



Welcome to International Alpine Guides **Mount Shasta Summit 2-day Climb** **Avalanche Gulch**

We are excited to have to you as a guest on our Mount Shasta 2-day Avalanche Gulch Climb! This is a challenging and rewarding snow climb to the California's beautiful 14,000 foot Cascade Volcano.

Following is some general information to help you prepare for your upcoming climb 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 climb. 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

You will meet your guides at the Shatice Park in the town of Mt Shasta at 9:30 am on the morning of your trip start date. You will meet your guide at the first big lawn area immediately to the left once you enter the park. Please be on time!

Weather and Conditions

The Mount Shasta climb is conducted at high altitude and sometimes in challenging conditions such as high winds and cold temperatures. It is our job to safely take you possibly out of your comfort zone, but our guides will

sometimes have to make the decision to turn around and abort the summit attempt due to adverse weather conditions.

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 or decide not to attempt the Summit of Mount Shasta due to weather and/or avalanche concerns.

On some years we may have to move the Avalanche Gulch climb to another climbing route such as Clear Creek later in June or July due to low snow conditions.

Your Guide

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.*** Anyone not following their guides direction will be asked to leave the 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 climb that you are in at least very good to excellent physical condition. You must also have extensive experience hiking off trail on very uneven terrain. We do recommend you have previous overnight wilderness backpacking experience.

Climbing Mount Shasta, while a beginner mountaineering climb, can be very strenuous due to the length of the summit day and how the altitude has an effect on your body and mind. You must be prepared both mentally and physically for a strenuous day. Climbing at high altitude can be very tiring and taxing.

The summit day on Shasta is a long one. The guide will choose the departure time from camp but it is usually between 1am to 3am. It is expected you will be able to exert yourself for up to fourteen hours on the summit day.

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/Boot Rentals

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. 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.

On our Mount Shasta climbs we do not provide mountaineering boots. It is imperative that you have the proper boots stated in the gear list. If you need mountaineering boots you can rent those in the town of Mount Shasta at the [Fifth Season outdoor store](#). It is recommended you make a reservation ahead of time.

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 on the mountain in 4 season winter mountaineering expedition 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 backcountry trips. We can easily accommodate most dietary restrictions, but we do ask that you be flexible when you can be.

On Mount Shasta it is required for you to carry out all solid human waste. Your guide will supply you with WAG bags designed for this purpose.

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, including Mount Shasta, 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 climb is not for you. A summit and especially a summit of a fourteen thousand foot cascade volcano is never guaranteed and many times it is just not possible due to snow conditions, avalanche conditions, group strength, and of course weather.

There are times on the Mount Shasta climb we do not make the summit. Reaching the summit is optional, getting down safely is not. Many times you will learn more and have a rewarding experience when not making the summit. This is definitely not a trip to have summit fever on!

Itinerary:

Day 1

We meet in the town of Mount Shasta, Ca at 930am. After a pack check and group gear distribution, we all drive to the trail head for Mount Shasta at Bunny Flat. ***Everyone is responsible for their own transportation to the trailhead.*** We then hike up to the Horse Camp area where we establish a base camp for the evening. The afternoon is spent relaxing and acclimating before enjoying a hearty dinner.

Day 2

After breakfast, we break camp and prepare to move to our high camp up Mt. Shasta towards Helen Lake, a few hours journey. We normally camp below Helen Lake to avoid the crowds. The afternoon is spent learning ice axe and crampon techniques to prepare you for the climb of Avalanche Gulch. We then have an early dinner and early to bed to prepare for our summit climb of Mount Shasta the next day.

Day 3

We wake up early for our alpine start to climb Mount Shasta, probably around 2am. Climbing by headlamp, we make our way up the Avalanche Gulch route towards the famous Red Banks. At some point before the Red Banks we are rewarded by sunrise and the shadow of Mount Shasta. Moving up past the Thumb, it on to Misery Hill (not really much misery!) and then to the summit plateau. All that is left is the summit pinnacle after which we stand upon the summit of Mount Shasta (14,180 ft)! We then make our way back down to camp, possibly glissading along the way. After breaking our high camp we continue back to the Bunny Flat trailhead, usually arriving in the very late afternoon. Summit day of Mt Shasta is a long, yet rewarding day!

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!