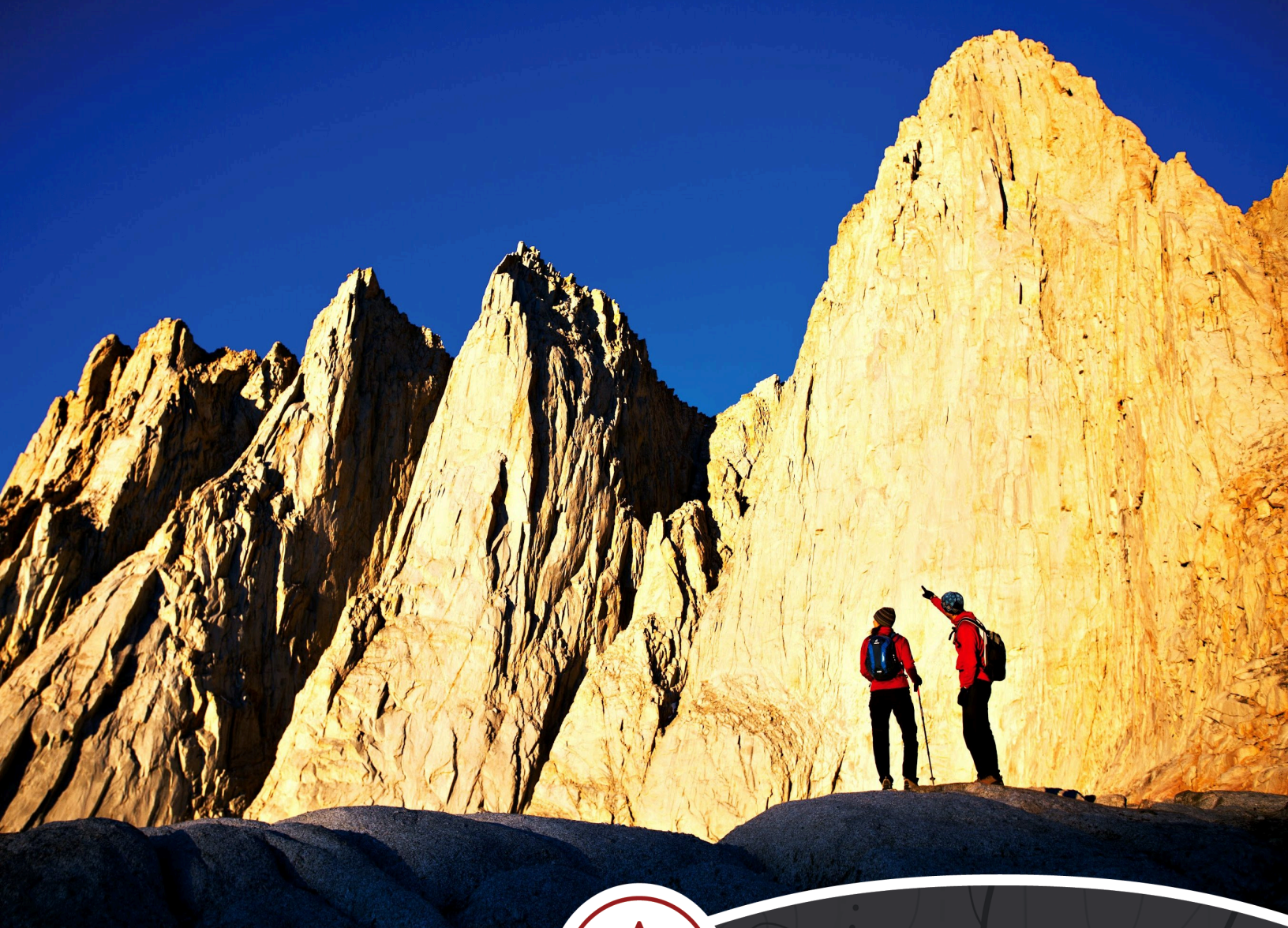

California John Muir Trail Southbound to Mt. Whitney Trekking

An Exclusive Wilderness Adventure with Summit Challenge

Thank you for checking out our adventures and for downloading this itinerary. Please note that this itinerary may be subject to change depending on the specific departure date. Be sure to check with us before scheduling any flights.

We love talking travel!

Contact us at info@mtsobek.com

or call **800-974-0300**

Feel the difference

with Mountain Travel Sobek

Unrivaled Expertise

MT Sobek started it all! Since our first Everest Base Camp trek in 1969, we've been leading award-winning adventures and building authentic connections in far-flung locations around the world. We were named Best Adventure Tour Company in 2022 by USA Today's 10 Best Readers' Choice Awards.

Unique Trip Design

Our adventures are perfectly paced, with incredible attention to detail — the right mix of fun, learning, and challenge that guarantees lifelong memories. Plan nothing, enjoy everything. We take care of all of the logistics so that you can have more time to do what's most important: relax, take in the experience, and enjoy!

Small Groups

We keep our groups intentionally small — usually fewer than 10 people. This allows you a more intimate experience with the people and wildlife you encounter. With a smaller group size, we can take advantage of many unexpected invitations and opportunities that would be impossible with larger groups.

Leading the Way

World-Class Local Guides

Our knowledgeable and passionate expert guides effortlessly create an immersive local experience for you. They are trained to the highest professional standards and are at the heart of everything we do. They make it possible to meet the challenges of adventure travel, and help create lasting memories and lifelong friendships... we can confidently say our guides are the best in the business.

Why take this trip with us?

REASON 1

MT Sobek has been exploring US National Parks for more than 50 years, placing a strong emphasis on responsible travel practices that support local communities and protect the natural environment.

REASON 2

This award-winning 17-day southbound trek to Mt. Whitney is fully aided with the support of a professional packer and mules that transport gear and move camp. This allows you to fully focus on the epic scenery and enjoy the challenge of the adventure.

REASON 3

Trek with our expert MT Sobek guides, who have in-depth knowledge of this remote and expansive mountain region. They'll also entertain with in-depth knowledge of local flora, fauna and legends about the great explorers who first blazed these trails.

At A Glance

ACTIVITIES

Challenging hikes up to 13 miles per day on mountain trails with high ridges, rocky switchbacks, and spectacular scenery. Summit Mount Whitney at 14,495 feet!

LODGING

We supply all camping and commissary gear, including tents and sleeping pads. You are expected to set up your tent, filter water, etc. Well-appointed hotels bookend the trip.

CLIMATE

Average daytime temperatures are 65-85°F and 15-35°F at night. Like many mountainous regions, storms that bring rain and snow can hit at any time.

KNOW BEFORE YOU BOOK

"What a total comfort to know that with MT Sobek, you're in the hands of professionals who have been doing it so long and so well. That was part of why we landed on them as our operators for our dream trip, and everything about the experience they gave us—from tailored expertise to unswerving professionalism—confirmed the company's emphasis on excellence." - Alex M.

California John Muir Trail Southbound to Mt. Whitney Trekking

An Exclusive Wilderness Adventure with Summit Challenge

Embark on this once-in-a-lifetime adventure, covering 135.5 miles of the southern half of the John Muir Trail. This incredible MT Sobek exclusive expedition will take you through the awe-inspiring and picturesque high Sierra Nevada and ensure a personalized experience with a small group size and full support team. With only a day pack, you'll traverse mountain passes, camp beside sparkling lakes, and marvel at the stunning alpine meadows. To top it off, you have the opportunity to climb Mount Whitney, the highest peak in the continental United States!

17 Days

Start: Fresno, California

End: Fresno, California

Departing: August

Activities: Hiking & Trekking, Adventure Camping

Lodging: Wilderness Camping, Comfortable Hotels

Group Size: 7-10 Guests

ACTIVITY:

Check mtsobek.com for date-specific pricing.

> ***"I've been on quite a number of long high altitude hikes on 5 continents. This was the best equipped, best organized, best provisioned and best led of all of them."***
>
> - Margaret M.

The Itinerary

DAY 01

Arrive in Fresno, California

Arrive in Fresno, California, to check in at the Fairfield Inn & Suites Fresno Yosemite Airport, near the Fresno air terminal, by 4pm. At 6pm, join the guides for an orientation and final gear check, along with a welcome dinner near the hotel.

MEALS: Dinner

DAY 02

Follow the South Fork of the San Joaquin River

Meet at 7am after breakfast, then drive about three hours to Florence Lake where you meet the horse-packer and mules to offload the gear. Then begin the first leg of the trip, which starts with a ferry ride across Florence Lake (7,325'). Today's mild acclimatizing hike goes 6.3 miles through lush meadows following the South Fork of the San Joaquin River. There is a 500-foot elevation gain along the way to the camp on the San Joaquin River.

MEALS: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

TRANSPORTATION: 3-hour private van transfer & ferry ride

ACTIVITY: 3-4 hours/6.3-8 miles hiking with 1,500' elevation gain and 1,050' elevation loss

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DAY 03

Hike from Piute Creek to Goddard Canyon

Continue the acclimatization process with another "easy" day on the trail. From Piute Creek, hike 6.2 miles of relatively flat terrain to the junction of the South Fork of the San Joaquin River and Goddard Canyon. Get a good night's sleep here in preparation for the ascent into the famous Evolution Canyon.

MEALS: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

ACTIVITY: 3-4 hours/6.4 miles with 1,437' elevation gain and 775' elevation loss

---

DAY 04

Reach Evolution Lake

Today's hike is approximately seven miles with an elevation gain of 2,400 feet into what some call the most spectacular portion of the trail. After a climb out of the river canyon, enter Evolution and then McClure Meadows. In this section the trail parallels Evolution Creek, which teems with golden trout. Camp at the spectacular Evolution Lake (10,852'), a gorgeous deep-blue lake that's one of the prettiest spots in the Sierra.

MEALS: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

ACTIVITY: 4-5 hours/7.81 miles with 2,820' elevation gain and 425' elevation loss

---

DAY 05

Descend into LeConte Canyon

From your camp at the very edge of the tree line, climb over Muir Pass (11,955'), taking a rest at the 75-year-old stone hut at the crest of the pass. Then descend on rocky terrain into LeConte Canyon (8,735'), with its impressive vertical walls of granite. Here, meet the first food drop on the trip.

MEALS: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

ACTIVITY: 6-7 hours/12.89 miles hiking to 11,955' with 1,815' elevation gain and 3,812' elevation loss

---

DAY 06

Head for Mather Pass & Camp at Palisades Lakes

On the way out of LeConte canyon, pass through Grouse Meadow and follow the Middle Fork of the Kings River. At the junction with Palisades Creek, turn east and begin the climb toward Mather Pass (12,100'). After tackling the Golden Staircase, camp short of the pass at Palisades Lakes (10,600') after approximately 9.5 miles.

MEALS: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

ACTIVITY: 5-6 hours/10.85 miles hiking to 12,100' with 3,129' elevation gain and 1,392' elevation loss

---

DAY 07

Climb Mather Pass & Reach South Fork of the Kings River

From Palisades Lakes tackle Mather Pass (12,100') and then descend through the Upper Basin, losing some 2,000 feet before reaching the South Fork of the Kings River. Stay on the Kings River tonight, enjoying the sounds of the gurgling river.

MEALS: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

ACTIVITY: 5-6 hours/8.87 miles hiking to 12,100' with 1,746' elevation gain and 2,311' elevation loss

---

DAY 08

Tackle Pinchot Pass & Descend to Crater Mountain Plateau

Today hike up to the Marjorie Lakes area, a glacier-scoured basin of stark beauty. Enjoy the dazzling scenery of pristine mountain lakes before tackling Pinchot Pass (12,130'). Descend to the Crater Mountain plateau for the night.

MEALS: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

ACTIVITY: 4 hours/7.22 miles hiking to 12,130' with 2,278' elevation gain and 1,732' elevation loss

---

DAY 09

Hike Up to Arrowhead Lake

Today head down into the Woods Creek basin (8,500'), across the "Golden Gate of the Sierra" suspension bridge, and then back up to Arrowhead Lake (10,300'), where you camp.

MEALS: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

ACTIVITY: 5-6 hours/8.49 miles hiking to 10,300' with 2,157' elevation gain and 2,387' elevation loss

---

DAY 10

Ascend Glenn Pass and Hike to Center Basin

Continue the journey by passing through the Rae Lakes Basin. Next ascend the rocky switchbacks of Glenn Pass (11,978'), followed by a descent to Vidette Meadow where you meet the second food drop. Continue to Center Basin, hiking amidst the stark beauty of huge precipitous ridges.

MEALS: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

ACTIVITY: 5-6 hours/8.97 miles hiking to 11,978' with 2,581' elevation gain and 3,009' elevation loss

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DAY 11

Face Forester Pass, the Highest On the JMT

At first light, head up the highest pass on the JMT (as well as the entire Pacific Crest Trail, for that matter) — the Forester Pass at 13,180'. From Forester descend to Tyndall Creek, passing the Diamond Mesa on the way. Make camp below the awesome Mount Whitney Massif.

MEALS: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

ACTIVITY: 7 hours/11.2 miles hiking to 13,180' with 3,389' elevation gain and 2,367' elevation loss

---

DAY 12

Hike to Wallace Creek

Today is a shorter day, featuring a hike that goes 5 miles from Tyndall Creek to Wallace Creek. At this scenic spot, enjoy a lazy afternoon resting in a meadow and playing in the creek.

MEALS: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

ACTIVITY: 2-3 hours/4.42 miles hiking to 10,405' with 604' elevation gain and 1,144' elevation loss

---

DAY 13

Hike to Mt. Whitney Basecamp

Enjoy a contemplative hike up to Crabtree Meadow, nestled at the base of the Eastern Sierra and the perfect basecamp for Mt. Whitney. Fuel up on an early supper before climbing into your sleeping bags after sundown. Relax in preparation for tomorrow's pre-dawn "alpine start" and your Mt. Whitney summit bid.

MEALS: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

ACTIVITY: 4-5 hours/6.5 miles hiking to 10,975' with 1,952' elevation gain and 859' loss

---

DAY 14

Attempt the Summit of Mount Whitney

Today take off early (at 4am) for the "high" point of the entire trip: a walk-up summit attempt of Mount Whitney (14,495'), the highest peak in the contiguous United States. You have worked hard to get on top, and now is the time to enjoy the 360 degree view that the highest peak in the Continental US affords you. The day's hike is 13 miles roundtrip back to Lower Crabtree Meadow.

MEALS: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

ACTIVITY: 9-10 hours/12.67 miles hiking to 14,495' with 3,621' elevation gain and 4,769' elevation loss

---

DAY 15

Meander Crabtree Meadows to Rock Creek

Today is a leisurely day in terms of terrain: lose 2,000 feet in elevation and then gain 1,900 feet (net gain of only 100 feet) as you meander through Crabtree Meadows on the way to the last night's camp at Rock Creek.

MEALS: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

ACTIVITY: 5 hours/9.23 miles hiking with 1,998' elevation gain and 1,891' elevation loss

---

DAY 16

Pass Golden Trout Wilderness & Rest in Lone Pine

The last day on the trail is a long one. Head up from Rock Creek over Cottonwood Pass (11,200'). Have a snack around Chicken Spring Lake on the way out of the Sequoia National Park for the last few miles through the Golden Trout Wilderness. It's 10 miles to the trailhead where picnic lunch awaits, as does the shuttle for a short drive to the nearby Eastern Sierra town of Lone Pine, California, home for the night. After a well-deserved shower, rendezvous for a final dinner.

MEALS: Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

TRANSPORTATION: 20-minute shuttle transfer

ACTIVITY: 5-6 hours/10.53 miles hiking to 11,200' with 1,722' elevation gain and 2,239' elevation loss

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DAY 17

Travel Home

After a good night's rest and breakfast on your own, depart early with the private shuttle back around the Sierra. The drive back to the starting point, Fresno airport, takes 5 to 6 hours. To build in any unforeseen road delays, plan your flights for the early afternoon, starting after 3pm.

TRANSPORTATION: 6-hour private van transfer

Where You'll Stay

These accommodations may be subject to change depending on your date of travel.

MT Sobek Camp—John Muir Trail Southbound

We supply all camping and commissary gear, including tents and sleeping pads. We encourage clients to bring their own sleeping bag, rated to 15 degrees in the 2-3 pound range. We encourage this because everyone sleeps differently, some need a really warm bag, others not so much thus having your own will ensure more comfort than renting. We also provide a crazy creek chair for every trip member. **Previous camping experience is required** for this trip! Guides will assist clients with their tents on the first night, but then it is up to the clients to set up their tents after that.

Best Western Frontier Motel

Situated in eastern California's beautiful Owens Valley, the Best Western Frontier Motel features mountain or valley views from its well-appointed guest rooms, each equipped with cable TV and Wi-Fi. An expanded complimentary continental breakfast is served each morning. Other amenities include an outdoor heated swimming pool, guest laundry, and a complimentary airport shuttle.

Departure Dates

Book early for a greater choice of available dates.
Once you book, your price is GUARANTEED!

August 30-September 15, 2024

August 29-September 14, 2025

What's Included

PRICE INCLUDES

- Expertise and services of our experienced adventure guides
- All accommodations as noted in the itinerary
- All breakfasts, lunches and dinners as noted in the itinerary
- Snacks and water between meals
- Additional regional guides and experts on many trips
- Comprehensive Trip Planner with detailed pre-trip information
- Private guided tours at historic sites, museums, wineries and other select attractions as noted in the itinerary
- Special events and other select attractions as mentioned in the itinerary
- All gratuities at hotels and restaurants
- Equipment and experienced guides for activities as described in the itinerary
- Park and other entry fees (unless otherwise noted)
- Fares for trains, ferries and other modes of travel as listed in the itinerary
- Select transfers as mentioned in the itinerary
- Baggage transfers and porterage

PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE

- Domestic or International airfare, airport taxes, and excess baggage fees
- Alcoholic beverages
- Gratuities for MT Sobek guides and packers
- Travel Protection Program
- Personal expenses

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