

Thank you for acting as a chaperone for your students. Together we will create an unforgettable experience for the whole group. This trip will be a great opportunity to see your students and children in a new light. Because of your hands-on participation, you will be able to continue the ideas and lessons into your classrooms and beyond. We understand that you may not be specifically trained as we are, so we hope this guide will help prepare you for the trip.

- **Safety is our first priority:** IO instructors are trained in the safest and most up-to-date backcountry procedures.
- **Co-leading:** You will be working as a co-leader with your Inside Out instructor(s) and you will have an active role in the outcome of your trip. We ask that you be willing to observe, learn and teach along with the IO staff.
- **Student's Experience:** Students will be given greater responsibility as the trip progresses. There will be many leadership opportunities and the group will be encouraged to make collaborative decisions. This will often mean that instructors will be less directive in order to have students figure things out. Physical and emotional safety, and time constraints will be taken into account. IO instructors will intervene if necessary. We ask that you follow the lead of the Inside Out instructor at these times.

If you have questions about the information below, please call us before the trip.

### **Pre-trip**

- **Trip coordinator:** Your trip coordinator is the go-to for information. They will handle all the paperwork and communicate directly with Inside Out. Let them know about any dietary needs, and they will get the information to us. Inside Out will provide all food for the trip.
- **What to pack:** Along with these guidelines you will receive a packing list. This is the same list the students will see. Please follow the list.
- **Gear:** If you need to use an IO backpack, sleeping bag, or sleeping pad, let your coordinator know and we will provide them for you. We suggest bringing a one person backpacking tent if you have one. Students will sleep under tarps that we provide and we have smaller one-two person tarps that are available for you.

### **Arrival**

- **Groups:** After your school or organization has arrived, the students will be divided into their groups. Your trip coordinator will have made these decisions before you leave, but often the students find out their group upon arrival.
- **Meeting:** At this time you will meet with your Inside Out instructor. They will discuss the pack-out structure, routes, and expectations with the group.
- **Your support:** You are not expected to be completely ready to go. Often the chaperones and teachers are learning right along with the students. As you learn, we ask that you help the students stay focused and assist them with the process.

## Pack-out

Every backpacking trip has time to prepare. We call this Pack-out. This is the time to learn all about what you will pack in your backpack and how it will all be packed. The group will get acquainted with the gear and food, then divide it all.

Your instructor will guide everyone through this process.

- **Backpacks, sleeping pads, and sleeping bags:** Your group will go together to get fitted for backpacks. They will also be issued sleeping bags and sleeping pads.
- **Group gear and food:** Your instructor will then go over the shared group gear and the menu. Food and gear will be divided. Everyone should always know what they are carrying.
- **Check the list:** During the pack-out your instructor will check each person's clothes and personal items. We will have extra layers and rain clothes available if needed. While often pleasant, mountain weather is notoriously unpredictable and requires proper equipment.
- **Only what you need:** Please support the staff by helping students pack only the proper clothing (function over style) and personal items (only items on the pack list). Carrying items that won't be used contributes significantly to pack weight.
- **Hygiene:** Inside Out provides environmentally friendly camp soap and hand sanitizer for handwashing. We will require all group members to wash their hands before handling food and after using the outdoor "bathroom". An Inside Out staff member will talk with females in your group about their hygiene needs.

## Routes

- **Routes:** Routes are created to give a positive beginner backpacker experience. Beginner experiences can be challenging. Elevation changes, weather, terrain, and water crossings all add to a great adventure in the forest. We work hard to give each group similar experiences that include challenges and time to relax. Often there are several groups from your school that use the same area. We try to have the groups interact as little as possible and save the reunion for after the trip.
- **Attitude:** One of the reasons we go backpacking is for the challenge of the experience. This takes us out of your comfort zones. Teachers and chaperones have the ability to set the tone of the group.
- **Weather:** Weather in the mountains is unpredictable. No matter what the forecast says, pay attention to the packing list and bring the rain gear and warm clothes listed. Being prepared is the most important thing when heading out into the woods.

## At the Campsite

- **Sleeping:** All students sleep under tarps. The instructors teach how to set these up to maximize weather protection. There will be separate male and female sleeping areas.
- **Respect:** For a backpacking trip, the forest is our home. We treat this space with respect and try not to disturb the flora and fauna as much as possible. We ask for support in this endeavor.
- **Meals:** Meals are community time. We all cook and eat together. Dietary needs and allergies will be addressed during pack-out including the use of utensils and cookware.
- **Stoves:** An adult who has learned to use the stoves must be present and watchful when stoves are in use. It is a time of extra caution and kitchen boundaries will be set. Your assistance is very important during this time.



## Inside Out Instructors

We take pride in finding the best outdoor leaders available. Our instructors are trained in backcountry emergency care, Inside Out values and procedures, and Leave No Trace ethics. Please know that every instructor is different and there will be variation between leadership styles. That being said, if you have concerns about your instructor's style, tone, or safety please bring it to our attention as soon as possible.

## Leave No Trace

Leave No Trace, commonly referred to as LNT, is a set of ethics that help us leave less of an impact in the forests we use.

These ethics are especially important for groups.

Below are some important points from LNT that we want you to know:

- **"Pack it in - pack it out"**: Everything that goes into the woods needs to come out with us, including trash.
- **Camp setup**: There are three areas in a backcountry campsite; sleeping areas, cooking areas, and food storage areas (Hanging, or bear canisters). The goal is to have each area 100 yards apart. This, along with hanging or storing the food correctly (bear canisters), will help keep animals away from the sleeping site. Additionally we keep our toiletries, or anything with a smell, with the food at night.
- **Cooking and cleanup**: We follow LNT during cook clean-up, which is extremely important. Leftover food is put in the group trash to pack out. The pots and cooking utensils are cleaned with leaves and the leaves are put with the trash. When no food debris is left, the pots and utensils are cleaned with water and a small amount of camp soap. This water is then disposed of away from camp either scattered or poured in a sump hole. Personal spoons and bowls can be cleaned the same way.
- **Bathroom**: Ideally we try to be 200 feet away from water to dispose of solid human waste. We may refer to this as "digging a cat hole." We supply trowels. The hole should be 6 to 8 inches deep. The hole should then be covered completely and the site marked in a way the group agrees on so no one digs there for a future cat hole. If you would like to learn more about LNT go to this website: <https://lnt.org/learn/7-principles>

## Emergencies and Evacuations:

- We take all precautions for safety in the backcountry. Each group carries a transportation plan, route overview, a cell phone, and first aid kit to assist with emergency situations.

## Finishing Up

- **Returning**: When coming out of the woods your instructor will receive check lists for unpacking. You and the Inside Out instructor will follow the task lists with the group. This is an important step in the backpack experience and you are a crucial part. Keeping the students on task will be key.
- **Finished**: Once the gear has been separated, cleaned and returned (every program is different), your students will be instructed on what to do next.

**Thank you in advance for your commitment to having a safe and meaningful experience!**