

2025  
**TRIP GUIDE**



# CALIFORNIA EXPLORER

A 18-day adventure camp for 7th, 8th, and 9th graders



3	Overview
4	Who is AT?
5	Our program goals
6–7	Why choose AT?
8–11	Activities & itinerary
12–13	What to expect
14	Philosophy & Great 8 Outcomes
15–16	Food, lodging, & gear
17–18	Transportation & communication
19	Fun facts about northern CA
20	Enroll now!

## GRADES

7th - 9th

## TUITION

\$5,495

## DATES

6/24 - 7/11

- **For the 2024-2025 school year**
- **Included in tuition:** Food, lodging, and airport pick-up and drop-off; group and technical equipment; guided activities
- **Not included in tuition:** Program and travel insurance; personal clothing and items; transportation to and from the arrival and departure airports



Discover the awe-inspiring beauty of northern California with our 18-day adventure! Begin your journey by hiking through the tallest Redwoods in the state, right on the coast. Experience the thrill of splashing down the Rogue and American rivers in whitewater rafts and inflatable kayaks. Challenge yourself with mountain biking around the famed trails of Lake Tahoe before exploring the fascinating lava tubes and thermal fields of Lassen Peak—then conquer its 10,457-foot summit on a breathtaking sunrise hike.



# Who is Adventure Treks?

We believe in creating remarkable, life-changing experiences for teenagers. Since 1993, we've guided thousands of students through spectacular outdoor adventures across North America and the world. Our multi-week camps go beyond experiencing awe in the outdoors: While students explore some of the world's breathtaking landscapes, they're also developing confidence, leadership, optimism, and resilience—essential character traits that will help them achieve incredible things as they face the world.

**Adventure Treks is where teens break out of their comfort zones to discover their best selves, forge lifelong friendships, and grow into capable young adults in a supportive, technology-free environment.**

Our program is defined by an unmatched commitment to safety, communities that have resulted in consistently high return rates, and a focus on transformative personal growth. With the industry's best student-to-instructor ratio and qualified, caring staff leading the way, we foster an environment where every teen feels valued and inspired.

“Simply put, AT was one of—if not the—most formative experiences of my life. I wouldn't be the person I am today without the lessons I learned on those trips, and I'm still friends with folks I met 20 years ago.”

Brad Elkins, student from 2002–2006, currently a political consultant



To maintain physical and emotional safety as our top priority



To offer fun and exciting outdoor activities that help teens gain valuable life skills and a greater sense of self



To take a sincere interest in the growth and development of young people



To empower students to create an inclusive and reflective community that maintains a culture of kindness, sense of humor, and spirit of cooperation and volunteerism



To inspire young people to develop a lifelong love of the outdoors and conservation ethic



To be a sustainable and responsive business, with a focus on our families and the quality of our programs



We have the **best student-to-instructor ratio in the industry**, with 4 students to every 1 staff

High student  
& staff return  
rate

More  
experienced,  
mature  
instructors

All-inclusive  
tuition

Our instructor-to-student ratio is the best in the industry. Most typical summer teen programs have a 6-7:1 ratio with only 2 staff; our programs maintain a 4:1 ratio with up to 5-6 staff. We also have:

- The highest student and instructor return rates in the industry (consistently between 50–85%);
- More experienced and qualified instructors with a broad range and depth of knowledge, skills, personality dynamics, and experience;
- All-inclusive tuition;
- And a hands-on director team!

# CALIFORNIA EXPLORER 2025 >> AT vs other programs

It's important to know the specifics of the program you're choosing for your child. While every program operates a little differently, Adventure Treks' model is truly unique. We accommodate larger groups (up to 24 students), hire more instructors for each group with our 4:1 ratio, and have the highest retention with student and staff.

We recruit more experienced instructors with higher certifications and pay them a better wage than our competitors, ensuring that we're attracting top talent.

	<b>Adventure Treks</b>	<b>Outward Bound</b>	<b>Moondance Adventures</b>	<b>Wilderness Adventures</b>	<b>Apogee Adventures</b>
Student-to-staff ratio	4:1	6:1	6:1	6-7:1	6:1
Student return rate	Consistently 50 - 60%	*	*	*	*
Staff return rate	Consistently 60 - 85%	*	*	*	*
Group size	Max 20 - 24	12-13	12-13	12-13	12-13
Extra fees and rental gear?	No. All-inclusive	All-inclusive	Must purchase/rent backpack, sleeping bag, & sleeping pad	Must purchase/rent backpack, sleeping bag, & sleeping pad	Must pay for bike rental, backpacks, sleeping bags, showers, & laundry
Director involvement on every trip?	Yes	No	No	No	No
Average staff age	Consistently 26 - 28	*	*	*	*
Minimum medical certification**	Wilderness first responder	Wilderness first responder	Wilderness first aid	Wilderness first responder	CPR, wilderness first aid, lifeguard

\*Info not publicly available

\*\*At minimum, Adventure Treks requires our instructors to be certified as wilderness first responders, which is an intensive 80-hour course that also includes CPR. Other companies only require wilderness first aid (16–20 hours) and CPR.

**HIKE**



**BIKE**



**RAFT**



**SUMMIT**







<b>Day 1</b>	Arrive in Sacramento, CA (SMF) and meet the group	Frontcountry camping
<b>Day 2</b>	Day hike in the Redwoods	Frontcountry camping
<b>Days 3-5</b>	Hike in Redwoods National and State Parks	Backcountry camping days 3-4
<b>Day 6</b>	Logistics day: Laundry, food shopping, van cleaning, and gear organizing	Frontcountry camping
<b>Days 7-9</b>	Whitewater raft the Rogue River	Frontcountry camping
<b>Day 10</b>	Prep/drive day	Frontcountry camping
<b>Days 11-12</b>	Hike through Lassen lava tubes and geothermal fields, and then summit hike up Lassen Peak	Frontcountry camping
<b>Days 13-14</b>	Mountain bike in Tahoe National Forest	Frontcountry camping
<b>Day 15</b>	Drive/logistics day	Frontcountry camping
<b>Days 16-17</b>	Whitewater raft the American River	Frontcountry camping
<b>Day 18</b>	Depart from Sacramento, CA (SMF)	Back home!

*Each trip's order of activities may vary; enrolled families will have access to their child's specific daily itinerary.*



## DAY 1

Fly or drive into Sacramento International Airport (SMF) and meet Adventure Treks! Once everyone has arrived, we'll head north to camp for a delicious welcome dinner.

## DAYS 2-5

A day hike on day two will acquaint us with the Redwoods, where we'll gaze in awe at California's old-growth towering giants, some soaring over 300 feet high! The next few days, we'll continue to hike through these majestic, world-famous forests, shaded by the tallest trees on earth. Keep your eyes peeled for hawks, bald eagles, osprey, and peregrine falcons gliding through the sky overhead. You may see Roosevelt elk and deer gracefully moving through the forest or grazing in the scenic coastal grasslands. On the coast itself, peer into tidepools for bright pink, purple, and green sea stars, anemone, sea urchins, crabs, and more! In the distance, look for harbor seals, sea lions, and gray whales.

## DAY 6

Logistics day! Students and instructors will work together to get laundry done, refresh our food supply, and do a thorough van clean-up. Then we'll get ready to raft and climb for the next few days.

## DAYS 7-9

Spend three blissfully fun days bonding with your friends while paddling down the Wild and Scenic Rogue River. Feel the rush as you navigate through thrilling rapids surrounded by pristine wilderness and rugged canyons. During the day, the adventure never stops with splash wars and laughter echoing across the water. In the evenings, relax on the riverbanks and share stories under a starry sky.

**DAYS  
10-12**

After a prep and drive day, embark on an adventure around the mighty Lassen Peak in the breathtaking Cascades. Discover the hidden wonders of underground lava tubes, bubbling mud pots, and other fascinating hydrothermal features that make this lava dome a natural wonder. As the sun sets, get ready for an early night because our hike to the 10,457-foot peak awaits at dawn. Imagine standing at the top, watching the first light of day break over the horizon—an experience you'll never forget.

**DAYS  
13-14**

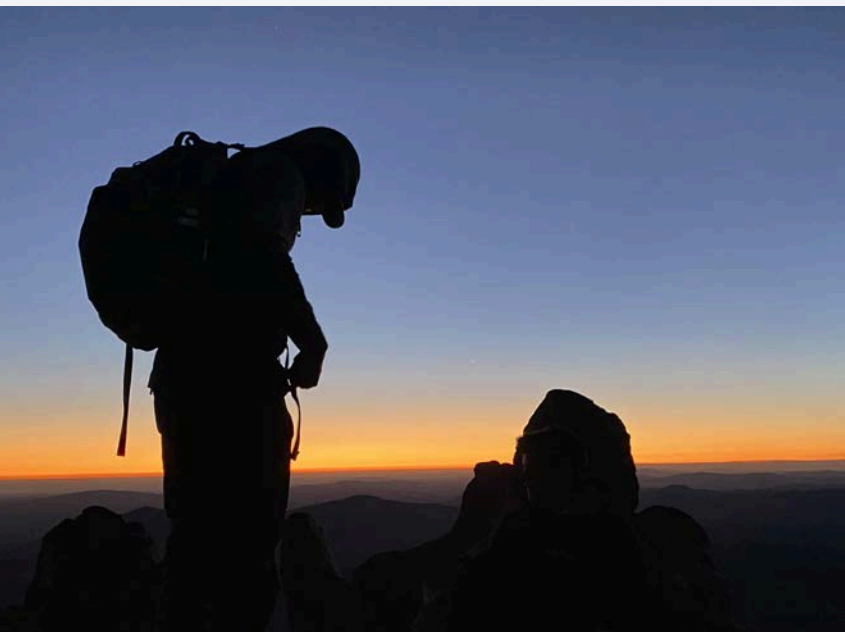
Spend two days honing your mountain biking skills as you zoom around world-famous trails just northwest of Lake Tahoe outside Truckee. We'll have trail options for every skill level and ability, so you can choose your adventure: Fun and flowy or more downhill and technical! Wind your way through trails surrounded by big trees and pretty wildflowers as you enjoy big views and a memorable biking experience.

**DAYS  
15-17**

After a logistics and clean-up day, get ready for two epic days on the Wild and Scenic American River! Fueled by the fresh snow melt from the Sierra Nevada and surrounded by lush, vibrant scenery, this is the ultimate whitewater rafting experience. Ride the continuous rapids and feel the rush as you navigate the twists and turns of this exhilarating river.

**DAY  
18**

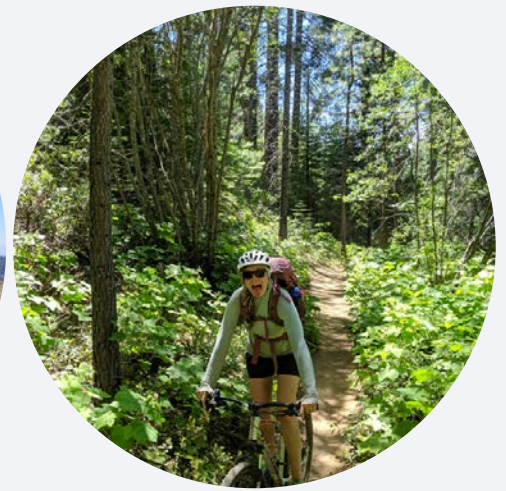
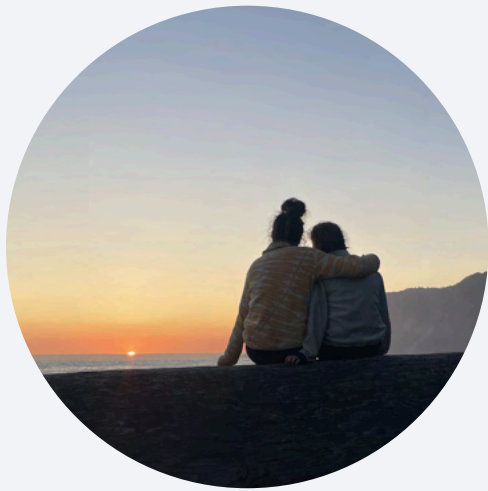
We promise you this: You won't want to leave! But it's time for our incredible adventure to come to an end. Relive every memory the night before with a celebratory dinner, and exchange contact info with all of your new best friends so you can stay in touch.



## **FUN, FRIENDSHIP, & CULTURE OF KINDNESS**

First and foremost, you'll have loads of fun. Our goal is for you to return home having made lifelong friendships, tried and succeeded at new and exciting activities, and had so much fun that you can't wait to do it all over again next summer with your new friends. We want you to laugh a lot, be yourself, and feel appreciated for who you are. We create a strong culture of kindness and sense of belonging to a community in which everyone feels valued, included, and supported. You'll feel like you've gained a second family.

We get that you're trusting us with their summer, and we're going to help make it your **BEST SUMMER YET**. In fact, our students have such a great time that most of them return to us for multiple summers. You'll also come home with the confidence that you can do **ANYTHING** you put your mind to.



## **ALL LEVELS WELCOME**

No experience is necessary, so don't worry if you've never rock climbed or kayaked before. We'll teach you everything you need to know to succeed, from setting up a tent to paddling a whitewater raft to cooking delicious meals in the backcountry. If you do have experience, that's fantastic! Our instructors will take your skills to the next level.

## **LARGER GROUPS**

Most programs cap their student groups at 12 or 13. Adventure Treks runs larger student groups of up to 20 to 24. There are lots of benefits:

- More students from a wider variety of backgrounds to befriend.
- The opportunity to spend time both the big group and in different smaller groups throughout the trip. In smaller groups, students get more personal time with each other and instructors and create strong bonds. Then in the large group we can all have fun together!
- Social dynamics are easier to manage. With a larger group, instructors can fluidly manage groupings to make sure everyone has an incredible experience and prevent exclusive cliques from forming.



## **21st CENTURY SKILLS**

Adding to a fun summer, we strive for our Great 8 Outcomes (see next page) to be learned through new adventures, immersion in nature, and face-to-face interactions with peers and caring role models. Our model of using close-knit communities and exciting, appropriately challenging outdoor activities makes Adventure Treks the perfect place to improve the interpersonal skills young adults need to thrive in the 21st century.

## **SAFETY**

Risk management is at the core of everything we do. Adolescents need reasonable risk as part of their normal growth and development, but from the moment your children leave home until they return to you, minimizing this risk is our foremost priority. As we consider ourselves partners in the parenting process, we make every decision as if you were looking over our shoulders, and we have extremely thorough policies and protocols for each activity. By teaching students about judgment, probability, and consequences, we build a safety-conscious mindset that helps them learn how to make good decisions and take intelligent risks—habits that will apply to the rest of their lives.

## **EXPEDITION MENTALITY**

Strong, inclusive communities develop quickly when there is a sense of mutual respect and trust among all members. Students quickly grow to understand that a good community includes both physical and emotional safety, and they'll discover how one's actions can impact the group. We encourage teenagers to have fun, challenge themselves, try new things, pitch in on group tasks, and maintain a positive mental attitude no matter the circumstances. This is a core tenet of the Adventure Treks experience.

Adding to an insanely fun summer, we strive for our **Great 8 Outcomes** to be learned through adventure, immersion in an outdoor environment, and interaction with great role models—allowing students to improve non-cognitive, interpersonal skills needed to thrive in the 21st century.

1

**Communication:** Few ideas are the product of a single mind, and being able to effectively communicate in a constantly changing world is a much-appreciated skill. Teammates need to be able to share ideas and build trust, empathy, and understanding.

2

**Collaboration and social achievement:** The ability to work well with others is vital—even when your team is not of your choosing. Creating and maintaining fun, substantive social connections is a hallmark of success.

3

**Creativity:** The ability to generate multiple ideas and think out of the box is engendered by a supportive and free-thinking community.

4

**Critical thinking:** The world's problems don't have simple answers. These challenges require the ability to critically analyze a situation and formulate potential solutions that are not often obvious.

5

**Leadership:** We solve problems in groups, which need leaders with heart that bring out the best in its members.

6

**Self-management:** Lasting success requires the ability to postpone short-term gratification or personal needs in pursuit of important long-term goals.

7

**Resilience:** Everyone encounters challenges and failures. Those who rebound from failure and see problems as opportunities will succeed when others give up.

8

**Optimism:** An optimist believes that problems are temporary and that they has the ability through effort and persuasion to effect positive change.

## MEALS AT ADVENTURE TREKS

Students are always impressed by the food! Instructors will ensure there is plenty of food and plan balanced meals, and we eat family-style, sitting in circles so no one is excluded. There are always second portions (and usually thirds) available; meals include a good balance of protein and carbs; and we eat fresh fruits and vegetables often.

While instructors will have done most of the meal-planning and shopping before students arrive, trip meals are mostly executed by the students (with supervision). Beginning with a French toast breakfast on the second day, instructors will teach students about backcountry cooking and stove and knife safety. Then students will break into smaller groups to cook for each other to ensure that everyone is involved from start to finish.

*We can easily accommodate vegetarians and many food allergies, including peanuts, tree nuts, soy, dairy, sesame, and gluten. And we always have a wide variety of snacks available throughout the day. Adventure Treks may choose to operate a trip free of a particular food (e.g., peanuts) due to allergies.*

## CAMPING IN TENTS

We'll camp in different places throughout our trip. Most of our nights are frontcountry camping (developed campsites with amenities like running water and toilets) at a public or private campground. The other nights will be spent backcountry camping in wilderness locations where we are most likely out of cell phone service and away from our vehicles, electricity, and other amenities. Multi-day activities like backpacking take place in the backcountry.



Never camped before? Don't worry!  
We'll make sure you'll learn the ropes  
and get comfortable in a jiffy.

“My experiences at Adventure Treks have taught me that pushing past my comfort zone will help me grow, that I am stronger than I think I am, and that I can learn something new, even when I've done an activity before, especially from other people. AT is one of my favorite places to be—summer 2024 was my fourth trip, and I'm so glad I have kept coming back, because I feel like it gets better every time.”

Greta E, current student (2021-present)

## GEAR

Adventure Treks provides all outdoor gear, including a backpacking backpack, sleeping bag and pad, tent, cooking gear, and all activity-specific technical gear (like climbing shoes and helmets and rafting gear). Students will bring a daypack and duffel bag; clothing, footwear, and toiletries; and a few personal pieces of outdoor gear.

Before opening day, students will pack all of their items in a daypack and duffel bag; the daypack can be a school backpack and will act as carry-on luggage, and students will use this often throughout the trip. The duffel will be checked luggage and will act as a “closet” while on the trip: They are stored and locked in the U-Haul trailer that we tow, and students will pull whatever items they need for the next activity out of their duffels and pack them in their backpacking packs or daypacks.

*Enrolled families can find their full trip-specific packing lists (including how to pack everything) in CampInTouch.*

## TECH-FREE EXPLORATION

Our students have an unbelievable amount of fun—all without their cell phones. We unplug from technology so that we can connect with our natural surroundings and each other and build strong, inclusive, and kind communities. Upon arrival to Adventure Treks, students will call home and then turn their phone off to be stored throughout the trip (minus a few designated calls home—more info on page 17). No time for Snapchat or TikTok at Adventure Treks, and best of all, students will quickly realize they don't even miss their phones.

Students are encouraged to bring a camera or GoPro for taking photos and videos!







## GETTING TO ADVENTURE TREKS

Students will meet us at **Sacramento International Airport (SMF)** on opening day. Most of our students choose to fly by themselves (i.e., without their parents) as they see this as a great exercise in independence. Our instructors will be at the airport to greet our students as they arrive by plane or car, and our office monitors all flights and is on hand to assist with delays and cancellations. Once your child meets their group, they'll call home to give a safe arrival notification.

While we provide travel guidelines and can help find flights that work, it is the family's responsibility to book travel. We will happily help coordinate travel for students traveling to and from the same home airports. For all students flying to Adventure Treks, we recommend purchasing refundable airfare and/or travel insurance.

*More transportation details are provided to enrolled families.*

## ***If flying***

- Arrive on opening day between 9 am and 1 pm
- Depart on closing day between 5:30 am and 11 am

## ***If driving***

- Tentatively plan to arrive between 10 am and 11 am on opening day, and between 8 am and 9 am on closing day. (This might change; a director will be in touch beforehand to confirm a time and meeting location.)



## COMMUNICATION DURING THE TRIP

Instructors will take photos and videos throughout the trip, which the office will provide to families. Because of the wilderness nature of our trips, there are limitations regarding the frequency of updates and the number and size of photos sent to the office. During multi-day backcountry activities like backpacking, trip updates will not be available until the group comes back into cell service. Our goal is to provide at least one update per week on each trip.

Written updates will be emailed to families. Photos and videos will be uploaded directly to an online album, and we'll send your child's specific album link about a week before your child's trip starts. Additionally, you can expect one or two brief phone calls from your child throughout the trip.

The summer office hours are 8–6, but someone is always on call for after-hours emergencies. We'll provide an emergency contact number parents can use for urgent or time-sensitive situations, such as canceled flights or family emergencies. If your child's trip begins or ends on a weekend, the office is open and happy to assist with travel.

“AT dramatically boosted my ability to adapt to new situations and go with the flow. It was also a great social environment, and I'm thrilled whenever I run into someone I know from AT (which last happened in January 2024). It was great to spend summer with other people excited to try out new things, have fun, and be silly. Most concretely, AT made me a lifelong lover of the outdoors and taught me the skills I needed to enjoy it fully.”

Grant Clovin, student from 2009–2011, currently a lawyer

## Weather

While it will likely be warm and sunny the entire trip, we might experience some chilly and windy temperatures on Lassen Peak or even some fog and drizzle along the coast. Students should be prepared to drink lots of water and electrolytes to stay hydrated, wear sun-protective clothing, and always use sunscreen.



“My experience with AT gave me a love of the outdoors and being in nature. It helped me build resilience and trust in my own body and my ability to push through challenges and setbacks. It gave me a sense of belonging and community with my fellow AT friends, as well as several very close friendships that made me feel seen and loved. I still feel like it was one of my most formative, treasured experiences of my teen years.”

Zoe Fishman Sitrin, student from 2004-2007, currently in product marketing

## Did you know?

- Old-growth coastal redwoods can live to be 2,000 years old and are some of the tallest and oldest trees on earth.
- All four types of volcanoes can be found in Lassen Volcanic National Park: Plug dome, shield, cinder cone, and composite.
- Lake Tahoe is the largest alpine lake and the second-deepest lake in the US.
- There are two museums in northern CA dedicated to Bigfoot!



# Ready to enroll? It's easy!

1

Complete our online application and submit a deposit to secure a space.

2

Submit admissions forms, including parent questionnaire, student questionnaire, health history, and character reference.

*A \$1,000 deposit must accompany the application to secure your child's spot, which will be applied toward the full cost of tuition. In the event a student is not accepted to Adventure Treks, the deposit is fully refunded. Please visit [adventuretreks.com/terms-conditions](https://adventuretreks.com/terms-conditions) for more information regarding our cancellation and refund process, payment options, trip insurance, and more.*