



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS INDIVIDUAL COURSES

### **HOW DO I KNOW IF AN OUTWARD BOUND CANADA COURSE IS RIGHT FOR ME OR FOR MY CHILD?**

Before you decide to embark on an adventure with us, you should take the time to consider if you have the following:

- A desire to boost your personal and practical skills
- An interest in disconnecting from your usual routine to try something new
- A positive attitude and an open mind
- Willingness to meet new people, outside of your usual social group
- Willingness to take responsibility for your own safety and decision making
- Strategies to manage stress and overcome challenges in your day-to-day life
- A detailed understanding of the program activities and day to day routine
- An appetite for adventure, fun and challenge!

### **WHAT IS THE PROGRAM LIKE?**

On every Outward Bound program, participants learn by doing. Participants will be challenged as an individual and become an effective member of the team. They will be compelled to dig deep within themselves, whether canoeing, backpacking, sea kayaking or dogsledding. It is important to know that your participation is voluntary and we expect you to try new things and put forth your best effort. The program is designed to be physically, emotionally and mentally challenging. We allow participants to try new things in a safe and supported environment – you will never be forced to do something you don't want to do. Your instructors inform and inspire you; as the course progresses, the responsibility of tasks shifts from instructors to participants, and the groups technical and decision-making abilities are able to thrive and grow.

### **HOW FIT DO I HAVE TO BE?**

Outward Bound is about ordinary people doing extraordinary things: participants with a wide range of physical and mental fitness have successfully completed an Outward Bound course. Overcoming challenge is one of the many tools we use to help you explore your personal potential. Our programs are designed for the reasonably fit, regularly active individual with a stable mental fitness and strategies to overcome challenges. It is important to know that the better shape you're in, the more comfortable you will be on expedition. Our courses are physically demanding and a certain amount of preparation will ensure that you are overall comfortable on the course. Please complete your Confidential Medical History form in detail and answer all questions honestly, providing as much detail as possible so that we can help you to be prepared and ready. We are committed to ensuring the safety of yourself and your group.

### **WHAT DO I NEED TO BRING?**

Outward Bound Canada supplies all of the technical gear you need! This includes canoes, kayaks, paddles, life jackets/PFDs, tents, first-aid equipment, sleeping pads, cooking and eating utensils, stoves, helmets, ropes, harnesses and tarps. OBC also provides the tripping packs appropriate for each course. Participants are only responsible for bringing their own personal clothing and footwear and a headlamp! You can pack everything in luggage that is suitable for traveling. We will provide you with a Clothing List, which outlines the items you should pack. We expect participants to do their best with bringing their own clothing, as it is always more comfortable to wear your own. If you have questions or get stuck, we can help you find tricky items or come up with an alternative. We have an inventory of supplies that participants can borrow if they do not have the ability to acquire some things on their own. During *Duffle Shuffle*, the instructors will ensure all participants are well equipped for the trip before heading out.



## **WHAT IS YOUR CANCELLATION / REFUND POLICY?**

Our Cancellation Policy reflects the fact that we incur most of the costs of your expedition before you arrive for the program. If you are participating on an open enrolment program as an Individual, click here to see our Cancellation & Refund Policy.

## **WHAT KIND OF FOOD DO WE GET ON THE PROGRAM?**

A detailed menu is planned before each course and is subject to change based on a number of factors. We can accommodate many dietary restrictions – vegetarian, Halal, Kosher - and some food allergies, Please indicate your dietary restrictions and allergies on your Confidential Medical History Form in as much detail as possible. We may request some follow up information in order to plan your course menu. Participants will receive sufficient calories in reflection of their physical output on the course. Bringing your own food/snacks on course is not required. Please speak to the Admissions Department to make sure you understand the dietary concerns of other participants before packing extra snacks.

## **WHAT IS YOUR ALCOHOL, SMOKING, VAPING AND SUBSTANCE USE POLICY?**

The possession and/or use of non-prescription drugs, alcohol, tobacco products, cannabis or illegal substances while on course is strictly prohibited. This includes the misuse of prescription medications. If you would like to use tobacco for ceremonial purposes, please speak with your instructor upon arrival to your program. You will be asked to sign a Code of Conduct & Assumption of Risk form demonstrating your understanding of this policy. Any participant who brings these substances on course will be sent home at the expense of the participant/their family.

## **IS THIS AN ADVENTURE THERAPY PROGRAM?**

While spending time out in nature can be described as therapeutic, it is important to know the Outward Bound Canada is not designed to be a therapy program. Our instructors are trained in outdoor education and expeditionary travel, and they are not mental health professionals. The Outward Bound program can be very challenging, both physically and mentally, and it is important for your success to arrive for the course with some healthy coping strategies in your toolkit for coping when those challenges arise.

## **WHAT WILL THE SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS BE?**

Participants will be sleeping in tents or improvised shelters that are suitable for the landscape where your course takes place – bringing you that much closer to nature! Outward Bound provides you with the tent, sleeping bag, and sleeping pad. Feel free to bring your own sleeping bag if you wish, however, if it is not appropriate for the weather conditions, your instructors may suggest that you use one of ours.

## **CAN I BRING MY CELL PHONE?**

You won't need it – participants on course enjoy a vacation from technology! Your cell phone, along with your other personal belongings that you don't need (wallet, music player, airline tickets, etc.) will be stored safely at our office nearby while you are in the wilderness. Once the course starts, you will not be able to contact anyone at home, you will be immersed in the Outward Bound experience – building connections with yourself, others, and the natural world! Please know that the instructor team has a plan for getting in touch with our office and your emergency contacts at home in the event of an emergency.



## **WILL I BE SAFE?**

Our highly trained instructors make sure that all activities adhere to strict safety guidelines that we have developed over more than fifty years of working in the wilderness. Instructional briefings precede each new activity to help you participate safely in all of our activities. Our methods and practices are monitored and reviewed regularly by a committee made up of senior Outward Bound staff from schools across North America, as well as independent experts. While there is inherently a risk involved spending time in the wilderness, you're in great hands!

## **WHAT ARE YOUR RISK MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES SURROUNDING COVID-19?**

Outward Bound Canada is committed to mitigating the risks involved with our expeditions, and to minimizing the spread of infectious illness among our participants and staff. The risk of contracting COVID-19 is new for all of us, and cannot be eliminated completely. An Outward Bound expedition is a group experience – one in which you and your new team will live, work, travel and play in a close-knit community. As you may already be aware, there will be times on your course that you and your group members are in close physical proximity. Due to the nature of our programs, there is a risk that you can be exposed to contagious and infectious illness, like COVID-19 (the disease presented by the novel coronavirus), while on your course. [Click Here](#) to read our Information Letter on Infectious Illness. [Click Here](#) to review our Covid-19 Field Protocols.

## **WHAT DO YOU DO ABOUT TICK BITES?**

Ticks are insects that are present across Canada, and their bite is a known vector for causing illness, such as Lyme disease. While the risk of being bit by an insect/vector is as present in the wilderness as it is in your own backyard, our highly qualified instructors carry out regular prevention measures and are trained to take precautions to help prevent the spread of vector-borne illness. We work closely with participants to carry out regular prevention measures. Participants will be briefed on vector bite prevention and participate in regular prevention routines during their time on course with us. [Click Here](#) to read our Information Letter on Vector Borne Illness.

## **WHO ARE MY INSTRUCTORS?**

Outward Bound Instructors are skilled, dedicated, and caring outdoor educators. These well-rounded individuals have extensive wilderness experience. They come from a variety of backgrounds: education, business, camp and other outdoor education networks, or from one of many Outward Bound schools around the world. Aside from formal qualifications in Wilderness First Aid, our instructors continually update their skills through independent training, personal expeditions, and staff development opportunities provided by Outward Bound Canada. They can't wait to meet you!

## **CAN YOU TELL ME MORE ABOUT THE SOLO EXPERIENCE?**

The solo experience, called "solo", is designed to give you some time to yourself, away from the group, to relax, reflect and recharge. The solo provides a change of pace, and it varies in length depending on the duration of your course. You will have the opportunity to set up a campsite of your own, manage your own physical and mental needs and enjoy your independence. You will never be more than a whistle-blow away from your instructors who will check on you regularly. Often described as the most transformative part of the experience, the solo gives participants the chance to reflect on earlier conversations from the expedition, absorb important realizations about yourself and leave behind anything that would no longer serve them going forward. It is important to know that the solo is not a survival exercise: you will have the proper gear, food, water and other necessities with you. It's simply a time for self-exploration, rest and reflection.



## **WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE COURSE FEE?**

The course fee includes the use of all technical gear required for your course: tents, sleeping bags, backpacking gear, and much more! Also included are three meals per day plus the snacks that are required to keep you nourished and energized. Included in the course fee are the knowledgeable and experienced instructors will be there to teach and guide you throughout the entire course. Additional fees include: an application fee, high school credit fee (if applicable for you) and applicable taxes.

## **HOW DO I GET TO THE COURSE?**

Outward Bound Canada courses take place in various landscapes across the country. As you can imagine, some are more remote than others. Participants are required to make their way to and from the course independently. You can travel to us in a variety of ways: by car, bus or airplane. Your Welcome Booklet includes information on specific meeting times and locations for your course – please consult with your Admissions Coordinator if you have any questions about meeting up for your program.

## **WHAT IF MY CHILD DOESN'T WANT TO GO?**

All participants at Outward Bound Canada are expected to be active and willing participants on their expedition. Our instructors will ensure to provide safe and supportive opportunities for participants to try new things, expand their comfort zone and learn along the way. We highly encourage you to include your child in the exploration and decision to participate in the program, and to be honest in completing their forms during registration. An applicant should not feel coerced or forced to attend a program. Participants on course will be highly encouraged and supported, but ultimately will not be forced to stay on expedition if they refuse to participate. Our Admissions team is happy to work with any parents and participants to help ensure that it is the right time for them to join us on course and to answer any questions you may have in your decision to have your child participate.

## **WHO ARE THE OTHER PARTICIPANTS ON MY COURSE?**

Since 1969, over 150,000 people have enjoyed a wilderness expedition with Outward Bound Canada. Groups usually consist of eight to twelve participants and two instructors. Our participants come from across Canada and around the world and they bring with them a wide variety of skills and life experiences; you can expect to meet peers with uniquely different family, school and social experiences.

## **CAN I BRING A FRIEND?**

We strongly encourage participants to consider attending a course on their own, independently from friends or siblings. In our experience, participants who step out of their comfort zone to participate independently are in a great place to experience immense personal growth and development. The majority of our participants do attend their course alone – the fresh start of the whole group allows for the building and maintaining of an integral team of working groups and the creation of special friendships. If you would like to participate in an Outward Bound experience with your school, friends or community, please contact us about our custom groups programs.