



Mammoth to June Sierra Ski Tour

Trip Notes

Mammoth to June Sierra Ski Tour

Once you have gained some backcountry touring skills and are comfortable skiing with a light pack it is time to head off into the Sierra winter and spring backcountry experiencing the joys of touring.

This tour from Mammoth to June Lake is an ideal introduction to backcountry touring. It is only three days long, a perfect long weekend. The skiing is moderate and the scenery outrageously beautiful. In the summer the Thousand Island Lake and Agnew Pass area is a popular destination, but in winter it is deserted and perhaps even more beautiful than ever. In fact we like this tour so much that we offer it several times during late winter and spring.

Itinerary: Quickly leaving behind the bustle and noise of the ski area lifts we follow Minaret Road to Minaret Vista (9,150 feet). This snow covered road gives time to adjust gear and ease into the skiing. After lunch at the viewpoint we make a quick, fun descent of the road to Agnew Meadows and finally leave the road. We climb up through aspens and pine forest to camp (8,800 feet) from where we can watch the sun slowly set to the west over the jagged Minarets.

On day two we take a steadily rising line through forest and open meadows to Agnew Pass (9,900 feet) and spend the night here, close to Thousand Island Lake and Mt. Banner. With several steep traverses this can be a challenging day, depending on conditions.

Day three starts with great views towards the Ritter/Banner area and the Sierra Crest before we descend to frozen Gem Lake, crossing the dam and dropping down to lower Agnew Lake. We top a rise and below is the community of June Lake and a steady descent down Rush Creek to the roadhead at Silver Lake (7300 feet). Our shuttle van is waiting here for us and we return to the vehicles and a well deserved rest.

Length: 13 miles **Duration** Three 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 very good level of aerobic fitness is required.

Meeting place and time:

We will meet in Mammoth at the Breakfast Club for breakfast, introductions, and trip outline at 7:30 a.m. the first morning of the trip. The Breakfast Club is located on Highway 203 (the access road to Mammoth from Highway 395) at the first traffic light you encounter, adjacent to the Shell Station. This is the intersection of Highway 203 and Old Mammoth Road and the restaurant is on the south side of 203. After breakfast we will do an equipment check before driving to the Mammoth Ski Area so don't finalize your packing until we meet.

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 will 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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