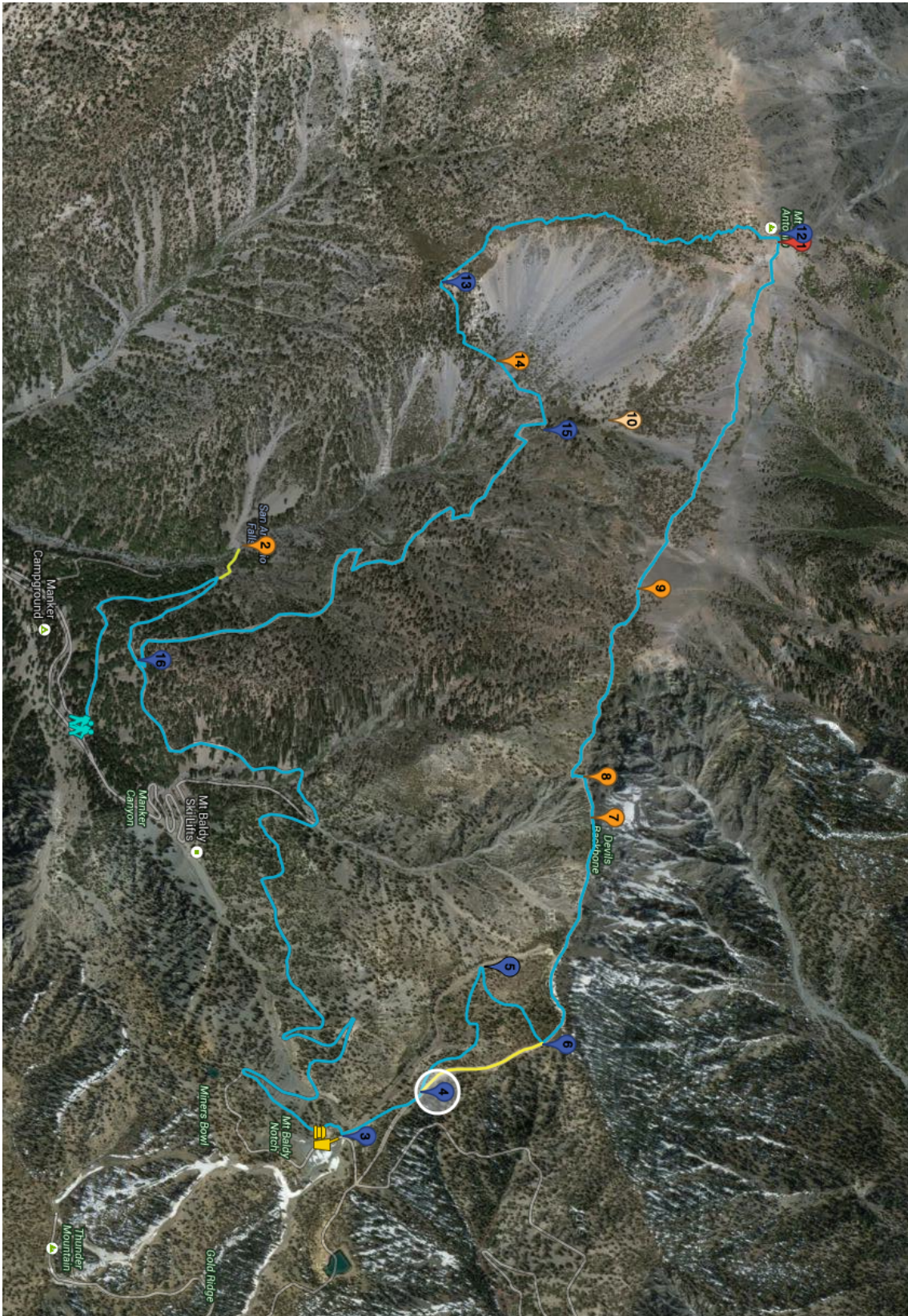


Mt. Baldy Loop Hike

by Hike-LosAngeles.com



Mt. Baldy Loop Trail Guide

DISTANCE: 11.3 Miles Roundtrip
ELEVATION: 10,064'
ELEVATION GAIN: 3900'
TYPE: Loop
HIKING TIME: 5 - 6 Hours (longer for novices)
RATING: Strenuous

Directions to Trailhead

From the 210 Freeway eastbound, exit at Basline Road, Exit 52. Make the first right onto Padua Road and continue 1.7 miles to the traffic light at Mt. Baldy Road. Turn right onto Mt. Baldy Road and continue 7 miles to Mt. Baldy Village. Stop at the visitor's center to purchase an Adventure Pass for parking. Current litigation regarding the Adventure Pass does not require the Adventure Pass to park, but this could change. Stop at the visitor center to check on the status of Adventure Passes to avoid a ticket and possible towing of your vehicle. Continue on Mt. Baldy Road for 4.4 miles to Manker Flats and park along the road. Begin hiking on Falls Road.



Parking

Park along the road near the Manker Flats Campground. Parking may require an Adventure Pass and can be purchased at the Visitors Center in Baldy Village.

Rest Rooms & Water

Porta-Potties are located at the trailhead.



Trailhead

The trail begins on Falls Road. Cross around the gate and continue .6 miles to San Antonio Falls



San Antonio Falls (.6 mile)

An 80' waterfall tumbles down the rocks on your left. A short spur trail leads to the base of the falls. The road hairpins to the right and becomes a dirt fire road known as Baldy Road. Continue 2.9 miles to Baldy Notch and the Top of the Notch restaurant. At .3 miles from the falls, the unmarked Ski Hut Trail veers off up and to the left should you want to do this loop in reverse. Note that this trail is easy to miss.



Trail Junction 1 (3.5 miles)

At Baldy notch you can stop for a bite to eat at Top of the Notch restaurant, refill your water bottles and avail yourself of the restroom facilities. To continue on the trail, turn left at the ski school and continue past the large bell. Angle up and to your right to join the Devil's Backbone Trail which follows the ski lift. Do not follow the flatter dirt road that angles off to your left.



Trail Junction 2

As you approach the bottom of the ski slope, you have two choices: veer off to the left just below the start of the fencing and follow an access road utilizing a long switchback or proceed directly up the slope. The road will add some time, but is much easier to hike. The slope is shorter, but is very steep. Very steep! I've hiked it so you don't have to. Use the road unless you want a challenge. The summit is 3.3 miles ahead.



Trail Junction 3

At the intersection, hairpin to your right and continue uphill back toward the ski slope.



Trail Junction 4

If you are coming up the switchback, turn left at this intersection and continue on the Devil's Backbone Trail. If you came up the slope, just keep going straight. This point also gives you your first great view of the surrounding mountains. The Mojave Desert can be seen to the north on clear days.



Devil's Backbone Bridge

At this point on the trail the mountain falls away to either side of the trail providing great 360° views. This section can be a little unnerving to some people, but the trail is fairly wide at this point and there is little risk unless you purposefully step off the trail.



Bend of the Backbone

Another harrowing moment for some hikers comes after crossing the Backbone Bridge. The singletrack trail becomes quite narrow and seems to cling precariously to the side of the mountain. There can sometimes be bottlenecks on this section as hikers going in both directions cautiously work their way past

each other.



Rim of the Bowl

The trail begins to cross the northeastern side of the Baldy Bowl. The trail at times can be almost 'slushy' with scabble and the landscape takes on a volcanic or barren lunar look.



Baldy Bowl

This is the large natural amphitheater of scabble and slide debris from the summit of Mt. Baldy leading into San Antonio Canyon. There is little vegetation growing on the slopes of the bowl and it has a distinct volcanic or even lunar appearance. The trail that leads around the rim of the bowl to the summit is rocky and loose, often feeling 'slushy' underfoot.



Mt. Baldy Summit, 10,064' (6.8 miles)

Congratulations, you've reached the summit of Mt. Baldy (Mt. San Antonio). Take in the views and rest up for the long hike back down.



Trail Junction 5

From the top of Mt. Baldy, you will want to proceed due south on the Baldy Trail-Ski Hut Trail. The trail is not well marked, and as it descends from the summit, it breaks into numerous smaller trails crisscrossing each other rather than one clearly delineated trail. As you look down from the summit, you will see a large rock outcropping a half-mile or so down the slope. Head for that outcropping. Just before the outcropping, the trail will will hitch to the right and descend below the outcrop and to its right. If you miss the turn, don't worry. The main trail ends at a nice cliff at the rock outcrop. Just walk back up the trail about 30 yards and look for the turn (now on your left). The descent is steep and consistent with a lot of short switchbacking. The distance to the ski hut is 1.9 miles.



Trail Junction 6

The trail comes off its steep descent into a flat wooded area. This is a great place to take a break and rest your knees. When you are ready to continue, the trail makes a sharp turn to the left and descends through a much more wooded area than you have previously experienced on the trail.



Boulder Field

The trail crosses a boulder field and can be hard to follow. Just work your way across the field in a northeasterly fashion toward the Ski Hut.



Ski Hut (8.7 miles)

The Baldy Trail ends at the Sierra Club Ski Hut and becomes the Ski Hut trail. The trail descends for 1.7 miles to Baldy Road.



Trail Junction 7 (10.4 miles)

The Ski Hut Trail joins Baldy Road. Turn right and continue downhill past San Antonio Falls .9 miles to return to the parking area for a total of 11.3 miles.