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**Backpacking I: Weekend
Introduction to Backpacking**

Trip Notes

Backpacking I: **Weekend Introduction to Backpacking**

The Great Outdoors is beckoning, you have read all the gear reviews online, and the credit card is maxed from all the REI spending. It has all starting to get confusing since all you wanted to do was go hiking.

We will get you there and have you learning the skills you need. This trip is low key, low distance but heavy on the skills you need to feel comfortable and confident in this new activity. We will spend time working through gear and equipment before we even set foot on the trail to make sure you have what is needed and then head out into the beautiful Sierra Nevada.

While you will have a guide along on the trip, we also want you to learn the necessary skills to get out yourself. We will guide you through all of the gear and tasks that you need to figure out. We will do the chores of cooking and setting up camp but you are invited to help out as much as you wish and learn new skills. We will talk about Leave No Trace practices and how to work those into what we do so as to take care of the mountains that we all value and cherish. The mileage on this trip is very short so this is the ideal for kids or someone who wants less distance and more time relaxing in the mountains.

Location

The Rock Creek Canyon area is situated midway between Mammoth and Bishop above Toms Place, a small restaurant and bar stop on Highway 395. This trip is not a loop back to the car so we will need to shuttle vehicle at the start of the trip.

Itinerary

Day 1: We meet in Bishop and do a complete equipment check to make sure you have everything you need for the adventure - and also to make sure that you are not taking too much and carrying too much weight. You will also have the opportunity to pick up anything you are missing in Bishop before we leave.

We carpool to Toms Place and set up our car shuttle before driving to the Hilton Lakes Trailhead above Rock Creek Lake. From here we climb gradually over to Hilton Lakes where we find a campsite by one of the lakes and enjoy the rest of the day while working on camp skills.

Day 2: We welcome the day, prepare breakfast, and then head down the other side with expansive views out over Crowley Lake past the Glass Mountains into Nevada. The trail here descends a lot to the trailhead but it is sandy and easy on the knees and finally we arrive at our vehicles and drive to retrieve the ones we left at Rock Creek. This is approximately a 30 minute shuttle.

Distances and elevations

Day 1	Trailhead to Hilton Lakes	4.5 miles	850 feet of gain	850 feet of down
Day 2	Hilton Lakes to trailhead	6.0 miles	120 feet of gain	2700 feet of down

Meeting place and time:

We meet the first day at 8:00 a.m. at the world headquarters of Sierra Mountain Center, 200 South Main Street, in Bishop. We are on the east side of Highway 395 in the second block south of the south most traffic light (intersection of Line Street and Main Street/Highway 395). Or is you prefer just across the Mountain Rambler Brewery. We will meet for an orientation talk and equipment check.

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 and all necessary group climbing gear.

Prerequisites

No prior experience is required though you should be in fair to good physical condition.

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Equipment List for Backpacking I: Weekend Introduction to 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. When backpacking paying attention to the details and creating a personal system will lead to success. Consider the month, weather patterns, and snow conditions. **Think lightweight.**

Essentials

- Footwear. Please bring sturdy hiking boots that you have broken in, or trail shoes that you have worn heavy packs with. The main difference between trail runners and boots is foot support vs. blisters. If your feet blister notoriously please consider wearing a trail runner. If you have weak ankles or need additional foot support please wear boots. Your feet are your transportation and can make the difference between surviving and thriving on any hiking trip.
- 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.
- Internal Frame Packs. A 40-50 liter pack will suffice. Internal frame packs are the norm these days and the most comfortable.
- Sleeping Bag. Please consider the month you are going to be hiking in. Fall trips have much colder nights than mid-July trips. A 25°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. Blister prevention is crucial so the clean third pair for camp is excellent preventative care. 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 pants, tights or expedition weight Capilene.
- 1 warm shirt. Synchilla or 200 weight works well.
- 1 warm jacket. A down jacket is preferred with about 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. Convertible pants that can convert to shorts can also be nice to have on the trail.
- 1 pair of shorts. Nice for swimming.
- 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.
- Headlamp. With a spare set of batteries.
- Eating and drinking equipment. We recommend a container with a lid. Plastic sporks will break - titanium does not.
- Swiss army style knife. No giant "multi-tools" tools!
- Personal toiletries including toothbrush, toothpaste (travel sized), baby wipes and floss. Keep it minimal.
- Hand sanitizer- a personal travel size bottle.
- Toilet paper! You will be required to carry your used toilet paper out. 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/phone camera.
- Plastic trash bag for keeping things in outside should it rain.
- Trekking poles. These are not essential, but can be handy on the trail. It is your choice, but they do save wear on the knees.
- Reading material, journal or Kindle. Do not bring "War & Peace"
- Ear plugs. Handy to block flapping tents (or noisy partners).

Food

- We include meals from lunch on Day 1 through lunch on Day 2. 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 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.
- 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.

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.