



## Canada West Mountain School - [www.themountainschool.com](http://www.themountainschool.com)

### Overnight Backpacking course pre-planning

This document will help you finalize your preparations for the course. Please read over all the information completely, there are a few **"action items"** that we need to hear back from you as well. We also welcome and encourage any questions so that we can ensure you are best prepared for your course. Thanks!

#### COURSE LOCATION

You will spend the 2 days of the course in a local backcountry hiking destination in Southwest BC. Specific objectives and destinations will be decided close to the actual trip dates and are based on current weather and mountain conditions, as well as seasonal considerations – many great backpacking locations are still under 2-3 meters of snow until mid-July. The trailheads for all hikes are within a 2-3 hour drive of Vancouver. Common course destinations include:

- Cheakamus Lake near Whistler
- Marriot Basin/Duffey Lake Road area, near Pemberton
- Manning Park, near Hope

#### WEATHER

While we will conduct the course in most weather conditions, if the alpine weather forecast is too poor for running the course in the chosen regions, we will discuss alternate locations and logistics. There are many sites for weather forecasts, but SpotWX is a great site to get a quick and detailed forecast for any location – [www.spotwx.com](http://www.spotwx.com).

#### INSTRUCTOR TEAM

Your course will be led by one of our regular Backpacking Course Instructors, you will be notified in advance of the course who the specific Instructor is for your program as well as their contact details.

#### PRE-TRIP PLANNING

The Introduction to Backpacking course includes Online Learning in the Canada West Mountain School Virtual Classroom – [classroom.themountainschool.com](http://classroom.themountainschool.com). Every student receives a separate email with a link to register in advance of the course. If you have not received a link, please check your email spam folder, and contact the Canada West Mountain School office by email to request a new signup link be sent to you.

A Live Zoom session is scheduled on an evening prior to the 2-day field trip. Many topics are covered during the evening theory session, as well as an opportunity to discuss and ask questions. Our staff and instructors are also available for consultation at any point in advance of the course, please feel free to contact us with questions.

You will be notified separately by email of the date, time, and sign-in details for the Zoom Pre-trip evening session.

#### LOGISTICS

On the morning of Day-1, your group will meet at the pre-arranged meeting location that will be determined at the pre-trip evening session. You will spend approx. 1 hour getting to know your team, reviewing gear, and finalizing logistics before embarking on the hike.

#### TRANSPORTATION

Every person is responsible for transportation to/from the course meeting location. Please ensure you do not have anything in your vehicle as the parking lots for most trailheads are not patrolled or secured.

#### GEAR

A gear list should be attached to this pre-course package for your reference and can also be downloaded from our website at - <https://themountainschool.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/GEAR-Multi-day-Backpacking-gear-list-2025.pdf>. Please plan for weather which may include temperatures of close to freezing or slightly below at night, and possible precipitation of rain and/or wet snow each day. Please ensure your clothing and gear is suitable for these conditions as a worst-case option; but consider that it may also be hot, dry, and sunny as well (hopefully!)

### Canada West Mountain School

1290 3rd St, West Vancouver, BC V7S 2Y2, Canada  
1-888-892-2266 ■ [info@themountainschool.com](mailto:info@themountainschool.com)



## **Canada West Mountain School - [www.themountainschool.com](http://www.themountainschool.com)**

### **FOOTWEAR**

Many of the trails are rough and involve slippery rocks, roots, and muddy sections. Also, you will spend some portion of the course off-trail as well and early-season courses may involve extended hiking on snow. Boots should be a proper backpacking boot that provides good support, are waterproof, fit well and are broken in. It is important to have good footwear that will keep your feet warm, dry, and protected to best enjoy your backpacking trip.

### **MAPS**

When the location is decided your Instructor will give you the specific details for the best mapping options – this may be a paper map or an electronic map that can be used on one of a variety of GPS Map Apps such as GaiaGPS or Avenza Maps, these are 2 common map apps. If you are using any mapping application on your phone or GPS, make sure it is updated and the local maps are downloaded for off-line viewing when you are in the mountains, away from cell service.

### **FOOD AND COOKING**

Food planning should be done well in advance to carefully plan and prepare. Here are a few notes to help, you will also cover this topic thoroughly during the evening pre-trip session:

- review your food carefully and measure out your portions to avoid bringing excess food.
- you will have a lot of time in the evening for preparing dinner but still try to keep to a simple, one-pot meal
- breakfast should be quick and easy (no gourmet pancake breakfasts, please)
- lunches should be easy to prep and can be eaten during short breaks. Do not plan on a long "lunch break" involving cooked lunches - more likely you will be eating during small breaks in travel and teaching.
- bring snack foods that are easy to access
- bring a stuff sack to store your food in overnight. Food may be hung from trees, cliff faces or buried in snow.
- there are usually ample water sources; however, we suggest using purification drops such as Pristine, purification tablets, or a water filter.

### **ANIMAL PRECAUTIONS**

Bears and other wildlife share the regions we visit, our Instructors will teach and follow best practices on all courses to reduce the risk of interactions with any wildlife and how to minimize negative impacts. WildSafeBC provides many good resources including a section on camping in bear territory - <https://wildsafebc.com/camping/>

### **SAFETY PLANNING**

Our Guides will have a satellite device (phone or Inreach) for the course, as well as 1<sup>st</sup> aid kits and gear to take care of any situation. We have a daily check-in protocol by Sat device as well. Cell Phone reception is not 100% reliable in all areas.

For all your trips, please leave a Trip Plan with a responsible person. We suggest using the online planning tool at AdventureSmart - <https://plan.adventuresmart.ca/>. For this course, plan on being back in contact at 7 pm (at the latest) on the final date of your course. If anyone needs to contact you, they can contact Canada West Mountain School at 604-878-7007, or [info@themountainschool.com](mailto:info@themountainschool.com) and we can provide an update. Please be sure that you follow up with your check-in contact person when you finish your trip on the last day to avoid unnecessary alarms and SAR callouts!

### **ACTION ITEMS**

- 1) Indicate if you require CWMS to supply any of the needed gear on the equipment list
- 2) **Please ask any other questions that you may have!**

Enjoy your course,

***The Canada West Mountain School team***

## **Canada West Mountain School**

1290 3rd St, West Vancouver, BC V7S 2Y2, Canada  
1-888-892-2266 ■ [info@themountainschool.com](mailto:info@themountainschool.com)