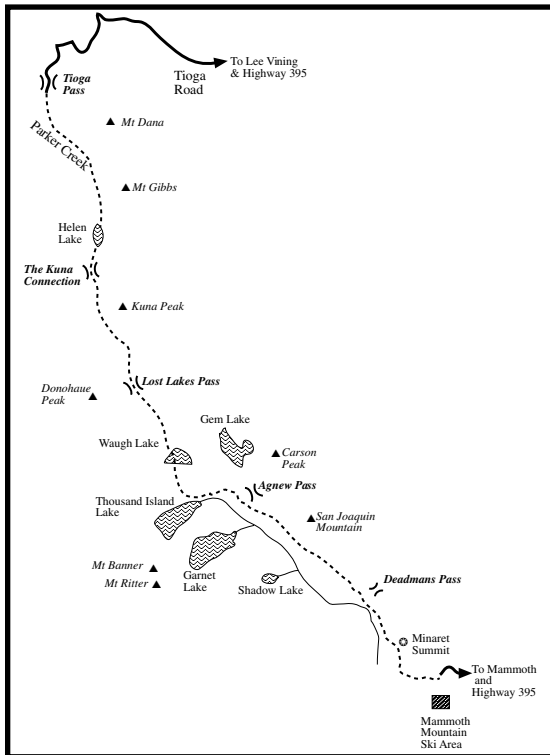




Yosemite High Country



This tour is quite possibly one of the best introductions to longer backcountry ski touring. It takes one into some of the most beautiful terrain in the Sierra Nevada, the skiing terrain is straightforward, and the traveling days are not too long, allowing time to drop the packs and to enjoy unencumbered skiing. The initial part of the tour follows the line of our Mammoth to June ski tour and this continuation is really no more difficult; just longer and more fun. Everyday brings a new vista and the camp sites are perfect. What else is needed?

Itinerary: The tour starts from Mammoth Mountain, quickly leaving behind the bustle and noise of the ski area lifts following Minaret Road to Minaret Vista. This snow covered road gives time to adjust gear and ease into the skiing. After lunch at the viewpoint we make a quick, fun descent of the road to Agnew Meadows and finally leave the road, heading north above the San Joaquin River. We climb up through aspens and pine forest to camp from where we can watch the sun slowly set to the west over the jagged Minarets. From here we take a long steady traverse skirting below Agnew Pass and dropping gently into the stunningly beautiful Thousand Island Lake. This is a popular summer camping and backpacking destination but at this time of year it is probable that we will have it to ourselves. Reluctantly leaving Thousand Island Lake we cross gentle Island Pass and drop to Waugh Lake; the easy and fun part of the day. Continuing we ascend to Lost Lakes and to our camp below 12,000 foot Donohue Peak.

Lost Lakes Pass offers a gentle crossing onto the large plateau above Kuna Creek which we cross to the Kuna Connection. The north side of this pass is the steepest slope encountered on the tour and if it is too firm the best option is to take off skis and hike down to Helen Lake. Our last camp is above Parker Creek and from here we descend rolling terrain to Dana Meadows, cross Tioga Pass and descend the Tioga Road to the roadhead. Depending upon snow conditions this section might involve some walking, potentially from near Tioga pass to the gate at the bottom, six miles. We are picked up by shuttle and return to our vehicles in Mammoth late that day.

Meeting place and time: We will meet in Mammoth at the Breakfast Club for breakfast, introductions, and trip outline at 7:30 a.m. the first morning of the trip. The Breakfast Club is located on Highway 203 (the access road to Mammoth from Highway 395) at the first traffic light you encounter, adjacent to the Shell Station. This is the intersection of Highway 203 and Old Mammoth Road and the restaurant is on the south side of 203. After breakfast we will do an equipment check before driving to the Mammoth Ski Area so don't finalize your packing until we meet.

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: 37 miles **Duration** Five 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 by staying in Mammoth or nearby. Let us know if you need help arranging accommodation.

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 miles a day and gaining up to 2000 feet a day so a very good level of aerobic fitness is required.