



## **Backpacking I: Long Weekend Introduction to Backpacking**

**Trip Notes**



# **Backpacking I:**

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This is our Introductory 3 day backpacking trip near the San Joaquin River out of Mammoth Lakes. We love this spectacular area of the Sierra with the multi-hued rock and beautiful deep lakes. For a lot of people 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, have time to simply enjoy the peace of the mountains and their beauty and recharge. The boss might actually thank you.

Hiking experience is not necessary - the desire to simply experience the Sierra Nevada is enough. During the trip we will work with you to give you the skills and knowledge to get to head out confidently by your self the next time.

### **Itinerary**

One reason we like this route is that it gives us some options. If the main desire is to hike longer days then we can do the full loop. If you would rather slow down, relax and just absorb the natural world around you then 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 then we can shorten it by camping on the rock slabs bordering Garnet Lake and then returning via the River Trail to Agnew Meadows

**Day 1:** We will meet in Mammoth Lakes, do an equipment review, pick up any last minute items and head to the trailhead at Agnew Meadows by driving or by taking the shuttle bus. 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 glacier bowl holding beautiful Shadow Lake. Here we find a great swimming rock for the brave. We follow Shadow Creek upstream and climb to our camp near the junction with the JMT.

**Day 2:** The sun greets us early here and after breakfast we head into 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 lighter packs and contour below the crest of the San Joaquin Ridge looking back to where our route took us. We hope to be back at the roadhead by early afternoon in time to get you on the road back to the big city.

### **Location**

Based from Mammoth Lakes, this area is accessed via the Devils Postpile/Reds Meadow Road.

### **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 8:00 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.

### **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 good physical condition and able to carry a pack with three days of equipment.

# Equipment List for Backpacking I: Long 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 1oz. 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.

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