

CALIFORNIA GIRL SCOUT BACKPACKERS

Rae Lakes Loop

Kings Canyon National Park

Itinerary provided by Girl Scouts San Diego

Created: January 2020

Distance: 46 miles

Starting Trailhead: Cedar Grove Road's End

Finishing Trailhead: Cedar Grove Road's End

Best Months: late July – September

Permit Limit: 15 people

Preview: The Rae Lakes loop in Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park is a world-class backpacking trip that attracts hundreds of backpackers every year. Fortunately, an excellent quota system and layover camping limits help preserve the solitude in this amazingly beautiful area. This is a moderate trip appropriate for those ready to hike 6 - 8 miles a day.

This 6-night trip loops clockwise through aptly named Paradise Valley, up along Woods Creek to join the John Muir (JMT) and Pacific Crest Trails (PCT). Cross Woods Creek on a very cool suspension bridge, then climb south to Rae Lakes. Continue south over Glen Pass (11,978 feet) and down to Charlotte Lake, then to Junction Meadow. Leave the JMT/PCT at Bubbs Creek and descend back to Cedar Grove for showers and pizza.

Girl Scout Progression Points: Week-long trip/itinerary planning, bear awareness, navigation, moving camp to camp, and creek crossings.

Key Risks:

- Creek Crossings: **CAUTION – S. Fork of the Kings River Bridge washed out in 2017. Until the bridge is re-built, crossing the river may not be appropriate for your group.** There are no other major, unbridged creek crossings.
- Bears (Bear lockers are available along much of the route.)
- Weather
- Altitude and Elevation Gains
- Heat in Paradise Valley
- Long Distance Conditioning

DISCLAIMER: Although California Girl Scout Backpackers attempts to keep the content contained in their itineraries up to date and accurate, it is up to each individual to check the accuracy of such information on their own. We assume no liability or make representations or warranties (expressed or implied) of any kind regarding the information provided.

Sample Itinerary (By Day):

1. Drive to Cedar Grove in Kings Canyon (Roads End), pick up permit, and camp in the valley.
2. Middle Paradise Valley (7.2 miles); bear lockers available.
3. Woods Creek Crossing x JMT (7.2 miles); bear lockers available.
4. Middle Rae Lake (6.5 miles); bear lockers available; backcountry ranger station. Note that camping is limited to 1 night per lake.
5. Over Glen Pass to Charlotte Lake (4 miles), Bubbs Creek (5.5 mi.), or Junction Meadow (7.8 mi.). Bear lockers available at all sites.
6. Either hike out (8.6 from Bubb's Creek) or camp at Sphinx Creek Crossing

Itinerary Options:

- Day hike or side trip from Rae Lakes to Sixty Lakes Basin. Sixty Lakes is a beautiful basin, though camping is restricted to groups of 8 or less.

Permits Needed:

- Permit: <https://www.nps.gov/seki/planyourvisit/upload/FINAL-NoYear-Wilderness-permit-application-Email-2.pdf> Apply March 1 for the entire summer season.

Resources & Safety Management:

- Permitting information: https://www.nps.gov/seki/planyourvisit/wilderness_permits.htm
- Wilderness Trip Planner: <https://www.nps.gov/seki/planyourvisit/backpacking.htm>
- Route Information: www.nps.gov/seki/planyourvisit/rae-lakes-loop
- Trail Conditions: www.nps.gov/seki/planyourvisit/trailcond.htm
- Guidebook: Sierra South by Kathy Morey and Mike White
- Topo Maps: 7.5 minute The Sphinx, Mt. Clarence King
- Tom Harrison's Trail Map: Kings Canyon High Country



Rae Lakes Basin

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