

MOUNTAIN WEST HIKING EDITION

BACKPACKER

THE OUTDOORS AT YOUR DOORSTEP

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ED VIESTURS HAS THE PERFECT PLAN FOR YOU
PLUS THE HEALTHIEST FOODS FOR HIKERS

THE
SCARIEST
GHOST
STORY EVER
TOLD
P. 64

26 WEEKEND ESCAPES

BONUS! 5 FREE DAYHIKING MAPS

Chainsaw Madness!

10 ENDANGERED WILDLANDS
THAT YOU BETTER HIKE NOW

TESTED

ULTRALIGHT TENTS
ALL-PURPOSE BAGS

HOW TO

BUILD A PERFECT CAMPFIRE
PHOTOGRAPH FALL FOLIAGE
CLIMB KILIMANJARO



Dogs & Kids

What to know,
where to go

OCTOBER 2005

\$4.50US \$5.99CAN



Andrew Prohlik and
Walter chill after a hard
day in the Adirondacks.

WWW.BACKPACKER.COM

Take A Pack Trip By Alexa Hackbarth

SAVE
\$1,050

WHAT YOU GET

Six days of hiking in one of the Colorado Rockies' most remote and imposing stretches, with llamas lugging your gear. The 30-mile circuit—more than half of which is above timberline—leaves from Silverton and loops through the Uncompahgre Wilderness in the wild heart of the San Juans. With beasts carrying the burden, you'll enjoy more creature comforts than you would backpacking—and have energy left to nail a hard-to-reach Fourteener. Just bring a sleeping bag and daypack; everything else, literally, is on the llamas.

WHY IT'S COOL

Redwood Llamas owner Bill Redwood has led llama pack trips in southern Colorado for 18 years—and designed this route himself during his extensive explorations. The route traverses four passes that top 12,500 feet and the glacially chiseled valleys surrounding the buttelike summit of Uncompahgre Peak; go in fall, when the valley aspen groves turn gold. From the middle fork of the Cimarron River, the trail snakes over the eastern flanks of Coxcomb and Matterhorn peaks. Use a rest day in Matterhorn Basin to tag Uncompahgre Peak (14,309 feet) or Wetterhorn Peak (14,017 feet) before topping a pass near Wetterhorn. After a day in the adjacent basin, you'll swing back past Coxcomb to complete the circuit. Llamas' padded, split-toed feet allow them to carry 75 to 100 pounds without damaging the alpine environment, and their sharp eyesight picks up elk and bighorn sheep on ridges, so pay attention.

End each day by sipping cabernet by the fire while your guides prepare stuffed pork tenderloin and banana flambé.

HOW TO DO IT

Redwood Llamas: www.redwoodllamas.com

SPLURGE
\$2,800

WHAT YOU GET

A week and a half to work on your your roll cast in Wyoming's Wind River Range, home to eight 13,500-foot cirques, 63 glaciers (the most in the Lower 48), and countless unspoiled rivers and lakes. You'll take on a 40-mile Continental Divide traverse with a herd of goats carrying the gear, leaving mornings and late afternoons to cast for trout: rainbow, cutthroat, brook, golden, brown. The trip is a joint venture between Wind River Pack Goats and Sweetwater Fishing Expeditions; just bring tackle and a sleeping bag.

WHY IT'S COOL

Most fishing trips don't get this deep into the backcountry, which means the trout are both big—up to 20 inches long—and a tad naive. You'll hike north from Green River Lakes over the Continental Divide and up to Trail Lake, wandering through lodgepole and spruce forests and up into boulder fields above timberline. But the route never strays far from the range's myriad streams and alpine lakes, creating a continuous tour of prime dry fly-fishing spots; if anglers were blues fans, this would be Beale Street in its heyday. But there's more than just big trout: Trailheads are often at least 20 miles from the crest in this designated wilderness, and no roads cross the range, making it a haven for bighorn sheep, moose, elk, and black bear. The goats carrying your tackle are like mellow dogs: They're hard workers, carrying up to 50 pounds of gear, who enjoy the company of humans. The bottom line? You'll no doubt fish all the better knowing that at the end of the day, the guides will pair your catch with a top-shelf single-malt scotch.

HOW TO DO IT

Wind River Pack Goats: www.goatpacking.com

LLAMA DRAMA:
HEADING TO
FOURTEENERS IN
THE SAN JUANS

FIND MORE TRIPS AT BACKPACKER.COM