



Dana Couloir

This is one of the classic long gully climbs in the Yosemite high country and an ideal introduction to snow and ice, making a perfect weekend climb. About 1,200 feet long, it often offers snow and ice climbing on 45-degree slopes. The special features of this area include the spectacular colors of the metamorphic rocks and an incredible view of the Yosemite high country from the summit.

Itinerary: Day One: We depart from the parking area at the west end of Ellery Lake a half mile before the Tioga Pass entry station to Yosemite National Park on Highway 120.

A half-day hike leads up Glacier Creek through forest and high alpine meadows to camp near Dana Lake. We'll use the balance of the day to review and learn skills and prepare for the next day, a long one.

Day Two: We are gone from camp before dawn working our way around Glacier Lake to the small Dana Glacier at the base of the couloir. We start out moving together putting to use the French crampon technique we discussed the day before. As the gully steepens and the ice gets harder we move onto our front points and start to use ice screw belays. About six to seven belayed pitches puts us at the top of the gully. We then curve up along the summit ridge to the top and relax enjoying the view.

The descent starts easy enough but when we drop off the ridge back into the Glacier Creek it becomes steeper and the rock somewhat looser but eventually we get back to the lake, pick up camp and head down.

We have found the crux of the climb timing things so that we get back down to the Mobil Gas Mart before they close. The MoMart™ has gained a reputation for the best food you will ever get at a gas station, and in the eastern Sierra for that matter. Maybe we will have time for one of their Mango Margaritas...

Meeting place and time: We will meet at the Mobil Mart at the intersection of Highway 395 and Highway 120 at 8.00 a.m. You can get food there, but be all done and ready for a pack check and to shuttle up to the roadhead.

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 climbing gear, tents, kitchen gear and breakfasts, lunches and dinners (you bring hot/cold drinks and snack items). Scheduled dates include USFS trail fees. Private programs do not.

Ratios: We undertake this at a maximum ratio of 1:3.

Notes: Guidebooks include Secor's "The High Sierra; Peaks, Passes and Trails", and "Sierra Classics" by Moynier and Fiddler. The best of course is "Eastern Sierra Ice" by SP Parker.

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. Lee Vining will also help, but it is lower than ideal at about 7,000. Please refer to our Planning for Success info sheet for more info.

Prerequisites: You do not need to have climbed steep ice before but basic snow travel skills are preferred. In the fall the snow is often hard and icy so we will not be able to work on self arrest and similar skills so come equipped with these.

Equipment List for Dana Couloir

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 or 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 with an * may be rented from SMC.

Climbing equipment

- Ice Axe*. A standard 70 cm. general purpose axe will suffice for this route.
- Second Tool*. This should be an ice hammer and we recommend a straight shaft rather than a bent.
- Crampons*. These should be matched to the boot. We suggest for very flexible boots the Charlet Moser G10 or Black Diamond Contact Clip; for stiffer boots the Black Diamond Sabretooth, the Moser G12 or Rambo.
- Harness.* A step-in type works best such as a Black Diamond Alpine Bod.
- 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.

Other essentials

- Footwear. A medium-weight pair of leather mountaineering boots or heavyweight hiking boots will be sufficient. The Sportiva Glacier is a good example of an appropriate mountain boot. Plastic boots are fine but will tend to be somewhat hot and uncomfortable on the approach so, if space in the pack permits, these can be carried and a lightweight pair of hiking boots used on the walk in.
- Camp Shoes. A lightweight pair of tennies or Tevas to wear in camp. This will reduce vegetation damage at our campsites.
- Large Pack. A 3000 to 4000 cubic inch will hold everything for the two days in the backcountry. Internal frame packs are recommended for their comfort and balance when climbing. A pack that allows plenty of compression is best since this allows it to be carried on climbs without the need for a smaller day pack. The Gregory Makalu or Reality are about the right size.
- Sleeping Bag. Most fall trips are warm and a bag rated to about 20°C will be plenty warm enough.
- 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 undesirable holes.
- Bivvy Sac. Only if using a Megamid or if you choose to sleep out under the stars.

Clothing

- 2 pair synthetic liner socks.
- 2 pair heavier synthetic or wool blend socks.
- Gaiters.
- Long underwear top. Capilene or some other synthetic is most desirable.
- Long underwear bottom.
- Warm pants. Tights or Expedition weight Capilene.
- Warm shirt. Synchilla 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 rainwear is unnecessary. Side zips on the pants should be long enough to slide on over boots. The jacket must have a hood. Do not skimp on your rain gear.
- Polypropylene or similar gloves.
- Heavyweight gloves.

- Warm hat. Synthetics are less itchy than wool.
- Sunhat

Etc.

- Sun glasses. Good quality with side shields.
- Ski poles. These are not essential, but can be handy on the trail. It is your choice, but they do save wear on the knees.
- 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, mild pain killer such as Advil and bandaids.
- Sunscreen and lip screen. SPF 30+. A 1oz. bottle will be sufficient. Make sure the lip stuff actually contains a sunscreen.
- Camera/film/spare battery.
- Plastic Trash Sac. Handy for keeping in outside the tent should it rain.
- Optional reading material etc.

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. We will provide lightweight, but storm worthy tents. If you have your favorite, by all means bring it, but we do want to pair people up where possible to reduce weight.
- 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.

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.