

Santa Barbara Trail Guide

Rattlesnake Trail

LENGTH: 3.5 miles round trip to Tunnel Trail junction. 1000 feet elevation gain. **Moderate.**

4.88 miles round trip to Gibraltar Road. 1550 feet elevation gain. **Moderately Strenuous.**

TOPO MAP: Santa Barbara

ACCESS: From Santa Barbara Mission, drive 0.7 miles toward the mountains. At the first stop sign, turn right onto Foothill Road and drive 0.2 miles. Turn left onto Mission Canyon Road at the fire station, go 0.5 miles. Make a sharp uphill right turn onto Las Canoas Road. Drive 1.2 miles on this winding road and park on the right side shortly before the stone bridge. There is a large sign at the trailhead on the left side of the road. Total distance from Santa Barbara Mission is 2.6 miles.

DESCRIPTION: Rattlesnake Canyon is one of the area's most popular hikes. It is easily accessible and there is always water flowing in the creek.

After the first stream crossing and a short uphill climb the trail joins a fire road for a short distance. The road narrows once again to a trail and begins a gradual ascent with several stream crossings and a series of switchbacks. The lower portion is well shaded with California bay laurel, costal live oak and sycamore trees. In the spring it is a wildflower lover's paradise with most of the coastal range flowers in brilliant display of color.

As the trail gains altitude the views of the city, the ocean and the Channel Islands expand. About two-thirds of the way up there is a large meadow which ends near a junction with a connector to Tunnel Trail on the left and a continuation of the Rattlesnake Trail on the right. Before beginning the final portion of the trail we suggest a short rest on the huge boulders under the large oak tree marking this junction.

The last three-quarters of a mile is very steep and some of the trail had deep erosion gullies down the middle. The trail ends at Gibraltar Road where the view is excellent. However, watch for motor vehicle traffic at this point.

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Altitude (feet)	Distance (miles)	Description	Waypoint
900	0	Trail starts from Las Canoas Road just before stone bridge. Large sign at entrance.	RAT001
900	0.03	Cross creek on rocks. Water is generally low, but may be high in rainy season.	RAT002
990	0.11	Junction with fire road. Proceed to left. This area planted with rock roses.	RAT003
1135	0.46	Large coastal oak growing in middle of road.	RAT004
1170	0.53	Junction with old horse trail to right. Continue straight ahead.	RAT005
1155	0.56	Walk along creek on left. Steep cliffs on right.	RAT006
1170	0.59	Wide, shallow stream crossing.	RAT007
1220	0.65	Pine trees on side of hill planted by Sierra Club after 1963 fire.	RAT008
1555	1.24	Large hollow tree on right of trail.	RAT009
1545	1.27	Cross creek beside large rocks.	RAT010
1575	1.34	Final creek crossing.	RAT011
1850	1.65	Enter high grass meadow. Many wildflowers grow here in spring. Former location of tin can hut.	RAT012
1900	1.75	Junction with connector to Tunnel Trail. Excellent rest stop with large oak tree for shade.	RAT013
1990	1.88	Dry creek crossing.	RAT014
2010	1.92	Start steep switchbacks. Middle of trail washed out in some places.	RAT015
2150	2.16	Large rectangular rock for rest stop at switchback.	RAT016
2450	2.44	Trail ends at Gibraltar Rd.	RAT017
2580	2.75	Gibraltar Rock.	RAT018

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La Cumbre Peak via Tunnel Trail

LENGTH: 11.0 miles round trip. 3010 feet elevation gain.
Strenuous.

TOPO MAP: Santa Barbara

ACCESS: From Santa Barbara Mission drive 0.7 miles toward the mountains. At the first stop sign, turn right on Foot hill Rd. , go 0.2 miles, then turn left on Mission Canyon Rd. at the first station and continue for 1.0 miles. At the sign for Tunnel Rd., bear left and drive 1.2 miles to the end of the road. Parking is allowed on the right side of the road inside the white lines and not beyond the “No Parking” sign. Total distance from Santa Barbara Mission is 3.4 miles.

DESCRIPTION: Visible from the entire Santa Barbara area, La Cumbre Peak is the highest point of the front range of mountains. The white fire tower (no longer in use) is a landmark. From this point, with a view of the entire coastal land and sea area, hang gliders take off and soar gracefully over the lesser mountain ridges.

The stone covered face of Cathedral Peak lies directly in front of La Cumbre Peak. This peak is lower but more rugged and with only a primitive trail, it requires considerable rock-hopping to reach the summit.

Altitude (feet)	Distance (miles)	Description	Waypoint
950	0	Trial starts at junction of Tunnel and Spyglass Ridge Roads.	TUN001
	0.05	Locked gate road. Walk around gate to left.	TUN002
	0.7	Cross wooden bridge over Mission Creek. The large pipes crossing the canyon near the bridge carry water from Gibraltar Dam to the city's water supply. Following the creek bed upstream will lead to Seven Falls, a popular weekend hike. To reach this series of water falls requires a considerable amount of rock climbing and hopping.	TUN003

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1245	0.81	Paved road ends, dirt trail begins -- continue straight (NW) ahead. A metal sign points to Tunnel and Jesusita trails. The wide dirt road to the right is maintained to service utility lines. It is approximately one mile and very steep, it can make a good conditioning hike when done at a fast pace.	TUN004
1291	0.87	Junction with Tunnel trail. Turn right (N) and follow trail up hill.	TUN005
1566	1.13	Cross trail used to service power lines. Continue straight (NE).	TUN006
2095	1.71	First clear view of Santa Barbara and ocean.	TUN007
2478	2.28	Junction with connector trail to Rattlesnake Canyon Trail. Continue on Tunnel Trail to the left (N).	TUN008
2657	2.89	View Point. Trail continues on right (NNW).	TUN009
3299	3.8	Vegetation becomes sparser. Trail cuts through side of hill with some loose shale.	TUN010
3410	4.09	Junction with Camino Cielo. Turn left for La Cumbre Peak. Walk on paved road, watching for traffic. Digger and Coulter pines and large specimens of big leaf maples growing along ridge of mountain. The view to the north covers the Santa Ynez and San Raphael Mountains as well as Gibraltar Dam.	TUN011
3908	5.3	Gate for entrance to La Cumbre Peak.	TUN012
3985	5.5	La Cumbre Peak. Fire tower, Radio towers and picnic benches.	TUN013

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Fremont Trail

LENGTH: 7.62 miles round trip. 1680 feet elevation gain.
Strenuous.

TOPO MAP: Santa Barbara

ACCESS: From Santa Barbara Mission drive 0.7 miles toward the mountains. At the first stop sign, turn left on Foot hill Rd. Continue 3.0 miles to Highway 154. Turn right on 154 and drive 7.7 miles to East Camino Cielo. Continue on for 1.6 miles. Park beneath the tall Torrey Pine tree and walk to the locked gate at the trailhead. Total distance from Santa Barbara Mission is 13 miles.

DESCRIPTION: The Fremont trail is mostly a dirt road that mostly follows the historic path of John C. Fremont's battalion in 1846. The top half of the trail follows the original trail while the bottom half veers to the east into Paradise Canyon to avoid private property. As a dirt road that is still used and maintained, it is too exposed to be a pleasant hike in the summer time. Other times of year however, the trail afford spectacular views of Lake Cachuma, the Cold Springs bridge, the backcountry and even of the islands. Below there is a very pleasant meadow and a pretty seasonal stream. By anyone's measure, the trail is steep on the return. A tough workout for all.

Altitude (feet)	Distance (miles)	Description	Waypoint
2675	0.00	Locked gate across dirt road.	FRE001
2580	0.66	A fiberglass structure is on the right of the trail.	FRE002
2185	1.58	Edison towers mark the end of the historic Fremont Trail. Trail turns to the right (E) and down.	FRE003
2125	1.68	Edison Tower marked 42-2 is on the left side of the trail.	FRE004
2015	1.85	Private in-holding is on the left (NW) of the trail.	FRE005
1485	2.67	Trail opens up into a meadow area.	FRE006

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1445	2.80	The trail forks into two single track trails. Follow the fork to the left (WNW). This heads down through an area that is soggy in the spring.	FRE007
1335	2.98	Trail crosses a creek with a large overhanging boulder on the other side.	FRE008
1130	3.29	Two water towers sit on the trail. One is steel painted yellow and the other is wooden.	FRE009
1030	3.36	Junction with a trail running behind some houses. Turn to the left (WNW).	FRE010
1015	3.51	A primitive trail leads down on the left. Continue straight.	FRE011
1005	3.76	Another primitive trail leads down to the left. Continue straight.	FRE012
995	3.81	Freemont Campground.	FRE013

For return trip, reverse route.