



Alpine Institute

Alpinism 1 Itinerary

Program Details

Alpinism 1 is a 6-day introduction to climbing and mountaineering intended to introduce the fundamentals of glacier, rock, and basic ice climbing. The course takes place at Mt. Erie on day 1 to cover the fundamentals of climbing before heading to the glaciers of Mt. Baker for the remainder of the course. The final day culminates in a summit attempt of Mt. Baker.

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, and 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 Rock Climbing Day

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

As soon as the rendezvous is complete, we will travel to Mt. Erie. This climbing area overlooking the North Puget Sound will be the classroom for the day. We will cover basic concepts of free climbing, rappelling, anchor placement, belaying, knot tying, and movement on rock. The class will be camping at a front country campground that evening.

*On some courses, your Guide will opt to have the rock day at the end of the course and go directly to Mt. Baker on the first day. This is done if the weather appears to be more favorable to necessitate this change.

Day 2 - Hike to Camp on Mt. Baker (5600ft/1706m)

We will break camp early in the morning to make the drive to the trailhead of Mt. Baker. Which route on Mt. Baker you will ultimately climb is based on conditions, Guide preference, weather, etc. The hike will be no more than 5 miles to where you will establish your camp for the next couple of days. Typically this is around 5000-6000ft. After camp has been set up, the remainder of the day will be spent covering concepts of alpine camping techniques, Leave No Trace principles, glacier travel, glaciology, mountain weather, geology, and the rough schedule for the next few days.

Day 3 - Snow School on the Glaciers (6500ft/1981m)

The third day will be spent practicing glacier skills. We will cover the concepts of self-arresting, crampon techniques, glacier travel, and rope team skills and management. Snow skills will be conducted a short distance from camp, at about 6000ft to 6800ft. We will return to base camp that night.

Day 4 - Crevasse Rescue (6500ft/1981m)

This will be another long day of skills practice on the glacier. We will start early in the morning and make our way farther up on the glacier like the previous day. The day will be spent covering the most essential tool for glaciated mountain travel; crevasse rescue. We will be setting up and practicing hauling systems, building snow anchors, and prusiking up a rope. This night will also be spent at base camp.

Day 5 - Snow Skills and Crevasse Rescue Continued

This is another day spent honing everything learned already and doing crevasse rescue drills. If there is time, basic ice climbing skills will be touched on by top roping on the glacier seracs. This evening has the potential to move base camp higher up on the glacier to about 7000ft to make the summit bid more efficient the next morning. It will be an early night!

Day 6 - Summit Bid and Hike Out (10,778/3285m)

It is not uncommon for the summit bid to be on the 5th day if the weather window looks better. However, we typically plan for it to be on the final day. We will have an early alpine start - sometime between midnight and 3 am. The push to the summit can take anywhere from 4 to 8 hours depending on where base camp was, group pace, and conditions. After the summit bid, we will hike down, pack up camp, and hike out to the vans. We will then drive back to the AAI headquarters. Plan to be back at the office anywhere between 3 pm to 7 pm.