

**DESERT INSTITUTE**Fall Session  
2020*at Joshua Tree National Park*

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## Backpacking for Women in Mission Creek Preserve

### Information

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Date/ Time: Friday, October 30, 5 pm  
 Saturday, October 31, 8:00 am through  
 Sunday, November 1, 3 pm

Meet at: [Mission Creek Preserve](#)  
 Mission Creek Rd off of Highway 62, Desert Hot Springs

Instructors: Pam Kersey, Camping and hike leader  
 Robin Balch, Camping and hike leader

### Overview

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Spend a full moon Halloween weekend in the desert! This is a perfect opportunity for women who want to get away from the noise of car camping, but may be afraid to go backpacking alone. This class is for women interested in backpacking. Novices are encouraged to join! We will carry everything we need for an overnight adventure in our backpacks. You will enjoy the company of other women who love exploring the outdoors. You will learn new ideas for what to eat while camping on the trail. Your instructors will also go over trail safety, backpacking gear and how to set up and tear down camp efficiently. You must be able to carry approximately 30 pounds of weight in your backpack while hiking approximately 5 miles per day in the desert with the group. We will adjust our distance depending on the ability and wellbeing of the group. If you are able to hike up to 7 miles with a daypack then you should be fine. The class will include two days of hiking and one night on the trail. We will meet on Friday evening to check that participants have all of the food, water and gear they will need for the trip. We will camp near our cars at the Stone House area on Friday night. We will start the overnight backpacking trip on Saturday morning and hike out on Sunday. Make sure to look at the Mission Creek Preserve Website for information about this beautiful area. Class size limited to 6!

### Itinerary

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Friday, October 30, 5 pm meet at the Mission Creek Preserve  
*Mission Creek Preserve, Mission Creek Road off of Highway 62, Desert Hot Springs participants cannot be dropped off but need to arrive in a car that will be staying at the preserve*

- Introduction
- Guidance and assistance with packing backpacks

- Camping overnight at the preserve near our cars

Saturday, October 31, 08:00 am until the next afternoon (we will be staying overnight in the backcountry so do not plan to leave the group until Sunday afternoon when the hike is over)

- Start hike
- Travel up to approximately 5 miles, depending on group ability and wellbeing to choose a campsite, lunch break may be on the trail, set up camp, dinner at camp
- We will have some fun activities to do for our time at camp, and may choose to do another hike once we lighten our loads
- You may bring a lightweight book, journal, game or other activity for camp
- 10 Essentials of Hiking and Camping, clothes, first aid kits and what to bring in your backpack
- Discussion about how to decide where to hike and how to read a hiking book/trail guide
- Camp Cooking and what to bring on a backpacking trip
- Note the campsite we choose is not in a campground

Sunday, November 1 continued trip until – approximately 3 pm

- Breakfast at camp
- Tear down camp and re-pack backpacks
- Hike out to the trailhead where we started

### What to Bring to the Course

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**\*Keep pack weight in mind when you decide what to take. Safety and comfort are important but the luxuries of car camping are more than you want to carry!**

- Backpack, an overnight pack, not a daypack!
- Tent
- Sleeping bag
- Sleeping pad, Thermarest and Agnes are some brands, and optional pillow
- Water to drink and to cook with (there is no water on the trail, in the park or at our campsite) either carried in bottles or “bladder”. Recommend at least 3-4 liters per day
- Bring all of your Food – trail lunches X 2, snacks, instant coffee, creamer, dinner at camp Saturday evening, breakfast Sunday morning. Backpacker food ie: Mountain House are the easiest for hot meals. We will have dinner for you on Friday
- Small bowl, mug and “spork” type utensil and a small amount of soap to clean these
- Snacks and beverages for campfires Friday and Saturday night

- Backpacking stove, Jetboil or other way to cook meals
- Any medications you may need
- A list of any medications or health conditions you would want us to know about if you get sick
- Hand sanitizer, small, wet wipes or some way to freshen up
- Warm layer for overnight, check forecast, may include a beanie hat and gloves, a waterproof jacket can serve to stay warm and also stay dry if needed
- You may want to wear the same hiking clothes with just a change of socks and underwear. Keep your load weight in mind. You want to be warm but not to carry extra weight by taking clothes you don't need
- Shoes to wear around camp if you want a break from boots
- Flashlight (your headlamp will do just fine) have a spare and spare batteries
- Trash bag, or some zip locks to carry out trash from meals
- Toiletries, toilet paper, trowel
- Hat to block sun
- Sun glasses
- Sunscreen
- First Aid kit preferences (we will have one also)
- Whistle
- (optional hiking poles)

### **Fitness Requirements**

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Participants must be in good physical condition for courses/activities in a desert that may be hot, dry, windy, and sometimes surprisingly cold.

### **Hike Level**

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Moderate-Strenuous

### **Guidelines**

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- You are responsible for your safety.
- Park your car in designated areas only. Parking along the side of the road is dangerous to you and the environment.
- Rattlesnakes are present in the desert. Avoid contact with wildlife. Put your hands and feet only where you can see them.
- Stay with the group. If you get lost, stay put.
- Drink plenty of water. If you run out, notify the instructor or the Desert Institute Representative.
- Before leaving the class, check out with Desert Institute Representative.

## Instructor Biography

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**PAM KERSEY**, Ed.D, MSN, RN is the Dean of Science, Math and Engineering at Cuyamaca College in San Diego. She is an archaeological site steward, “lead” volunteer for the Desert Institute at Joshua Tree and has also volunteered as a camp nurse. She has completed three marathon hikes for children’s cancer fundraising. She has camped, backpacked, and hiked for many years including summits over 14,000 feet 5 times. She has taught hiking classes for women, and enjoys helping others learn how to safely appreciate camping and hiking.

**ROBIN BALCH**, Recently retired school counselor and prior co-owner of a skydiving school with her husband. She is a Desert Institute “lead” volunteer and loves being around people. She has hiked several portions of the Pacific Crest Trail and is a Forest Service Fire Lookout at Black Mt. Fire Tower in Idyllwild, CA. She loves the outdoors, hiking and backpacking and has been mentored by the best learning the ins and outs of backpacking. She has had experience of being caught in unexpected hail, snow and rain and learned how to pack light and smart. Robin is also a member of Joshua Tree National Park Search and Rescue (JOSAR).

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\* The Desert Institute staff/instructors will attempt to accommodate participant’s needs; however we reserve the right to deny a student participation in the course due to concerns regarding health and safety issues.