



Patagonia Mountaineering - Spanish Immersion (Full Immersion Mountaineering Course in Patagonia)

Challenge yourself to learn the necessary skills to climb the mountains you've always dreamed of. Learn what it takes to be a leader in a complex environment. Make mountains your home and let the air clear your lungs every morning. Taught in a 14-day expedition course, we invite you to take part in a unique experience, where the terrain and climate of Patagonia will create a unique and unparalleled setting for you.

2024 will be NOLS Patagonia's 35th anniversary and we want to celebrate it with an expedition that reflects the values of multiculturalism and diversity for which we are known for. This year, for the first time, our Mountaineering Course in Patagonia will offer spots for non-Latin American students whose native language is not Spanish and want to take on the challenge of joining a transformative expedition 100% taught in our local language through the Patagonian range.

Therefore, the predominant language used in this course is Spanish. Participants need to be fluent in Spanish language in order to understand class content and be able to communicate with classmates and instructors.

Course description

The course is designed to improve leadership skills and teamwork in an ambiguous environment, in which decisions have real consequences. During this course, you will hike through one of the many remote and beautiful mountain ranges of Chilean Patagonia. These rugged mountains offer stunning views of sharp spiers and mountain massifs with hanging glaciers. In this open classroom, you will practice leadership, learn to live in the outdoors, mountain travel skills, and Leave No Trace principles.

The Mountaineering Course in Patagonia offers the fundamental knowledge to travel, enjoy and make decisions about the route safely. The program is based on:

- Wilderness skills
- Risk Management
- Leadership
- Environmental studies

Wilderness Skills

The course is developed as an expedition through the Patagonian mountains, where students live outdoors, making camps and preparing their own meals, loading and carrying their own equipment in backpacks, reading maps and often having to cross rivers and dense forests. The course has the potential to offer an opportunity for professional development and practical experience in mountain techniques, such as route selection, map interpretation, use of crampons, ice axes, ropes, knots, river crossing and glacier progression.

Normally the weather conditions are adverse and present a great physical and mental challenge; but they are undoubtedly an important part of the curriculum and course experience.

Our skilled instructors will go deeper both in these wilderness skills and mountaineering technical techniques in Spanish.

Risk Management

Risk recognition and management are critical to the leadership development, safety, and health of expedition members. We accept risk as an integral part of the learning process and the environment through which we travel. We firmly believe that risk management can be carried out with good judgment, based on experience, training and knowledge. In each course participants learn to face real challenges and risk assessment is an integral part of each day. NOLS has a positive history of managing safety in courses, and we believe this is possible only when our students learn how to recognize hazards and evaluate the skill of group members.

Leadership

Your course will have a strong focus on being a good, adaptable team member, having the ability to distinguish between the roles of "team member" (active follower) and "team leader" (designated leader). You'll have the opportunity to exercise individual decision-making while facilitating great teamwork—skills that are seemingly at odds with each other. You will learn and develop technical outdoor living skills and interpersonal skills - the combination will allow you to function effectively as a group in the powerful and dynamic landscape of Patagonia.

Environmental studies

Minimum impact techniques are taught under the “Leave No Trace” program. This program presents minimal impact techniques under 7 general principles, facilitating their application in different environments. “No Deje Rastro” is an adaptation of the program led by the Center for Outdoor Ethics from Leave No Trace www.Int.org (course does not include certification).

Course Format

Pre course: Traveling to Coyhaique

Day 1

We meet in Coyhaique’s main square early in the morning and drive to the NOLS Patagonia Campus for breakfast and a quick orientation. Then, you and your coursemates will check your personal equipment with your instructors, group equipment, and the food that you will take to the field. The day ends with a review of group goals and a plan for the next day. Finally, the instructors will do a “How to pack your backpack” class and review the plan for the rest of the afternoon and the day after.

Days 2-13

The progression of the contents to be taught during these days will depend on the conditions of the terrain, weather, interests of the students and the instructors’ evaluation of all these conditions and others that may arise.

The “Leader of the day” model, responsibilities, decision making, navigation curriculum, paddling, campsite selection and “Leave No Trace” techniques will be presented as part of the topics to be taught.

Depending on the length of the travel days, participants may have the opportunity to plan a hike, climb a summit, and/or route exploration.

Day 14

Pick-up at designated meeting point and return to NOLS Patagonia Campus for a nice hot shower, course graduation and back to Coyhaique.

Methodology

"What I hear, I forget; what I see, I remember; what I do, I know." This Chinese proverb recreates the NOLS educational philosophy. With more than 55 years of experience in outdoor education, NOLS has developed a methodology whose roots are founded in experiential education. Where formal classes in the field are the minimum, since learning occurs during doing and then reflecting on what has been learned and reapplying it. There will be constant check-ins and feedback from the instructors in all areas of the course and there will be a self-assessment of the student's performance at the end of the course.

Equipment

NOLS Patagonia supplies all group equipment. A document will be delivered specifying the requirements for the personal equipment necessary for the course. It is recommended to bring equipment that you have already used before. If you miss something, we encourage you to borrow from a friend. Buying or renting equipment from outfitters should be a last resort.

NOLS Patagonia has equipment for rent and/or sale. For more detail, see the Personal Equipment Description document, which clearly indicates what NOLS provides and what is available for sale and/or rental.

Important considerations

Weather conditions greatly influence the pace and curriculum of the course. For example, a lot of rain, very large rivers to cross or very hot areas are elements that require flexibility in the curriculum and the route to take advantage of the opportunities that arise in each course. Each course is a unique experience that is defined by the entire environment, climate, route, and human group. The course route varies each year, the group of instructors will design it days before the course, based on their experience, the course curriculum, objectives, level of the participants and weather conditions.

Participant requirements

- Over 18 years old.
- The participant must have adequate physical condition to be able to carry a backpack of 55 pounds or more for 6 or 8 hours a day.
- The participant must be psychologically prepared to put effort into the learning and challenge involved in this expedition. It is not necessary to have previous

experience, however, if you wish to take this course, you must come with the willingness to be open to learning and facing difficulties in a difficult environment.

- During the course we travel through isolated areas of medical services, telephone communications, human settlements and roads.
- You must demonstrate interest in learning basic mountaineering techniques and others specific to this course, and also collaborate in the learning of your classmates.
- Participants need to be 100% fluent in Spanish language in order to understand class content and be able to communicate with classmates and instructors. Also, the enrollment and admissions process would be carried out in Spanish. A personal interview or a presentation video may be requested in order to assess language skills.