

Hike and Kayak Waldo Lake

Due to the many variables of outdoor trips, it's impossible to describe exactly what the trip will be like but this will give you a sense of what to expect. Questions? Get in touch at: outdoors@lclark.edu

About the Location:

The waters of Waldo Lake are so crystal clear that paddling looks like flying! At 5,400 feet in elevation, is the second largest natural lake in Oregon, covering 6,700 acres with 420 feet of depth in some places. Formed by sheet glaciations during the Ice Age, the lake is nestled amongst geologically recent volcanoes in the midst of the Central Oregon Cascades. The 10,000-foot peaks of the Three Sisters mountains are visible in the distance. The eastern side lake has three Forest Service campgrounds and the western side is the 39,200-acre Waldo Lake Wilderness. Most of this trip's camping will occur on the western shore. Waldo Lake is a spectacular body of water, unlike any other in Oregon. Huckleberries will still be ripening in the high meadows. Fall colors will just be beginning as frost hits this high-elevation basin. The sunrises and sunsets are simply amazing.

What to Expect:

The first day of your trip you will drive to Waldo Lake and camp on the edge of the lake in a campground. During the trip you will paddle to backcountry campsites around the western shore of the lake, and take time for some great hikes. On the last day of your trip, you'll pack up and head back to Portland the evening before New Student Orientation begins. The Waldo Lake Wilderness is about a 5-hour drive from Portland, and well worth the trip to this unique clear lake surrounded by mountains. The kayaking is suitable for beginners, and the group will practice basic sea kayaking techniques and rescue methods at the start of the trip. This will involve getting wet! All the food, water, sleeping bags, clothing, gear, tents, and group equipment, such as stoves and tarps, is loaded into the kayaks and carried with the group throughout the trip. On some days, the group may paddle 6 miles or more, and on other days you will spend substantial time exploring and playing kayak games. Participants will need to wear wetsuits at times (which we can provide), depending on the weather and the route. While day-hiking, not everyone in the group will be able to hike at the same speed, so there are probably going to be some compromises made on routes. On average, the group expects to hike about 6-8 miles every other day with daypacks.

Weather factors (such as wind and rain) may influence the group's plans and route. Wind can be a factor at any time on the lake, although the water tends to be calmer in the early morning. August in the Cascades is generally beautiful, and this trip has had great weather most years. However, it's possible for weather at this elevation to be a warm 80°F at noon and then be sleeting by 4 p.m. It's not impossible to have snow in late August in the Waldo Lake Wilderness. Nights are generally cool to cold, and the temperature can drop below freezing at night. Rain can blow in from the Pacific Ocean at any time, creating wet, foggy weather. While August is one of the driest months in the Northwest, participants need to be prepared for precipitation with good rain gear.

It is important to practice minimum impact camping techniques such as packing out all litter and food waste, not using soap in streams or lakes, and not camping on fragile meadows. Instructors will brief the group on low-impact camping techniques and Leave-No-Trace (LNT) principles at the start of the trip. All trips are non-smoking.

New to hiking or kayaking?

No problem! This trip is designed for beginners, and fun for every experience level.

How to Prepare:

- **Break in your boots:** Since we'll be day-hiking remember that new boots can cause painful blisters. It is *very important* to break in your boots by wearing them for extended periods prior to your trip.
- **Get moving:** It's a great idea to walk or run this summer to get yourself into shape, and any exercise that improves core strength will help your paddle strokes. If you have the chance to paddle, do it! It's great to start getting those muscles ready for the water.

What will we eat?

We eat well on this trip! Some examples of typical meals include: curry, pizza, mac & cheese and much more. We resupply water from streams and lakes. This water needs to be filtered or treated before you can drink it; this is done with pumps and tablets. Our treatment neutralizes Giardia, bacteria, and viruses.

What if I don't have outdoor clothing or equipment?

No problem! Check out our packing lists (located on your trip page) for a description of the essential and optional gear for your trip. To help prevent foot injuries, we do not allow open-toed sandals on our rafting trips. If you don't have your own sandals/boots, outdoor clothing or equipment, we provide what you'll need. You must request the equipment ahead of time using this form: <http://tinyurl.com/c4d5g2r>

What are the risks?

Common injuries which could occur on this trip include blisters on hands (from paddling) or feet, and burns from UV reflection off the water. *These are all preventable with a little caution and common sense.* Yellow jackets (wasps) can be pests at this time of the year, and people with the potential for severe reactions to stings should plan to bring their own anaphylaxis kits. Find out more about possible risks [here](#).

Please note that our trips go to remote areas and medical help is usually at least one day away. Our trips carry satellite phones, but remember satellite service is sometimes not available in certain areas. All our trip leaders are trained as Wilderness First Responders.

Complete and return the online [Health & Diet Questionnaire](#) to inform our trip leaders of any conditions or illnesses that you have.

Have a great summer, and we'll see you in August!