

Hike & Stand Up Paddleboard Oregon's Alps

Due to the many variables of outdoor trips, it's impossible to describe exactly what the trip will be like but this will give you a sense of what to expect. Questions? Get in touch at: outdoors@lclark.edu

About the Location:

Nestled in the remote northeastern corner of Oregon, next to Washington state and Idaho, lie the spectacular mountains nicknamed "Oregon's Swiss Alps." Very different from the Cascade Mountains, the Wallowa Mountains tower to nearly 10,000 feet and feel similar to the Rockies. Pronounced "Wal-OW-ah," meaning "fish trap" in the Nez Perce language, this rugged and remote range shoots up around Oregon's largest natural lake, Wallowa Lake. If you ever watched the 1975 movie, "I Will Fight No More Forever," this valley was the home of Chief Joseph and his Nez Perce tribe. Now it's the home of bronze sculptors, loggers, artists, craft beer brewers, and ranchers. Vegetation and weather are similar to that found in the Idaho, Wyoming, and Colorado mountains; August weather is typically dry and sunny early in the day, with potential thunderstorms in the afternoon. Wallowa Lake has an amazing natural setting, tucked in a basin between jagged peaks. This wild corner of the state features some of the most spectacular scenery Oregon has to offer, and you will get to gaze up at glacier-capped mountains from a stand-up paddleboard in the middle of the lake!

What to Expect:

You will stay in rustic cabins at a camp College Outdoors has rented, eat great food in the dining hall, and have access to showers and flush toilets. The Wallowas are about a 7-hour drive east of Portland, and totally worth the trip. On the last day of your trip, we'll pack up early and head back to Portland and arrive late in the afternoon, the day before New Student Orientation begins. You can move into your room on campus at that time. The weather in the Wallowas can be a beautiful 80° F at noon, and then a thunderstorm blows through, and it's chilly by evening. It's not unheard of to have a little snow in late August up at the high lakes in the Wallowas, where we'll be hiking some days. The camp is at 4,400 feet in elevation, just a short half mile hike from the shores of Wallowa Lake, so expect warm sunny days and cool nights. Afternoon thunderstorms with lightning can occur, but tend to be fairly short. It's rare, in this dry part of Oregon, to have a rainy period lasting several days in August, but possible.

During the trip we will have adventures every day, including stand up paddleboarding on Wallowa Lake and spectacular hikes into the Eagle Cap Wilderness, the "crown jewel" of the Wallowa Mountains. Of course, there also will be time to chill at the camp we rented, swim at the beach at Wallowa Lake, and to get to know the other new students on your trip. Because there are lots of day hikes, good fitting comfortable hiking shoes or boots are important. Having lightweight hiking boots with ankle support is the best, since it helps protect you from twisted or injured ankles (low cut hiking shoes have no ankle support). As you might expect, not everyone in the group will hike at the same speed, so some days you will split into groups based on desired hiking rigor, and other days there will probably be some compromises made on distances/rigor. On the average hiking day, the group expects to hike about 8 miles wearing light daypacks; sometimes more mileage, sometime less.

It is important to practice leave no trace techniques such as packing out all litter and food waste, not using soap in streams or lakes, and not walking on fragile alpine meadows. Instructors will brief the group on Leave No Trace practices at the start of the trip. Due to wildfire danger, all trips are non-smoking.

New to hiking or stand up paddle boarding?

No problem! This trip is designed for beginners.

How to Prepare:

- **Break in your boots:** Since we'll be day-hiking remember that new boots can cause painful blisters. It is *very important* to break in your boots by wearing them with appropriate socks for extended periods prior to your trip.
- **Get moving:** It's a great idea to walk or run this summer to get yourself into shape.

What will we eat?

We eat well on this trip! Some examples of typical meals include: curry, pizza, mac & cheese.

If we need to resupply water from streams and lakes, this water needs to be filtered or treated before you can drink it; this is done with pumps and tablets. Our treatment neutralizes Giardia, bacteria, and viruses. Usually, though, we'll just get water from the lodge before we go hiking.

What if I don't have outdoor clothing or equipment?

No problem! Check out our packing lists (located on your trip page) for a description of the essential and optional gear for your trip. If you don't have your own outdoor clothing or equipment, we provide what you'll need for free. You must request the equipment ahead of time using this form:

<http://tinyurl.com/c4d5g2r>

What are the risks?

Common injuries which could occur on this trip include: blisters on feet (don't forget to break in your boots), cuts resulting from walking barefoot or use of pocket knives, burns from handling pots on a stove without hot pads or gloves, spilling boiling water, and not applying enough sunscreen. *These are all preventable with a little caution and common sense.*

Yellow jackets, wasps, or hornets are very common at this time of the year, and people with the potential for severe reactions to stings need to carry anaphylaxis kits with them. Fire danger can be very high in August, and the threat of a wildfire is real. Participants need to be very careful with any type of fire.

Learn more about possible risks [here](#).

Please note that while medical help is available within 10 miles from the camp, at a small hospital in the town of Enterprise, it's a fairly remote area. Our trips generally carry cellular phones, but remember cellular service is not always available in rural or remote areas. All our trip leaders are trained as Wilderness First Responders.

Complete and return the online [Health & Diet Questionnaire](#) to inform our trip leaders of any conditions or illnesses that you have.

Have a great summer, and we'll see you in August!