

10 Questions: What to Ask When Choosing the Best Summer Program for Your Teen

1 | How involved are your directors?

The director sets the tone of a program. Many adventure program directors manage from an office far removed from the activities. Few directors will actually get to know your son or daughter personally. From a quality control perspective, it is imperative that directors spend time in the field supporting instructors and being involved in day-to-day operations.

At Adventure Treks, a director visits every trip, meets every student and is directly involved with your student's instructors throughout the summer.

2 | What are your program's goals?

Every company has a different focus and it's important to find the program that matches your goals. Some programs emphasize fun, others outdoor skills, others personal growth, and others therapy for at-risk teens. Begin by examining your goals for the summer.

The Adventure Treks mission is to ensure the safest, most substantive, and most exciting adventures for young people through our personal attention to every student, our caring and our competence. Adventure Treks is a program for outstanding young adults with an emphasis on fun, outdoor adventure and building life skills needed for 21st century success.

3 | Do your instructors have medical training?

Industry standard medical training for backcountry instructors is a Wilderness First Responder (WFR) or EMT certification. Wilderness First Responder certification means the instructor has passed an intensive 80 hour course that focused on the prevention and treatment of back country emergencies. Many pro-



grams (and The American Camp Association) require only Wilderness First Aid certification, which is generally inadequate for extended backcountry travel.

Adventure Treks requires each instructor to be trained to a Wilderness First Responder or EMT standard.

4 | What is your instructor to student ratio?

For a backcountry adventure trip, the maximum student-instructor ratio should be 6:1. Lower ratios mean a safer experience, better supervision, more opportunities to learn, and stronger interaction with role models.

At Adventure Treks the instructor to student ratio is always 4:1 or better. We feature six instructors on every trip. This is very different than the two to three instructors typical of most wilderness programs.

A six-person team makes better decisions, keeps a more watchful eye on safety and allows more instructors to be actively involved with the students. Six instructors are better able to model a sense of community, inclusiveness and kindness.

5 | What is your average instructor age and experience level?

The skills necessary to be a successful wilderness instructor are very different than those needed to be a counselor at a summer camp. The complex responsibility of leading back country trips and the maturity needed to work with teenagers is best handled by mature instructors, and it takes several years of experience to gain the wealth of knowledge needed to become a proficient wilderness instructor. Instructors should be at minimum 21 years old and college graduates. In order to maintain program safety, quality, continuity, and consistency, a



Choose carefully: student repeat rates vary between companies from as high as 60% to less than 10%, and can indicate program quality.

successful program should have at least a 50% instructor return rate each summer.

At Adventure Treks the average instructor is 27 years old, ensuring plenty of experience. Virtually every Adventure Treks instructor has a college degree. Typically, 30% of Adventure Treks instructors have obtained or are working towards a graduate degree. At Adventure Treks, the average instructor return rate is 70%. The average instructor tenure is more than three years.

6 | Are students carefully screened?

One student attending for the wrong reasons can negatively affect an entire trip. Few teenagers are perfect, but every program should check references to ensure

that every student will contribute to the program's overall success.

Adventure Treks requires an essay and two references for every new student. Adventure Treks is in no way a program for troubled youth, and does not accept students with behavior issues or any problems with drugs or alcohol. In addition, 60% of our students return for at least a second summer, and they eagerly welcome new students.

7 | How long has your program operated?

There is no easy, best answer for this. Some new programs have tremendous energy; some established programs have gone stale. Generally a program should have been around at least ten years to have an established track record.

Adventure Treks has been working with teens in the Southeast for 34 years and operating programs in the Western U.S. for 19 years.

8 | How often do you use outfitters?

All programs use outfitters for activities that need extra safety expertise like whitewater rafting, sea kayaking and ice climbing. Outfitters should be chosen carefully and have a long-term relationship with the program as well as a reputation for safety and professionalism. Make sure that the use of outfitter staff compliments the existing adventure program instructors. Much can be lost if outfitters replace your instructors for the day.

Adventure Treks has long-term relationships with the finest outfitters. Our instructors operate in full collaboration with the outfitters to maintain the best community experience for our students.

9 | Is this a good program? Is it licensed, permitted, and ACA accredited?

ACA accreditation is useful for traditional summer camps, but generally not relevant for wilderness adventure travel programs. ACA standards, especially for first aid, are insufficient for most wilderness programs. To operate on public lands (National Parks and Forests) a program must possess Special Use Permits and undergo Federal Government scrutiny. Not all summer programs operate legally. It is always best to carefully check references by talking to the families of previous participants.

Adventure Treks exceeds every relevant ACA standard and also uses standards from AEE, the USFS, the NPS, Peer Review, America Outdoors and the Wilderness Risk Management Conference to provide a

professional experience for our students. Adventure Treks owns federal and state permits in the places they visit and has an extensive collection of Special Use Permits and Commercial Use Authorizations.

We encourage you to speak with Adventure Treks students and their parents to find out more about our program. Call 888.954.5555 or email info@adventuretreks.com for references in your area.

10 | What are the added costs of the program?

Many programs have hidden costs - gear rental, equipment deposits, and airport pick up fees - and require you to pay extra for some meals.

At Adventure Treks, you pay for your tuition, plane ticket, clothing and boots, and a few personal items. Adventure Treks tuition includes the use of all of your outdoor gear at no extra charge, a savings of up to \$500 from other programs. There are no hidden taxes, charges or fees.

Know your goals: are you focused on wilderness skills, 21st century life skills, fun experiences, or all three?





888.954.5555 info@adventuretreks.com
www.AdventureTreks.com



Why Choose Adventure Treks?

Your Questions Answered.

- **Safety** is the foundation of every Adventure Treks experience.
- Our mission is to mix adventure with valuable **21st Century Life Skills**.
- Our instructors are **medically trained and certified**.
- Our instructors are **experienced outdoor professionals**. Their average age is 27.
- Our **4:1 student-instructor ratio** is the best in the industry.
- We select students to ensure a **vibrant, inclusive community**.
- **60% of our students return** for another summer - triple the rate of similar programs.
- Our **directors are directly involved** with every trip.
- **Tuition is all-inclusive** with no hidden fees or extra costs (except transportation).
- **All equipment is included** at no charge, saving you hundreds of dollars.

Learn More!

Call us, **skype** us, watch our DVD, or explore our website.

The more you know about our company, the easier your decision will be.



Scan code for more information