



Since 1999

*"The More You Carry In Your Head,  
The Less You Carry On Your Back"*

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## **Earth Skills Semester Program**

For over 99% of human history our species lived as small groups of hunter-gatherers in intimate contact with the land around us. We knew how to make what we needed from what nature provided. Our knowledge of our surroundings was so complete that we knew every plant, bird, bug, mammal, track, fish, and star on a deep and meaningful level.

With the rise of agriculture and the specialization of labor we began a detour from our origins. In our modern world, the vast majority of people are cut off from the rhythms of the natural world. But you can rebuild this connection. You can begin to see the real world of nature in the same way all of our human ancestors did; as home. The Earth Skills Semester Program (ESSP) can teach you how.

The ESSP is an immersion course in traditional wilderness living and travel skills designed to bridge the gap between our modern world and the natural world around us. Students receive intensive instruction in traditional bush skills and naturalist studies. They learn how to build shelters, how to make fire without matches, how to find wild foods and medicines, how to make baskets, pottery, clothing, musical instruments, soap, and anything else required to live well. At the same time they learn how to take care of the land so that it becomes a healthier environment for plants, animals, and people.

The program is designed for students to live the skills they are learning. Early in the course they learn to make fire without matches, and from then on use those techniques in place of matches or lighters. They weave pack baskets and make pack frames, then use them to carry their gear. They make shelters, then sleep in them. They acquire knowledge, then put that knowledge into action.

On numerous trips into the north woods, students live and learn the skills of the bush. From a ten day snowshoe trip where they live in woodstove-heated wall tents, to canoeing northern rivers, to a north woods walkabout, students are constantly refining their knowledge, while at the same time expanding their understanding of what is possible.

The most important lesson taught is to think creatively and to throw out the word impossible. By the time they leave, students who arrived with little knowledge of traditional bush skills will know how to find food and shelter on almost any landscape. They will be able to produce fire quickly by friction or percussion. They will be able to apply abilities and confidence gained in the wilderness to problems in everyday life, turning challenges and difficulties into strengths and opportunities.

For more information on the ESSP and other learning opportunities including an extensive photo gallery, visit us on the web at:

[www.jackmtn.com](http://www.jackmtn.com).