



2026 Student Information Guide

Aanii Kina weya Friends,

Welcome to Great Lakes Cultural Camps! We look forward to sharing our rich and vibrant Anishinaabe culture with you in Anishinaabe Akiing. Please read through the following pages carefully to help you prepare for your Great Lakes Cultural Camp Experience. If you have any questions about the course logistics, course content or eligibility contact the Great Lakes Cultural Camp office anytime by email at info@culturalcamps.com

Learn | Play | Explore with Great Lakes Cultural Camps

Great Lakes Cultural Camps is more than just a camp experience. We're all about making memories, leadership, learning opportunities, and outdoor adventure.

Great Lakes Cultural Camps' unique programming is designed to promote the proper delivery of outdoor adventure and cultural programming through the development of knowledgeable competent leadership.

On-the-Land Learning with Great Lakes Cultural Camps

Great Lakes Cultural Camps is a year-round mobile outdoor education centre which means that we bring everything to you! Great Lakes Cultural Camps develops and provides high quality cultural experiences that recognize the value of being active in the outdoors, land-based learning, Anishinaabe culture and what it can bring to people's lives. Solid facilitation, opportunities to process learning and real life experiences ensure a unique way of learning. Whether the focus is Gchi-gete-anishinaabe-kendaasowin (ancestral knowledge), cooking our traditional foods, Indigenous games, traditional ecological knowledge, or deeper understanding of Anishinaabe culture and history, we promote hands-on learning.



What You Can Expect

Our days are full of adventure and challenging because they involve the active participation of each individual. If you wish to participate, you should be aware that very little will be done for you. Expect full days on and around the lake/river with plenty of hands-on practice time. Days include a mixture of skills workshops, small group drills, practical review and debriefing. Anticipate intense days. Don't plan on being involved with other work or school during your Great Lakes Cultural Camp program.

You can expect excellent instructors who are professional, dynamic and fun. In addition you can expect a safe environment, and a unique experience to remember!

Our Enthusiastic Participants

The key to a great trip is a group of participants who are highly motivated to participate. Great Lakes Cultural Camps is not the type of program where participants are sent against their own will. We only accept participants who express a strong desire to join our expeditions and contribute positively, which assures everyone of having the best possible group experience. You will return home with not only a variety of fascinating skills, but also with new friends and a true Anishinaabe cultural experience.

Our Wilderness Classroom

Instruction is "hands-on" and personal, giving you the opportunity to learn through experience. Experiential learning is one of the most effective tools available for helping individuals learn and apply knowledge. Solid facilitation, opportunities to process learning and real life experiences ensure a unique way of learning. Whether the focus is team building, leadership, cultural enrichment, science, skill building, we promote hands-on learning. This approach to teaching acknowledges and meets the needs of participants' varying learning styles.



We Reserve The Right To Alter The Agenda

We reserve the right to alter the agenda prior to and throughout the course as we constantly improve the Great Lakes Cultural Camp experience. Itineraries may change due to: severe weather, student ability, unpredictable natural disasters, vehicle breakdowns, road closures, forest fires, illness, any potential threat to safety; even a brilliant idea from an instructor or student. In the event of a schedule change, comparable activities will be substituted when possible and you will be notified by e-mail of significant changes.

Safety Practices

Our instruction staff possess current First Aid and CPR certificates, have experience working with children and youth and have taken part in our extensive staff training. In addition, we ensure that staff carry a knapsack containing a fully stocked first aid kit, participant information, bear deterrent, a whistle, sunscreen and extra clothes. All staff facilitating adventure programs, have related qualifications, training and experience. Proper safety equipment for all of our programs is used and regularly inspected (i.e. first aid kit, PFDs, water rescue equipment, Garmin inReach, GPS and satellite phone, etc).

Medical Training of Our Instructors

Great Lakes Cultural Camps requires all field instructors to be trained as a Wilderness First Responder (WFR). Industry standard medical training for backcountry instructors is a Wilderness First Responder (WFR) certification. Wilderness First Responder certification means the instructor has passed an 80 hour intensive course, focused first on prevention and treatment of back country emergencies.

Whitewater Rescue Training of Our Instructors

Great Lakes Cultural Camps requires all field instructors to be trained as a Whitewater Rescue Technicians (WRT). Whitewater Rescue Technician (WRT) is the international standard for river guides, whitewater instructors, independent boaters, and rescue technicians.



Canoe & Kayak Training of Our Instructors

We specialize in Ontario Recreational Canoeing & Kayaking Association (ORCKA) certification programs. Our team is friendly, skilled and take pride in sharing their cultural heritage. We are ORCKA Instructors in the following disciplines of paddling such as: Basic Canoeing, Canoe Tripping, Moving Water, Canadian Style Paddling, River Running, Flatwater Kayak and Moving Water Kayak.

ORCKA (Ontario Recreational Canoeing and Kayaking Association) is the provincially and nationally recognized provider of recreational canoeing and kayaking programs and instruction, helping the people of Ontario to become safe, competent and knowledgeable recreational paddlers!

Program Registration

We are very excited to welcome you into the Great Lakes Cultural Camp family. It is very important you fill in and return the following documents as part of your registration. Please complete these and return them to the coordinator immediately. We must receive these completed forms in order for you to begin the course. In addition, participants must be properly equipped for our adventure. Failure to have the proper equipment will result in you not being able to participate.

- 1. Health Form**
- 2. Student Agreement**
- 3. Dietary Restrictions**
- 4. Participant Agreement for Adventure Activity**

Special Needs or Personal Requirements

If you have special needs that require assistance, please indicate this on the registration form and we will do our best to accommodate them. We regret that we CANNOT provide a peanut- or nut-free environment.



Abusive Language

We expect all participants and students to treat each other with respect. Abusive language or disrespectful treatment of others is not acceptable and cannot be tolerated. In the event that a personal conflict arises between members of our group, it may require some resolution by one of the instructors. Please keep one of our instructors informed if you are having a difficult time dealing with someone or something on the course.

Smoking

Smoking often becomes an issue while working in a group environment. We have a few guidelines that we ask you to respect.

1. Please refrain from smoking in any vehicles or buildings.
2. Please refrain from smoking while others are eating, during group meetings, while working around food or equipment.
3. Please refrain from smoking while loading or unloading equipment or anytime when we need the whole group's effort to perform a given task.
4. Please ensure that you "butt out" completely and dispose of your filters appropriately.

Alcohol

Great Lakes Cultural Camps is 100 % alcohol and drug free.

Illegal Drugs

Great Lakes Cultural Camps is a drug free program. Anyone using or in possession of illegal drugs will be expelled from the program and/or handed over to the appropriate authorities. Please do not jeopardize your position on your Great Lakes Cultural Camps Experience.



What People Are Saying About Great Lakes Cultural Camps

"The impact this camp had on my son, Levi was incredible. As parents we think we know everything about our children but the moment you put them in a different environment that feeds their identity, the change you see is radical; he enjoys being outside but for him I think he connected a lot to the spearing tipi; and he showed patience that I might have forgotten as a parent that he is **capable** of; and to watch him lay there waiting and wondering and being extremely calm all day was remarkable, he was present in the learning that was taking place around him and interested in new things."

Dakota, Parent & Participant

Anishinaabe Wilderness Living Skills Camp

"I would absolutely recommend this Family Trapping Camp to other families. This was a great learning experience that was so hands on and full of so much information! My child was able to engage when he felt comfortable to. Great Lakes Cultural Camps is a family organization; they are incredible with adults, but also children! They went out of their way to make sure the children were engaged and learning; through hands on experience, storytelling, and exploring the nature that surrounds us. I appreciate that this was so welcoming to children; as an indigenous woman who never grew up with this culture and teachings, I am doing what I can in my adult life to learning when and where I can, and the fact that my child is welcome and encouraged to engage makes it that much better. It is through this type of learning and opportunities that we will be able to provide a life for our children that we did not have. We as the adults are learning, but we are learning alongside our children; and that is true privilege. It is through these types of opportunities that we build relationships with other like-minded people and families; we are building a sense of community and belonging."

Alyssa, Parent & Participant,

Family Trapping Camp



Why Choose Great Lakes Cultural Camps

There are plenty of great wilderness educational experiences and we highly recommend them for the general public. Great Lakes Cultural Camps, however, is designed with a cultural experience and is better suited for people who desire a fun, personal, cultural outdoor adventure program.

We Have Great Food This might seem like an arbitrary thing to mention at first, but after a full day of outdoor activity, there's nothing better than sharing a hot, tasty meal with friends.

Top of the Line Equipment We use only top-quality equipment on all of our GLCC whitewater wilderness trips. Our Esquif Canyon canoes are the performance vehicle for whitewater descents. NSR wetsuit, Kokatat splash jacket, Sweet helmet, Salus life jacket, paddle and fully outfitted Esquif canoe are included in the price of your GLCC experience.

Our Instructor to Student Ratio Lower ratios mean a safer experience, better supervision, more opportunities to learn, and better interaction with role models. Our student ratio is 1:5 in solo boating, 1:6 in kayaking, 1:8 canoe tripping. Our staff always work in teams of two or three. We have two instructors on all our programs with additional support staff for larger groups.

Cultural Adventure Experience the backcountry with culture. At GLCC, you'll enjoy whitewater canoeing / kayaking on world famous rivers of Canada with your First Nation professional whitewater guides. Whether it's your first time whitewater paddling, or you are an experienced paddler looking to step up to the next level, a canoe or kayak lesson with GLCC is an unforgettable experience.

GLCC Purpose Contribute to the land-based educational development and growth of all people at Great Lakes Cultural Camps.



The WISE Clothing System

If you're making plans to hit the outdoors with us, give this a try. There is no such thing as bad weather. It all has to do with being prepared to be in the elements. Getting dressed for your outdoor adventure is part of the experience of enjoying our Canadian weather.

The WISE Clothing System.

Nothing will affect your comfort outdoors more than how you dress and no other season is more challenging to stay comfortable in than winter. Winter is a great time to get outside with family and friends, so get dressed and get outside.

Dressing in the WISE way provides a functional system to keep you comfortably and dry year around.

W = a wicking layer worn next to the skin. Fabrics like polypropylene and merino wool draw moisture away from your skin so you don't get wet and clammy.

I = insulation. This layer goes over the wicking layer. This layer is a bit thicker and traps warm air next to the skin and moves moisture to the surface and away from the wicking layer. Materials like wool, fleece and down are great for this. In summer a thin insulating layer may be all you need. In winter add extra layers of insulation to provide the warmth you need. Just make sure the layers are large enough to fit comfortably over each other.

S = the shell layer. The shell is used to stop heat loss by wind or rain and snow. The shell needs to be wind proof and breathable. Materials like Gore Tex are made for this purpose. The breathable nature allows the shell to vent the moisture that has been moved away from your skin by the other layers.

E = Extra layers. It's always a good idea to carry some extra insulating layers for the head, hands, feet and body. Carry the extra layers in a pocket or pack and they are ready when you need them. Just keep them dry while packed.



The WISE Clothing System (continued)

OK, so there we go. Dress WISEly and let's get outside and enjoy the natural treasures around us.

BASE LAYER
Warmth/ Moisture Control
Regulates body warmth and moves perspiration away from body



Also known as "long underwear/ johns" and usually made of synthetic material. Available in lightweight, middleweight and heavyweight, depending on the season. We recommend one lightweight and one heavyweight top and lower options for the Dayara trek. This will allow you more choice, depending on the prevalent conditions.

MIDDLE LAYERS
Insulation
The Mid layers retain heat, trapping it close to the body



Fleece (synthetic wool) top and bottoms above the base layer. A puffy jacket (down or synthetic down) for insulations. Both of these are compressible and light and will easily fit into your backpack.

OUTER LAYER
Weather Protection
Protects from harsh weather conditions such as Snow, Rain, Sleet, Hail



Commonly known as wind shell jackets, these can be worn above your mid layers and insulate your body as well as breathe well during hiking. On top of this we suggest a waterproof shell, which will actually keep you dry when it snows (snow quickly melts when coming into contact with the body).



Outdoor Adventure Check List

Personal Gear

- ✓ Filled reusable water bottle
- ✓ Personal snacks
- ✓ Healthy & hearty lunch
- ✓ Prescription medication (if required)
- ✓ Feminine hygiene products
- ✓ Toilet paper, diaper wipes, hand sanitizer in a ziploc bag
- ✓ Sunglasses
- ✓ Prescription glasses with strap
- ✓ Contacts/ contact lens solution
- ✓ Sunscreen and lip balm
- ✓ Bug spray
- ✓ Water proof protective bag/case for cell phone
- ✓ Towel
- ✓ Cash for field trip days
- ✓ Day backpack

Clothing

- ✓ Closed toed sturdy footwear for on the land activities (NO sandals, slides or crocs)
- ✓ Bug jacket, bug head net & bug repellent
- ✓ Quick dry pants/long pants
- ✓ Rain coat
- ✓ Old pair of shoes for canoe training or appropriate water shoes
- ✓ Swimming shorts or bathing suit
- ✓ Hoodie
- ✓ Work gloves
- ✓ Sun hat or ball cap
- ✓ Extra clothing
- ✓ Gear bag for all of your stuff

Personal Responsibility For Your Comfort In Outdoor Learning

As part of your outdoor learning experience temperatures vary and conditions can change quickly. Dress in comfortable clothing for the day with good sturdy closed toe footwear (no flip flops/crocs) and be ready to have fun in the outdoors rain or shine. Please remember to label all of your items.



OPHEA Swim Test (Swim Test for Shallow and Deep Water) To Be Conducted Prior To Your Great Lakes Cultural Camp Experience

An initial screening/testing of swimming ability must be done in shallow water prior to the activity.

Schools must adhere to the facility swim test standard regarding the components of the swim test for shallow and deep water. If a facility swim test standard does not exist, the Lifesaving Society Swim to Survive swim standard must be used.

The test must be administered by a certified aquatic instructor or a certified lifeguard (the test is based on the Lifesaving Society's Swim to Survive™ Standard).

The swim test must be completed within the school year in which the activity is taking place.

In lieu of completing the swim test, students may provide proof of Bronze Star certification or higher.

Results of the swim test must be documented and communicated as per school board policy (for example, to the student, teacher, principal, parents/guardians, trip guide(s), lifeguards, aquatic instructor, and outside provider [if applicable]).

Students who do not pass the swim test or who do not have the aforementioned certification must not participate in the activity.



2026 Great Lakes Cultural Camps Fine Print

The safety and well-being of our participants, our Team and our community partners is what's most important. As an organization that has provided on-the-land and culture-based education for more than a decade, we remain fully committed to providing education today and in the weeks and months to come.

We Reserve The Right

We reserve the right to alter the itinerary prior to and throughout the trip as we constantly improve the Great Lakes Cultural Camp experience. Itineraries may change due to: Severe weather, student ability, motivation and conditioning, high or low rivers, unpredictable natural disasters and acts of nature, vehicle breakdowns, road closures, forest fires, illness, any potential threat to safety; even a brilliant idea from an instructor or student. In the event of a schedule change, comparable activities will be substituted when possible and you will be notified by e-mail of significant changes.

Medical Circumstance Refunds and Withdrawal

For students who are required to discontinue their course/program for medical reasons, each course has its own specific policies that may require contacting the coordinator of that course.

However, most courses do not provide a refund unless it is for a medical or emergency reason. Medical circumstances require an official written doctor's note. The refund amount is specific to each course and may be pro-rated based on course time completed at time of withdrawal. All medical requests must be made in writing and be fully supported and documented by a practicing medical physician with the Medical Association.

Registration Process

Upon receipt of your paid registration we will forward our Health & Safety Form and an Assumption of Risk, Responsibility Form. Please complete these and return them immediately. We must receive these completed forms in order for you to begin the course. There is a practical skills evaluation as part of the certification process during this course.



2026 Great Lakes Cultural Camps Fine Print

The Course Fee Does Not Include

Personal equipment/gear requirements, personal expenditures while at Great Lakes Cultural base camp (i.e. equipment purchase, travel snack purchase) nor does it provide replacement for lost, stolen or broken equipment.

Insufficient Registration

From time to time, courses are cancelled due to insufficient registration. Every effort will be made to contact people 14 days prior to the start of the course. Great Lakes Cultural Camps is not responsible for any other expenses incurred by registrants as a result of cancelled courses such as travel and accommodation.

Evaluation and Attendance

Practical assessment is ongoing. Instructors will do everything they can to accommodate students with different learning styles and needs. Please let us know what we can do to help you succeed. Attendance for 100% of class time is mandatory. If you cannot make a session you must get permission from the instructor in advance. Students who miss a section of the course without pre-approval may be asked to leave the course for the sake and safety of the other students.

Course cancelled by Great Lakes Cultural Camps:

If a course has to be cancelled due to circumstances beyond our control (i.e., flood) then we give you a spot on another date and location of the same course, or a full credit to use towards any of our other courses. Great Lakes Cultural Camps is not responsible for expenses incurred by students in preparing for a cancelled course (for example non-refundable advance purchase plane tickets, visa fees, inoculations, equipment etc. or for any additional arrangements for other travel plans associated with this course).