

Where do I begin? Sahale Peak has been on our radar for a couple of years now, so when we finally decided this was the year, we got to work. The flight to Seattle was pretty unremarkable. We stayed in a hotel close to the airport that night and the next morning, got as far away from the city as we could! We spent a few days in the amazing and quiet town of Mazama while we watched the forecast on the higher summits. Sahale was supposed to be a three day, more laid back trip where we'd hike in on day one, summit on day two, and then hike out on day three... well, the weather had other plans. Our guide had contacted us, and we all agreed that two days would be sufficient, where we hike in on day one, and summit and hike out on day two. Here we go: To start, we knew we had a longer journey than originally planned. The road leading up to the trail was closed for repair for avalanche damage. It was about two extra miles on the road. We threw the heavy packs on our backs and went on our way. I noticed right away that my traps would be the muscle group that would experience the biggest suffer-fest. It was exciting to get to the trail until I realized just how overgrown the bottom half was. My mountain axe kept getting caught on trees and bushes, and my legs were getting cut and bruised by the shrubs/trees/hidden rocks. This was type 2 fun at its finest. We also had 4 or 5 river crossings, which, if you know me, you would understand that they are my nemesis! Regardless, I navigated them well and about 3.5 hrs after beginning, we reached lower camp above tree line, and all of my aches and pains disappeared when I saw ridge lines ahead. Boston Basin is such a unique and beautiful place filled with wildlife, fresh running water everywhere, and mountain tops surrounding the basin like an amphitheater. We put up our tent, unpacked and repacked for summit day, did some crevasse rescue refreshers and ate dinner. Meanwhile we had the pleasure of encountering marmots, who have mastered the art of food thievery and also stealing hearts. ❤️ We sure do love marmots! One thing to note was just how hot it was up at almost 6000 feet. The sun beats down on the basin and there isn't much of anything to hide behind. With that said, once it set the temperature was so much more comfortable for sleeping... speaking of which, Bob and I both slept remarkably well, and when the alarm went off at 3 a.m., we sprang up and got to getting breakfast and coffee, and making our way to the alpine potty maintained by the sun and the Park Rangers. We set off for the summit around 4:15 with lighter packs and big smiles. The trek over to the snowfield and glacier was up on this gorgeous terrain filled with green grass and beautiful flora. We made our way across the moraine and onto the snow, where we put on our crampons, harness, helmet, etc. and roped up. We both said later how strong we felt climbing the steep snow and glacier. It actually felt quite amazing. Once we got up to the saddle and onto the ridge line, we took our crampons off and left the axes behind. We scrambled up the ridge pretty quickly and were at the base of the summit pitch in no time. Here's the thing: exposure is something that has scared me for a long time, and a fear I have been really working to overcome. Sahale summit has some classic 4th class with a couple of 5th class moves on it, where, if I were 30 feet off the ground would be no problem. We were almost 8600 ft. above sea level, and at some points, there is a lot of open air between you and the earth below you. I knew this going into it. I studied the summit pitches through descriptions and countless videos, and I trained and vowed to push myself outside of my comfort zone. I

don't know how best to describe topping out on the summit other than it felt effortless and there was no fear. I'm not saying climbing rock in mountaineering boots is a walk in the park, but I can say that I had the utmost confidence in my training, and 100% trust in the rope system and my team. Bob was right behind me and popped out onto the summit a moment later. There we were, three people sitting on the summit, pretty much taking up its entirety (all of about 10 ft. I'd guess). We soaked in the views as the sky was blue and visibility was exceptional.

We looked over and could see Rainier in the far distance, and turned around to see Mt. Baker in all her glory, the summit that sparked our interest in mountaineering back in 2019. It's cheesy, but it was absolutely euphoric and breathtaking.

Definitely one of those "pinch me" moments where I just needed to make sure it was all real. We down climbed the summit, scrambled down the ridge, popped the crampons back on, grabbed our axes and headed down. It took us 4 hours to reach the summit from camp and 2 to get back. We took a snack break, packed up our belongings and starting making our way back to the car. The descent was brutal on my traps, sometimes to the point where I would try to think of anything else to divert the pain, but it just wasn't quite working. Oh well, we made it back to the car and drove to our hotel for a mandatory shower and to do some laundry. At the end of the day I can say that there is no one I'd rather do this stuff with more than my husband. Being able to experience types 1, 2, and 3 fun together is really quite amazing (a roller coaster of emotions in the best way, if that makes sense). I have one lesson learned for next time: train with a heavier pack. Legs and lungs were properly trained, but my shoulders and traps definitely needed more work to mimic carrying a heavy pack over long periods of time.