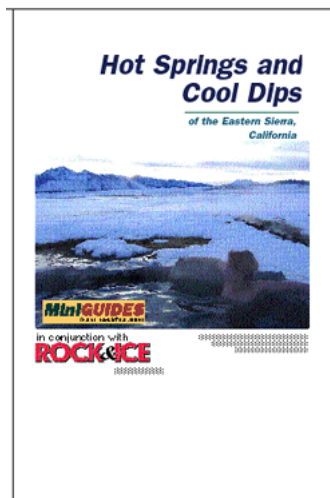


Hot Springs and Cool Dips

MiniGUIDE

by Mick Ryan
Version 1.0 - March 2003



Thank you for downloading this ROCKFAX MiniGuide. We hope that you find the information useful, inspiring and accurate. Our intention is to provide many more MiniGuides which will help open up new areas for travelling climbers. We also hope to provide affordable sampler guides to established areas and to extend existing coverage with newly developed crags. Print-on-demand means that we will be able to keep the MiniGuides continually up-to-date but to do this we need your feedback. Please send any comments you have to feedback@rockfax.com. Your subscription to this MiniGuide includes free updates within the same main version number.

Thanks again for your support.

Alan James, March 2003

HOW TO ASSEMBLE YOUR *MiniGUIDE*

This MiniGUIDE is designed to be printed and compiled into a compact booklet. For best results it should be printed on good quality Letter-size paper using a modern color inkjet printer.

PRINTER SETTINGS

- Choose *Landscape* printing on a *Good quality color* setting.
- Initially print at at full size (100%).
- Ensure that any options such as *Shrink oversize pages to paper size* are **UNCHECKED**.
- Select any options to *Maximize printable area*.
- Select any options to *Centre printable area*.
(See Problems below)

PRINTING

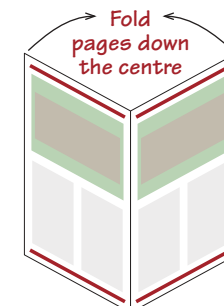
- Do not print page 1 (this page).
- Print page 2 (the cover) on strong paper, photo paper or white card.
- Print the rest of the pages on good quality paper.

ASSEMBLING

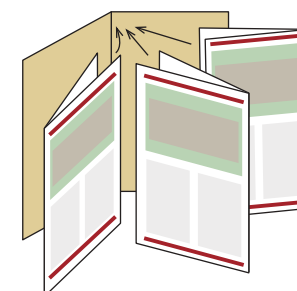
- Fold each internal page separately down the middle so that the printed sides are facing outwards.
- Assemble the pages, with the folded center edge outwards, into a small booklet.
- Wrap the cover around the pages.
- Either staple the spine (you will need a strong stapler) or use a plastic binding clip available from stationary shops.

PROBLEMS

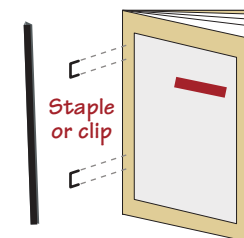
- With some printers (especially HP) it is difficult to get the pages to centre properly. Check the ROCKFAX web site www.rockfax.com/miniguides/help.html for a solution to this problem



Printed sides facing outwards



Insert separate folded pages inside cover page



Fasten with a large stapler, or a plastic sliding clip



Hot Springs and Cool Dips MiniGUIDE

by Mick Ryan

Version 1.0 - March 2003

ROCKFAX MiniGUIDE design by Alan James and Mick Ryan.
Published by ROCKFAX Ltd.
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Hot Springs and Cool Dips

**of the Eastern Sierra,
California**



MiniGUIDES
from rockfax.com

produced for the clients of Sierra Mountain Center by Rockfax

Robyn Stoddard enjoys the winter sun, hot water
and mountain views at one of the Whitmore
pools. photo: Matthew Magruder



Hot Springs and Cool Dips **MiniGUIDE**

by Mick Ryan

with help from Matthew Magruder, Robyn Stoddard, Scott Justham
and Joe Pollini.

Version 1.0 - March 2003

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The core Sierra Mountain Center team at the first Eastern Sierra MountainFest. From the left SP Parker, Lori Constan, and Todd Vogel. Not pictured are Sierra Mountain Center guides, Mark Houston and Kathy Cosley, Vince Anderson, Howie Schwartz, Tim Villanueva, and Ed Boddy.

Rockfax USA's next two guidebooks

Eastern Sierra Climbing *traditional | sport | bouldering | alpine | ice*

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HOT SPRINGS AND COOL DIPS

MiniGUIDES from rockfax.com

If you dig deep enough at any spot on earth you'll eventually melt your shovel. On the Eastside of the Sierra you won't have to dig for very long. The region is a hotbed of seismic and volcanic activity, with magma slowly making its way to the Earth's surface. This is especially so near Mammoth at the Long Valley Caldera which last exploded 760,000 years ago, sending a blanket of ash over much of the Western United States. This is the same material that has formed the Happy Boulders, the Owens River Gorge and the Bear Crag. This active caldera has produced smaller scale eruptions on average every 200,000 years, though today it is relatively quiet, marked primarily by hot springs, natural steam vents (fumeroles), small earthquakes, and a prominent central dome six miles across. As well as feeding local hot springs the magma-heated water drives three geothermal power plants, producing a combined 40 megawatts of electricity.



photo: Matthew Magruder

This ROCKFAX MiniGUIDE documents the best places to relax in hot and cold water under the clear blue

Eastern Sierra sky around the climbing hotspots of Bishop and Mammoth Lakes. Enjoy Mother Nature's tonic that heals the body, relaxes the mind, and helps you understand your obsession with rocks. There is no better way to start or finish a day climbing on the wild side of California.

Hot Springs can be found south of Bishop and north around Mammoth Lakes, especially in Long Valley near the Green Church off Hwy. 395. There are three commercial facilities and many free hot tubs that locals have built into jacuzzi-like concrete-lined baths that can be regulated and emptied for cleaning.

When it gets hot during the summer you may like to try something cooler and there are many crystal-clear lakes, bubbling creeks, rope swings and shimmering artesian wells in which to take a refreshing dip. There's even a salty Dead Sea experience to be enjoyed at Mono lake. Some of these locations are described.

So whether you've just come down off an alpine route, had a hard day pocket pulling at Clark Canyon or been busy bruising your fingertips at the Buttermilk. Make sure you visit one of these aqueous sanctuaries of sanity.

UPDATE: This MiniGUIDE will be updated this summer with more photographs (please submit some of your own if you like) and any corrections and new information. Also there will be a new section on "tubing": floating on inflated tyre inner-tubes down the Owens River. Including where to purchase the tubes and the best "in and out" locations.

The next ROCKFAX guidebook:

EASTERN SIERRA CLIMBING
sport | trad | bouldering | alpine | ice



features this Eastern Sierra cliff and many more

If you are a registered ROCKFAX MiniGUIDE user you will receive an email about this ROCKFAX guidebook before publication.

CORE PRINTED INFORMATION -

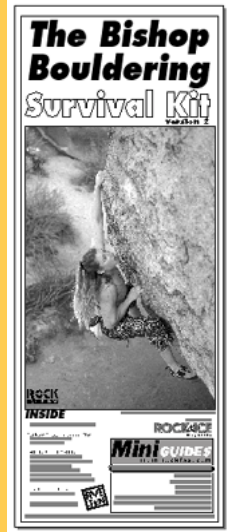
The Bishop Bouldering Survival Kit 2003

This ROCKFAX guide contains all the bouldering maps that you need for bouldering in the Bishop area.

It includes topo maps and problem descriptions to: the Happy Boulders, The Sad Boulders, The Druid Stones, a Buttermilk Country map and guides to such Buttermilk areas as the Peabody Boulders (updated 2003) and these NEW areas: the Pollen Grains, the Get Carter area, Secrets of the Beehive area, the Checkerboard, and Dales Camp.

The Happy Boulders, Sad Boulders, and Druid Stones are updated online at www.rockfax.com in the form of FREE downloadable MiniGUIDES. These FREE updates are not self-contained and are best used with the printed guides in the Bishop Bouldering Survival Kit.

The Bishop Bouldering Survival Kit costs \$18 and is available from climbing shops and online by Paypal or Credit Card at the ROCKFAX USA shop. Or send a check to Rockfax, 298 May Street, Bishop, CA 93514



FREE

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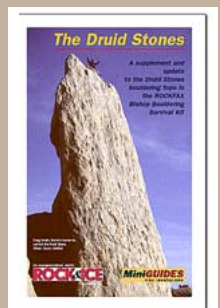
- The Happy Boulders
- The Sad Boulders
- The Druid Stones

Go to www.rockfax.com and click on the MiniGUIDES section. Register (it's free) and you can then download the selection of FREE MiniGUIDES (a few are for paid downloads but all the Bishop Bouldering ones are free). It does mean that we have your email address but we have a strict privacy policy and will only email you with our monthly newsletter describing new updates and guidebooks.

Also available are - FREE Color-Coded Bouldering Circuits to the Happy Boulders and Peabody boulders

To help you in planning your trip to Bishop and assist in increasing the good time factor when you are there. These FREE MiniGUIDES are also available.

- Hot Springs and Cold Dips
- Bishop Accommodation Guide
- Buttermilk Scumberling - trail running and scrambling





THE EASTERN SIERRA
Hot Springs And Cool Dips

Hot Spring Etiquette

Please follow these guidelines when bathing in the hot tubs.

- Approach the hot tubs by the established trails or boardwalks.
- Do not drive off the established roads: you'll get stuck in the alkali mud, a tow will cost you \$500, it destroys vegetation and it's illegal (you'll get a ticket).
- Most hot tubs are "clothing optional", although if families are about it is courtesy to wear a bathing costume. Two exceptions are the Hot Creek pools behind Mammoth-Yosemite airport (patrolled by a Forest Service Ranger) and of course the commercial facilities. You will get a ticket for parading in the nude at these places.
- Never use soap in the tubs for bathing or laundry washing.
- Always check the water temperature before entering.
- Leave the boom box at home.
- **OPEN or PRIVATE.** Some tubs are considered **OPEN**. This means that if there are people in them and there is space, you are at liberty to join them. There are exceptions of course: especially if there is a family with children occupying the tub. Other tubs are considered **PRIVATE**, usually the more remote harder-to-get-to tubs. If people are in these wait your turn. In general, if the tub is small and is occupied, come back later.
- Pick up any trash others have left behind.
- Don't gawk at fellow bathers.
- Pregnant women, those with heart problems, and small children are not advised to bath in hot water even for short periods of time.
- Do not camp next to any of the hot tubs described in this MiniGUIDE.

Best Time To Visit the Hot Springs

The "free" hot tubs described here are quietest mid-week. You may have to wait a while if you want privacy at weekends, especially weekend evenings. Some roads may be impassable after heavy snow.

Trash Bags and Secret Service

As climbers we are responsible guardians of the environment. Unfortunately not all are like this. If you are visiting a hot tub or the river take a trash bag with you and do a "secret service", pick up the detritus left by others. Trash bags for this purpose are available FREE (supplied by Rockfax) from both Wilson's Eastside Sports and Mammoth Mountain Supply.

Several Mammoth and Bishop locals are the unofficial guardians of some of the hot tubs described here. They generally maintain the tubs and make sure that they are clean and periodically do "clean ups". Give them a hand if you can.



Keough's Hot Springs

Seven miles south of Bishop down Hwy. 395 is Keough's Hot Springs which consists of "the ditch", a series of hot pools in a creek, and the commercial Keough's Hot Springs Resort.

The commercial facility, Keough's Hot Springs is owned by the Brown family and managed by Robin and Matt Fisher (a climber). If you want to swim a few lengths in a warm pool, and then cook like a lobster in the hot tub, then this is the place. It is highly recommended. It is open every day apart from Tuesdays and costs \$7. Call for opening hours.

The ditch is only hot in the evenings usually after 7pm. They are well-used. They are situated on Los Angeles Power and Water Land and camping is not allowed. They aren't the most aesthetic pools in the region being shadowed by power lines but at dark it makes little difference.



Keough's Hot Springs consists of a swimming pool, hot tub, fountain, snack bar and gift shop. Out in the grounds are outdoor grills and picnic tables. Camping is also available Photo: Mick Ryan

East Line Swimming Holes

The Swimming Pond

By the Owens River, just outside of Bishop. is a crystal clear artesian well that bubbles "warm" water into a dug out pond. This is a popular venue in the summer and it is advised that you get there in the morning or after 5pm. If you do go early in the morning you will be rewarded with crystal clear water. In the afternoon this pond gets a bit of traffic and will be churned up.



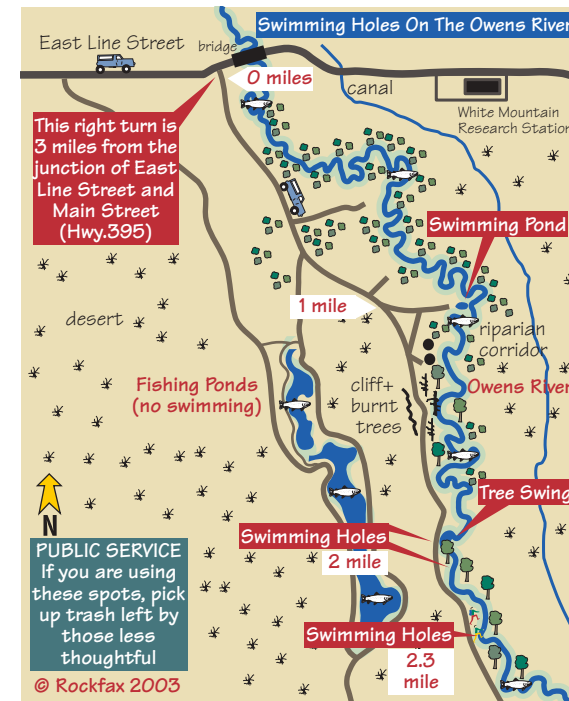
This pond averages four feet in depth (up to 6ft) and is great for swimming. It is also home to four big fat carp that have resisted all attempts to capture them. The adjacent Owens River is much colder, even in summer and is great for a bit of shock therapy. In winter swimming is possible here on sunny days but it is primarily a summer hang.

The Swimming Holes

A mile south of the pond are various swimming holes in the Owens River, including a rope swing. These areas are popular and are the site of the usual run of stupid human tricks, usually demonstrated by local youths trying to impress the opposite sex.



The rope swing and swimming hole on the Owens River. Photo: Mick Ryan

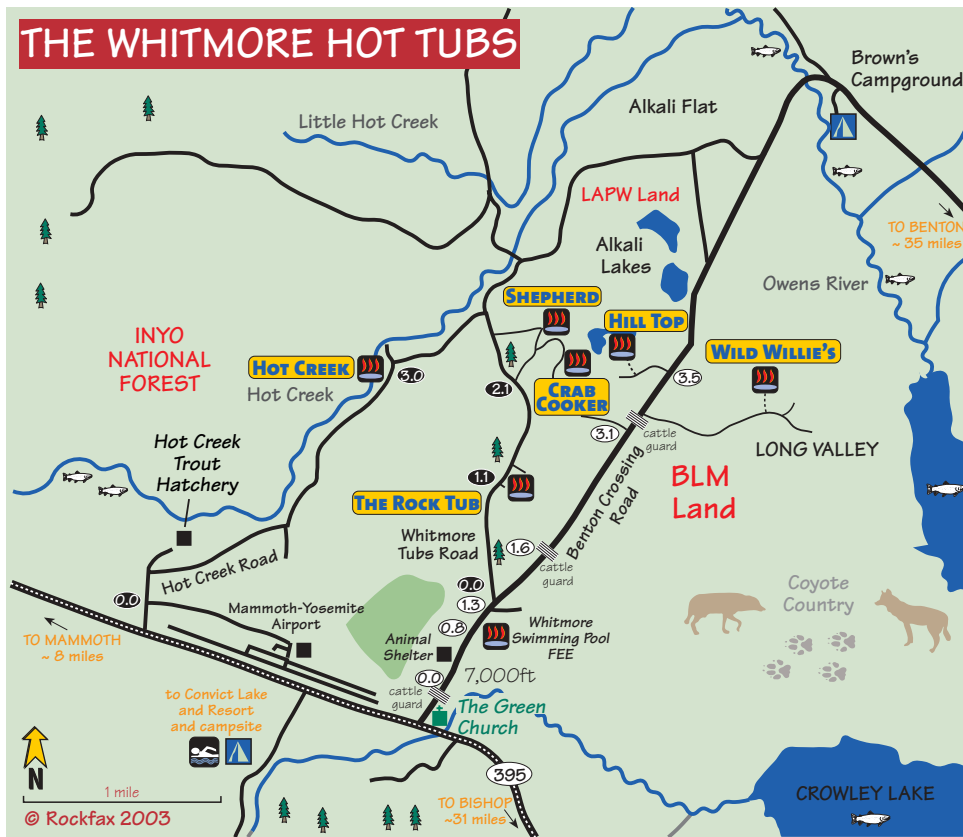


The Whitmore Tubs

The most picturesque of all the hot springs and tubs on the Eastern Sierra are without a doubt the Whitmore Tubs southeast of Mammoth Lakes in the Long Valley Caldera, northeast of the local landmark the Green Church. Over the years locals have customized these springs into tubs some of which have faucets (taps) that can regulate the water temperature and most have clean concrete floors. They are in a delicate area however and great care must be exercised to stay on established trails and boardwalks so as not to damage the fragile alkali meadows. It is best not to camp here as this causes sanitation problems and disturbs other users of the area. These tubs are quite popular at any time of the year, luckily you have several choices. At times of heavy snowfall the roads to some of these tubs are impassable, sometimes even by a high-clearance 4WD S.U.V's. Not so the pleasant commercial Whitmore Swimming Pool- great for lap swimming. Open from June until September. Call 760/935-4222 for opening times.

Hot Creek

The pools here are in sections of the Hot Creek behind Mammoth-Yosemite. This area is under strict control of the Forest Service and there are rules and regulations, but no fee. Bathing suites must be worn and the area is open from sunrise to sunset. The creek is in a narrow cliff-lined canyon and it is geologically very interesting.



Hot Creek continued.

Areas of the creek are too hot for bathing and these areas are cordoned off. People have died here usually through a combination of alcohol-induced impaired judgement and scalding hot water! Saying that, it is a popular place and the contrast between the cold creek water and hot spring water is quite an experience as you swim through cold creek water to get to the hot spots. It can be hard to get to in the winter, but worth it. Ditch the car and don the X-country skis or snowshoes.

From the Mammoth Lakes junction of Hwy.203 and Hwy.395 drive south (toward Bishop) to Mammoth-Yosemite Airport (a couple of miles) and take Hot Creek Hatchery Road north of the airport for 3 miles to a paved parking area. Take the stepped-trail down to several hotspots in the creek.

The following three hot tubs are located north of Benton Crossing Road. Take Benton Crossing Road that begins at the Green Church on Hwy.395 for 1.3 miles past the commercial Whitmore pool to a left turn onto Whitmore Tubs Road. All approach descriptions start here.

The Rock Tub

A small concrete and stone tub (4/6 people) that is secluded by rocks. Quite romantic. Drive for 1.1 miles down Whitmore Tubs Road to a right turn. Best to park here. Walk down this rutted-road for about 200yds to this tub that is hidden by rocks.

Shepherd and the Crab Cooker

Because of their seclusion these tubs are considered "Private". If someone is already in them please respect their privacy. Drive for 2.1 miles down Whitmore Tubs Road (which is a mile further than the side-road for "the Rock Tub") to a right-turn just before a lone pine tree. Take this for half a mile to a left fork which is followed to a small valley and a pond. Shepherd's Hot Tub is by this pond. For the Crab Cooker walk south down the dirt road to a partially-enclosed valley where you will find this tub.

The following tubs are further down Benton Crossing Road.

Hill Top Tub

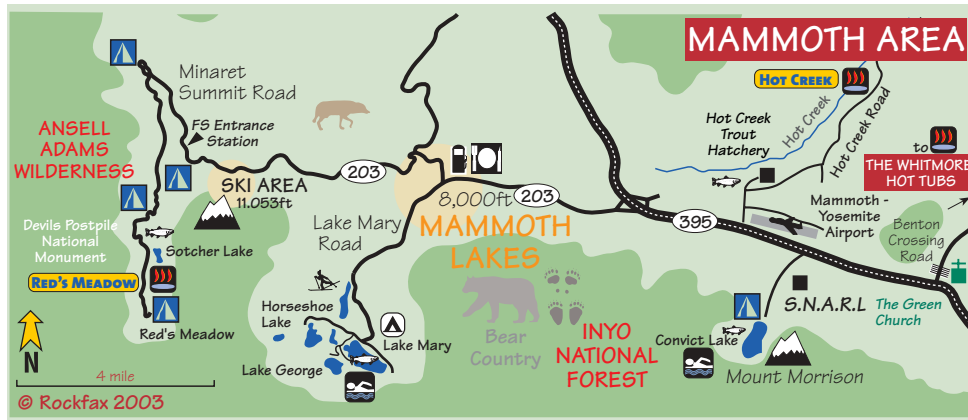
Perhaps the most popular of the small tubs (4 people comfortable to 6 people at a squeeze) due to its proximity to the road that makes access a snatch even in mid-winter. You will run into a lot of fellow humans here. Its popularity is also due to the fact that the views are tremendous. There's a faucet to regulate the flow and temperature in this deluxe concrete and stone tub. Drive down Benton Crossing Road for 3.1 miles to the third cattle guard. Continue down the hill to a left turn. Park-up then walk down this unpaved road for 200yds to some log posts. Turn right here and walk across the meadow, over a creek and up the slight hill to this tub.

Wild Willies

Perhaps the most popular of the tubs. Definately "open". It consists of a large concrete tub about hip deep, and a smaller, hotter tub. Drive down Benton Crossing Road for 3.1 miles to the third cattle guard. Take a right immediately after the cattle guard and follow this dirt road for about a mile. Stay to the left until you reach a well-marked parking area. Then walk along a trail to the east, part of the way on a boardwalk, to the tubs.

Red's Meadow's Free Hot Showers

These hot showers near the Devil's Postpile National Monument are free and great if you are climbing in the area at Bear Crag or coming down off the Minarets. Red's Meadow campground is just south of Sotcher Lake but before Red's Meadow Resort and the Rainbow Falls trailhead. These showers are located in a purpose built building in the campground and area available on a first come first served basis. The nearby hot spring source has a grate over it but is available for bathing in the winter accessed by skiing.



Other Hot Springs

Bridgeport

If you are approaching or leaving the area via Bridgeport (north of Mammoth on Hwy. 395) you may like to give Travertine Hot Springs a visit. Drive south from Bridgeport Main Street for half a mile to a left at Jack Sawyer Road (a few hundred yards before the ranger station). Go a third of a mile along this road to a right bend, turn left on dirt road here and go 1.2 miles. Take a right fork over some rough spots and approach the top of hill. There are several pools here below the ridge of travertine rock.

Saline Valley

A big hippie hang-out. Remote, hard to get to and beautiful. Ask around.

Benton Hot Springs

Thirty or so miles down Benton Crossing Road from the Whitmore Tubs is Benton Hot Springs (also accessible from Route 6 from Bishop). Clean and sanitary baths are available in antique redwood tubs for only \$7 per person, or \$15 per tub per hour. Baths are drained and cleaned after each use. Reservations suggested. Call 760-933-2507.

Further Reading

Hot Springs Of The Eastern Sierra by George Williams III. Published by Tree By The River Publishing and available at all local bookshops.

Other Cool Dips

Millpond, Bishop

If you are camping at Mill Pond or at Horton Creek there is a large pond suitable for swimming in Millpond Recreation Area.

Owens River and McGee Creek

If you are climbing in the Gorge you will find several deep pools in the Owens River in which to take a dip. If you have been climbing at Clark Canyon, check out the upper Owens River which runs through the Big Spring campground (the one off the Owens River Road). Nearer Bishop, as well as the East Line areas, check out various pools in the Owens River that are along the Chalk Bluff Road near the Happy Boulders. There is also a good waterfall on McGee creek near the Peabody Boulders in the Buttermilk. Drive past the Peabody Boulders up to the parking area for the Bardini Boulders (see the ROCKFAX Buttermilk map) and the waterfall is to your east.

Lakes



Lake Tulainyo near Mount Russell.

They aren't that cold! One of my summer favorites is Convict Lake, especially if you've just done an alpine route on Mount Morrison or Laurel Mountain. We stash beer by the northern shoreline and on our return sip cold ones and skinny dip in Convict's crystal-clear depths. Virtually all the trailheads have lakes that are suitable for swimming, however briefly....brrrrrrrr. PLEASE NOTE: Don't swim where other humans are fishing and you will get ticketed if you skinny dip in view of others.

One challenge, and this has been done, is to swim Tulainyo Lake on the north side of Mount Russell. At an altitude of 12,818 feet, it is the highest "named" lake in the continental United States. It is icy cold and the color of deep sapphire, a jewel set in a lonely and desolate place.

Salty Mono Lake

Swimming in the salty Mono Lake near Lee Vining is not to be missed. It's on life's big tick list. The water is two and a half times saltier than sea water. If you can't swim, this is the place for you as you can't sink. And swimming is positively encouraged here according to David Carle, Park Ranger of Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve. You will share the water with brine shrimp and alkali flies, but don't be put off as they are harmless and extremely interesting to watch. Access is at the south shore, from the South Tufa or Navy Beach parking areas. Both places are off Hwy 120, about five miles east of Hwy 395.

It is recommended that you either float on your back or wear goggles as the salty water is irritating to eyes. It is also a good idea to have fresh water handy on shore to rinse your face. Expect a whitish mineral residue on your skin, and stiff hair after you dry off. This residue washes off easily. There is no fresh water available in the South Tufa / Navy Beach area. Public showers are available in Lee Vining.