Winterfest
Backpacking: Cumberland Island, GA
January 10-17, 2015
$285
Round trip transportation, group equipment, fees and permits, two nights in hotels, camping fees, all backcountry meals and two road dinners

Trip Overview
Activity: Backpacking  Difficulty Level: 🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟

Whether you’re walking down a long-forgotten country road, sitting on the beach or following one of the island’s many trails, expect to be affected by the island’s natural, cultural and historical wonders. The western edge of the island features large salt marshes with gnarled live oak trees covered with Spanish moss and palmetto plants at the edge of a maritime forest. The island is home to native and non-native animals, such as white-tailed deer, nine-banded armadillos, wild boars and raccoons. It is also famous for the wild horses that wander Georgia’s largest barrier island.

A total of 50 miles of hiking trails through maritime forests, interior wetlands, historic districts, marsh ecosystems and beautiful beaches are available on Cumberland Island. In addition to hiking, the group will learn skills such as map and compass use, Leave-No-Trace, and backcountry living techniques. This is a backcountry experience, so the group will carry all of their own gear and will not have access to modern bathroom facilities during their time on Cumberland Island.

General Schedule of Trip

January 10, Saturday: Arrive on campus independently before noon, review gear and pack.

January 11: Depart Gettysburg for a hotel in King’s Bay, Georgia

January 12: Take the ferry across to Cumberland Island in the morning.

January 13-15: Backpack, explore, and relax on the island

January 16: Leave the island behind and drive to showers, beds, and a hotel in Florence, SC

January 17, Saturday: Complete the drive from Florence, SC back to campus
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The Hike: Hiking distance will range from 5-7 miles a day. Average time hiking daily will range from 3-4 hours, which includes stops for lunch, breaks and enjoying our surroundings.

Group Size: The trip consists of two to three GRAB staff members from the Office of Experiential Education and 6-8 participants.

Accommodations: On campus housing can be provided on Friday and Saturday (1/9-10), but may not be in your normal room. The group will stay in hotels the first and last nights of the trip (King’s Bay, GA and Florence, SC), and every other night will be spent camping in tents on the trail. Fees, permits, and 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 a backpacking stove. Travel dinners on the first and last night are also included, but you will be responsible for breakfast, lunch, and any additional food while traveling to and from Florida. You will also provide your own meals prior to the beginning of the trip.

Weather: The weather can be variable in Georgia at this time of year, but expect to see nightly lows in the low 40s and daily highs in the mid 50s to 60s. You can expect rain on at least a few days.

Physical Preparations: Moderate terrain and temperatures make this a great trip for participants of all levels of experience, and the best way to prepare for this trip is to stay active. You must be able to walk 3-5 hours a day with a 30 pound pack, so jogging, walking or exercising are great ways to make your experience more enjoyable.

Communication & Emergencies: Our trip locations often have cell service, but some sections may be spotty. 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, so we ask for your assistance to inform us about your background to properly prepare together. 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, 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.