

2025  
**TRIP GUIDE**



# CALIFORNIA CHALLENGE

A 24-day adventure camp for 9th, 10th, and 11th 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

9th - 11th

## TUITION

\$6,595

## DATES

6/25 - 7/18

7/6 - 7/29

- **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 24-day adventure! Hike through the breathtaking Shasta-Trinity Alps, one of the coolest wilderness areas in North America. Cool off afterward with a thrilling whitewater rafting trip down the Trinity River. Challenge yourself with mountain biking and rock climbing in the scenic shadows of Mt. Shasta, and then prepare for a life-changing summit attempt of its iconic sister, Mt. Shastina. Afterward, enjoy three lively days of rafting and kayaking down the bouncy Rogue River! Cap off this incredible adventure with a hiking journey through the tallest Redwoods in the state, right on the beautiful CA coast, and an overnight rafting trip on the American River.



# Who is Adventure Treks?

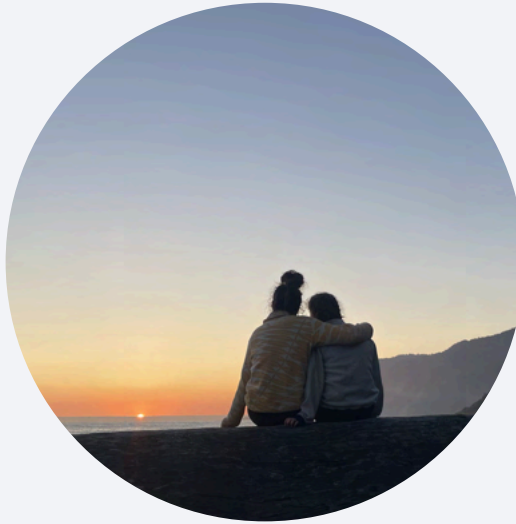
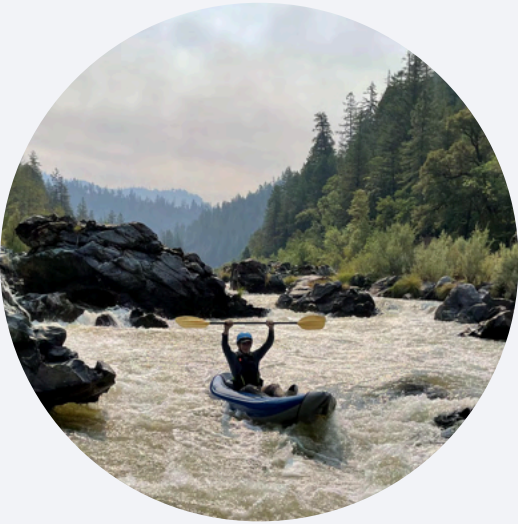
We believe in creating remarkable, life-changing experiences for teenagers. Since 1993, we've guided thousands of students through spectacular outdoor adventures across North America and the world. Our multi-week camps go beyond experiencing awe in the outdoors: While students explore some of the world's 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 everyone 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 CHALLENGE 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.

	Adventure Treks	Outward Bound	Moondance Adventures	Wilderness Adventures	Apogee Adventures
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**



**CLIMB**



**RAFT**



**BIKE**



**SUMMIT**





# CALIFORNIA CHALLENGE 2025 >> basic itinerary



<b>Day 1</b>	Arrive in Sacramento, CA (SMF), and meet the group	Frontcountry camping
<b>Day 2</b>	Day hike in Shasta-Trinity National Forest	Frontcountry camping
<b>Days 3-7</b>	Hike through Shasta-Trinity National Forest	Backcountry camping days 3-6
<b>Day 8</b>	Whitewater raft the Trinity River	Frontcountry camping
<b>Day 9</b>	Logistics: Laundry, shopping, cleaning, organizing	Frontcountry camping
<b>Days 10-11</b>	Rock climb and mountain bike around Mt. Shasta	Frontcountry camping
<b>Days 12-13</b>	Summit attempt of Mt. Shastina	Backcountry camping day 12
<b>Day 14</b>	Rest and drive day	Frontcountry camping
<b>Days 15-16</b>	Whitewater raft the Rogue River	Frontcountry camping
<b>Day 17</b>	Logistics and prep day	Frontcountry camping
<b>Days 18-20</b>	Hike through Redwoods National and State Parks	Backcountry camping days 18-19
<b>Days 21-23</b>	Drive and prep day, then raft the American River	Frontcountry camping
<b>Day 24</b>	Depart from 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 and your new friends! Once everyone has arrived, we'll head to camp for a delicious welcome dinner.

## DAY 2

Explore different trails in Shasta-Trinity National Forest on a beautiful day hike. We'll walk to a stunning alpine lake for a scenic lunch and play lots of fun games to get to know each other.

## DAYS 3-7

The Trinity Alps range was named after its more famous European counterpart due to its chiseled granite peaks and domes. Hike through lush, green valleys carved by glaciers long ago, beneath one of the greatest conifer forests in the world. Black bear, bobcats, blacktailed deer, pine marten, wolverine, and many more species of wildlife call the Trinity Alps home. In the afternoon, cool off with a refreshing swim in one of the forests many alpine lakes! At night, settle in with your new best friends, blanketed by the brightest stars you've ever seen.

## DAY 8

Whitewater raft the Wild and Scenic Trinity River, a popular destination for paddling enthusiasts with its nonstop and exciting rapids lining the canyon walls! Fun fact: the Trinity's riverbanks contain some of the oldest evidence of human habitation in this part of the state.

## DAY 9

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 10-11

Gear up for a rock climbing adventure at the riverside crags near the behemoth Mt. Shasta! With routes for all abilities, you'll challenge yourself and progress at your own pace. When it's time to cool off, take a refreshing plunge into one of the sparkling swimming holes in the Sacramento River. The next day, you'll love riding the trails around Lake Siskiyou, nestled at the foot of Mt. Shasta. Zoom down thrilling flowy trails or take a mellower approach on beginner-friendly tracks.

## DAYS 12-13

We'll spend two memorable days on this mammoth, 12,335-foot mountain that commands the landscape of northern California. First, learn how to use ice axes and crampons in snow school. Then for our summit attempt, we'll wake up when it's still dark to start our hike—our reward is the most vibrant sunrise you've ever seen and the thrill of accomplishing an incredibly impressive feat.

## DAYS 14-16

After a well-deserved rest day, spend two blissfully fun and exciting days paddling down the Wild and Scenic River Rogue River! Feel the rush as you navigate 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 17-20

It's time to head to the coast. Spend three days gazing in awe at the towering giants of California's old-growth coastal Redwoods, some soaring over 300 feet high! Walk through vibrant fields of wildflowers, including the iconic lupine and rhododendrom blooms. 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, peer into the tidepools for bright pink, purple, and green sea stars, anenome, sea urchins, crabs, and more!

## DAYS 21-23

Time to refresh our food for the last few days and head south! Then get ready for two epic days on the 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.

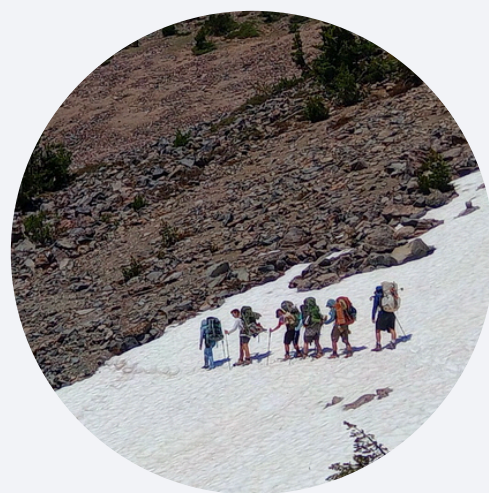
## DAY 24

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 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. About two-thirds of our nights are frontcountry camping (developed campsites with amenities like running water and toilets) at a public or private campground. The other third 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.

Adventure Treks was the most significant life experience of my adolescence. AT introduced me to a community of individuals who would go on to be friends and mentors for years to come. My love for the outdoors was born out of summers with AT, and so many choices I've made from where I've lived to what jobs I've taken... My path to a career in medicine was heavily influenced by AT experiences as an instructor. I simply can't imagine who I would be if I didn't spend summers with AT.

Lauren Liebling, student from 2004–2006, currently a physician assistant

## 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.

## 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.

### *If flying*

- Arrive on opening day between 9 am and 1 pm
- Depart on closing day between 6 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, 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 during 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'll probably experience chilly and windy temperatures on Shastina 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?**

- Coastal redwoods can live to be 2,000 years old and are some of the tallest, oldest trees on earth.
- Mt. Shasta is known as the root chakra of the world. On earth, chakra sites are said to have a particularly strong energy pull.
- There are many theories involving extraterrestrials on, in, and around Shasta, often proposing that the unique lenticular clouds are strategically placed to hide a spacecraft landing near the summit.
- 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.*