



**SWS Mountain Guides**

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**Phone: 888.797.6867 / Fax: 877.797.6867**

## **BASIC WINTER MOUNTAINEERING SEMINAR**

### **Onion Valley, Eastern Sierra Nevada, California**



**General Description:** A three-day basic winter mountaineering course, offering instruction in the skills needed to safely climb non-technical winter peaks, and travel over winter terrain. Conducted in Eastern Sierra Nevada, you will learn the fundamentals of winter travel while snowshoeing (backcountry skiing option available\*). Winter skills development include: fundamentals of establishing a winter camp, snow shelters (including snow caves), traveling over winter terrain, snowshoe technique, basic avalanche safety/rescue, winter survival, staying warm, winter route finding & navigation, and winter mountain safety. Technical skills include: ice ax self-arrest, crampon use, basic rope skill, belays and team self-arrest. The course culminates with an attempt of either Mt. Gould (13,011 feet) or University Peak (13,632 feet). Our winter mountaineering course is designed to build a basic foundation of winter mountaineering skills for all types of winter adventurers; snowshoers, skiers, snowboarders, advanced climbers, and summer mountaineers.

*\*Note: Give us a call about the backcountry skiing options so we may discuss your skill level*

**Location:** Independence, California. / Eastern Sierra Nevada

**Itinerary:** After meeting at 7:00 am on the first day in Independence, CA, we will conduct a complete pack check and divide up the group gear. We will then drive about 20 minutes west to the Onion Valley trailhead. We will then snowshoe into the backcountry and establish a base camp up in the basin between 10,000 – 11,500 feet depending on group conditioning and snow/weather conditions. As we snowshoe we will be instructing and holding informal lectures on snowshoe techniques, avalanche awareness and winter navigation. The second day will be spent near base camp with lectures and practice sessions with topics to include: avalanche awareness & rescue, ice axe/crampon skills, knots, belays, rope handling, rope team travel (including team self-arrest), and mountain medicine. On the third morning we will be up early (3-4 am) to put our new skills to use with an attempt of either Mt. Gould or University Peak, returning to camp by early afternoon. Will then pack up our camp and snowshoe back to the vehicles, arriving back at the trailhead by late afternoon. **PLEASE NOTE:** This is a best-case scenario. This itinerary is subject to change at the guide's discretion and is dependent on the current winter mountain conditions, group experience/expectations, and other factors we cannot anticipate. It is possible that summit day might be on day 2 or day 3.

**Food:** Group breakfast(s), dinner(s), and hot beverages are included. Please bring your own favorite, high-calorie, high-carbohydrate lunches and snacks. Examples: bagels, cheese, dried fruit, trail mix, Clif bars, chocolate, etc.

**Level:** Beginner to Intermediate. Participants should be in **good to excellent physical condition**. Backpacks will weigh anywhere from 40 to 60 pounds. No previous winter experience is required, but recent hiking, snowshoeing, or backpacking experience is highly recommended. Intermediate/Advanced backcountry skiing skills are required only if you are planning on



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using skis\*. Please call us if you have any questions about this. Elevation gain on this climb is 4,432 feet from the trailhead at Onion Valley parking area (9,200 feet) to the summit of University Peak (13,632 feet). Our base camp will be between 10,000 - 11,500 feet. If you anticipate a problem with altitude sickness please call and talk to us. We have several techniques that can help you to avoid, or at the very least, minimize adverse reactions to altitude.

*\*Note: Give us a call about the backcountry skiing options so we may discuss your skill level*

### **Dates 2012:**

**February** 18-20 (President's Day)

**March** 3-5

**Cost:** \$595.00 (Guide to client ratio is 1:4/5. Group size is limited to 10).

**Includes:** Professional instruction/guide, breakfast(s), dinner(s), ice axes, crampons, helmets, harness, group-climbing equipment including ropes and avalanche safety equipment, group camping equipment including tents and stoves, and permits. Mountaineering Boots and Snowshoes \*are **NOT** included. For more details about equipment please see our equipment list for this course.

\* Snowshoes are available for rent through SWS Mountain Guides

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