



## Little Switzerland Climbing Camp

Alaska is known as the home of large scary difficult climbs and frigid temperatures. However not all of the range is like this at all. If you have climbed in the lower 48 and have aspirations to climb higher and more challenging peaks in a glaciated environment then Little Switzerland is a fantastic place to start. The peaks are of a manageable size, but also offer challenges at all levels of difficulty and all a short distance from a comfortable basecamp. The rock has a reputation as some of the best in the state and is a fine coarsely crystalline granite. As well as climbing peaks we will work on the skills necessary to travel safely on the glaciers, crevasse rescue and route finding as we work to increase your comfort level in this amazing environment.

**Itinerary:** Alaskan mountains are big and subject to the extremes of changeable weather. So we need to be flexible and prepared to adapt plans accordingly. So do not consider this following schedule as set in stone! We fly from Talkeetna to the Pika Glacier and establish basecamp here. If you have never taken a small plane to a glacier landing then this in itself is an incredible experience. Camp is on a flat glacier surrounded by towering peaks with snow and ice encrusted ridges and faces every direction you choose to look.

For two days we will work on skills and moving around on the glaciers before heading up onto the steeper peaks. The skills covered will include.

- Establishing glacier camps
- Roping up for glacier travel
- Route selection on glaciers
- Crevasse rescue
- Climbing techniques for snow and ice
- Crampon technique; both French and frontpointing

Once everyone is comfortable with the skills we will set off to climb and explore the surrounding peaks. The rock in this area is high quality alpine granite and many of the ridges offer spectacular snow climbing. The choices are endless. The classic 5.8 route on Middle Troll, Routes on the Throne, Royal Tower and others.

And if you want a day off from the climbing then the ski touring is superb and the side valley offer great short ski runs.

**Meeting place and time:** We meet in Anchorage the night before the trip is slated to commence. You are responsible for transportation to Anchorage, but the office will coordinate the different schedules of everyone. From Anchorage we shuttle up to Talkeetna and hope to fly in shortly after arriving there.

**Dates and Prices:** Check the latest brochure, call us or go to our web site for dates and rates. Should minimum participant numbers not be reached you will be given the option of paying our private rate, rescheduling, or cancelling. Price includes guiding, permits, demo ice tools and crampons, helmets and group climbing equipment.

Price includes guiding, permits, all necessary group climbing gear, avalanche beacons, tents, kitchen gear and all meals. You may want to bring your favorite climbing snacks to supplement the one's we bring.

**Ratios:** Climbs will be at a maximum ratio of 1:2

**Notes and other information:** The best map is Bradford Washburn's "Mt. McKinley" 1:50,000 scale. The best guide is Alaska Climbing by Joe Puryear and published by Supertopo

**Prerequisites:** You need not have done big peak ascents previously, but should be able to cope with variable and sometimes trying mountain conditions. Night temperatures can dip below zero but days can be warm. We will be in the snow camping for the entire time and since Alaskan storms are legendary there is the chance of being tent bound for a day or more. So be mentally prepared for this and accept it as a part of the mountain experience.

# Equipment List for Little Switzerland Climbing Camp

We will be flying to basecamp so absolutely minimal equipment is not necessary. This list provides you with suggestions for lightweight and compact equipment. If you have any questions don't hesitate to call and ask our advice.

## **Essentials**

- Skis: metal edge alpine touring skis are the best ski choice. Better too short than too long. Get them tuned and check the bindings for tightness and boot fit prior to the trip.
- Snowshoes. These can be substituted for skis and skins. A pair with a built in crampon are best in case you encounter icy snow. Pair these up with an appropriate boot. Warm feet are your primary concern.
- Mountaineering boots. Temperatures on the Pika are not extreme but the boots must be warm enough for your feet.
- Poles, telescoping probe type are best.
- Climbing skins. Close to the width of the skis' waist. Make sure the glue is in good shape.
- Internal frame backpack of about 3-4000 cubic inches
- Sleeping bag. This should be rated to about 0°F. If it bulky put it in a compression stuff sac.
- Sleeping pad system. A foam pad and a Thermarest works best. Include a Thermarest repair kit

## **Climbing equipment**

- Technical ice axe. 50-55 cm. Straight shafts are preferable to bent ones for mixed climbing. Must have an appropriate wrist loop.
- Technical ice hammer. 50-55 cm. Straight shafts are preferable to bent ones for mixed climbing. Must have an appropriate wrist loop.
- Crampons. An all round mountaineering type rather than a rigid technical crampons that "balls up" is preferable
- Harness. One large enough to wear over bulky clothing and with buckle style leg loops to get on and off over crampons.
- Helmet. It needs to adjust enough to fit over a hat.
- Belay/rappell device
- Four locking carabiners
- Four regular carabiners
- Prussik system

## **Clothing**

- 4 pair synthetic liner socks
- 4 pair heavier synthetic or wool blend socks
- Gaiters or overboots. Make sure that they fit properly. Insulated overboots are not necessary unless you need more foot insulation.
- Long underwear top and bottom. 2 pairs. Capilene or some other synthetic is most desirable
- Warm pants. Tights or Expedition weight Capilene
- Warm shirt. Expedition Capilene or light Synchilla
- Another fuzzy sweater top such as synchilla

- Pile jacket
- Pile pants or bibs. 200-300 weight.
- Light down jacket; synthetic fill is second choice.
- Good quality Gore-tex rain/wind pants and rain jacket.
- Warm hat
- Balaclava; silk and/or pile
- Visor hat (for sun)
- Bandanna for something for facial and neck sun protection
- Liner gloves 2 pair for one set gets wet
- Shell gloves
- Mittens and shells for when it gets really cold
- Long sleeve light weight white shirt for sun protection
- Light weight down booties for around camp. The OR Mukluks are best since they come up high avoiding snow falling down inside.

## **Etc.**

- Sunglasses, high quality with keeper leash. The type with side shields are recommended. If you wear corrective glasses you might want a second pair
- Goggles for bad conditions
- Ear plugs for noisy tents
- Personal kit; tooth brush...
- Sunscreen and lip screen. SPF 30+. Make sure the lip stuff actually contains a sunscreen. A 2 oz. bottle will be sufficient
- Two 1-quart plastic water bottles with insulating jackets
- A small thermos if you have one
- Pee bottle
- Personal first aid kit, foot care, and any required medications. We will have a large group medical kit; go light on your own kit. Bring plenty of blister treatment items.
- Eating and drinking items
- Swiss Army type knife
- Camera, film and spare batteries
- Books, games etc. for the event of storm days

## **Food**

- We will provide breakfast, dinner and lunch but bring some snack items like cliff bars, power bars, gorp concoctions. A days worth for most people would be 2 bars, 3 ounces of gorp, and perhaps a candy bar. Don't over do it.

## **You specifically don't need**

- ⊗ Cell phones. They rarely work anyway.
- ⊗ Big first aid kits (we have a comprehensive one)
- ⊗ Deodorant or any toiletries beyond those listed above.

### **We will provide the following.**

- Tents. If you have a tent of your own you can bring it for base camp, but we need to determine that it is appropriate. We will also provide a basecamp/kitchen tent.
- Stoves and cooking equipment
- Technical climbing equipment