



# IWLS

International Wilderness Leadership School

## 24 -Day Mt. Kilimanjaro and East Africa Backpacking Leadership & Guide Training Course Information



### Course Location

The International Wilderness Leadership School East Africa program takes place in Kenya and Tanzania.

The first portion of the course takes place in Northern Kenya on the massif of Mt. Kenya's. Here we will trek through lush alpine meadows and have opportunities to see Africa's unique ecosystems as we acclimate. After hiking to the third tallest summit in Kenya, Point Lenana (4985m), we will travel to the plains of the Maasai Mara to experience the exceptional wildlife of East Africa on a walking safari.

The second part of the course takes place in Tanzania. Here we will climb Mt. Meru (4,667m) and conclude with an ascent of Mt. Kilimanjaro (5,895m), the highest point in Africa.

### Course Goals

- Students will gain a strong technical high altitude trekking skill set and appropriate traveling techniques.
- Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to professionally deal with all aspects of emergency scenarios while in the field.
- Students will be able to use and teach state-of-the art minimum-impact camping and travel techniques.
- They will be able to exercise good quality judgment and decision-making skills within a leadership position to avoid potential accident and survival situations and develop a comprehensive understanding of safety considerations in East Africa.
- They will be able to recognize their own leadership abilities and limitations within the context of a group. Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to make decisions and lead small groups in the mountain environment of East Africa.
- Students will be able evaluate their personal acclimatization process, be knowledgeable about appropriate acclimatization regimens, and have an understanding of medicines and methods associated with high altitude.



## Course Itinerary

*This is a flexible trip itinerary that shows the general progression of the trip.*

**Day 1 and 2:** Nairobi, Kenya: Trip preparation, planning, food and equipment packing. We will also discuss expectations for the course.

**Day 3:** Head to Mt. Kenya

**Day 4 – 8:** Trekking around the Mt. Kenya massif. We will climb the third tallest summit in Kenya, Point Lenana (4985m).

**Day 9-10:** Trekking safari in Maasai Mara.

**Day 11:** Mid-course evaluation

**Day 12– 16:** Mt. Meru

**Day 16:** Travel to Moshi to prepare for our Kilimanjaro climb.

**Day 17-23:** Mt. Kilimanjaro. We ascend the Machame route through the different alpine ecosystems to gain the summit at 5,895m.

**Day 24:** Return to Nairobi. In the last few days of the course we will have final peer and instructor evaluations. Students will be evaluated on their understanding and completion of the IWLS and WEA curriculums.

## A Typical Day

A typical day starts around 7am with breakfast and hot drinks. If a summit attempt is planned, you may find yourself awake just before sunrise. While water is heating you will most likely be preparing for the days' adventures.

You will play an integral part of the expedition team by setting up camp, cooking meals, or carrying a portion of the group gear. You may be leader of the day, responsible for planning the day, accomplishing objectives, or facilitating a lesson plan.

The day's activities will vary depending on weather, location, and progression of the course. We may work on developing your technical skills set, learn about different leadership styles, or get an alpine start and climb a large peak in the area. Regardless of the day's activities, it will be full of learning and adventure.

Dinner could be anything from thanksgiving to pasta, to backcountry pizza. Students often walk away from our courses with a newfound love for cooking good and original food.

The day will finish with a debrief session where we'll discuss the days events, what you learned, and how you'll be able to use your newfound skills in the near future.



## Course Curriculum

The International Wilderness Leadership Schools' educational model nurtures leadership development and creates an awareness of the guiding mentality essential for leading safe, fun adventures in the wilderness. The combination of technical skills training, experiential education and practical leadership experience make the IWLS curriculum world class.

We believe that experiences drive our learning, and therefore we use formal and informal classes taught by both instructors and students. Instructors are eager to help facilitate the learning process, but, ultimately, how much you learn will be dependent upon the amount of effort you put into the course.

A detailed curriculum will be provided at the beginning of the course. Below is a partial list of curriculum points that will be covered throughout your course.

**IWLS General Curriculum** outlines essential components for effective outdoor leadership. Below are a few points that will be covered in this course.

**Decision Making and Problem Solving:** Over the course of 12 or 24 days, we'll discover ways to assess problems, explore solutions and evaluate options in order to make effective and safe decisions in the field.

**Leadership:** Opportunities to lead the group will be abundant, and you'll have the time to learn and practice multiple styles of leadership in varied situations.

**Expedition Behavior and Group Dynamics:** Because this course is a true wilderness expedition, interactions between group members need to be supportive and contribute to the efficacy of the group. The daily dynamics of the group, combined with instruction, will teach participants not only how to be a member of a team, but how to influence and lead an expedition.

**Environmental Ethics:** As adventurers in some of the most pristine environments on the planet, it is our duty to respect the natural world. All of our courses practice and teach Leave No Trace® principles.

**Basic Camping Skills:** Mastering these essential skills will prove valuable whether you are pitching a tent in gale force winds or melting snow for drinking water.

**Equipment/Clothing Selection and Use:** You'll learn to choose the right gear for the correct application, whether enjoying a sunny afternoon on a snow slope or trekking through a tropical rainforest.

**Weather:** Will the storm arrive in the next 12 hours or the next 48? Understanding weather patterns and trends will help you plan successful trips in a wilderness setting.

**Health and Sanitation:** You'll learn water treatment techniques and waste management skills for healthy backcountry living.

**Travel Techniques:** Course instruction will help you discover ways to safely maximize your efficiency, whether hiking down a well-beaten path or traversing an exposed ridge.

**Navigation:** Learn how to take a bearing, read a topographical map, triangulate your position, or navigate in a whiteout.

**Safety and Risk Management:** Safety is always the #1 consideration. As the course progresses, you'll develop an awareness to appropriately assess risk and make safe decisions.

**Wilderness Emergency Procedures and Treatment:** Learn how to effectively manage safe, efficient and timely backcountry rescues.



**Natural and Cultural History:** Having a strong understanding of cultural history, flora, and fauna is an integral part of leading people in an outdoor environment. You'll learn some of the botany, ecology, and geology that apply to these remarkable areas.

**Communication Skills:** Speaking in public, managing a personal conflict, or leading a group in the wilderness, all of these situations require effective communication. You'll gain confidence in your communication abilities as you develop your personal leadership style over the length of this course.

**Trip Planning:** The first day of the 24-day course is devoted to planning, packing, and organizing the logistics, food, and equipment for the expedition.

**Teaching:** You'll have the opportunity to develop lesson plans, teach in front of the group, and learn the importance of progressions for teaching technical skills and leadership.

**IWLS Backpacking Curriculum** prepares students for exploration into remote, backcountry settings.

**Pre-trip Activities:** Learn how to plan and prepare for an extended wilderness expedition. We'll cover everything from technical camping equipment to group and personal expectations.

**Backpacks:** Proper packing and fitting of backpacks improves efficiency and helps avoid injury.

**Big Game Considerations:** Big game of East Africa include water buffalo, lions, rhinoceros and more. Students will learn safe protocols for traveling in the big game country of Africa.

**Tents:** Staying dry in the wilderness is an essential survival skill. You'll learn how to repair a damaged tent, how to set up camp in high winds, and techniques to secure your dry space for the night.

**Stoves and Campfires:** The ability to repair a broken stove, make an emergency fire after being submerged in an icy river, and melt snow efficiently for water are key components for leading a group in the wilderness.

**Cooking:** Sometimes in the backcountry, the meal makes the day. Whether cooking oatmeal or Thanksgiving dinner, you'll develop your skills at making tasty treats.

**Lightning Hazards:** Learn how to read weather patterns and avoid exposure, and how to manage a group in an emergency situation.

**River and Stream Crossings:** In river crossings, attention to detail and safety are #1. You'll learn and practice safe techniques for wading across a small stream or doing a Tyrolean traverse across a raging river.

**Travel on Scree and Talus:** The term 'talus' originated from a Greek name for a giant who throws rocks. Learn how to safely travel on this potentially dangerous terrain.

**Geology:** From plate tectonics to granitic batholiths, you'll learn the history of the land you are exploring and how these forces create and influence the environment around you.

**Objective Hazards:** River crossings, wild game encounters and "widow makers" are examples of objective hazards. We'll learn how to effectively deal with or avoid these hazards.

**Subjective Hazards:** Among other things, dehydration, fatigue and personal pride can be detrimental to group safety. Learn how to implement measures to mitigate these potential hazards.



**Timing:** This is a key component of group management. You'll develop this awareness and how it affects all aspects of a day on an expedition.

**Altitude Considerations:** The mountains in East Africa reach above 19,000ft. Learn how to recognize signs and symptoms of acute mountain sickness, and steps to take to avoid it. We'll also discuss the most effective treatment for all altitude illnesses: descent.

**IWLS International Curriculum** is designed to provide students with a fundamental understanding of planning and leading expeditions in foreign countries. Here are just a few topics that will be covered:

**Cultural History:** As visitors to this remarkable place, we place a premium on being respectful and learning about the local culture and history. There are over 200 tribal groups in this portion of East Africa. Students will experience some of cultural influences of the Maasai, Bantu, Chagga and their role in the cultural identity of the region.

**Language Skills:** The ability to ask directions, purchase items, and communicate on any level is an essential element of leading an expedition to a foreign country. Throughout the course, we'll develop our Swahili skills through dialog and lesson plans.

**Trip Preparation:** Logistics in a foreign country have the potential to be complex and tenuous. You'll take part in shopping at the local market, arranging transportation, and securing permits in preparation for your expedition into East Africa.



## The Wilderness Education Association

The WEA has been training and certifying outdoor leaders around the world for nearly 25 years, and teaching students to safely and effectively lead groups in the outdoors without harming the environment.

Legendary mountaineer Paul K. Petzoldt, Chuck Gregory, Robert Christie, and Dr. Frank Lupton, founded the WEA in 1977. The organization's mission includes "...promoting the professionalism of outdoor leadership and to thereby improve the safety of outdoor trips and to enhance the conservation of the wild outdoors..."

## Journal Writing

Keeping a wilderness journal can help students to record, reflect, and gain from experiences throughout the expedition. The following are examples of topics that may be assigned throughout the course: First-Aid SOAP notes, incident management forms, leadership analyses, trip reports, lesson plans and decision making analyses

## Evaluation and Grading

Students who take this course for credit will receive a letter grade. Grading is a measurement of one's knowledge of material, participation, written and oral communication, and one's judgment and awareness.





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Students will be evaluated on their skills, level of participation, their knowledge and awareness of their own abilities as outdoor leaders, their level of judgment as applied to decisions, and written projects assigned during the trip. Students that don't take the course for credit will receive an evaluation in place of a grade.

Additionally, the grading will be a reflection of student's peer and instructor evaluations as per the WEA and IWLS assessment rubrics.

## Certifications

Upon completion of the 24-day backpacking leadership and guide training course, the student may be eligible for the following certifications.

- WEA certificate of completion
- WEA certified outdoor leader
- IWLS certificate of completion

