



Outside

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Destinations: Mountaineering Essential Gear

Featuring: Variant 37

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Mountaineering

Mount Shasta, California

You Have: Climbed a fourteener.

You Want: To get into technical mountaineering.

The Trip: At 14,179 feet, Mount Shasta is far less dangerous than other big American peaks like Rainier, but, being covered in glaciers, it's still plenty technical. Many hikers walk up the Avalanche Gulch route. You'll scale the more challenging north face on a guided three-day mountaineering trip with Shasta Mountain Guides (\$600; shastaguides.com), during which you'll learn to self-arrest with an ice ax, walk in crampons, and recognize crevasses. It starts with a three-mile hike from the trailhead to your base camp, a large glacial moraine at 9,400 feet. The next day you're up at 3 A.M., ascending 4,600 feet of 5-to-40-degree faces with ropes and crampons. Once you pass the Ramp, a 35-degree climb, you'll see two 50-foot rock towers that let you know you're close to the summit. After carefully crossing the slick, icy Bolam chute, scramble to the top for your hero photos, then hike back down to base camp. Be sure to hit Stewart Mineral Springs for a soak in one of the giant natural steam baths on the drive out (\$28; stewartmineralsprings.com).

Essential Gear: You'll need a backpack with about 2,400 cubic inches, like Osprey's Variant 37 (\$169; ospreypacks.com). Also get a lightweight helmet like Petzl's Meteor III (\$100; petzl.com), an ice ax like Black Diamond's Raven Pro (\$100; blackdiamondequipment.com), lightweight strap-on crampons (Black Diamond's Contacts are great; \$140), and boots like La Sportiva's Nepal (\$475; sportive.com). Rentals are available from the Fifth Season Outdoor Store in Mount Shasta (thefifthseason.com).

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