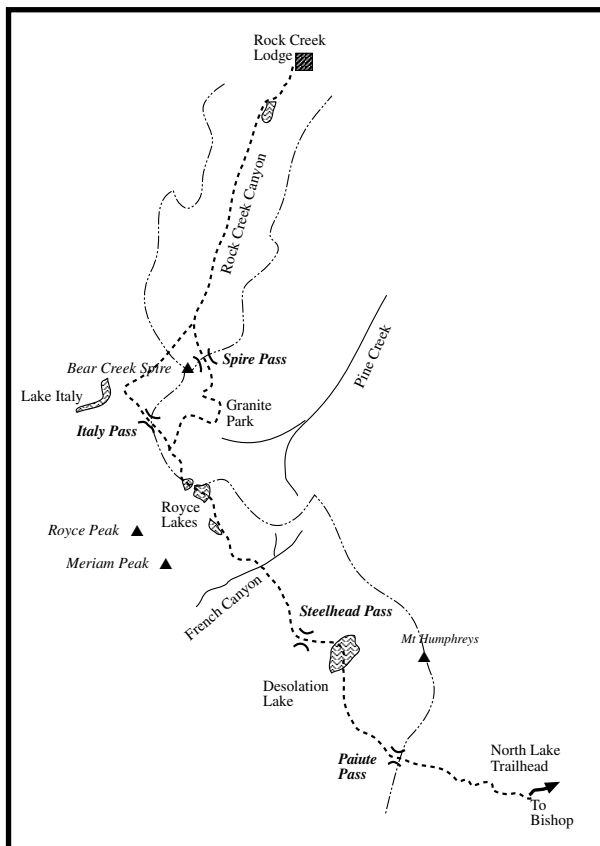




Paiute Pass to Rock Creek



A true Sierra Crest tour, this is one of our favorite moderate ski trips. The tour features gentle skiing across Humphreys Basin, a spectacular traverse around Bear Creek Spire, and the exhilarating open skiing down the bowls of Granite Park and Rock Creek Canyon. As a five day trip our itinerary allows plenty of time for taking a run or two without a full pack at the end of the day. If you want to make the trip longer pair this with it's continuation along the crest: the Rock Creek to Mammoth tour.

Itinerary: Our first day is an easy day to aid in acclimatization as we take the road from Aspendell to our hut at North Lake. We review avalanche rescue procedures that day and on the second day we head up the North Fork of Bishop Creek leaving behind the trees and cross Paiute Pass into the wide expanse of Humphreys Basin. Endless slopes of gently rolling terrain pass easily beneath the skis as we cross Desolation Lake and climb to either Steelhead Pass or Carol Col before dropping steeply into the lakes of upper French Canyon.

The next portion of the trip is certainly the most beautiful section as we cross Royce Lakes below the imposing walls of Merriam, Royce and Feather Peaks. A low pass gives access to the stunningly beautiful Granite Park with gentle slopes and great runs everywhere.

From here we have two options for our route into Rock Creek Canyon. Which one we choose will depend upon snow conditions and the wishes of the group. The technical descent over Spire Pass is a true mountaineering experience, while the less steep option across Italy Pass and the north shoulder of Bear Creek Spire is longer but

gives the opportunity for an ascent of Bear Creek Spire.

Rock Creek Canyon has long been known for the quality of its skiing and we will enjoy the best there is: an eight mile downhill run to Rock Creek Lodge. Here our friends at the Lodge will provide us with their famous high country hospitality before we finish our trip at our vehicles at the Rock Creek trailhead.

Meeting place and time: We will meet the first day at 7.00 am at the world headquarters of Sierra Mountain Center, 174 W. Line Street, in Bishop. Line Street is an east/west street marked by the southern-most traffic light on Main Street/Highway 395, in town. We're west of the light, on the south side of the street next to the health food store. A large parking lot is located on the south side of the building. We will meet for breakfast and will have a thorough pack check so don't plan on finalizing your packing until then.

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. Price includes guiding, permits, all necessary group gear, avalanche beacons, tents, kitchen gear and dinners, lunches and breakfasts (you bring snack items).

Length: 30 miles

Duration 5 days

Difficulty: SMC Tour Rating II

Other information: For a good overview see the Inyo National Forest John Muir/Ansel Adams Wilderness map (but please don't bring it on the trip...). The SMC web site has photos, our own topo map, trip profile 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 better yet, camped at an even higher trailhead, such as the South Lake/Bishop Pass trailhead for a day or two just before the trip.

Prerequisites: You need intermediate ski skills for this tour. You should be able to ski intermediate ski area runs confidently and be proficient at kick turns, traversing on 30 degree slopes, side slipping and Christie turns all while carrying a pack of about 35 pounds. Prior winter camping and mountaineering skills are advised. You will be travelling up to seven