



Winter Powder Weekends

Powder Snow: Skiing. loose, usually fresh snow that is not granular, wet or packed.- v.t.

Webster's Dictionary.

We think that Noah Webster didn't quite get it right, and was obviously not a skier. So here is our definition:

"Quite possibly the best snow to ski. Soft and deep, giving the sensation of floating in air. Soft white waves flowing around the body with the skis out of sight for most of the day. The finest, light powder is often like smoke rising and falling in the cold air of a mid winter's day. Not easy to ski and requiring a delicate touch and awareness of weighting, unweighting, and steering. What skiers dream about during the long summer months."

We certainly dream about it and a good powder day is the best reason we can think of to take a day off work and ignore any consequences. A perfect powder day is as close to heaven as you can get here on earth. While the Sierra powder is not as predictable as that of the intermountain states we have some excellent days in the mid winter months of February and March. Even weeks after the most recent storm we have excellent "powder pockets," where the snow pack has metamorphosed into great smoky powder.

And if the skiing is too good to leave we can arrange to call work saying that you are "snowed in" or have "vehicle problems"

Itinerary: This trip is designed to fit into a weekend away from home. The exact destinations will depend upon the prevailing conditions so check in with us beforehand and we will make our choices as the trip progresses. We may ski in the Bishop area to the south or north towards Mammoth; if the snow is good we will be there! Some of our favorite backcountry areas are Table Mountain or Bishop Bowl, to the west of Bishop, Chicken Wing and Little Wing between Mammoth and June Lake, the Tele Bowls, or runs in the Sherwins, just out of Mammoth. Once we get a track put in then we can do multiple runs until we can ski no more. Usually we are able to get at least 2,500' of fresh tracks, with little or no competition from other skiers.

Meeting place and time: We will meet in Mammoth at the Breakfast Club for breakfast, introductions, and trip outline at 7:30 a.m. the first morning of the trip. The Breakfast Club is located on Highway 203 (the access road to Mammoth from Highway 395) at the first traffic light you encounter, adjacent to the Shell Station. This is the intersection of Highway 203 and Old Mammoth Road and the restaurant is on the south side of 203.

Dates and Prices: Check the latest brochure, call us or go to our web site for dates and rates. Should minimum participant numbers not be reached you will be given the option of paying our private rate, rescheduling, or cancelling. Should minimum participant numbers not be reached you will be given the option of paying our private rate, rescheduling, or cancelling. Breakfast and dinners will be restaurant meals and are not included in the trip price.

Notes: The SMC web site has photos, a map and more information.

Proper acclimatization to the elevation will greatly increase your pleasure and enjoyment of the trip. We highly recommend getting at least one day and night at altitude immediately prior to the trip, for instance, by staying in Mammoth or at Tom's Place between Mammoth and Bishop. Let us know if you want us to help arrange accommodation.

Gear and equipment: SMC does not rent ski equipment, but we work with Mammoth Mountaineering (760 934 4191) to get you set up on the correct equipment. MMS has a very wide range of rental equipment that is probably the best you will find anywhere in California. All gear is current state of the art, well tuned and rental fees are deductible if you buy a set up from them. (We highly recommend renting before you buy so as to find what suits you best, since a full setup is pretty pricy). We can coordinate the rental but suggest that you arrive Mammoth the night before and get fully set up since boot fitting can take some time. If this is not possible we will take time to get gear the morning of Day One but if it is already taken care of we can get out and ski sooner.

Prerequisites: You do need to be a comfortable skier, with at least strong intermediate ski skills but we will be working with you to improve your technique in the steep and deep. Experience off the groomed runs is helpful and if you have never skied powder we suggest a day or two at the ski area, working on techniques for skiing un-groomed snow.

Equipment List for Powder Weekends

The following list is a general guide and will assist you in packing for the program. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have specific questions regarding equipment and if you need assistance prior to making a purchase. The following list will vary according to the time of year, and your individual requirements.

Items on the list with an * may be rented from SMC.

Essentials

- Skis*. Metal edge telemark mountaineering skis or alpine touring skis are essential. Better too short than too long. Get them tuned and check the bindings for tightness and boot fit prior to the trip. We can coordinate telemark and alpine touring rentals from Mammoth Mountaineering (760) 934-4191.
- Boots*. Stiff, high top boots in good condition and waterproofs. Asolo Extreme and Snopine, Merrell Ultra, and Black Diamond T-2 and 3 are some examples of acceptable telemark boots. For Alpine touring we recommend the Garamont, Lowa or Dynafit boots. Make sure your boots are a comfortable fit for walking and skiing. We can coordinate boot rental with Mammoth Mountaineering (760) 934-4191.
- Poles*. Telescoping probe type are best
- Climbing skins*. Close to the width of the skis' waist. Please make sure the glue is in good shape.
- Day pack of about 2,500 cubic inches

Clothing

- Clothing for all conditions
- Gaiters are not always necessary, depending on your boot system. If in doubt, please ask.
- Good quality rain/wind pants and rain jacket. Must be water proof and jacket must have a hood. Do not skimp on your rain gear.
- Warm hat
- Visor hat (for sun)
- Liner gloves
- Shell gloves
- Goggles

Etc.

- Sunglasses, high quality with keeper leash. The type with side shields are recommended.
- Sunscreen and lip screen. SPF 30+. Make sure the lip stuff actually contains a sunscreen. A 1oz bottle will be sufficient
- One 1-quart plastic water bottle (full of water...)
- We will have a group medical kit
- Camera, film and spare batteries
- Thermos with a hot drink

Food

- Bring a lunch and your favorite snacks.

Group gear that will be provided and divided amongst the group prior to starting the trip:

- One shovel for each person
- Avalanche transceiver for each person
- One probe per two people
- First aid kit
- Ski repair kit