

Maine Appalachian backpacking and canoeing expeditions explore the most remote stretches of the northern Appalachian mountain range and the wild lake and river systems that surround it. This 22-day journey is an opportunity for those seeking a fresh challenge in a unique wilderness environment and an intense team setting. In the mountains, lakes and rivers, students learn to camp and travel simply, relying on each other and what they can carry on their backs. In a phased teaching progression, instructors will introduce beginning, intermediate and advanced skills in mountain navigation, paddling technique, woods craftsmanship, weather observation, risk management, and campsite selection. Regular group discussions allow for reflection on each day's progress, and ensure that leadership and responsibilities are shared so that every crew member is integral to planning the next day. Through living and working closely together, students learn far more than wilderness travel skills. The habits learned and strengthened through this backpacking and canoeing expedition will serve students for life, and for whatever challenge is next.

In General

On this course you will expedition through the bold Appalachian Mountains and the picturesque and historic rivers and lakes of Maine. You will depart the base camp on the first or second day of the course and not return until the end. You will carry what you need for as much as a week in your backpack and you will hike, paddle, or climb nearly every day. You do not need to have previous backpacking or canoeing experience. We will teach you everything you need to know to travel comfortably, including how to pack a backpack, maneuver a canoe, set up a wilderness campsite, rock climb, and navigate using a map and compass. Arriving physically fit will enhance your experience and ability to do well on the course and ultimately allow you to take full advantage of the expedition.

Course Area

You will canoe in one of the watersheds of the the upper Androscoggin, Kenebec or Penobscott Rivers, including the Rangely Lakes, Moosehead lake, Chesuncook Lake. Indigenous Abenaki peoples used the rivers and lakes as both a means of transportation, between winter habitats inland and summer living on the coast, and as a source of food. Later the rivers were used to move logs to mills downstate during the logging boom of the nineteenth century. These days the lakes and rivers are used primarily by canoeists, fisherman, and other recreationalists. Some of the portages you may encounter have been in use for centuries, such as along the Rapid River and the North East Carry.

Your backpacking course area will be the mountains of western Maine, northern New Hampshire, or the 100 Mile Wilderness. These spruce-fir and hardwood forests are home to hundreds of species of birds as well as moose, deer, and black bear. Rock climbing instruction will take place at one of many cliffs you encounter along your expedition route. Most of this hiking terrain is protected from development and offers both pristine and established camping, rushing waterfalls, twisting streams, and spectacular views from rocky summits.

Course Activities

Backpacking – Your course focuses on wilderness expedition skills. In the mountains, you will learn map reading, cooking, how to pack and adjust your pack, foot care, hydration, knots, and most importantly leadership and teamwork. Backpacking is a great combination of team and individual elements. The mountains of Maine are rugged, wooded, and will at times be muddy and steep, making it necessary to “spot” and coach each other through difficult terrain. At times you will travel on wilderness footpaths, at others, you will navigate off trail. From mountain peaks, if the weather cooperates, you will be rewarded with spectacular views. Living and traveling with just what you can carry on your back is a simple existence, in which small choices can make deceptively great differences. To live well in the outdoors, all crew members must share the chores that turn a camp into a home, including setting up tents and tarps, making a kitchen area, taking a turn fetching water, and cooking satisfying meals.



Canoeing – Part of your course will be focused on learning wilderness canoe expedition skills. You will canoe on lakes and rivers, learning paddle strokes such as the draw, pry, and J-stroke. You will likely learn the skills of portaging (carrying the canoe on your shoulders), and lining (guiding your canoe down unrunnable rapids) as you travel through some of the amazing waterways of Maine. In learning to work and communicate well with your paddling partner each day you will discover the power of two people truly working together. Depending on the canoe route and the water levels of the rivers, you may get to paddle a section of white water up to class II.

Portaging – To travel between lakes, your group will work together as a team to carry packs and canoes over trails. Portage trails are rugged and often rocky or hilly. They vary in length from a few hundred yards to a few miles.

The group will work to come up with a portaging plan that sensibly and safely distributes all of the responsibilities.

Rock Climbing – During your course you will spend a day rock climbing on one of this area's many cliffs, known locally as "Half Dome," "Fat Man's Woe," "Little Bear," "Bald," "Table Rock," and "Square Ledges." You will learn to use climbing equipment, tie knots, climb and belay each other, while instructors provide overall supervision of the site. Climbing gives you a chance to practice your balance, coordination, flexibility, and grace on the rock.

Solo – The solo experience is a standard element of Outward Bound courses. With sufficient food and equipment, you will set up camp at a site on your own for one or two days. Your solo site is chosen to offer as much solitude as possible, yet be within hearing distance of other group members. You will not travel during this time and will be mostly alone, however your instructors will check on you occasionally. The solitude and break from the fast pace of your expedition allows for rest and personal reflection, which is necessary to make the most of your experience.

Service – Service is an integral part of the Outward Bound curriculum. We encourage service to the environment in the form of practicing Leave No Trace® ethics throughout the course. We coordinate service projects with local land managers (US Forest Service, Maine Bureau of Public Lands, Dept. of Conservation, local land trusts, etc.) as well as with select social service agencies (nursing homes, hospitals, etc.). During your course, you will have the opportunity to participate in at least one service project.

Final Challenge Event – We typically end our courses with a Final Challenge Event—an individual final physical push. This might take the form of a run or a triathlon activity.

The Outward Bound Difference: What HIOBS Students Learn

On this course, students learn:

- to pare down their "stuff" to the essentials needed for keeping warm, dry and well-fed.
- to navigate using a map and compass to arrive accurately at the day's destination over mountains, down rivers and across lakes.
- to set a pace of hiking or paddling that covers each day's miles and gets everyone through together, an integral part of the team
- to live (cook, eat, sleep, work and learn) together in the backcountry, contributing energy and ideas, sharing tasks and responsibilities, and relying on themselves and each other.

As students learn these backcountry backpacking and canoeing techniques, they develop many essential skills and habits to help them achieve their potential at school, home and in their communities. They enhance their ability:

- to give every challenge their best physical and mental effort, even when the goal seems beyond their reach.
- to differentiate between things they want and things they actually need. Living simply and taking good care of all they have develops independence and a sense of appreciation.
- to focus on the needs, safety and learning of others as well as their own. It takes an entire crew to set up camp, break it down and create hot, delicious meals; the whole crew must participate mentally and physically.
- to share responsibilities, communicate and lead. In addition to the challenges of moving over Maine's rugged terrain, living together requires commitment to the support of crewmates and community as a whole. Leadership roles are shared within the group, and responsibilities rotate each day.
- to find reserves of tenacity and compassion. Maine backpacking and canoeing courses are designed to expand and stretch the limits of students, individually and together, so that every expedition is a true accomplishment and a memorable journey.



Course Progression

1. **Training Expedition:** Initially, your instructors will focus on teaching the skills of backpacking, canoeing and campcraft, navigating and coaching your team through the art of moving through the Maine mountains and waterways safely and efficiently.
2. **Main Expedition:** The instructors begin to hand over technical responsibility for day to day running of the expedition while they continue to teach more advanced skills, and coach you in the finer points of leadership and teamwork.
3. **Final Expedition:** Near the end of course, if you and your group have demonstrated the necessary leadership, team problem-solving and wilderness living skills, you may be given the opportunity to travel without your instructors participating in decision-making. Many of our students tell us this phase of the course is the most rewarding, as the group learns to work together, solve problems, and accomplish a goal independently, utilizing all the skills they have acquired.

Young Adults (ages 16+)

The young adult years are filled with excitement, transition and pressure, whatever you are planning to start a new chapter. Sometimes, it's easy to let the momentum take over. To get a fresh perspective, young adults need to step out of their routines and challenge themselves in new ways, discover new strengths, and forge new friendships. Outward Bound instructors coach young adult students to step outside their perceived limitations, assess risks and work together to achieve more than they thought possible. In the wilderness, you can unplug from your everyday life and build amazing new connections that will serve you wherever you go. Students need only to be physically fit and motivated to live, learn and work together. No previous wilderness experience is necessary—all travel and leadership skills are taught from the beginning, and each phase of the expedition builds on the previous one.

Course Skills

Expeditioning

- ✓ Emergency preparedness
- ✓ Safety management and basic first aid
- ✓ Campsite selection
- ✓ Navigation with map and compass
- ✓ Shelter construction
- ✓ Outdoor cooking
- ✓ Conservation practices
- ✓ Ropes and knots
- ✓ Route finding
- ✓ Stove use and maintenance
- ✓ Leave No Trace wilderness ethics
- ✓ Nutrition and ration planning

Backpacking

- ✓ Proper fit and loading of packs
- ✓ Moving efficiently over rugged terrain
- ✓ River crossings
- ✓ Above treeline travel

Canoeing

- ✓ Care of canoes and paddles
- ✓ Flatwater paddle strokes
- ✓ Weather signs and forecasting
- ✓ Paddling in convoy

Rock Climbing (weather dependent)

- ✓ Belaying and rope handling
- ✓ System safety
- ✓ Climbing technique
- ✓ Rappelling

Group Dynamics

- ✓ Leadership and decision making
- ✓ Followership and expedition behavior
- ✓ Communication and conflict resolution
- ✓ Goal setting