



Welcome to International Alpine Guides **Intro to Mountaineering Course**

We are excited to have to you as a guest on our Intro to Mountaineering Course! This is a challenging and rewarding course that is designed to give you an introduction to many of the skills you need to climb peaks in the Sierra Nevada and beyond.

Following is some general information to help you prepare for your upcoming course and to help manage your expectations. Our hope is that this will help your planning go smoothly and will add to the enjoyment of your course. Do not hesitate to contact us with any questions...we are available to provide you with a high level of service. Our office will be checking in with you at some point prior to your course.

It is required that you carefully read all of the information in this letter and the confirmation letter as well as the information on our website, including the gear lists and any itinerary information. For your enjoyment and safety, and for the enjoyment and safety of others on your trip, you are responsible for knowing all of it.

Meeting Place & Time

Meeting location for Matterhorn Peak: We will meet at 8:00 am outside of the Mono Village Cafe at the far end of Upper Twin Lakes near the town of Bridgeport, Ca. After a brief gear check, we will head into the backcountry for the three-day course. Please note that there is a \$15 cash parking fee at the trailhead.

Meeting Location for Mt. Abbot: You will meet your guide in front of Tom's Place Resort, 20 minutes south of Mammoth Lakes, at 8:00 am. After a brief gear check, you will head out to the backcountry for the three-day course.

Weather and Conditions

The Intro to Mountaineering Course is conducted at high altitude in off trail mountain conditions. The summit attempts of both peaks can be strenuous.

We run this climb regardless of weather and we do not cancel it due to storms or based on weather forecasts.

For safety reasons we may change the itinerary of the climb last minute due to weather and/or other concerns.

Your Guide

Your lead guide will be in contact with you a day or two prior to the trip via phone call and/or email. It is our goal that you will develop a rapport with your guide before the trip commences that will last long after it ends. Once they have contacted you, you will receive their contact information so please feel free to ask them any questions you have. Before that time, our guides can be very busy in the field, so please contact the office via phone or email with any questions.

All of our trips are fully guided trips which means you will be traveling with the group and your guides the entire time. ***For everyone's enjoyment and safety, it is required that you follow your guide's instructions and direction for the duration of your trip***

Our guides have difficult jobs and sometimes they may have to turn around the group due to weather, safety concerns or the physical state of others on the trip. This is a group trip and the group is a team. If you do not want others to affect your trip and to be able to go at your own pace, you should set up a private custom climb.

Travel Assistance

Our office is available to you for any travel assistance to help you get to the meeting place of your trip and can recommend local lodging.

IAG and our guides are not able to provide you any transportation. You are responsible for arranging your own transport to the meeting point and beyond.

Using public transport in many of the areas we meet is generally not possible and you should be prepared to rent a car if needed. Even after accounting for paying for a rental car being left unused for days at a trail head while you are

in the backcountry, rental cars are always more convenient and usually more cost effective than trying to use the meager public transport network in the rural areas of California.

Physical Fitness & Preparedness

It is also imperative for your enjoyment and the enjoyment of others on the course that you are in at least very good physical condition. You must also have previous overnight wilderness backpacking experience. While this is a beginner course it is not a beginner overnight wilderness experience. You will be expected to carry an overnight pack to the base camp and you will be carrying a share of the group gear as well.

During the course of the trip our guides reserve the right to change the trip itinerary for you or deny your participation on any portion of the trip such as a summit bid, due to inadequate physical condition.

You are expected to meet the physical & experience levels detailed under trip you have signed up for. For your safety, the safety and enjoyment of other guests and the safety of our staff, we reserve the right to deny your participation on our trips without refund.

Physical Training Advice

As part of our overall instruction for your course, we are happy to provide you with training advice to help you better physically prepare for your trip. Contact our office for more information. Showing up physically prepared for your objectives will greatly increase your enjoyment and your odds of success.

Gear List

It is imperative and required that you bring **everything** on the gear list. You can find recommendations on specific gear choices on our website. If you have any questions at all please do not hesitate to contact our office or ask your guide once they are in contact with you.

It is your responsibility to come fully prepared. We can refuse your participation on a trip if you show up without the proper gear and clothing.

Gear for lend

Many items are available for lend at no extra charge. These include sleeping bag (\$25 cleaning fee) and pad, backpacks and even eating utensils. For technical trips we can provide ice ax, crampons, harness, helmet and most technical gear. For your winter mountaineering trip, we also can provide winter mountaineering boots. Tents are automatically provided on all trips.

You must notify the office of any gear you need at least 5 days in advance of your trip via our gear request form on our website.

Tips/Gratuities

Tips are customary in the guiding industry. If you are happy with the service provided by your guide, it is customary to provide a 15-20% tip. This is solely at your discretion.

Cancellation Policy

International Alpine Guides has a 60-day day no refund cancellation policy. Sorry, but ***no refunds can be made within that time period***. Unless you are prepared to absorb the entire cost of your course and other travel expenses in the event you need to cancel, you must purchase travel insurance to cover the costs of cancellation within the no-cancellation period (See below).

We do not issue refunds for unused days due to weather, environmental conditions (such as fires or smoke) or mountain conditions. We can issue a weather credit for fully unused days at the discretion of IAG. We do not issue credits or refunds due to not making a summit or reaching an objective.

Please see the website for our [full cancellation policy](#).

Health Insurance

It is imperative that you have adequate health insurance to cover anything that may occur on your trip. IAG does not provide any insurance for its guests.

Travel and Rescue Insurance

It is imperative that you purchase travel insurance for your trip. This will cover the cost of any trip fees if you have to cancel for any covered reason (You can even get "cancel for any reason" policies). It will also cover many

other things such as extra medical bills, transport and airline delays, etc. Travel Guard and Ripcord are two companies you can look at for travel insurance.

Rescues

Rescues are extremely rare. Our guides are wilderness medical professionals certified as Wilderness First Responders and are the only ones that make the call whether an outside rescue or self-evacuation is warranted. Minor medical problems and/or fatigue do not constitute the need for an outside rescue or self-evacuation.

Rescues involving rescue personnel and/or helicopters are ONLY available for high-risk medical problems that have an immediate threat to life and limb. And sometimes an outside rescue may not even be an option depending on weather conditions or other circumstances.

In the event it is needed, you are responsible for any costs associated with the need for a rescue. Some travel insurance plans may cover some of this. However, we recommend you join the [American Alpine Club](#). The nominal costs of the AAC membership provides you automatically with thousands of dollars in rescue insurance.

Voluntarily leaving a trip early

In the event you need to, or simply want to, leave a trip voluntarily you will be charged for any costs associated with that. This also pertains to someone having to leave a trip early due to lack of physical preparedness. In remote wilderness locations, it is usually not an option to leave a trip voluntarily. No one is ever allowed to leave the guided group without a guide.

Camping, Food and Leave No Trace

On this climb we will be camping high on the mountain in tents that we provide. Everyone will be expected to share a tent.

Our food menu is carefully crafted and has been honed over many years of operating guided winter backcountry trips. We can easily accommodate most dietary restrictions, but we do ask that you be flexible when you can be.

We will be traveling in a designated wilderness area and it is required by law that you will follow all leave no trace principles as outlined by your guide. Anyone not following LNT principles will be asked to leave the trip. We

consider ourselves stewards of the land on which we guide and play and strive to protect it for future generations.

Summit Bid

The summit of any peak is our third goal behind safety and having a rewarding experience. If you do not agree with the order of those three goals then our course is not for you. A summit is never guaranteed and many times it is just not possible due to snow conditions, group strength, and of course weather.

Itinerary:

Day 1

MATTERHORN PEAK:

We meet at the trailhead located at the Mono Village resort on the shores of Twin Lakes, near the town of Bridgeport. After a pack check and gear discussion we begin our hike into base camp up the Horse Creek drainage into the heart of the Sawtooth Range. We begin on a trail that eventually peters out and we hike the last bit to base camp cross-country. Our base camp is beside a beautiful tarn (alpine pond) with views up towards Matterhorn Peak. The late afternoon is spent acclimating and setting up camp and covering some basic mountaineering skills such as knots and navigation. In the evening we enjoy a hearty backcountry meal prepared by your guide.

MT. ABBOT:

We meet at the Mosquito Flat trailhead up from Tom's Place in the Eastern Sierra. After a pack check and gear discussion we begin our hike into base camp up the Rock Creek drainage and on passed Ruby Lake and into the spectacular and remote Mills Creek drainage where we establish camp. We spend the late afternoon working on some basic skills time permitting.

Day 2

MATTERHORN PEAK & MT ABBOT:

Today is skills and acclimating day. We spend the morning learning basic rock climbing skills with the use of a top rope. You will learn basic movement on rock as well as belaying technique and rope management. The afternoon

is spent in snow school learning ice axe use and basic snow climbing skills including cramponing techniques as well as ice axe self arrest. There will also be discussions of "mountain sense" and what to do if things go wrong.

Day 3

MATTERHORN PEAK:

After an early "alpine start" we begin our climb of Matterhorn Peak, using your new found skills. We scramble up to and across the small Matterhorn Glacier where we enter the East Couloir (gully) that takes us to the crest of the Sierra Nevada. The couloir involves moderate 38 degree snow climbing and ice axe use (depending on season). Once on the ridge, we rock scramble up easy 3rd-4th class rock to the summit of the California Matterhorn. We then descend to base camp and back to the trailhead arriving around 4-5pm back at the cars.

MT ABBOT:

After an early "alpine start, we climb towards Mt Abbot. Using the skills learned the day prior, we encounter a snow couloir and small "glacierette" and climb this and some 3rd class rock to gain the narrow NE Ridge of Mount Abbot. After some short 4th class ridge climbing we tackle the final easy summit slopes up to the summit of Mt Abbot, enjoying spectacular views. We then descend back to camp, pack up and head back to the trailhead usually arriving in the very late afternoon to early evening.

The above itinerary & curriculum can, and many times will, change due to weather, mountain conditions, group strengths and other circumstances beyond our control. It is required you have a flexible mindset!