



## **Clyde Minaret; The South Face**

A superb and classic face climb, this is one of the coveted "Fifty Classic Climbs of North America", and "the" route for an experienced climber. On the south face of the highest of the serrated Minarets, this 14 pitch route seems improbably steep but square cut holds and sharp-edged cracks everywhere allow interesting – and never easy – climbing on compact metamorphosed volcanic rock. We have two options for the start; the original start which traverses in from the Clyde/Ken couloir or, the harder, direct start at 5.9. The direct is our favorite start, but you need to feel comfortable on 5.9 terrain and the hardest climbing on the route comes right at the start before the body has had a chance to warm up. Climbers who have skied at Mammoth have no doubt looked over to the imposing Minarets and marveled at the imposing and intimidating look of the spires and pinnacles. And maybe you have been drawn to climb them; here is your opportunity!

**Meeting place and time:** We have to deal with getting around the gate closure which is a problem. So we need to meet at the Forest Service Visitors Center parking area at 6.30 a.m. and drive to the entrance station by 7.00 a.m. As you come into Mammoth from Highway 395 the Forest Service Visitors Center is on the north side of Highway 203 about 500 yards before the first traffic light in Mammoth. Do not be late here since it will then mean shuttling in and out, which reduces our flexibility.

**Itinerary:** We start from the Agnew Meadows trailhead at the hairpin on the road from Mammoth Mountain to Devils Postpile. We travel up the San Joaquin River and ascend to beautiful Shadow Lake for a break. The trail continues on up to Lake Ediza where it deteriorates some. The rough trail then climbs past Iceberg Lake to our bivvy sites above Cecile Lake beneath the face. Even though we gain over 2,000' on the approach it is spread out over six miles and doesn't seem too difficult. In contrast, the climbing day is a long one. A predawn start sees us leaving camp at first light and a half later we are at the rope up point. The first pitch sets the tone that remains for the rest of the route: devious route-finding, interesting climbing that is quite unique (especially to us graniter-rich Sierra climbers!) and exposure. Belays are usually spacious but the climbing remains continuous the length of the route, with several decidedly cruxy sections. Most pitches have some 5.8 on them and can be up to 5.9. Fourteen pitches later we reach the summit. After taking time to enjoy the view we descend via the notch between Clyde Minaret and Ken Minaret or via the "Rock Route" on the east side. Which one we choose depends a lot upon snow conditions (or lack of it) since we want to avoid carry ice axe and crampons up the route. We reach camp late in the afternoon, just in time for a well earned meal and early to bed.

**Dates and Prices:** Check the latest brochure, call us or go to our web site and locate on the first page the pull down menu for downloadable schedules 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 climbing gear, tents, kitchen gear and breakfasts, lunches and dinners (you bring hot drinks and snack items). Scheduled dates include the newly imposed USFS trail fee. Private programs do not.

**Ratios:** This is a technical climb and we limit the ratio to two climbers to one guide. This enhances safety and ensures a timely arrival at the summit before potential weather changes.

**Notes:** The best guidebook is Peter Croft's "The Good, the Great, and the Awesome. Get it from Maximus Press You can also get our very detailed unpublished SMC Guide to Clyde Minaret on-line. We highly recommend that you spend at least one night at moderate altitude (higher than 8,000') just prior to the trip. Spending a night in Mammoth or camped at the trailhead campground would do the trick. Please refer to our Planning for Success info sheet for more info. Bears are also a major problem at the trailhead. Do not leave any food, scented items (deodorant, soap etc.) in your vehicle. Clean up all trash and do not leave food, coolers, or food packaging in your vehicle. Failure to take precautions can cause the vehicle to be ripped apart by a bear and the added insult of a fine from the Forest Service. It is necessary to carry bear proof food storage containers on this trip. We provide these. We have to deal with the road closure at Minaret Vista. A mandatory shuttle is used to access the Devils Postpile area. If we drive in past the gate before 7.00 a.m. or after 7.30 p.m. we are OK. Outside of these hours we have to take the shuttle in. There is an entry fee or you can use a Golden Eagle or Parks Pass. We try and arrange a carpool to deal with this.

**Prerequisites:** You need to be able to follow at the 5.8 level and have experience on multi pitch routes. Prior experience at altitudes above 10,000' is recommended.

# Equipment List for Clyde Minaret

The following list is a general guide and will assist you in packing for the program. Remember that this is an alpine climb and you want to pare everything down to the minimum since you have to carry it up on technical climbing. 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 \* can be rented from SMC.

## **Climbing equipment**

- Harness.\* An adjustable type such as a Black Diamond Alpine Bod works best.
- Helmet. New models such as the Petzl "Helios" or the Black Diamond Half Dome are comfortable and light weight. We provide these for the program.
- Two locking carabiners and a couple of non-lockers.\*
- Belay/rappel device\*. An ATC style is preferred.
- Comfortable rock shoes sized large enough so that you can wear them all day.

## **Other essentials**

- Footwear: bring the lightest boot you can get away with. But since this is along approach tennies are not acceptable. If snow travel is expected you should bring a heavier boot and gaiters
- Camp Shoes. A lightweight pair of tennies or Texas to wear in camp. This will reduce vegetation damage at our campsites.
- Pack. A 3000 cubic inch will hold everything for the climb. It should be well cut and hug the body. A narrow profile will be best for climbing with. Use the smallest pack that you can get away with.
- Sleeping Bag. A bag rated to about 25° will be plenty warm enough except in the spring and late fall.
- Sleeping pad. A 3/4 or full length closed cell foam or Thermarest. If you bring a Thermarest also bring a repair kit to fix pesky leaks

## **Clothing**

- 1 pair synthetic liner socks.
- 1 pair heavier synthetic or wool blend socks.
- Long underwear top and bottom. Capilene or some other synthetic is most desirable.
- Warm pants. Tights or Expedition weight Capilene.
- Warm shirt. Synchronilla or 200 weight works well.
- Another fuzzy sweater top or pile jacket of some sort.
- GoreTex Jacket and Pants - A lightweight set is sufficient and heavy bulky clothing is unnecessary. Side zips on the pants should be long enough to slide on over boots. Must have a hood. Do not skimp on your rain gear.
- Tee shirt for on the trail.
- Polypropylene or similar gloves and shells.
- Warm hat.
- Sunhat.

## **Etc.**

- Sun glasses. Good quality with side shields.
- Water Bottles. Two quart (1 liter) wide mouth bottles and or a hydration system holding up to 50oz. (2 liters).
- Headlamp. With a spare set of batteries.
- Eating and drinking equipment. Forget the traditional Sierra cup, instead use an insulated backpacking mug, with a lid. This can double for a bowl. Fork and spoon.
- Pocket knife. Swiss army style.
- Personal toiletries. It is not necessary to smell like a rose each day so do not over do it. Remember toilet paper and a small zip-lock bag to carry out the used in.
- Personal Medical Kit. The guide will carry a large kit so yours will predominately consist of foot repair items and mild pain killer such as Advil and band-aids.
- Sunscreen and lip screen. SPF 30+. A 1oz. bottle will be enough. Make sure the lip stuff actually contains a sunscreen.
- Camera. Bring film and a spare battery to record those summit moments.
- Plastic Trash Sac. Handy for keeping gear in outside the tent should it rain.

## **Food**

- We will provide breakfast, dinner and lunch but bring some snack items like cliff bars, power bars, gorp concoctions. A days worth for most people would be 2 bars, 3 ounces of gorp, and perhaps a candy bar. Don't over do it.

## **Shared Equipment Provided by SMC**

- Shelter. A bivvy sac will be appropriate. Talk to us if you do not have one. We will bring tents if there is a chance of precipitation.
- Stove. We provide MSR Whisperlite stoves.
- Cookwear.
- Water purification. A sad but true fact of life is that much Sierra water is contaminated. Iodine may be used individually or the group can carry a pump style purifier.
- Bear Canisters. Sierra bears have fallen into bad habits and learned that backpacker's food is tasty and easy to obtain. We provide these bulky items and this area certainly warrants their use.

## **You specifically don't need**

- ⊗ Cell phones. They rarely work anyway.
- ⊗ Big first aid kits (we have a comprehensive one).
- ⊗ Deodorant or any toiletries beyond those listed above.
- ⊗ Items that are not on this list.