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## Outside Guide: What you need to know before climbing your first volcano

1 message

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The Seattle Times <info@email.seattletimes.com>

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*The Seattle Times*

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# OUTSIDE GUIDE

WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 2017

### **THE VOLCANOES ARE CALLING...**

At some point, almost every Seattleite goes from admiring the view of one of our state's five volcanoes to wondering what it would be like to actually climb one. Here's what you need to know before taking on one of the most quintessential Pacific Northwest challenges.

**Choose your route carefully.** Not all of the Cascade volcanoes are created equal. Some are accessible only by crossing glaciers and navigating crevasses; others are more akin to a really steep and really long hike — with the added challenges of altitude, off-trail navigation and rugged terrain. Most Northwest climbers go with [St. Helens](#), [Adams](#) or [South Sister](#) as their first volcano, but local guiding companies regularly lead beginners up Baker, Hood, Shasta and even Rainier. Wherever you go, be sure to research permits, weather, road access and current conditions.

**Get in shape.** Around these parts, most of us live at or near sea level, which means that even a climb up to the 8,000-foot level can cause shortness of breath, headaches and nausea in some people. Stack the odds in your favor by ticking off at least a few hikes with significant elevation gain before your volcano attempt and drinking plenty of water before and during the climb. Know the [signs of acute mountain sickness](#) and be ready to turn around if you or someone in your party experiences worsening symptoms.

**Bring the right gear and know how to use it.** Along with the [Ten Essentials](#), most volcano climbs require at least a helmet, crampons and an ice axe. If you've never used these tools before, get some practice before summit day — the side of a mountain in the groggy wee-morning hours is not a great place to take your first steps in crampons. Don't forget that you'll spend an entire day exposed to the elements above the treeline; a hat, sunscreen, polarized sunglasses, rain protection and heavy insulation layer are all musts.

**Prepare to be (figuratively) blown away.** There's nothing quite like taking those last few steps to a crater rim and standing on top of the world. Revel in your accomplishment, take some photos, and hold your ice axe high. But remember that getting to the top is only half the journey — don't let your guard down on the descent.

## **MORE WAYS TO GET OUT**



## Escape to a cabin in the hills for year-round fun

Scottish Lakes High Camp, located just east of Stevens Pass, has new owners, a new name and is [ramping up its offerings for summer mountain biking](#). Did we mention there's a wood-fired hot tub? Summer camp just got a lot cooler.



## Pair a nautical adventure with a pint of local brew

What's better than sailing across Bellingham Bay with a view of snowcapped Mount Baker? How about a pint or two from a local microbrewery? [The Ales N' Sails cruise](#) aboard the classic schooner Zodiac is a great way to enjoy a healthy dose of Pacific Northwest summer scenery and drink it in, too.

**Not just for through-hikers:** From the Goat Rocks Wilderness to the North Cascades' jagged peaks, the Pacific Crest Trail winds through some of Washington's most spectacular scenery. The good news? You don't have to quit your job in order to experience it. [Here are some of the most wow-worthy sections of the trail](#), most of which are accessible in a three- or four-day backpacking trip.

**Still searching for a place** to watch the solar eclipse next month? Campgrounds in central Oregon have been booked for months, but the event has nurtured an entrepreneurial spirit that's [created some new options](#) for visitors who don't already have reservations.

**How do you Leave No Trace?** By now, we should all know to "pack it in, pack it out" and that wildlife and granola bars don't mix. But things can get complicated once you start talking about soapy dish water, campfires and — gasp — poop. Do you have any tried-and-true methods for minimizing your impact in the wilderness? We want to hear about them. Email [outsideguide@seattletimes.com](mailto:outsideguide@seattletimes.com), and we might feature your ideas in a future newsletter.

## WHAT WE'RE READING

[Did Airbnb kill the mountain town?](#) (Outside)

[Rock climbing tips for beginners](#) (Gore-Tex Blog)

[Hikers ditch the PCT in favor of the Oregon Coast Trail](#) (Daily Astorian)

[Want to find fly fishing solitude? Go backpacking](#) (Outdoor Research)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

7.22 | 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. | Free

[WTA work party at Sunrise](#)

Mount Rainier National Park

7.24 | 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. | Free

[Meet the Mountaineers info session](#)

Mountaineers Seattle program center

7.28 to 7.30 | \$30

[Snoqualmie Pass trail run](#)

Washington Alpine Club's Guye Cabin

7.29 | 2 to 10 p.m. | Free

[Outdoor Project's Seattle Block Party](#)

Optimism Brewing

**That's it for today. Happy trails!**

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