



Alpine Institute

Mt. Baker Skills and Climb Itinerary

Program Details

The Mt. Baker Skills and Climb course is designed to introduce beginner climbers to the world of mountaineering. This course focuses on the fundamental skills of mountaineering such as roped glacier travel and rope management, self-arresting, and crampon use. Additional skills pertaining to mountaineering such as navigation, glaciology, weather, packing, and camping in an alpine setting are also covered. Usually, the third day of the course culminates in a summit attempt of Mt. Baker. The 3-day option departs in the early afternoon after you've returned from the summit climb. For those of you who have opted for the 4-day program, you'll attempt the summit on day 3, and then have some additional instruction on day 4 before packing up and departing camp.

Please keep in mind that this is a standard yet loose itinerary and is subject to change depending on conditions, weather, group dynamics and pace or summit strategies.

Difficulty Grade

Beginner to Moderate

Inclusions and Exclusions

Inclusions: Permits and access fees, transportation during the course, guide, group technical equipment, and biffy bags.

Exclusions: Food, personal equipment, lodging the day before and after your course, personal health, baggage and trip insurance, and transportation before and after your course.

Itinerary

Day 1 – Rendezvous at the AAI Equipment Shop and Head to Mt. Baker (6400ft/1951m)

Plan to meet your fellow climbers and instructor(s) at the AAI Equipment Shop promptly at 7:00am. Your guide(s) and an Equipment Specialist will take the time to go over equipment, finalize rentals and purchases, review the itinerary, and ensure everyone is adequately prepared.

Once everyone is ready we will make the roughly 1 1/2 hour drive up to the glaciers of Mt. Baker and park at the trailhead. We will hike to basecamp, generally between 5400 feet and 6400 feet. Once we arrive we will set up camp and spend the rest of the day discussing concepts of glacier travel, glaciation, mountain weather, and geology. We may start on snow skills today if time allows.

The route that your group will ultimately take for your summit will be dependent on conditions, weather, guide choice, and group dynamics.

Day 2 – Glacier Skills (7000ft/2133m)

We will get an early start today and make our way up, roughly an additional half mile to an appropriate location to practice ice axe and crampon use, glacier travel, rope work, snow anchors, self-arrest, and navigation. After we wrap up the day we will either hike back down to basecamp for an early night of sleep, or we will pack up camp and move slightly higher on the glacier in order to make the summit push the next day shorter.

Day 3 – Summit Bid and Hike Out (10,778ft/3285m)

Summit day! Weather and conditions permitting we get an alpine start (typically 1-3am) and head for the summit of Mt. Baker, which is at 10,778 feet. Our goal is to reach the summit by daybreak so we can utilize snow conditions during the night and early morning and be heading down by the time the sun warms the slopes. After our summit bid, we descend to camp, pack up, and head back to the institute. We shoot for getting climbers back to town anywhere between 3-7pm. This can vary a bit based on how the last day of the trip goes.

Day 4 - (Additional Option - final hike out)

For those of you who have selected the additional 4th day, you'll have time in the morning to do some additional skills training and review before packing up and making your way out on this last day.