



BOLD/GOLD FAQs

How much does it cost to attend a trip?

The cost to attend a BOLD/GOLD trip is \$960. This includes food, all group gear for the excursion, transportation from base camp to the excursion destination and back, and most of the activities at base camp will be open to our group when returning from their trip.

Do you offer financial aid?

To ensure equitable access for all, the YMCA offers affordable options at all of our branches. Interested in applying for Financial Assistance? Please find the application on our home page for BOLD/GOLD.

Where and when do expeditions begin and end?

All trips begin and end at our base camp, YMCA Camp High Harbour at Lake Allatoona, located at:
40 Old Sandtown Road
Cartersville, GA 30121

The specific check-in time for each trip will be provided in the welcome email. The course officially begins with an opening circle, and families are asked to stay for the course start. Upon arrival, participants will meet instructors and will be outfitted with any gear needed for their trip.

All participants will be expected to help with the de-issuing process of the group and personal gear after the trip returns. Pick-up family members are encouraged to arrive on time and will have the opportunity to check in with instructors about the course.

We will let our participants and families know of specific pick up and drop off times in the welcome email.

Why are BOLD/GOLD trips divided by gender?

Part of the mission of BOLD/GOLD is to challenge the gender stereotypes that our society has instilled in all of us. All girls' trips with strong female instructors, for example, show young women that they can be a strong leader in the outdoors without the aid of men by their side, contrary to the gender stereotypes around leadership in the outdoors. Additionally, providing a space for youth to spend time with those of only their own gender gives some youth more freedom to express themselves however they'd like to.

Who are the instructors?

Our instructors are experienced outdoor educators with an extensive background of working with youth and adults in the outdoors. All instructors are also trained in Wilderness Medicine.

How many participants are on each expedition?

There between four and ten participants on each trip with two instructors.

Where will I sleep?

We provide lightweight tents and there are typically 2-4 participants in each shelter. You will use a sleeping pad, a warm sleeping bag, and you'll learn how to make a pillow out of your clothes! And don't worry, the instructors will be sleeping in their tents close by.

What will I eat?

We love good food! Eating well is really important to all of us and you can expect lots of lessons on cooking and opportunities to show your skill in the kitchen. The menu is largely vegetarian with lots of grains, pasta, cheese, beans, veggies, fruit, and nuts. Meat is heavy and spoils easily, but we do occasionally eat chicken, beef jerky, and summer sausage.

Example Typical Menu:

- **Breakfast:** Oatmeal with brown sugar and fruit, bagels and cream cheese
- **Lunch:** Summer sausage, cheese, crackers, tortillas, peanut butter and jelly
- **Dinner:** Burritos, rice and beans, salsa, tortillas, cheese, pasta dish, macaroni and cheese, teriyaki chicken and rice.
- **Snacks:** Trail mix; granola bars; fruit; goldfish

You will be given a supply of sweet and salty trail mix, to eat whenever you get hungry. It usually contains M&Ms, a variety of nuts, rice crackers, and raisins. In addition to your personal trail mix, there are two group snacks a day such as peanut butter pretzels or rice crackers and dried fruit.

What about drinking water? Is it clean?

On our backcountry courses, we will purify our drinking water using a filtration system and we boil water used for cooking. Your instructors will teach you how to properly treat your water before drinking.

Can you accommodate my food allergy or special diet?

Yes! We can easily accommodate vegetarians and vegans as well as participants with certain food allergies. If you have any special dietary restrictions (nut allergies, lactose intolerance, wheat allergy, etc.) please list it on your health form so we can accommodate your specific needs.

What happens with my medications while on the expedition?

All prescription medications must be noted on your medical form prior to the expedition. Medication use is overseen by instructors. Please bring your prescription medications and non-prescription medications in the original containers. We require that medication obtained through a prescription must be maintained in the original container provided by the pharmacy with the prescribing label. Participants with prescription inhalers and epinephrine injections must bring two sets of medication. In most cases the instructor will carry one, and the participant will carry one in case of emergency. Participants who would suffer severe consequences if they were to miss a dose of medication due to damage or loss should bring back-up doses of that medication.

Should I bring contacts or glasses with me?

Either glasses or contact lenses are acceptable on expedition. However, sterile lens care is difficult on the trail and their use is not encouraged. Whether you wear contacts or glasses, you should think about bringing an extra pair.

I plan to borrow gear, when will I receive it?

Gear is issued to participants during the gear check on the first day of their adventure. The gear check takes place after the conclusion of the opening circle and families have said their goodbyes.

Will I be able to take showers?

On backpacking trips and paddling trips, you can choose to take "camp showers" which involve bathing in a stream or lake. Your instructors will demonstrate bathing options when appropriate and explain more about hygiene upon your arrival. When you return to base camp after your expedition, you will be able to use our bath house.

What about privacy?

Privacy takes on a new meaning when you are sharing a tent with three other people. Although you will be in close quarters for most of the time, efforts will be made to provide privacy for changing clothes, personal hygiene routines, etc.

How do I go to the bathroom?

On backpacking courses, some camp sites will have pit toilets nearby. Participants will learn the art of Leave No Trace bathroom use and staying clean and hygienic in the backcountry.

Will I be able to keep in touch with family and friends?

Your instructors will have satellite phones for emergencies and will have scheduled check-ins with their directors at base camp. We know it will be challenging to be away from home for a week, but the satellite phone is for instructor use only.

How do we get around?

All our adventures travel by bus to their destinations. On backpacking expeditions, you will be dropped off and picked up at a trailhead and for paddling trips you will be dropped off and picked up at a boat launch.

How challenging are the trips?

Participants new to this type of adventure can be successful if they are motivated, open to learning new skills, willing to work closely as a team, and are able to demonstrate leadership skills. Trips may be very challenging at times regardless of a participant's experience in the outdoors, but the instructors will ensure that everything is within the abilities of the group. You do not need to have any outdoor experience to complete a BOLD or GOLD expedition and you do not need to be an athlete. Being in shape and physically active before you arrive is helpful but is not required on introductory experiences. Come prepared to meet new people, try new things, have fun and challenge yourself. You may make mistakes, but you will learn from them and go on to meet challenges, both individually and as a group. Our Level 1 trip is great for individuals looking for a slow introduction into the outdoors and wanting to experience everything a BOLD/GOLD expedition has to offer but on a smaller scale.

How far do I backpack and how heavy will my pack be?

Beginner level backpacking expeditions may travel 3 to 5 miles each day. Your size and ability to carry the weight of the backpack is taken into consideration. Backpacks may weigh up to 45% of your body weight. Instructors will help you adjust your pack to carry the weight safely and in the most comfortable fashion.

Do I have to carry all of my stuff with me?

On backpacking expeditions, you will carry all of your personal belongings as well as some of the group gear and food. On paddling expeditions, you will have your gear in your canoe with you and will be responsible for transporting it to and from each camp site. Your personal belongings will be kept in your duffle or backpack back at base camp.

Should I bring spending money?

Money is not needed and strongly discouraged.

Who do I contact with more questions?

Contact our Program Administrator, Maya Joglekar at Mayaj@ymcaatlanta.org