

Winter 2022 Quarter in North America Program Description

Northern Mexico contains some of the best sport climbing on the continent. alpha climbing owner Aaron has been visiting the area for over 10 years. It's a perfect winter destination for inspired young adult athletes who are

alpha climbing's one-of-a-kind gap year programs are aimed specifically at performance-driven young-adult rock climbers, ages 18-23, who have graduated from high school or are taking a break from post-secondary education or work. The Winter 2021 Quarter in North America will visit tufa-laden limestone sport climbing crags in El Salto, Nuevo Leon, Mexico during the 30-day duration of this course.

Features

- Duration: 30 days.
- Dates: January 17 - February 15, 2022
- Locations: Cienega de Gonzalez, Nuevo Leon, AKA, "El Salto"
- Performance focus: on-sight, flash, and red-point climbing on single-pitch, bolt-protected sport climbs from 10m-40m
- Group size: 3-7 athletes / 1-3 coaches
- Ages 16-23; average age is 19
- Tuition: \$3950 plus a la carte add-ons: gear purchase, photos, et al.

Overview

Our gap year programs are designed for young adult athletes with previous competition and/or training experience, who have some outdoor rock climbing experience. The mission of these programs is to provide a unique and dedicated opportunity for young adult athletes to pursue a performance rock climbing agenda on the best rock on the planet. Within this context alpha climbing provides mentorship & coaching as well as expertise on international travel.

Program Objectives

- Learn how to perform as an athlete during an extended climbing trip;
- Develop a strong awareness of strengths and weaknesses;
- Develop strategy in selecting routes for onsight/flash and redpoint;
- Gain understanding of specific needs for rest, recovery, intensity, and motivation;
- Learn budgeting for extended international travel;
- Explore culturally and historically significant sites;

- Meet locals and learn about their way of life; and,
- Integrate life-skills with athletic priorities and travel logistics.

Past Destinations

alpha climbing has visited Rodellar, Mallorca (DWS & Sport), Margalef, Siurana, and Chulilla in Spain; and Kyparissi and Leonidio in Greece; Serra do Cipo in Brazil, and Rocklands in South Africa. We have extensive experience climbing in the western United States of America, and northern Mexico, and most recently, Cuba.

Pre-Requisites

Fundamentally, in order to meet the physical and emotional demands of this program, you must have significant experience working towards performance level climbing goals. Some of the key components of your experience might include:

- Training and competing with an organized gym team during your teenage/high school years;
- Summer/weekend trips to sport climbing crags where you worked on personal best redpoints;
- Dedication to a local “project,” with repeated attempts;
- The building of a “base” in climbing, where you worked towards building volume, developing efficiency, and/or increasing enjoyment of the “easier” level of difficulty;
- Improving on-sight difficulty level;
- Learning that failure is a significant component of performance-level climbing;
- Integration of nutrition, rest, and other lifestyle choices, as a means to further your performance, well being, and general health; and/or,
- Interest in being a member of the global community of climbers, as well as the development to learn about other cultures, and how you can do your part to be a citizen of the world.

For ability, athletes must be comfortable moving on rock routes rated at 5.12a/7a+ and up. This includes the skill set required to onsight or project at this level and higher: hanging draws, stick clipping, risk management, efficient projecting techniques, crag etiquette, and partnership. The following list should be considered as a minimum for participation in this program:

- A gym-training program of a minimum of 6 hours per week for the past 2 years. This might include training which might not happen at a commercial climbing facility (hang boarding, woody training, etc.);
- Rock climbing trips of greater than 3 days. Extended duration at single locations is preferred;

- Projecting of maximum redpoint grades, which involves tactical development, and failure;
- A well-rounded approach to health & fitness, including healthy eating habits, incorporation of rest/recovery into the training cycle, cross training intended to strengthen the body and prevent injury; and,
- Expressed desire to live, train, and perform with like minded climber-athletes.

Finally, some basic travel experience will serve to assist the team to perform at its best. We don't expect our athletes to be jet-setting veterans; just some basic familiarity with navigating, budgeting, and self-care.

Staff

alpha climbing founder Aaron Hjelt will serve as the head coach and coordinator for the semester. Please contact Aaron for all questions related to the program. Additional staff shall be added as enrollment increases. Guest coaches/guides from the local climbing communities visited will assist us and share their knowledge of the areas.

Travel Logistics

Flights required:

- Round trip flight to Monterrey, Nuevo Leon for arrival on January 17 and departure on February 15.

Packing and baggage:

- You will need camping gear. This will need to arrive with you in Monterrey on the first day of the course.
- Other equipment will be detailed in the packing list.

On-ground transportation:

- Mexico and SW U.S.A.-alpha climbing's 2006 Chevy AWD Express Van will transport the group.

Itinerary

Other than the flight dates as listed, we will maintain a semi-flexible schedule to ensure we are maximizing good weather. The proposed itinerary is as follows:

- January 8

The daily schedule will vary. A 2-on, 1-off, 2-on, 2-off schedule is most likely, with recovery, weather, and travel days influencing the regularity. There is not a set schedule. Key elements shall be scheduled into a weekly agenda, including:

- Cross training, core strengthening, and injury prevention, including: Tabata workouts, strength drills, yoga, hikes/trail runs;
- Time for meditation and other mental exercise;
- Life maintenance, including: laundry, grocery shopping, personal care, and communication to home;
- Sight-seeing, visiting with locals, and other cultural interests;
- Informal language lessons.

Financial Commitment

A \$500 deposit, payable to Alpha Climbing LLC by check or online invoicing, is required for your application to be accepted and considered. Should your application be rejected, or the program be cancelled, your deposit will be refunded in total. The \$500 deposit is only refundable in the case of legitimate medical or family emergency or hardship.

The balance due will be determined by the length of your course (1-3 months) and any additional ala carte items you've ordered. Payments may be made by cash, check, or ACH withdrawal. Credit cards payments are accepted, but shall incur a 3% surcharge to cover processing fees. Invoices are sent by email and may be paid electronically, or by mail. Tuition covers: on-ground transportation, approximately 70% of food, all accommodations, and alpha climbing administration, payroll, and operational expenses.

- Airfare may be purchased by alpha climbing, with full reimbursement being paid by check or ACH, no later than 30 days post purchase. A \$25 administration fee will also be added to the purchase price. alpha climbing is not responsible for unused airfare due to program cancellation, injury, or any other circumstance.
- Athletes must have health insurance which covers the participant in the areas we'll be traveling.
- Athletes must have international travel insurance which guarantees coverage of emergency medical evacuations, repatriation of remains (in the case of death), and/or other circumstance that might cause departure from the program, specifically covering activities listed in this program description. Recommendations for plans costing \$150-300 for this coverage are available. We strongly encourage the Explorer Plan offered by World Nomads. [Click here to get a quote.](#)

- A weekly food budget of \$30, to be spent on meals at restaurants, cafes, and while travelling.
- A total budget of \$100-200 to be spent on special activities: concerts, club entry, museums, or other fees as required by group interest.
- \$100-150 to be budgeted for cell/data coverage, which can be purchased in the form of a SIM card for smart phones. This is not a requirement.
- \$50+ to be spent on laundry and hygiene.
- Extra baggage fees as needed.

Equipment Requirements

- Climbing equipment needs include: a new(ish) and clean 70-80m rope of 9.2-9.5mm (with rope bag), 20-30 keylock quickdraws, 2-4 pair of climbing shoes, Petzl Grigri or + belay device, helmet, skin kit, belay glasses (if used), kneepads, chalk, and other personal items. A suitable sized backpack (50l+) is required. Full gear requirements will be delivered in the packing checklist.
- A laptop or tablet will be required for communicating, blogging, and other media interests of the team.
- Although it might be possible to contain all belongings in one checked bag, athletes should be prepared to pay for a second checked bag.
- Most likely, we will be tent camping in Mexico, so a tent, sleeping bag, and comfortable pad will be needed.

Preparation

- Prior to departure, athletes must be on a training and climbing program that contains 1-2 hanging workouts per week, ARC training or other volume-centric workouts for stamina on 35m+ sport climbs, full body training and core strength. This must be confirmed through your local coach, gym staff, or training partner. Consultation and/or personal training is available from alpha climbing staff and mentors. Please inquire on options with Aaron.
- American Red Cross CPR and First Aid certification (online cert is acceptable) is highly encouraged. A credit for the cost of the certification towards the total course fee will be given upon successful completion;
- Spanish language prep using the Duolingo app or other approved instructional method. This will require minimal investment (5-10 hours max.)

Please contact Aaron Hjelt (aaron@alphaclimbing.com) with any questions regarding this information, or to seek clarification. This document is subject to change.