



Boulder, Utah, USA

# Survival School



Southern Utah in the United States is a land of extremes. The normally dry desert is occasionally drowned in summer rainstorms. The high altitude of Utah's mountains makes the days very hot and the nights very cold. It is also a beautiful place with a long history of human habitation. Utah is named after the Ute tribe of Native Americans, and, before the Ute, the Anasazi people made their home here.

Perhaps it's no surprise that modern outdoor adventurers come to southern Utah to go hiking, camping, and horseback riding in the area's national forests or to see the fantastic rock formations in Bryce Canyon National Park. What might surprise you is that some of the adventurers choose to spend their time outdoors with little food or water and no modern camping equipment. Instead, they're learning to live in the wilderness the old-fashioned way.

The Boulder Outdoor Survival School (BOSS), founded in 1968, is the world's oldest survival school. With its philosophy of "Know more; carry less," BOSS teaches its students techniques



for surviving outdoors without tents, backpacks, or sleeping bags. Participants learn to make shelters from leaves or snow, to find and **purify** water for drinking, and to eat what they can find in the wild. The students and instructors end their day around a crackling campfire, but the fire is made using stones and **brush** from the area, not matches.

The school's courses are not for everyone. Students must arrive in excellent physical health in order to **endure** hikes of up to 30 miles through Utah's deserts and **canyons**. They must be active learners because they'll need all the skills the BOSS instructors teach them in order to survive a field course, which can last from one week to one month, and which includes "solo" time, when students are tested in a very real way on everything they've learned.

For the people who take BOSS's courses, there is nothing better. If they wanted to spend time outdoors in comfort, they would pack their camping equipment and perhaps their GPS system and join the rest of Utah's outdoor **enthusiasts**. Instead, these campers love the way BOSS challenges their minds and bodies. And the confidence they gain from knowing how to survive without a lot of technology is the reward these brave people are looking for.