

What is a Philmont “Trek”?

The standard and most popular Philmont program is the *trek*. A typical Philmont trek lasts 12 days and covers anywhere from 50 to 103 miles (80 to 166 km) of trail. In 2010 there were 35 different trek itineraries, ranging from challenging to super strenuous. Each trek is unique, covering distinct regions, peaks, and camps. A group of Scouts on a trek is called a *crew*; most crews are assembled by troops, Venturing crews, or local councils. A crew consists of eight to twelve people, with two to four adult leaders, a chaplain's aide, Wilderness Pledge Guide, and a crew leader. A *contingent* consists of one or more crews from the same council (see [Boy Scouts of America: Organization](#)), traveling together. *Sister crews* are crews that follow the same itinerary and are usually from different troops. Around 360 trekkers arrive at base camp every day of the season.

The first crews receive their guides, or [Ranger](#), on June 8, and the last crews receive their Rangers on August 14. During the last few weeks of the season crews may be placed on shortened itineraries, which run from 6 to 9 days in length (compared to the typical 12).

A typical crew's experience is as follows:

The crew arrives in [Base Camp](#), checks in at the Welcome Center, and meets its [Ranger](#), a trained staff member from the Ranger Department. He or she assists them in the various Base Camp ("processing") procedures, which consist of completing all paperwork at Registration, verifying their itinerary with Logistics, checking out gear at Services (such as a dining fly, bear ropes, bear bags, and water purification tablets), and receiving health checks at the Health Lodge.

A crew also receives several days' worth of Philmont trail food, packaged in bags which feed two people each; the exact quantity depends on the crew's itinerary and the day on which it is scheduled to reach the next commissary, but is usually 3 days worth of food. Philmont also provides optional cooking supplies.

The crew spends its first night in the Trailbound side of Tent City, where the trekkers sleep in canvas tents. The next morning, they eat breakfast at the dining hall, have their crew photo taken, and board a bus to one of the ranch's several trailheads (called "turnarounds" because they consist of a loop in the road for the bus to turn around).

The [Ranger](#) verifies the trekkers' general backpacking knowledge and teaches them specific Philmont procedures, such as bear procedure and latrine usage. Rangers stay with their crews on the trail for two days and depart on the morning of the third day. In the next eight days the crew will hike through the Philmont wilderness, staying at various [staffed camps](#) and unstaffed "[trail camps](#)" scattered about the Ranch. On the final day, the crew returns to Base Camp, sometimes by bus from a turnaround or by climbing over the [Tooth of Time](#) and hiking directly into Base Camp. During the final day at Base Camp, the crew cleans up, returns various Philmont-issued supplies, and attends the closing campfire.



PHILMONT SCOUT RANCH
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA