

DESERT INSTITUTE*at Joshua Tree National Park*

74485 National Park Dr. Twentynine Palms, CA 92277

Phone: 760-367-5539; e-mail: desertinstitute@joshuatree.orgSpring Session
2022

Beginning Backpacking for Women in Mission Creek Preserve

Information

Date/ Time: Friday, March 18, 2022, 5 pm
Saturday, Saturday, March 19, all day
Sunday, March 20, plan to be back to car by 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

Spend the “Pink Full Moon” weekend in the Mission Creek back country and on the Pacific Crest Trail! This is a perfect opportunity for women who want to learn how to backpack and camp overnight to get away from the noise of car camping, but may be afraid to go alone. This class is for women interested in learning backpacking. 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. There will be an intermediate level class in the future for those who want more experience and may want to move at a faster pace than this beginning class. Make sure to look at the Mission Creek Preserve Website for information about this beautiful area and the wildlife that live there. Class size limited to 6!

Itinerary

Friday, March 18, 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
- Bring your own dinner, either take out or something easy
- Camping overnight at the preserve near our cars

Saturday, March 19, 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)

- Breakfast near the stone house before we start hiking
- 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
- Some topics we may cover over the weekend include: 10 essentials of hiking and camping, clothes, first aid kits and what to bring in your backpack, how to decide where to hike and how to read a hiking book/trail guide, and food for a backpacking trip
- Note the campsite we choose is not in a campground

Sunday, March 20 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

***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 small pillow or a pillowcase to stuff clothes in for a makeshift 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 but use judgement based on what you normally drink while hiking. Water is usually the item that weighs the most, 2.2 pounds per liter!
- Small bowl, mug and “spork” type utensil and a small amount of soap to clean these
 - Bring all of your food. You will want trail lunches for two days, snacks, instant coffee, creamer, dinner for Friday and Saturday, breakfast for Saturday and Sunday. Backpacker dehydrated meals such as those produced by Mountain House are the easiest for hot meals but not required. Dried fruit and nuts are good options for snacks.
 - 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 should be filled in on the Desert Institute Waiver
 - 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
 - Sunglasses
 - Sunscreen
 - First Aid kit preferences (we will have one also)
 - Whistle
 - Optional: hiking poles
 - Masks

Fitness Requirements

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

Moderate-Strenuous

Guidelines

- 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

PAM KERSEY, is a Desert Institute “lead” volunteer, an archaeological site steward, and has also volunteered as a camp nurse. She has completed four 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. She recently retired from a career as a nurse and as a science and math dean.

ROBIN BALCH, is a Desert Institute “lead” volunteer. She has hiked several sections of the Pacific Coast Trail and has been a Forest Service Fire Lookout. She is a member of the Joshua Tree National Park Search and Rescue (JOSAR). She has taught many hiking and camping classes for women and enjoys sharing her knowledge of hiking and camping skills.

* 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.