



The John Muir Trail

The John Muir Trail is one of the finest hikes to be found anywhere in the world. The route starts in Yosemite National Park and continues south some two hundred miles to the high point of the lower forty-eight states, Mount Whitney. Along the way it climbs over 13,000' passes, wanders beneath high alpine peaks, and traverses beautiful meadows and forested river valleys. The spectacular scenery is combined with the generally clement weather of California and warm summer temperatures. This is truly a trip of a lifetime to be remembered for years to come.

Itinerary: Not everyone has the ability to get an entire three weeks off work so we have divided the trip into two segments. You can sign up for all, or part of the hike, although of course we recommend doing all of it if you can. We are allowing twenty days for the complete trip and differing lengths of time for the segments. We will have three food drops so that the packs are not too heavy for each segment and if doing only part of the trip you will go in, or out, with the food drop. You can expect to cover ten to twelve miles a day. The tentative schedule is as follows, but remember that weather, conditions and perhaps issues such as sore feet or a desire for a rest day may well vary this outline. So be flexible and adapt to the inevitable changes that will occur during a trip of this duration. It's just as possible the trip will finish before the allotted number of days.

Numbered days refer to significant logistical events during the trip. Due to the difficulties of trying to map out every day of a long journey such as this other days have been omitted from this itinerary. Expect changes to this itinerary!

Section One:

Tuolumne Meadows to Big Pete Meadow One Hundred and Fourteen Miles

If you're doing just the first segment you hike out via Bishop Pass on Day 11 of the full trip.

For those on a very limited schedule you can do the first three days of the hike and end at Red's Meadows.

For a shorter hike you can also join us for the Tuolumne to Red's Meadow segment, which is three or four days in length. We start off slowly to ease into the hiking. Packs will be light for this section and although there is plenty of distance the hiking is easy and the days not too long.

We start up gentle Lyell Canyon and cross the first pass of the trip, Donohue Pass. From here the route passes below the jagged Minarets and skirts wonderful Thousand Island Lake before dropping to Red's Meadow and the volcanic flows of Devils Postpile National Monument. The next section takes you into the heart of the mountains and at eight days is the longest unsupported segment. The route stays well to the west of the main Sierra Crest before climbing up onto the Silver Divide and then descending towards Lake Edison in the western foothills. From here we climb up into the Evolution Valley and the high surrounding peaks. We cross Muir Pass and drop down into deeply incised Le Conte Canyon and meet our re-supply below Little Pete Meadow brought in by either mule or by porters. Those hiking just the first segment will hike out via Bishop Pass on this day.

Day One: The night before the start of the trip will be spent at the campground in Tuolumne Meadows. We prefer to start the trip from here rather than from the lower Yosemite Valley to avoid the summer heat of the Valley and also to comply with Federal laws regarding guiding in Yosemite National Park.

Day Three: Arrive at Red's Meadow north of Mammoth. This is the opportunity for a shower and a food re-supply.

Day Four: Leave Red's Meadow and head south.

Day Eleven: Arrive at the junction of the JMT with the Bishop Pass Trail below Little Pete Meadow.

Section Two:

Little Pete Meadows to Whitney

Eighty Three Miles

If you're doing the second segment you hike in via Bishop Pass on Day 11 and start the JMT on Day 12 of the full trip.

This segment includes several high passes and stays close to the Sierra Crest passing below the fourteen thousand foot peaks of the Palisade region, dropping into the wide open alpine valley of Upper Basin. The passes here are high and steep, but the effort is more than compensated by the incredible scenery.

The final section of the hike is the highest and the most spectacular of them all as it traverses high glacial bowls far above the main river drainages. Forester Pass, 13,120 feet, is the highest on the route, but by now you will be in such good shape that it will be barely noticeable. Turning east from Crabtree Meadows the route climbs towards Mount Whitney and the

Equipment List for the John Muir Trail

The following list is a very specific guide that 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 less weight you carry, the better and this list is our suggestion for doing so. Remember that you'll be receiving your share of the group equipment prior to departure.

Big Stuff

- Footwear. A good sturdy pair of hiking boots. These must be broken in to your feet and need to be sealed with a water-proofing treatment. Your selection of boots may mean the difference between pain and comfort on the trip so be very careful with what you wear on your feet.
- Camp Shoes. A lightweight pair of tennies or Tevas to wear in camp. This will reduce vegetation damage at our campsites.
- Pack. A 4000-4500 cubic inch (66-75 liter) pack will hold everything for the trip. Internal frame packs are recommended for their comfort and balance when hiking. The Gregory Makalu or Reality are about the right size.
- Sleeping Bag. Most summer trips are warm and a bag rated to about 25°F (-4°C) will be plenty warm. Pair this with a compression stuff sac to reduce volume. We recommend a down bag rather than a synthetic since it will be less bulky.
- Sleeping pad. A 3/4 length Ultralight thermarest paired with a Ridgerest foam pad is the best combination. If you bring a Thermarest also bring a repair kit to fix pesky leaks.
- 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.
- Sunscreen and lip screen. SPF 30+. A 1 oz. bottle will be enough. Make sure the lip stuff actually contains a sunscreen.
- 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.
- Camera. Bring film and a spare battery to record those moments.
- Plastic Trash Sac. Handy for keeping things in outside the tent should it rain.
- 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.
- Optional reading material, etc.
- Ear plugs. These can be handy to block flapping tents (or noisy partners).
- Camp Shoes. A lightweight pair of tennies or Tevas to wear in camp. This will reduce vegetation damage at our campsites.

Clothing

- 3 pair synthetic liner socks.
- 3 pair heavier synthetic or wool blend socks.
- 1 long underwear top. Capilene or some other synthetic is most desirable.
- 1 long underwear bottom.
- 1 warm pants, tights or expedition weight Capilene.
- 1 warm shirt. Synchilla or 200 weight works well.
- 1 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. Jacket must have a hood. Do not skimp on your rain gear.
- 1 pair of shorts for on the trail.
- 2 Tee shirts for on the trail.
- 1 pair of polypropylene or similar gloves.
- 1 warm hat. Synthetics are less itchy than wool.
- 1 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. Knife, fork and spoon.
- Pocket knife. Swiss army style.

Shared Equipment

- 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 will provide MSR Whisperlight stoves
- Cookwear.
- Water purification. A sad but true fact of life is that much Sierra water is contaminated. The group will carry a light weight pump and iodine.
- Bear Canisters. Sierra bears have fallen into bad habits and learned that backpacker's food is tasty and easy to obtain. We will provide these bulky, but necessary items.

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.