



Women's Beginning Backpacking

Trip Notes

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Discover the beauty and ruggedness of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in this spectacular area with its multi-hued rocks and beautiful deep lakes. This trip will take you deeper into wilderness and allow you to see John Muir's treasured range up close. It is an introductory backpacking trip and a fun adventure with a group of women who are looking to get out and experience the Sierra Nevada. For three days and two nights we will hike up into the alpine, carrying what we need and seeing beautiful mountains, forests and alpine lakes. A lot of people find that it is hard to get time off work to get to the mountains but driving to the Eastern Sierra and back in a weekend just makes everything too rushed and ruins the goal of getting away and relaxing in the mountains. So take an extra day off work and take the time to simply enjoy the peace of the mountains and their beauty and recharge your soul.

Itinerary

One reason we like this route is that it gives us some options. If the main desire is to hike then we can do the full loop. If you would rather slow down, relax and just absorb the natural world around you, we can take a shorter loop by camping on the rock slabs of Garnet Lake and then dropping back to the river trail and Agnew Meadows. Described below is the long version, but if you decide you would rather relax more the itinerary will change slightly.

Day 1: We will meet in Mammoth, do a gear check and then take the Red's Meadow shuttle to Agnew Meadows. From here we take the River Trail along the San Joaquin River, past Sierra Junipers with their papery bark and spreading branches. A short steep climb takes us to the glacial bowl holding beautiful Shadow Lake. Here we find a great swimming rock for the brave. We follow Shadow Creek and climb to our camp near the junction with the JMT.

Day 2: The sun greets us early here and, after a leisurely breakfast, we head into one of the most lovely places in the Mammoth area. A short pass crossing takes us to Garnet Lake and the other gems here (Ruby and Emerald) before dropping to the big expanse of Thousand Island Lake. We take lunch here and enjoy the views of Mounts Ritter and Banner before heading to camp at Badger Lakes.

Day 3: We leave camp early with now light packs and contour below the crest of the San Joaquin Ridge looking back to where our route has taken us. We hope to be back at the trailhead by early afternoon in time to get you on the road home.

Distances and elevations

Day 1	Trailhead to Shadow Creek	4.9 miles	1250 feet of gain	550 feet of down
Day 2	Shadow Creek to Badger Lakes	6.5 miles	1850 feet of gain	1320 feet of down
Day 3	Badger Lakes to Trailhead	6.3 miles	642 feet of gain	1850 feet of down

If we choose the shorter loop this reduces the Day 2 distance to 3 miles and the Day 3 distance back to the trailhead to 5 miles. Elevation gains and losses also are reduced on both days.

Meeting place and time

We meet at the Mammoth Welcome Center in Mammoth Lakes at 7:00 am. From 395 take the Mammoth Lakes exit and follow the signs into town. The Mammoth Lakes Welcome Center is a few miles from the highway on your right (along with the US Forest Service). The address is 2510 Main St, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546. If you get to the first traffic light you have gone too far. We like to meet in town so that if there are any last minute items we can get them, but come packed and ready to do a gear check and then shuttle to the trailhead.

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, 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

No prior experience is required though you should be in good physical condition and able to carry a pack with three days of equipment.

Location

We will be traveling and camping in the Sierra Nevada west of Mammoth Lakes. This area is one of our favorite spots in the range with sparkling lakes below high peaks and we have several route options depending upon the group and conditions.

Your Guides

Our guides are experienced outdoors people and you can expect the highest level of safety and mountain knowledge.

Ratios

We keep the ratio at one guide to five participants.

Bears

Bears can be a problem in Mammoth and 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. If possible, please carpool up to the trailhead; we will talk about where to leave extra vehicles.

Acclimatization

Since camps during the trip are over 9,000' we highly recommend that you spend at least one night at moderate altitude (higher than 8,000') just prior to the trip. Mammoth has the usual selection of hotels and accommodation as well as a number of campgrounds for those wanting to camp out. Please refer to our Planning for Success info sheet for more info.



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Equipment List for Women's Beginning Backpacking

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.

Essentials

- Footwear. You will be hiking roughly 7-8 miles per day. Please bring shoes or boots that you have broken in and that are suitable for multiple days of travel. Your feet are your transportation and can make the difference between surviving this trip and thriving.
- Camp Shoes for around camp. Sanuk sandals, Crocs, or light tennis shoes are all appropriate. The camp shoes will make hanging out in camp more comfortable, and lessen the impact we leave on the sites. Open toed flip flops are not acceptable.
- Pack. 60-65 liter. The pack you choose to bring will also greatly impact your trip. Bring the smallest lightest pack you can get everything into.
- Sleeping Bag. A 32°F bag should be sufficient but if you are cold at night a sleeping bag liner can add significant warmth with minimal additional weight. We recommend a down bag as opposed to a synthetic one due to weight differences, but a down bag must be waterproofed inside your bag with a trash bag lining the stuff sack. Pair this with a compression stuff sac to reduce volume.
- Sleeping pad. A 3/4 length Ultralight inflatable pad paired with a foam pad is our favorite combination. If bringing an inflatable pad also bring a repair kit to fix leaks.

Clothing

- 3 pairs of socks. 2 pairs to alternate while hiking, and a third pair for at camp. Nothing beats a fresh pair of socks in the backcountry. Blister prevention is crucial so the clean third pair for camp is excellent preventative care. Having 2 pairs to alternate hiking in also gives the opportunity to rinse and dry socks. A mid-weight, non-cotton sock is ideal, such as a Smartwool or Darn Tough hiking specific sock. Please do not bring low-cut ankle socks as they can lead to rubbing on the heel.
- 1 mid-weight long-sleeve top. Capilene, Merino or other synthetic.
- 1 pair of long-johns or tights. Capilene, Merino or other synthetic.
- 1 warm pair of pants.
- 1 warm shirt. Synchilla or 200 weight works well.
- 1 warm jacket. A down jacket is preferred with around 800 fill.
- Waterproof Jacket and Pants - Lightweight and non-bulky. Side zips on the pants should be long enough to slide on over boots. Jacket must have a hood.
- 1 pair of hiking pants.
- 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 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 using prescription lenses consider a backup pair.
- Water carrying system with a capacity of 2-3 liters. A combination of a bottle and hydration system works well. 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. For drinking we like a thermos (refer to "water carrying system" above for more clarity). Plastic sporks will break - titanium does not. Collapsible style bowls save space.
- Swiss army style knife. No giant "multi-tools".
- Personal toiletries including toothbrush, toothpaste (travel sized), baby wipes and floss. Keep it minimal.
- Hand sanitizer - a personal travel size bottle.
- Toilet paper. The used toilet paper will go in a paper bag, which then goes in a ziplock, which you carry in your pack.
- Sunscreen and lip screen. SPF 30+. A 1 oz. bottle will be enough. Make sure the lip screen actually contains a sunscreen.
- Basic first aid supplies such as ibuprofen, moleskin, and tape. Your guides will have extensive first aid kits so please don't go overboard with your personal kits. If you tend to take NSAID's regularly please bring your own, or if your feet require constant blister attention please bring tape and moleskin.
- Camera, a spare memory card and battery. No big cameras please; compacts only. You can substitute a camera phone.
- Plastic Trash Bag for keeping things 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.
- Reading material, journal or Kindle. Do not bring "War & Peace".
- Ear plugs. Handy to block flapping tent noise (or noisy partners).

Food

- We include meals from lunch on Day 1 through lunch on Day 3. 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

- Shelter. We will provide tents for you, and you will be asked to share a tent with someone as campsites are only so large, and to help distribute weight. If you have a tent of your own you want to use please call the office prior to the trip.
- Stoves, kitchen and cookware.
- Water purification. The group will have access to a variety of different ways to treat water. Chemical treatment, such as Aquamira or Iodine, will be carried by the guide. Gravity filtration bags will be distributed amongst the group for use in camp.
- Bear Canisters. Each hiker gets a large plastic cylinder for overnight food protection from animals. When you pack each day you will be issued one canister to carry for that day.

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.