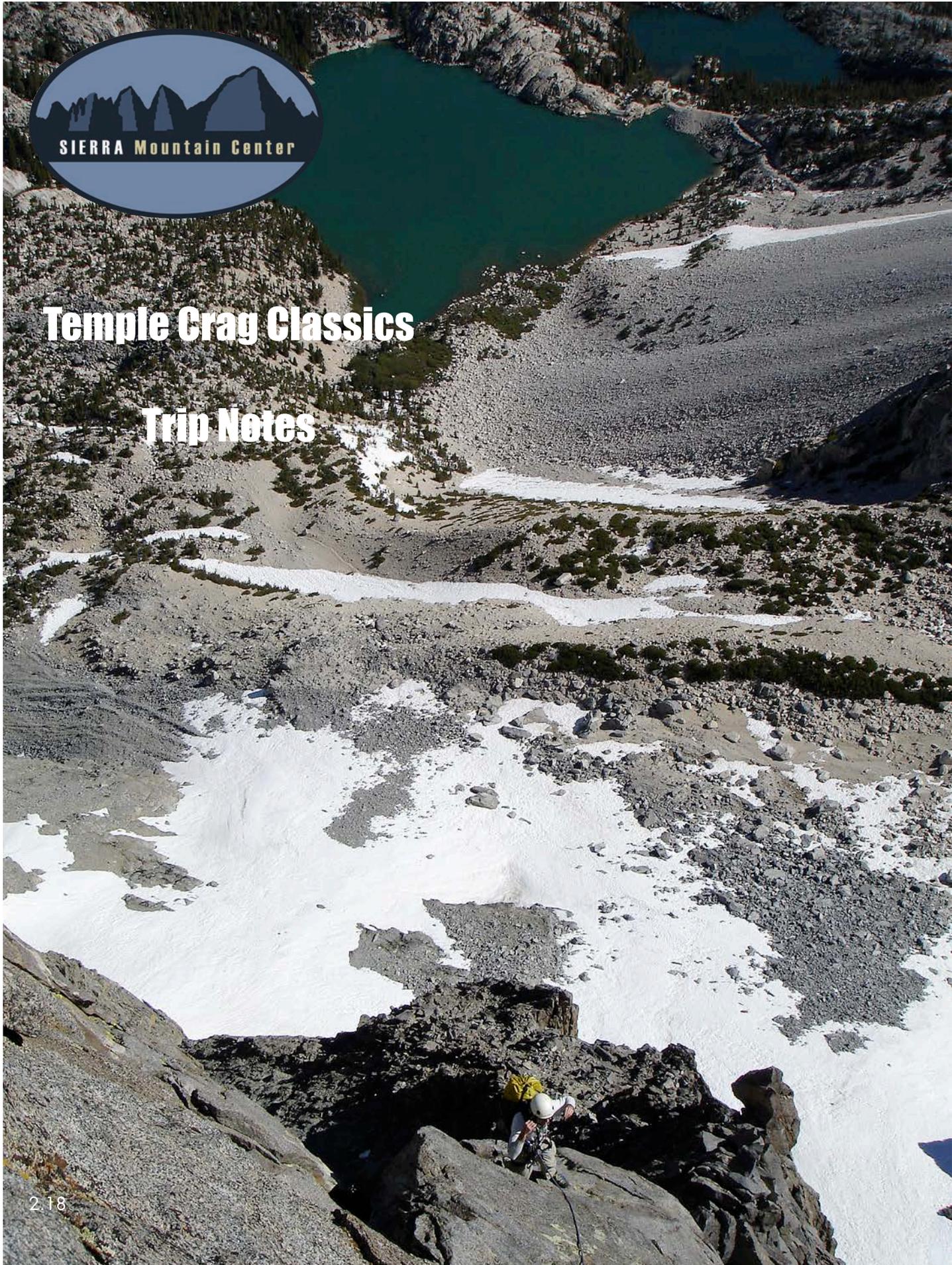




Temple Crag Classics

Trip Notes



Temple Crag Classics

One of our favorite things to do in the mountains is to set up a comfortable camp and to climb as much as we can from there. We invite you to join us for four days of fine alpine cragging in the Palisades area. We'll place camp above Third Lake, in the shadow of the alpine rock climbers paradise – Temple Crag. From here our options include the Celestial Arêtes on Temple Crag, Mount Robinson arêtes, and many more. These four days will be filled with as much climbing as you can handle and will certainly be a “dream trip” for the rock aficionado. Any of these routes are also offered individually as a custom trip. Just contact us for availability.

The 23-pitch 5.9/10a Sun Ribbon Arête includes a Tyrolean Traverse and makes for a long climbing day.

A little easier at 5.8 and 18 pitches in length, Moon Goddess Arête is a tremendous introduction to technical rock climbing in a stunning alpine setting.

Venusian Blind Arête is one of the farthest left on Temple crag and, at 5.7, is every bit as good a climb as the others. With only ten or twelve pitches it is less committing than Moon Goddess but a little more continuous.

The arêtes on Mt. Robinson offer another alpine adventure with mostly 4th class climbing with sections of 5th class. These can be a good warm up for a more sustained route on Temple Crag.

Why not climb them all and compare for yourself?

Itinerary

Day One: After a gear check and introductions we'll hike in, taking the rest of the day to reach camp. The approach will take around half of the day, allowing for time to prepare for the climbing days at camp. We have several options for our camp location, which will depend on weather, the season and availability. But the closer to the base of the routes the better since it lessens the morning commute to the climbs.

Approximate Distance: 5 miles, 2550 feet of gain, 100 feet of loss (dependent on camp location)

Day Two: An early start sees us off for either a warm-up route or one of Temple Crag's classics. Our targets are any of the Celestial Arêtes: Venusian Blind 5.7, Moon Goddess 5.8, or Sun Ribbon 5.9/10a. From camp it's a short but steep hike, mostly on talus but ending with some early season snow climbing to the base of the routes. We usually take just one ice axe, for the leader, but chop good steps and belay for those who are following. From the top of the snow several hundred feet of easy, but roped, scrambling lead to the start of 5th class climbing on both Moon Goddess and Venusian Blind. Sun Ribbon follows a slightly different approach climber's right of the other two routes. All of these routes descend of the east side of Temple Crag into Contact Pass and back to camp.

Days Three: We can climb another one of the routes.

Day Four: We have the option to climb more on the last day, depending upon how tired everyone is. In the morning or after a climb, we will pack up camp and hike out to the vehicles. Our arrival at the vehicles is dependent on whether or not we climb the last day.

Meeting place and time

The course meets at the parking area at the end of the Glacier Lodge Road at 10:00 a.m. on the first day of the trip. Our approach to camp is not a big day so we prefer to take it easy in preparation for the much more intense days to follow. Follow Glacier Lodge Road west out of the town of Big Pine. We will meet in the day-use parking area at the end of the road (A road turns left into Glacier Lodge and we may move vehicles there after meeting). Most vehicles will take about 20 to 30 minutes to get here from Big Pine as it's a gain of 3,500'. We will do a gear check here and distribute group equipment.

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 canceling. Price includes guiding, permits, all necessary group climbing gear, tents, kitchen gear and breakfast, lunch and dinner daily (you bring hot/cold drinks and snack items). Scheduled dates include USFS trail fees. Private programs do not.

Prerequisites

You need to be able to follow at the 5.7 to 5.9 level, have experience on multi-pitch routes and be familiar with belaying and rope work. Prior mountain camping experience is recommended as is experience at altitudes above 11,000'. This is a physically demanding trip and you should be in good condition and have the ability to traverse broken and uneven slopes with a moderately heavy pack.

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 and other information

The best guidebooks are Supertopo's "High Sierra Climbing" by Chris McNamara and Peter Croft's "The Good, The Great, and the Awesome". Get them from Maximus Press: <http://www.maximuspress.com>.

You can also get our detailed unpublished "SMC Guide to the Palisades" online, which includes Temple Crag.

Acclimatization

Since our camp will be around 10,000' 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 would work, but this means a long drive to the trailhead; it may be easier to camp at a higher trailhead, such as one of the campgrounds in Big Pine Creek for a night just before the trip. Glacier Lodge is also a good lodging option and is at the end of road close by. Please refer to our Planning for Success info sheet for more info.

Bears

Bears are a problem at the trailhead. Do not leave food or other scented items (deodorant, soap etc.) in your vehicle. There is limited food locker storage at the trailhead so do not bring extra items with you to the trailhead. Clean up all trash prior to your trip. 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.

Porters

Want to do the trip but concerned about carrying the overnight pack through the rough terrain or want to save the knees from the steep descent back down? We can provide the services of a porter to carry the heavier and bulky items, leaving you with a lighter day pack for the trip. Porters can be used for just the up or the down as well. Contact the office for more information.

Equipment List for Temple Crag Classics

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. When packing **THINK LIGHTWEIGHT!** Items with a * can be rented from SMC.

Climbing equipment

- Boots*. Lightweight mountaineering or heavy duty hiking boots are required, but also a pair that is compact enough to fit in the climbing pack for the descent. Trail runners or tennies are not acceptable since there may be hard snow to cross. If you have any concerns as to the adequacy of your footwear contact us. We rent mountaineering boots.
- Ice axe.* A general purpose axe appropriate to your height. Required only in early season. We will inform you if this is needed.
- Crampons.* These must be compatible with your boots. Required only in early season. We will inform you if these are needed.
- Harness.* We recommend a comfortable rock climbing style harness.
- Helmet. Should be comfortable and lightweight. We provide these for the program if you do not have your own.
- Two locking carabiners and a couple of non-lockers.*
- A lightweight belay/rappel device, ATC style.*
- A 120cm nylon sling.
- Rock shoes*. Regardless of what anyone tells you they need to be comfortable! You'll be wearing them most of the day.

Other essentials

- Internal frame backpack of 50-60 L. This must fit all of your personal gear and group equipment. If your pack compresses down you do not need the following item.
- Small day pack for climbing. 20-25L with attachment points for ice axe and crampons.
- Sleeping bag. This should be rated to about 32°F.
- Sleeping pads. A Thermarest and foam pad. A 3/4 Thermarest on a foam pad makes a good combination. Bring a repair kit along with a Thermarest in case of holes.

Clothing

- 2 pair synthetic or wool socks.
- Long underwear top and bottom.
- Warm pants, to layer between base and waterproof layer, such as softshell fabric.
- Another fuzzy sweater top, such as fleece or Polartec.
- Pile/fleece/softshell fabric jacket.
- Light down jacket; synthetic fill is second choice. This is optional & can replace the previous item. For in camp or in cold weather.
- Good quality rain/wind pants and rain jacket. Must be water proof and jacket must have a hood. Don't skimp on your rain gear.
- Shorts for on the trail.
- Climbing pants. We like the softshell type fabrics.
- 1 long-sleeve sun shirt. We recommend a "hoody" style though anything that covers your arms and is synthetic is great.
- 1 short-sleeve T-shirt. Synthetic, not cotton, so it can dry quickly and wick sweat from your body on sweaty, but windy, days.
- 1 lightweight pair of polypropylene or similar gloves.
- 1 pair of heavier gloves.
- 1 warm hat/beanie. Synthetics are less itchy than wool.
- Sunhat. Better to cover up than just rely upon sunscreen.

Etc.

- Sun glasses. Good quality. If you wear corrective glasses you might want a second pair in case of breakage.
- Water carrying system with a capacity of 2-3 liters. We recommend a 2 liter bladder for daily trail use and an additional Klean Kanteen insulated bottle for drink flavoring, coffee, etc. This can be your thermos and additional water bottle.
- Headlamp. With a spare set of batteries.
- Eating and drinking equipment. An insulated mug with a lid. This can double for a bowl. Fork and spoon.
- Pocket knife. Small Swiss army style, not a large Leatherman.
- Personal toiletries. Toothbrush and toothpaste. TP & a ziplock bag to carry out the used.
- Sunscreen and lip screen. 30+ SPF. A 1oz. 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/phone camera. Small enough to fit in a pocket; please no giant cameras with multiple lenses.
- Plastic Trash Sac. Handy for keeping gear in outside the tent should it rain.
- Trekking poles*. These are not essential, but can be handy on the trail. It is your choice, but they do save the knees on long descents.
- Optional reading material, journal, Kindle, etc.

Food

- We include meals from lunch on Day 1 through breakfast on Day 4. Bring your own snack items like cliff bars, power bars, or gorp concoctions for all days. Also bring your favorite hot drinks (tea, hot chocolate, cider etc.). 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

- First aid kit
- Food
- 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.
- Group climbing equipment.
- 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 gravity style purifier.

You specifically don't need

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

Additional Thoughts

- Some people, particularly women, tend to run colder than others. If this is the case add another layer or two, a warmer sleeping bag, warmer boots and extra handwarmers
- Women – see our "Women on the Trail" information sheet at the Women's Trips pages on the website.

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