



Sierra Mini Mountain Camp

Perhaps you have done some hiking and peak scrambling in the past and found yourself wishing that you had the skills needed to get up more challenging peaks, across those unexpected snow slopes or up technical rock sections. Or maybe you have done some rock climbing but wish to expand your skills to include mountaineering. If so this three day program will give you the basics upon which to build a solid climbing future. If you have more time available we suggest looking at our Extended Mountain Camp which gives you more time in the mountains practicing the skills.

Meeting place and time: We will meet at the Toms Place Restaurant, located to the west of Highway 395, 18 miles north of Bishop, at 7:30 a.m. for breakfast. This is at the top of the long steady hill climb (Sherwin Grade) north of Bishop. Go a hundred feet from Highway 395 on the road that heads west to Rock Creek Lake and turn north on the frontage road to the restaurant. Have gear organized, but not packed in the big pack. You will need equipment for a day of rock climbing only for the first day.

Itinerary: Day One: After breakfast we head up Rock Creek Canyon's Iris Slab to cover the basics of rock climbing. We will do some of the climbing in rock shoes but we'll also use mountain boots to get accustomed to climbing in them before getting onto a peak. The evening will be at a campground in the canyon where we'll make preparations for an early departure for the next day's hike to camp.

- Rock skills on day one include
- Belaying
- Movement skills
- Knot tying
- Equipment selection and use
- Rappelling.

For the night you have two choices. At Mosquito Flats there is a walk in campground for hikers and at 10,000 feet this makes a good place to spend the night and acclimatize to the elevation and we recommend this. You can either bring your own food and plan on cooking for dinner and breakfast at the campground, or you can go back to Tom's Place. On the other hand Mosquito Flats can be well named in early summer and there is also the option of a soft bed and a restaurant at Toms Place just back down the road.

Day Two: We leave the 10,000' Mosquito Flats trailhead and follow an easy trail for three to four hours, passing beautiful Ruby Lake on our way to basecamp near Mills Lake at 11,700'. This is a secluded part of the canyon, high in the mountains and surrounded by dramatic peaks. For the rest of the day we will work on the basics of snow and ice travel including:

- Snow skills
- Moving on snow
- Self arrest, snow anchors,
- Step kicking
- Ice axe use
- Belaying on snow
- French crampon technique.

Day Three: Once you have learned the basics we will put it all together on day three an ascent of 13,600 foot Mount Dade the high point of the drainage. Mount Mills (13,468') and the spectacular spire of the Petit Griffon, with its table-top sized summit are two other possible options depending upon conditions and inclination. The program finishes late on day three with a descent to Mosquito Flats.

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 generally undertake this program with a participant to instructor ratio of 6:1 maximum for the skills instruction and then reduce the ratio to 3:1 for the peak ascent to ensure that you get maximum individual attention with a high level of safety on the more technical terrain.

Notes and other information: Guidebooks include Secor's "The High Sierra; Peaks, Passes and Trails", and "Sierra Classics" by Moynier and Fiddler.

While a night spent at Mosquito Flats aids acclimatization we still 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 in Rock Creek Canyon would do the trick. You could also stay at Rock Creek Lodge. Please refer to our Planning for Success info sheet for more info.

Prerequisites: No prior climbing experience is necessary but prior backpacking and wilderness travel is helpful.

Equipment List for Sierra Mini Mountain Camp

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 most routes.
- 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.* 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.

Other essentials

- Footwear. A medium-weight pair of leather mountaineering boots or heavyweight hiking boots will be sufficient. The Sportiva Glacier or Makalu 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 light-weight 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 accidental holes.
- Bivvy Sac. Only if using a Megamid or on a trip that involves sleeping 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. Synchronia 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.
- Shorts for on the trail.
- Tee shirt for on the trail.
- 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 1 oz. bottle will be enough. Make sure the lip stuff actually contains a sunscreen.
- Bug repellent. Only needed in the early season.
- 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, 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