



# **Tour De Darwin Sierra Ski Tour**

## **Trip Notes**

# Tour de Darwin Sierra Ski Tour

A great loop tour, this trip starts and finishes near North Lake, above Bishop Creek. We ascend Paiute Creek up into the wonderful ski terrain near Alpine Col. If time allows we can drop packs to enjoy long runs on nearby Goethe Peak or perhaps Mt. Darwin. Highlights include great views of the entire Evolution area and northern Kings Canyon National Park. With two major pass crossings we find it to be a great introduction to more complex backcountry tours. Though it's only thirty miles in length this trip packs a lot into its distance. Whether you've skied other tours or if you are aspiring to do some of the longer, more difficult routes like the Monarch Divide tour or High Route (We often use this as a warm up for these routes), this is a great trip through some of the most spectacular terrain in the Sierra.

## Itinerary:

Day 1: An easy day to aid in acclimatization as we take the road from Aspendell to our hut at North Lake. We review avalanche rescue procedures this day.

Day 2: We head up the North Fork of Bishop Creek leaving behind the trees and cross Paiute Pass, camping the second night above treeline near Alpine Col, in the great glacial cirque below Mt. Goethe.

Day 3: We start with a short and steep haul over Alpine Col but then brings us to our home for the next night, the Darwin Bench. Situated right at treeline this area has incredible views of the Mt. Goddard region to the west, down precipitous Evolution Canyon.

Day 4: This last day climb up and over Lamarck Col, passing below the giant peaks of the region: Mounts Mendel and Darwin and a great couple of thousand foot run, generally on perfect corn snow carving wide turns back to our starting point near North Lake.

**Length:** 20 miles

**Duration** 4 days

**Difficulty:** SMC tour rating II

## Skiing Ability and Prerequisites:

"SMC Backcountry Level II" and upwards and "SMC Intermediate Ski Skills" and upwards.

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 traveling up to seven miles a day and gaining up to 2000 feet a day so a high level of aerobic fitness is required.

## 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, permits, all necessary group climbing gear, tents, kitchen gear and breakfasts, lunches and dinners (you bring hot/cold drinks and snack items). Scheduled dates include USFS trail fees. Private programs do not.

## Notes and 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 with 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.

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