

# SUMMER LEARNING EXPEDITION OVERVIEW



## THOMPSON ISLAND OUTWARD BOUND EDUCATION CENTER

**Hello** and welcome to the Summer Learning Expedition at **THOMPSON ISLAND OUTWARD BOUND**. We are pleased that you have decided to join us on one of our adventures. We believe that it will be a very memorable experience.

### **What is Outward Bound?**

Outward Bound is an international organization that uses experiential learning (learning by doing), the outdoors and adventure-based programming as a classroom for learning life skills. Outward Bound was founded in 1941 by Kurt Hahn, who felt that education should put students into experiences where they can form their own ideas and opinions. He developed programs that brought people from all walks of life together in an effort to help them learn about working with others as well as gaining confidence in themselves.

Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center is an independent, chartered operating unit of Outward Bound USA. Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center was established in 1988 and has been serving the youth of Greater Boston for over 30 years. Thompson Island Outward Bound's mission is to provide challenge- and science-based experiential programs that inspire character development, compassion, community service, environmental responsibility, and academic achievement. Thompson Island is located in the Boston Harbor Islands National Park area, a twenty-five-minute ferry ride from downtown Boston. There has been an educational institution on Thompson Island since 1832.

### **What is an Expedition?**

An expedition is a journey undertaken by a group of people with a particular purpose. The Summer Learning Expedition is a backpacking or kayaking course that involves learning outdoor skills, gaining a greater appreciation for nature, being inquisitive about the spaces around us and overcoming personal and group challenges.

A typical day starts with a “morning energizer,” tidying up your camp space, reviewing the plans for the day, and preparing and eating breakfast. During the day you will learn to climb, navigate, and orient yourself around Thompson Island and the Boston Harbor Islands National Park. You will play games, work on our communication skills, and challenge ourselves both personally and as a crew. You’ll explore the natural and cultural wonders of the islands. At the end of the day, you will cook dinner, debrief the day’s experiences, and hop in your tent to sleep out under the stars. Throughout the course you will learn and practice basic low-impact outdoor living skills, as well as environmental science and natural history. Your group will operate as a team of mutually supportive explorers. Your instructors will teach you all the skills you’ll need to thrive through these challenges. At night, discussions will review personal and group challenges and difficulties encountered in the day's activities. Topics will include leadership, decision-making, responsibility, teamwork, and group project work.

You and your team will be staying in single-person tents in a campsite that the crew will be tasked with maintaining. You’ll cook, clean, plan, and complete chores as a crew. We have all the camping supplies you will need, including sleeping bags, sleeping pads, tents, backpacks, headlamps, and all cooking supplies. The campsites do not have running water, so we’ll be bringing water out with us to drink, to wash our hands and our dishes and to brush our teeth and take camp showers. We have safe and hygienic bathroom systems at our campsites. After enrolling in the program, you’ll receive a packing list. Please do your best to follow the packing list as closely as possible. If you don’t have something on the list, let us know – we can usually provide the item for you!

Your instructors are there to teach and guide you through these new challenges, with your safety and growth as their highest priority.

## **Spend your summer becoming better scientists**

Like classroom science that you do at school, field science is also based on asking a question, coming up with a hypothesis, and making and reflecting on observations to find an answer. Unlike science in your classroom, field science involves stepping outside and looking at the world around us to get both our questions and answers. At Thompson Island, you'll be living outside for most of your time here. This means there are endless opportunities to question and observe the natural world you're immersed in!

Of our science-specific time, some of it will be spent with a BPS teacher learning new concepts and putting them into practice. The other part of your science-time will be spent with your instructors and crew reflecting on what you learned and applying it to the world around you. This will be done by putting on rubber boots and wading into the Salt Marsh, getting lost in the on-island Maze, playing games on the North End, and talking to our Green Ambassadors about their work on the island. Our goal is to make summer science learning as fun and engaging as possible.

Our field science is centered around project-based learning. For us this means encouraging students to ask their own questions that interest them and for our science exploration to be based on these student-led questions. Our final week's science time will revolve around each student or small student group finding an ecosystem, animal, plant, rock, or other natural component that they want to learn more about and then focusing on it. For example, a group of students may decide they are very interested in learning about the different organisms they can find under a fallen tree. Their final project could revolve around going into the woods, flipping over logs, finding out what creatures they might find, and then making an art project to show the different forms of life under a log. This is just one example of the many different areas of interest we'll encourage our students to investigate throughout their time here.

## **Explore on Thompson Island**

There are over 150 acres to travel across, many high and low ropes elements to climb and beaches to hang out on. You and your crew will have plenty of opportunity to explore Thompson Island's flora and fauna in the woods, marsh, tide pools, and other natural environments. You will also get the chance to visit and camp on other islands in the Boston Harbor!

## **Meals will be provided**

Students will receive breakfast, lunch, dinner, and two snacks every day during the program. Students will learn to cook tasty and nutritious meals over portable gas stoves. Our expedition meals will be prepared by our student chefs with the support of our instructors. Students will take turns preparing meals with ingredients like rice, beans, meat, cereal, pastas, etc. Students will experience and grow in their knowledge of camp cooking! A typical breakfast might be bagels, granola, or oatmeal; lunch could include pizza bagels or sandwich wraps; dinner might be macaroni and cheese or beans and rice with chicken.

Thompson Island is a nut-free facility, and we monitor what snacks and meals we pack based on any food allergies present in the crew. We can accommodate many special food allergies and needs; *it is important that if your child has any allergies they're noted in the medical form in the application.*

## **Paperwork**

All paperwork, including medical and emergency forms, should be filled out during the application process. An application is not complete until the medical information, permission slips, questionnaires, and liability waivers are signed and submitted.

## **Student Expectations**

Every student is expected to fully participate on this expedition and is integral to the overall experience and success of their group. Students are expected to demonstrate their commitment with an honest best effort throughout the program. To maintain the highest standards of safety, all students must also comply with procedures and practices as explained by instructors. All students must maintain a fundamental respect for the rights and dignity of others. Respect and courtesy will be emphasized at every opportunity.

Outward Bound programs visit pristine and fragile wilderness environments. Students are guests who must respect and help preserve the natural conditions for resident animals and plants and for other visitors' enjoyment. "Leave no trace" best practices will be taught to students.

Students who, through misconduct or unsafe practices, pose a danger to themselves or others, or diminish the experience of the group may be removed from their program (this includes both physical and verbal behaviors). While we make every attempt to keep motivation high, if a student is not willing to complete the program in such a way that meets our standards of cooperation, or is determined to leave, we will arrange to send them home. We will not keep a student against their will, and we expect full participation from all participants. Please let us know if you plan on being away while your student is on this program.

**Alcohol, Drugs, and Tobacco:** In keeping with legal, safety and ethical considerations, these substances are not allowed on our courses. Use of these substances while on a course will result in dismissal.

**Expulsion:** Thompson Island Outward Bound reserves the right to expel students who, through misconduct or unsafe practices, present a danger to themselves, the environment, others, or diminish the experience of the group (this includes both physical and verbal behaviors).

**Emergencies:** Because your child is on an expedition, it will not be possible for you to reach them directly. If a family emergency arises and it's important to contact them, please call us at 617-830-5116 between 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM Monday-Friday EST. For calls after hours, you will be given the appropriate phone numbers on the first day of the course to contact us 24 hours a day.

## **NONDISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT POLICY**

**OUTWARD BOUND** is a non-profit, tax exempt, educational organization that does not discriminate based on gender, race, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, financial aid programs, or other school-administered programs. In addition, we have always had a policy of accepting those students with a variety of physical handicaps and medical conditions, provided those conditions do not pose a significant safety risk to themselves or others.

Consistent with our educational goals and philosophies, as well as our legal and ethical obligations, we have extended this nondiscrimination policy to individuals who have or may have Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). AIDS isn't known to be communicable through casual contact such as insect bites, coughing, sneezing, shaking hands, or by sharing food, eating utensils, or drinking cups. This decision was made with consideration for the entire Outward Bound community and with the best medical advice currently available.

Additionally, the school recognizes the right of each student to learn in an atmosphere that is free of intimidation, hostility, and offensiveness. Acts of harassment based on the aforementioned differences are a violation of our policy. We are committed to providing our students with an environment that is free from harassment. Therefore, conduct that is harassing to students will not be tolerated. Any student who violates this policy will be subject to expulsion. In some cases, offenders may be susceptible to prosecution under state and/or federal law.

### **For more information, please contact:**

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