Winterfest Ice Climbing and Snowshoeing: White Mountains, NH

January 12-19, 2019
$400

Round trip transportation, group + technical equipment, fees and permits, three nights in bunkhouse, two in cabin, one in hotel, all non-travel meals, one day guided ice-climbing, dinner on final night

Trip Overview

Activity: Ice Climbing, Snowshoeing  Difficulty Level:⭐️⭐️⭐️⭐️⭐️

As leaves turn from red to brown and drop with the temperatures, most peoples’ attention shifts away from New England. But with no leaves obstructing views, no visitors congesting trails, and a blanket of white on the mountains and ground, New Hampshire becomes one giant playground for those who know to look. This Winterfest program will take participants to the White Mountains of New Hampshire to try their hand at a series of winter sports during a New England winter. The group will return each night to a cabin with either electric heat or fueled by a wood burning stove for warmth. After all of the winter fun, we will spend our last evening in picturesque Portsmouth, NH—a small coastal city first settled in 1603.

Crampons, snowshoes, ice axes and temperatures below zero—this one is going to be a challenge. But if the idea of climbing a snow-covered mountain or ice wall, and experiencing one of the most beautiful places on the East Coast at its finest appeals to you, this trip is what you’re looking for. Get ready to bundle up, drink hot chocolate, and push your limits!

General Schedule of Trip

January 12 (Saturday): Independently return to campus before noon, review gear, and pack.

January 13: Depart Gettysburg and drive to the cabin in New Hampshire.

January 14: Explore the White Mountains National Forest by snowshoe.

January 15: A day of guided ice-climbing with International Mountain Climbing School in the White Mountains.

January 16-17: Move to the unheated cabin, build a fire, explore by snowshoe, and stay warm.

January 18: Leave the mountains behind and head to a hotel in the coastal town of Portsmouth, NH for a final dinner.

January 19 (Saturday): Complete the drive from Portsmouth, NH back to campus (8 hours)
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The Activities: This program consists of a sampling of different winter sports. The group will spend a day ice climbing with professional AMGA certified guides from the International Mountain Climbing School, and snowshoe around Moosilauke and the White Mountains National Forest. If weather allows, the group may also summit Mount Moosilauke using snowshoes and/or crampons (condition dependent). We will spend two nights in an unheated cabin with no electricity—the group will haul in the firewood and build and maintain the fire. Other activities may include building snow shelters, visiting nearby towns, and an introduction to orienteering.

Group Size: The trip consists of 3 GRAB staff members from the Office of Experiential Education and 7-9 participants.

Accommodations: On campus housing can be provided on Friday and Saturday night (January 11 & 12), but may not be in your normal room. The group will stay in an electric-heated cabin the first three nights, a wood stove-heated cabin with no electricity the fourth and fifth nights, and a hotel in Portsmouth, NH for the final night. Fees, permits, and technical gear are provided by GRAB and are included in the program's cost.

Meals: We will provide breakfast, lunch, and dinner each day we are in the field, and you will learn how to cook delicious backcountry meals on backpacking stoves, gas burning stoves, and wood burning stoves. Travel dinners on the first night are also included, but you will be responsible for breakfast, lunch, and any additional food while traveling to and from New Hampshire. You will also provide your own meals prior to the beginning of the trip.

Weather: It’s going to be cold. Really cold. Expect lows around 0 and highs still below freezing. We’ll make up for this with a carefully planned packing list and by bundling up with lots of layers. Balaclava, gloves, glove liners, heavy weight socks, and serious insulation will allow you to brave temperatures you never thought you would want to experience!

Physical Preparations: Some physically demanding activities and extreme temperatures make this a great trip for participants looking for a challenge. Jogging, walking and exercising are great ways to make your experience more enjoyable. Following the packing list to the letter will also be a must; all gear will be inspected by GRAB staff prior to departure because having the appropriate clothing has the potential to make or break this trip.

Communication & Emergencies: The staff will carry a cell phone in the event of an emergency, however we will not completely rely on the service, and the group needs to know they may be without communication at times. We develop contingencies and have specific information for emergencies, but we are also aware that based on location and access it may take time to contact or reach definitive medical care, should the need arise. Although participants are permitted to carry phones, most choose to leave technology behind to more fully immerse themselves in the group experience.

Health and Medical & Release of Liability: Each participant is asked to fill out a Health and Medical form for this trip. We request that you are truthful with your medical information and speak with your GRAB staff facilitator about any concerns or pre-existing conditions. In addition, we want to inform you that you will be asked to sign our indemnity form, and that you are aware that all Gettysburg College policies and procedures apply to this trip.

Medical Kit and Medicine: It is our top priority to mitigate risk on these experiences. As such, we rely on medical forms so we can properly prepare together for this trip and ensure everyone’s safety. All GRAB staff members are certified Wilderness First Responders, and while in the field, we carry a medical and trauma kit. The medical kit has basic bandaging and wound care items, whereas our trauma kit has basic splinting and medicines such as aspirin, anti-diarrheal, epinephrine, and Benadryl. We ask that you have with you your prescription medicine that you need on a daily/weekly basis, and that you transport it in its original container/bottle with your name and dosage. It is your responsibility to manage your own medication. For those with strong allergies that require medication, it is very important that you bring extra epinephrine or necessary medication in the event that yours becomes lost or broken.