



## Backcountry Tours Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is Alpine Touring / Backcountry riding?**

In its simplest terms it's skiing and boarding outside resort boundaries. Effectively this means being self-reliant as there's neither immediate infrastructure nor services such as Ski Patrol to assist. You move around under your own power and carry essential gear to support you for the duration. Technology has ensured the supply of specialist lightweight touring gear that has made this sport more accessible to the masses.

It's a big world out there with amazing terrain and stunning scenery to be discovered.

Due to the nature of the sport, safety has always been a big factor and this is why it's a good idea to hire a guide when first venturing out or seeking new terrain. A good guide will teach you and show you - they are full of knowledge that you can and should tap into. What you might learn in ten outings on your own, you could learn from your guide in one day so it's a very worthwhile consideration.

### **How good a skier/boarder do I need to be?**

You must be a strong intermediate to advanced skier or boarder, capable of riding all snow conditions in a safe and confident manner. This includes windblown, powder, crud and icy conditions etc. You must also be able to ski trees, avoid obstacles and manage whiteout and very windy conditions. The terrain we seek out is all un-groomed and mostly categorised blue and black.

While we will do our best to group riders of similar abilities, it's important you have a realistic self-assessment of your class of rider.

If you're not sure of your ability click the link below. To join our Green Tour / Signature Hill and Blue Tour / Mt Kosciuszko you must be a level 6 or above. To join all other tours you have to be at level 7 or 8.

<https://www.thredbo.com.au/lessons-programs/know-your-level/>

### **How fit do I have to be?**

A reasonable level of fitness is required, namely endurance and to a lesser extent strength. During a day out you will be expected to cover 10-15km including 2-3km of climbing slopes of various grades. Make sure you get good night's sleep, have a solid breakfast and arrive hydrated.

**IMPORTANT - IF YOU'RE NOT SURE OF YOUR ABILITY OR FITNESS LEVEL PLEASE ASK, WE'RE HERE TO HELP.**

### **What personal equipment do I need?**

You need to dress for a full days skiing and carry/wear sufficient clothing to cater for extreme weather conditions. Don't leave home without your goggles, helmet, good quality waterproof gloves and dress in layers. It's a good idea to carry a 'stuffable' puffer jacket and plenty of water. Have a solid breakfast and bring lunch and snacks. And don't forget your phone/camera and sun screen. You will be issued with a suitable touring pack in which you carry all your gear and additional essential safety equipment.

### **Where can I rent Alpine Touring Equipment from?**

A number of Alpine touring skis / split boards, including climbing skins are available for hire from Thredbo Sports at Valley Terminal. Thredbo Sports staff and of course your guide will show you how the touring specific equipment works. This is especially so for the Introduction to Alpine Touring.

### **Where do we go?**

Weather and snow conditions will always dictate which tours will operate and when the conditions are right, nothing compares to a day touring the Australian Alps. Depending on the tour you've booked, be assured that your guide will seek out the slopes with the best "stashes". Furthest is not always best - at times the best snow is found in the trees nearby.

### **Safety**

Above all we must obey the conditions - "we don't run the backcountry, the backcountry runs us". Safety is paramount. Alpine touring is undertaken beyond the resort boundaries and as such there is usually no reliance on ski patrol or other immediate support.

Weather and snow conditions are the two biggest safety factors that need to be continually monitored. Your guide is experienced and will make decisions accordingly in order to maximise group safety. Although avalanches are rare and we have a relatively stable snowpack, you will be issued with a shovel, probe and beacon, and receive instruction in basic avalanche safety.

### **What if an accident occurs?**

Should an accident occur, your guide will assess the situation and render first aid and immediate care of the injured person. A team member with a minor injury may choose to continue the tour. A more serious injury may require evacuation for further medical treatment. Terrain dependent, the team may work together to effect the evacuation, or a 000 call will alert emergency authorities, who will take over and likely evacuate by air.