



Minimalist Backpacking Course

for Photographers
& Storytellers



“

“Amazing!
I learned to backpack so light,
I no longer have to stress over
which lens to pack!”

Ian J.
Bay Area photographer. 2017 course graduate

Experience true wilderness

Carry less, Capture more

Backpack smarter + lighter from now on

Support conservation and education

Grow your network and deepen relationships

What you get

BACKPACKING
SKILLS

+

FREE GEAR &
DISCOUNTS

+

WILDERNESS
EXPERIENCE

Course Curriculum*

Pre-trip Coursework

Trip conditions assessment

Gear workshop + shopping

Meal and snack planning

Guided Adventure

Day 1: Learn

Day 2: Practice

Day 3: Refine

*See Appendix for details

Skills you'll master

- Map and compass
- Off trail travel
- Water treatment
- Campsite selection
- Foot care
- Walking efficiently
- Fire building
- Knots and shelter
- Bear bagging
- Trail etiquette and LNT
- Pooping in the woods
- Finding your pace
- Food + water budgeting

Fall 2018 Courses

Welcome video
conference
(30-min call)

Trip prep workshop*
in Berkeley CA
(2.5 hours)

Trip dates

Course A:

Sept 28

Week of Oct 1

Oct 18-21

Course B:

Week of Oct 8

Week of Oct 15

Nov 1-4

Course C:

Week of Oct 22

Week of Oct 29

Nov 15-18

Courses are identical

Students who are unable to attend trip prep workshop in person will be invited to a make-up webinar

We donate 100% profits

We believe that giving back is an integral part of the transformative journey of minimalism, that it has the potential to educate and inspire more people, and that it helps protect the environment for future enjoyment. After operating costs, your contribution is given in full to support wilderness conservation, education, and social betterment.

Recent successes:



Vital Action Project: Every cent of \$1,700 from our May 2018 trip supported 3 Nicaraguan families and prevented 2,000 endangered baby sea turtles from being poached and sold in exotic animal markets.



3 Forests: Every cent of \$1,100 from our July 2018 trip went to create wilderness education programs and trail maintenance for the Sierra

What are we asking for?

The course is FREE of charge.

We ask that you document and share your experience with us and your communities, and consider making a contribution to Off Trail On Track. Our graduates typically contribute \$250-1,000 to support our work.

We donate **100%** of our profits to support non-profits such as the California Conservation Corps Foundation, to run the Women in the Wilderness Program.

The program provides women of color the opportunity to build career skills, outdoor skills, and stewardship of the natural environment via an 8-day trail maintenance project.

Graduates this year have told us first-hand what a transformational experience it has been for them personally and how inspired they feel in launching into a career dedicated to conservation. Learn more [here](#)

“...most life-changing thing that I’ve done.”

– Graduate from the Women in the Wilderness Program



CCC
FOUNDATION





3 courses offered in Fall 2018

6 spots per course. Typically 75-100 applicants

Priority given to mission-driven, rising star photographers and storytellers

[CLICK TO APPLY](#)



Bonus information



What is Off Trail On Track?

A community of outdoor-loving people who use minimalist backpacking to empower voices, build networks, and support conservation.

Over the past 6 years, hundreds of our students – from beginners to outdoor professionals, photographers to writers, yogis to business executives, park rangers to scout masters – have taken our courses to enhance their outdoor experience and practice a new mindset of simplicity.

Why are we doing this?

Fulfillment, not profit.

To help humans reconnect with themselves, one another, and nature.

To direct attention and resources toward wilderness conservation and education.

To inspire us to apply a minimalist mindset to our lives so to create abundance for all.

Your instructor and wilderness guide

Hi! Duncan here. I've been teaching and guiding backpacking for over 6 years to 100+ people like yourself.

Why place your trust in me?

1. I learned how to backpack properly from world-class masters of ultralight backpacking. I hike 750-1000 miles a year, often off trails
2. I have been serving as a Brand Ambassador with several outdoor brands, including Gossamer Gear
3. I've been teaching and guiding minimalist backpacking for the last 6 years to 100+ people, from beginners to scout masters. Every one of my students will back me up on my credibility and reliability
4. I keep my wilderness knowledge and Wilderness First Responder certifications up-to-date (I practice rescue scenarios weekly on my son!)

Background: I'm a dad, a guide, and a human who cares. I take my 6-year-old son hiking, orienteering, and mining (yes!). For over a decade, I advised executives on their companies' growth strategies, marketing, innovation, and environmental programs. I've since left the corporate world after a decade to pursue deeper fulfillment in life and drive environmental progress.



Kind words

“Duncan, you really have a gift for guiding, helping, and teaching others, and I’ll be forever grateful for how you supported me (physically and verbally) to make it up the slab yesterday.”

Ellen R

“Duncan is our resident expert on fast-and-light hiking!
He has been such an incredible asset to us!”

Katharine McGlynn,
Marketing & Engagement Specialist,
The Nature Conservancy

“...this minimalist hiking thing you got me into... got me to think differently ...
you know, about the ‘real’ life where I got a mortgage, 2 kids, and bills...”

Chris, with his dirty feet hanging out the
window on the drive back after his 3rd trip

Physical / fitness pre-requisites?

The Storyteller Edition of Off Trail On Track trips are what we consider a Level 2 course (Out of 3 levels)

Level 2 trips require some backpacking experience and a basic level of physical fitness. This should not be your first ever backpacking trip. Our students ages range widely, from early 20s to late 60s. You should be prepared to hike for 3 days in the mountains with limited creature comforts.

That said, the courses are learning-oriented, moderate intensity trips, not boot camps or test-your-limits peak-baggers. A typical day for our trip will involve hiking for 7-10 miles, with 2,000-2,500 total elevation gain per day. We adjust depends on the fitness level and desires of the group.

We'll get plenty of time to rest, eat, huddle around campfires, and learn. Our packs will be light and I'll show you how to walk efficiently and with ease. If you do some exercise regularly and have done long day hikes somewhat regularly or a few overnight/2-3 day trips, you should be able to handle a Level 2 course.

Detail curriculum

Pre-trip Coursework

t minus...
(weeks)

- 4.5 Application closed
- 4 30-min intro conference call. Homework 1: Trip Conditions distributed
- 4 Complete hw#1 (1-2 hrs)
- 4 3-hour In-Person Gear Workshop and Shopping Guidance (SF Bay Area)
- 3 hw#2: Gear list due for feedback
- 3 Buy/Borrow gear (Free gear library available)
- 2 hw#3: Food. Cooking groups set.
- 3 days Confirm logistics, weather, get permit

Day 1 LEARN

- Guided by Duncan
- Map and Compass
- Water treatment
- Campsite selection
- Trail etiquette and LNT
- Shelter pitching
- Off trail navigation

Guided Trip

Day 2 PRACTICE

- Route Planning
- Your turn to guide!
- Foot care clinic
- Knots practice
- Fire building
- Bear bagging
- Rest, swim, meditate, yoga, fire-side chats

Day 3 REFINE

- Finding your pace
- Advanced foot work
- Talus hopping
- Food budgeting

*Trip begins 7am on Fridays at trailhead and ends 4pm on Day 3 at trailhead. Suggest arriving at trailhead campsite the night before (Thurs night).

Who are my trip mates?

People at their best. Perhaps like many of you, I am my best self when I'm in deep wilderness.

I've found that when we're in the mountains, we are more willing to share our vulnerabilities, more able to unpack our burdens and let the mountains and each other in.

You'll get to depend on each other and feel more intimate with each other as just humans, especially around a campfire.

We've decided only to allow adults 21+ on my level 2 and level 3 trips as these are learning-intensive and the content and pace are catered to adults.

Safety and Liability

Over the last 6+ years of guiding trips, we've honed in on our safety protocol and are pleased to report that we have not had any injury or illness (whether related to being in the mountains or not) that warranted evacuation or emergency medical treatment.

Core to our protocol is that we make route selection and go / no-go decisions as a group and we do not attempt anything that any participant deem unsafe to undertake. Every wilderness guide holds an active Wilderness First Responder certification.

By joining this trip, you agree to be responsible and liable for your own health and safety. Off Trail On Track does not provide health and travel insurance to participants.

We'll ask everyone to commit to being responsible for their own safety during our introduction conference call.

Let's help each other enjoy the trip safely!



OFF TRAIL • Make your own path, in the mountains and in life

ON TRACK • Go forth with a vision and a purposeful stride



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