

TRIPS FAQ

1. How long are the trips?

- a. The trips are typically one-week long and follow a regular camp format (Sunday-Saturday). Level four and five trips sometimes offer more days in length and start and end on different dates.

2. Where do the trips begin? Where do I need to drop my kid off?

- a. All trips begin at Camp Fitch YMCA in North Springfield, PA. Campers are dropped off and picked up here. Trips campers stand in the same line as regular campers on opening day to check in.
 - i. Check in is 2:00-4:00pm on Sundays
 - ii. Pick up is 9:00am-11:00am on Saturdays
 - iii. If a Level four trip has different dates, look for an email regarding drop off and pick up times.
 - iv. Most trips travel back to Camp Fitch YMCA via Pittsburgh, PA on I-79. Pickups can be arranged on Friday night near Pittsburgh if desired.

3. Can my son/daughter fly to camp?

- a. Yes, the trips program has seen several campers attend from places like New York City, Boston, Pheonix, Chicago, and Tampa Bay. Usually these kids fly into Cleveland- Hopkins International Airport and camp picks them up there. If you are willing to spend the extra money, getting a connecting flight to Erie International Airport makes it more convenient on our end. If your child is flying in, please make it be the dates when the trip starts and ends; having kids fly home the day after it ends or arrive a day early puts a strain on staffing.

4. Who oversees these trips?

- a. At Camp Fitch YMCA we have a Trip Director, Brad Powell, who oversees all the trips directly. His email is bradpowell@campfitchymca.org. While on the trips, campers are supervised by two Trip Leaders and a designated Trip Coordinator who are hired and trained by Brad. The Trip Leaders typically have more experience than your regular counselor and have skills in wilderness first aid. These Trip Leaders do some of the same trip-specific activities in their regular life. Most Trip Leaders are above the age of 21.

5. What is the difficulty of each trip?

- a. Trips are grouped based on length and difficulty.
 - i. Level I is a low-risk trip that basically does day trips, using Camp Fitch or a public campground as a base camp. Campers stay in a cabin or other permanent structure. The kids rarely stay in tents.
 - ii. The level II trips have the campers stay at a campground with day trips leaving from there. Campers tent camp and do activities that are a little more difficult than Level I.
 - iii. Level III trips are one-week specific and go to locations away from Camp Fitch property. Being able to spend multiple nights in the woods is a requirement for these. Level III trips introduce area-specific activities such as caving or mountain biking.
 - iv. Level IV trips are 8-9 days in length, unless it is a 'Supreme' variation of another trip and involves constant travel. For example: Sweet Carolina travels about 1-2 hours each day. These trips also up the game in activity level by paddling more intense rapids, climbing harder routes, and hiking multiple days.
 - v. Level V trips are too intense for anyone under sixteen and are ten days or more. The only exception is Mountain Momma: Supreme as it simply involves activities that require more money to book reservations with.

6. Who can go on the trips?

- a. Trip levels are based on age groups.
 - i. Level I Trips are for ages 10-11, a 9 and 12-year-old may attend with a sibling or friend.
 - ii. Level II Trips are for ages 12-14, 15-year old's may attend with their younger sibling or friend
 - iii. Level III Trips are for ages 13-16, a 17-year-old may attend if they are unable to attend a Level IV trip or participate in Galley Crew.
 - iv. Level IV Trips are for ages 15-17. A camper aged 14 can attend if they have been a trips camper in recent years and have completed a Level III.
 - v. Level V is only for ages 16-17 due to activity restrictions set by outfitters.

7. What do you do on these trips?

- a. Each adventure varies depending on location and length. Most trips sample several activities such as backpacking, rock climbing, and paddling. Some trips feature a 'unique' activity designed specifically to highlight the trip. Examples include caving, mountain biking, stand-up-paddle boarding, ziplining, and walking under a bridge.

8. Are trips coed?

- a. Yes, all trips at Fitch are coed. The makeup of each trip can vary depending on enrollment. All trips have an undecided final maximum that fluctuates during enrollment. Spots will always be increased, not decreased. The two variables that determine this are vehicles available and staff hired. If there is a situation where the total enrollment looks like it might be one gender, that trip will then become a girls' only or boys' only trip. Parents will be notified if their son/daughter is the only one of that gender scheduled for the trip, so they can decide to withdraw. (Example: a situation where there are 9 girls, 1 boy enrolled).

9. Where do the campers sleep?

- a. Campers sleep in one-person backpacking tents. Level 1 campers stay in cabins or structures that allow up to four people. Level 2 trips may use a three-person tent if running on a week where multiple trips are going out. If given permission, campers can sleep in a tent with relatives and/or friends of the same gender if given permission by the parent. Trip Leaders do not sleep with the kids. Trip Leaders sleep in their own tent and are encouraged to set up near a main walkway to ensure safety.

10. How should I pack for a Trip?

- a. Packing lists specific for each trip will be emailed no less than a month before the trip you are signed up for. Typically, the best way to pack is to have a backpack with a sleeping bag and pillow inside it and everything else inside a large plastic tub. These items will be stored in a trailer that will be attached to a vehicle. Campers can bring up to two plastic tubs for luggage.

11. What does my child eat while on a Trip?

- a. Trip Leaders will cook hot meals for breakfast and dinner most of the time on two burner camp stoves. Campers are encouraged to help make the meals. Meals range from mac n cheese to chicken fajitas. Lunches are typically always cold and on-the-go to be eaten while paddling, hiking, etc. Due to some logistics, meals will be eaten out at a restaurant. In these situations, camp pays for all meals. However, if your child decides they want a second meal at the restaurant, they will have to pay for it on their own.

12. Should I give my child money to purchase souvenirs and/or snacks at gas stations?

- a. Yes, all trips will feature multiple gas station stops. During these stops, campers can buy drinks and snacks, depending on their behavior and Trip Leaders' discretion. These stops are earned, not expected, and can be taken away due to bad behavior. Trip Leaders are not responsible for lost money. This is a 'growing up' opportunity for the child and they should learn or know by now how to keep track of their belongings and money.