz Glacier, ascend through Cathedral Gap to the Ingraham Glacier at 11,000'. From here, we'll descend the Emmons Glacier near the North Face of Little Tahoma then make a rising traverse back up to Camp Schurman at 9,600'.

Day 4 – We'll either descend the Winthrop or the Inter Glacier to an altitude of 7,000', then traverse over to the Carbon Glacier. We'll camp somewhere in the vicinity of 7,000' on the edge of the Carbon Glacier.

Day 5 – Continue skiing down the gentle terrain along the moraine of the Carbon Glacier to its snout at around 4,000 feet. We'll then follow the Wonderland Trail north towards Ipsut Creek Campground as far as is practical before setting up a final camp.

Day 6 – We'll complete the trip out the Wonderland Trail to Ipsut Creek Campground. From here we'll follow the Carbon River Road out to the Carbon River Entrance of the Park for pickup and return to IMG headquarters in Ashford.

Note: The itinerary is subject to change as the weather and route conditions dictate. If the group is delayed in reaching Paradise due to closure of the road or slowed in our progress around the mountain, we may be forced to make adjustments to the schedule as group fitness and conditions dictate. The guides will make the best decisions for the group based on minimizing risk at all times during the program. Many options exist and it is possible to shorten the route or detour to exit sooner as necessary.

“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 Traverse 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 65-75 liter range) with good hip belt - be ready to carry at least 45 pounds.
- Sleeping bag - warm to 0F.
- Sleeping pad suitable for snow camping (Thermarest, full length closed cell, etc)
- Lightweight Ice axe 50-60 cm.
- 10 or 12-point crampons with crampon adjustment tools, adjusted to your boots
- Skis with AT bindings, splitboard or telemark
- AT, snowboard, or telemark boots
- Climbing skins
- Adjustable touring 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
- 1 sun hat (ball cap and/or bandanna)
- 1 pr. Light insulated gloves and 1 pr. thick insulated gloves (like ski gloves) both should be waterproof
- 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 wool/synthetic blend socks
- Personal first aid 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 balm, both high spf rated
- Foam ear plugs, 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.