

CALIFORNIA EDITION 12 FREE MAPS!

BACKPACKER

THE OUTDOORS AT YOUR DOORSTEP

UNDISCOVERED GRAND CANYON

6 CROWD-FREE HIKES TO HIDDEN OASES
AND PRIVATE BEACH CAMPSITES

**SURVIVE A
BEAR ATTACK!**

PLAN YOUR DREAM TRIP

CLIMB MT. RAINIER
PLAY HARD IN MOAB
TREK PATAGONIA
DO IT ALL IN ALASKA

HIGH-TECH GIFT GUIDE

HIGH POINTS USA
**BEST OF
THE WEST**

DECEMBER 2004

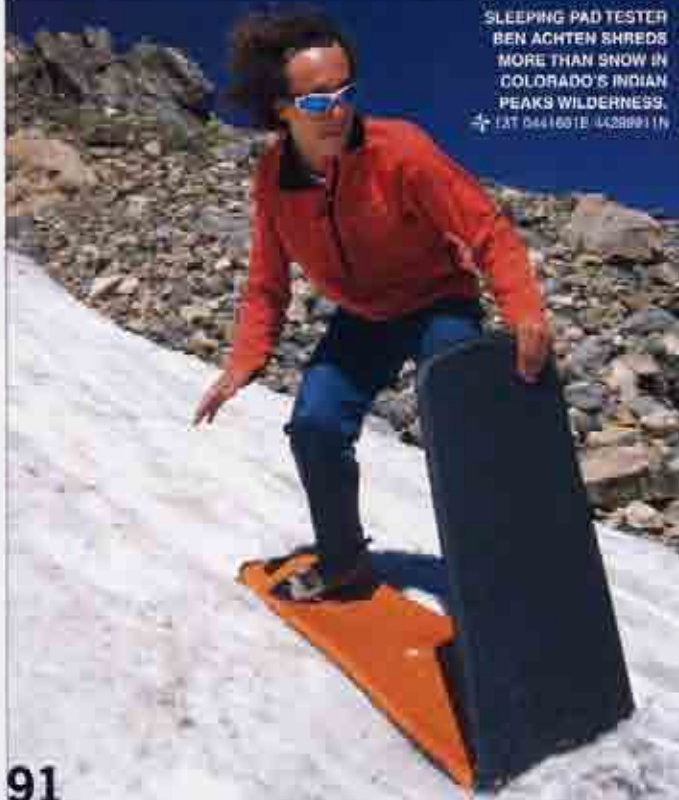
\$3.99US \$4.99CAN



12

Red rock cathedral:
An early-morning
alpenglow surveys
the Colorado River
from Toroweap Point.

WWW.BACKPACKER.COM



SLEEPING PAD TESTER
BEN ACHTEN SHREDS
MORE THAN SNOW IN
COLORADO'S INDIAN
PEAKS WILDERNESS.
 [31 0441001E 04289911N]

91



WLANGELL-ST. ELIAS NATIONAL PARK, AK

36



49



40

(BASECAMP)

Adventures

[25] **The Trip** Beyond the tourist throngs and Appalachian kitsch, we find a slice of the Smokies that has actually gotten wilder in the last 50 years. Prepare yourself for empty trails, quirky ghost towns, and quiet pools filled with foot-long rainbows.

[31] **60-Minute Fixes: San Francisco** The hills, that bay, those golden mountains of the Marin Headlands. Here's how to hike, paddle, and bike the Bay Area's best pockets of wilderness.

[32] **Days** Three hikes for howling at the moon; a blissful day among Moab's red rocks; and a search for the elusive ghost orchid on Florida's swampy trails.

[34] **Weekends** Backpack and basecamp in hidden California oases; get beyond the bow in Minnesota's coolest lake town; and find your way in the Lost Coast's spectacular new state park.

[36] **Vacations** Two foolproof plans for trekking among glaciers galore in backcountry Alaska. And everything you need to know for the hike of a lifetime in Patagonia.

Nature

[39] **Wildlife** Learn why the feds shot a pack of sheep-eating wolves in Idaho. Plus, how do weather reports help a nature photographer see animals?

[44] **Natural World** Get an inside look at Alaska's largest kettle pond, the lowdown on Glacier National Park's shriveling ice sheets, and a delicious inspiration to hunt for wild pecans.

Skills

[49] **Technique** Thousands of trip photos, three high-tech solutions for scrapbook chaos. And there's more: Learn how to fix busted tent poles, find a hiking partner, and rappel off a cliff.

[54] **Food** Dehydrated breakfasts: Are they worth waking up for? We taste test four new meals. And we deliver fast, delicious recipes for the versatile black bean.

[56] **Health** The best way to treat a bum; two solutions for ill-fitting boots; and how Olympic canoeist Nate Johnson gets stronger with Fig Newtons.

Adventure Guide

[76] **Grand Canyon**

With this map and guide to the Big Ditch's wildest routes, you can trek to hidden waterfalls, cool grottos, and soaring slick-rock viewpoints rarely visited since John Wesley Powell ran the Colorado. Our explorer-in-residence sussed out the canyon's sweetest spots and nailed GPS coordinates for getting to them.

Gear

[81] **Turn On, Tune In, Get Out**

We thrashed the latest high-tech toys on treks from Rainier to McKinley and came back with seven electronic gifts for the hiker who has everything—from a wrist-top GPS to an ultralight MP3 player. Plus: four summit packs, three featherweight wind suits, and two reasons to get a new stove.

[15] **EDITOR'S NOTE**
 [16] **CONTRIBUTORS**
 [19] **TRAIL LOG**

[104] **WAYPOINTS**
 [113] **HUMAN NATURE**

BASECAMP

ADVENTURES 25 NATURE 39 SKILLS 49

TOUCH OF THE COAX: INSIDE HEAD
HUNT A NEW BIRD IN THE ROOF
GLACIER: IN ALASKA'S DRY STATE
FELIX: SHAWDOLL OF BIRDS
MOUNTAIN: FROM LEADERSHIP
AND THE WAY OF THE

COLD SHOULDER:
HIKERS TRAVERSE
THE BREMER
GLACIER ON
WRANGELL-ST. ELIAS



Backcountry Alaska By Tracy Ross

SAVE **\$840** SPLURGE **\$3,500**

WHAT YOU GET

Ice and rock, and lots of it. Hop a scenic bush-plane flight from McCarthy (population 25) into the Wrangell Mountains (home of 16,390-foot Mt. Blackburn) as prelude to a guided 5-day Wrangell-St. Elias National Park scramble. The agenda? Trek across Kennicott Glacier, over 2,200-foot Packsaddle Island (actually a mountain jutting from ice), up 6,696-foot Donoho Peak, and down the Root Glacier. The tab includes the flight from McCarthy, meals, loaner gear, and glacier-travel instruction.

WHY IT'S COOL

Eight hundred large may not sound like a bargain, but you'd be hard-pressed to put this trip together for less unsupported. And even if you could find your way deep into 13-million-acre Wrangell-St. Elias—where 14,000-foot peaks send plumes of spindrift off their summits and earth-rattling avalanches onto the world's second-largest concentration of glaciers—it's not a great idea for the uninitiated to tackle America's last great unexplored mountain kingdom solo. Grizzlies, wolves, and bald eagles own these wilds, but it's the glaciers (and traveling on them) that make this trip stratospherically cool—and more harrowing than your average hike. A local expert will help you admire, but ultimately avoid, the likes of the 40-foot-wide, 300-foot-deep blue-ice moulin that one guide recently spotted on nearby Gates Glacier. Slip into a hole that size and you'll have to worm your way home under 1,000 feet of heaving ice—like Joe Simpson in *Touching the Void*, give or take the good luck.

WHAT YOU GET

You'll fly even deeper into Wrangell Mountain country, then nomad across four glacial highways, climb rarely seen peaks, and camp on islands of tundra amid snow and ice. Eight days and untold burned calories later, you'll push off on a 4-day raft trip back to McCarthy. The tab includes round-trip ground transportation from Anchorage; bush flights; food, gear, and some of the most experienced deep-backcountry guides in south-central Alaska.

WHY IT'S COOL

Throw in a couple mastodon sightings and you might as well be an ancient Athabaskan traveling through this country for the first time—that's how much civilization you'll see after the Casena 180 leaves you on the ice fields of Hole-in-the-Wall Glacier in the upper Skoia Valley. Only six people have ever done the Skoia/Nizina trip, which traverses the Frederika, Rohn, Regal, and Nizina Glaciers, crosses two ice-melt-engorged rivers, and winds beneath hanging snowfields and sky-slicing peaks. By the time you descend the Nizina Glacier, civilization is a welcome sight. There, you'll trade freeze-dried stroganoff for fresh Copper River reds, French wines, and cheese cake with local berries. And you'll swap pack sores for a raft, launching an iceberg-studded, 50-mile "float and bloat" through the mile-high cliffs of the Nizina Canyon and onto the bear-lined Chitina River. Back in town, you can ease your re-entry with a therapeutic sweat in a wood-fired sauna.

HOW TO DO IT

St. Elias Alpine Guides, (888) 933-5427;
www.steliasguides.com

FIND MORE TRIPS AT BACKPACKER.COM