

DESCRIPTION

Mt Olympus is the highest peak in the Olympic Mountains, an impressive glaciated massif crowned by three summits, positioned in the heart of the range. Guarded by a 17.5 mile approach that begins at only 600' above sea level, Olympus is a big climb despite its 7980' summit elevation. The effort this trip requires is greatly rewarded by spectacular 360° views, and beautiful climbing on a remote peak.

We spend two days on the approach hiking through the lush Hoh Rainforest, gaining most of our elevation on the second day. Our climb begins from a camp at Glacier Meadows, at the toe of the Blue Glacier. The ascent involves glacier mountaineering and snow climbing, finishing with a short pitch of rock on the summit block.

Our standard program is 5 days in length, climbing on the third day, and returning to camp that evening. This allows two full days for the hike out, and even some time to explore the lower Blue Glacier on day 4. Most people will find this to be the most enjoyable pace for this trip.

We also offer a 4 day "express" program. On this trip we climb on the third day, pack up camp that afternoon, and descend 7 miles to Lewis Meadows. This makes for a longer summit day but can be a good option if time is a factor, or you're seeking a more challenging overall experience (or both).

5 DAY PROGRAM

DAY 1 – Trailhead to Lewis Meadows

We meet at the Overnight Parking Lot of the Hoh Rainforest Visitor Center at 9am for introductions, orientation, and gear check. Once packed, we'll secure our permits and begin the approach. On this first day we will cover 10 miles of gradual terrain along the Hoh River, hiking through lush temperate rainforest. We arrive at our first camp, prepare dinner, and spend the evening practicing a few basic mountaineering skills.

DAY 2 – Lewis Meadows to Glacier Meadows

The Hoh River Trail's gradual incline becomes a steady ascent, gaining over 3000' in 7 miles to Glacier Meadows. We arrive in the afternoon and set up camp along the creek. Here we'll discuss the details of the climb

ahead including what we'll need to bring, and what to expect. The rest of the afternoon is spent making preparations. We eat dinner and head for bed on the early side in order to maximize our rest for the big day to come.

DAY 3 – Climb

With an early start, we eat breakfast and set off on the climb. After two days of carrying bigger loads, it's nice to be moving with lighter packs.

The route follows a lateral moraine before crossing to the other side of the Blue Glacier. Here we ascend a feature called the Snow Dome, cresting a broad plateau at 6600'. From this point we have an excellent view of our objective, the West Peak, but getting there can be somewhat circuitous. Depending on conditions we'll use one of a couple variations, the standard ascending through Crystal Pass to the head of the Blue Glacier before wrapping around the false summit. From this point a steep snow slope leads us to the final pitch of rock and a short scramble takes us to the summit.

On top we enjoy 360° views of the Olympics. We spend half an hour or so on the summit, take lots of pictures, and prepare for the descent.

Returning to camp, we cook up dinner and hot drinks and enjoy some well-earned relaxation time.

EXPERIENCE

- This program includes a skills training component.
- No previous mountaineering experience is required.
- Previous hiking and/or backpacking experience is recommended.

FITNESS

- Excellent physical fitness is required for this program.
- You should be able to hike/climb for 1-2 hours at a stretch taking 10 minute breaks, for up to 12 hours.
- You should be able to ascend 3000' in a day carrying 50+lbs on your back, and 4500' in a day carrying 30 lbs on your back.
- Physical conditioning should not be underestimated – mountaineering is a strenuous activity. Some sort of training/exercise regimen is strongly recommended.

- The better shape you're in, the more you'll enjoy the climb, and the better your chances of making it to the top.

COST INCLUDES

- Guiding & instruction at a 4:1 ratio
- Group equipment: tents, stoves, fuel, ropes, and technical gear
- Permit & insurance costs, guide's expenses

NOT INCLUDED

- Lodging & transportation before and after the trip
- Personal equipment and food*
- Park entrance fees

*provided for an additional fee.

FOOD

Lunch Food: In the mountains, "lunch starts after breakfast and ends before dinner". In other words, on a given day we generally won't stop for a formal lunch break, and instead we'll snack all day long. This is vital to maintaining high energy levels in this environment.

Be sure to bring foods that you like and emphasize variety. Energy bars and gels are great but in limited amounts – real food works just as well and tastes better.

Breakfasts & Dinners: Bring meals that can be cooked with just boiling water. Examples include freeze-dried pouches (Mountain House, Backpackers Pantry), ramen noodles, instant oatmeal, etc. The stoves we use are very efficient for heating water but are not suitable for cooking.

WHERE TO MEET

Hoh Rainforest Visitor Center Overnight Parking Lot.

TRAVEL

Flights

Option A: Fly into Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. From here the

drive to the Hoh Rainforest Visitor Center is about 4.5 hours.

Option B: Fly into Port Angeles. [Kenmore Air](#) flies daily from Sea-Tac and is an Alaska Airlines partner (domestic flights can be booked with Port Angeles as the destination). From Port Angeles it's a 2 hour drive to the Hoh Rainforest Visitor Center.

Car Rental

Many options exist in Sea-Tac. There's also a [Budget Rent-A-Car](#) in Port Angeles.

ACCOMODATIONS

Forks is an hour away from the trailhead.

[Forks Chamber of Commerce](#)

RESOURCES

Check out our [Weather & Avalanche Resources](#) page.

Books

- [Climber's Guide to the Olympic Mountains](#) by Olympic Mountain Rescue
- [Alpine Climbing: Techniques to Take You Higher](#) by Mark Houston & Kathy Cosley