

BACKCOUNTRY SKIING

Backcountry Trip Rating System

Trip Difficulty Rating

**Easy
1/5**

Skills:

- Able to snowplow
- Ski on wide trails or road systems with gentle hills and lots of room to maneuver

Equipment:

- Light boots/skis adequate
- Wax or fish scale base adequate

Duration:

- About 4 hours of skiing including rest stops

**Easy
Intermediate
2/5**

Skills:

- Able to snowplow, sidestep, herringbone, and kick turn
- Ski narrower trail, some trees, short steeper sections

Equipment:

- Stiff boots and metal edges recommended
- Skins recommended

Duration:

- About 5 hours of skiing include rest stops

**Intermediate
3/5**

Skills:

- Able to snowplow, sidestep, herringbone, and kickturn
- Handle sidehills and creek crossings
- Do some telemark, parallel, or stem-Christie turns
- Ascend or descend keeping pace with group
- Ski black diamond X-country trails/green downhill runs on backcountry skis
- Single track with trail breaking, steep sections, and tree skiing

Equipment:

- Stiff boots, metal edges, skins recommended
- Shorter, wider, or shaped skis recommended
- Shovel, probe, and survival gear recommended
- Avalanche transceiver may be required (destination and condition dependant)

Duration:

- About 6 hours of skiing

**Strong
Intermediate
4/5**

Skills:

- Have all skills detailed in first three ratings
- Self-arrest from fall
- Ski strong telemark or parallel turns
- Move confidently through a range of terrain and conditions
- Ski blue downhill runs on backcountry skis
- Snow camp
- Avalanche training recommended

Equipment:

- All skis & equipment detailed in first three ratings

Duration:

- Up to 8 hours of skiing a day and may be multi-day trips

**Advanced
5/5**

Skills:

- Have all skills detailed in first four ratings
- Able to glacier ski, do crevasse extractions
- Experience in rope handling, scrambling, and climbing
- Skills in route finding and navigation
- Able to ski with a very heavy pack
- Avalanche training required

Equipment:

- Have all equipment detailed in first four ratings

Duration:

- 10 hours of skiing a day and may be multi-day trip