

Paramount Ranch Trail Guide

by Hike-LosAngeles.com

DISTANCE: 2.5 Miles Roundtrip

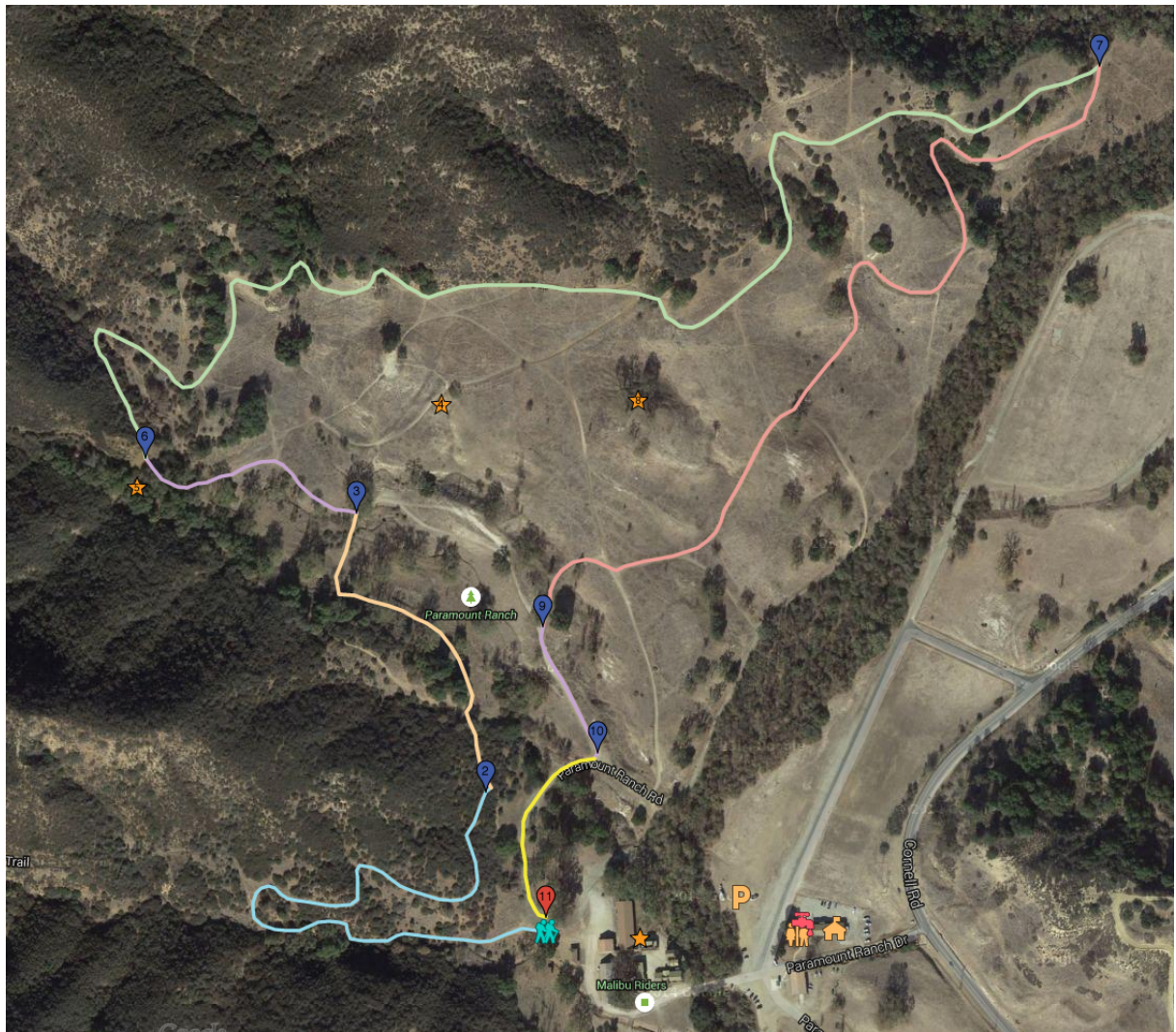
ELEVATION: 750' – 800'

ELEVATION GAIN: Approximately 50'

TYPE: Loop

HIKING TIME: 2 Hours

RATING: Mostly easy, but with a several mildly moderate hills



Directions to Trailhead

Parmount Ranch Road
2903 Cornell Road
Agoura Hills, CA 91301
Trailhead Coordinates: 34.115847, -118.757045

Head west on the 101. Take Exit 36 Kanan Road in Agoura Hills, CA. Turn left onto Kanan Road and proceed south for .5 miles. Turn left onto Cornell Road and continue south for another 2.5 miles. Turn right into the parking lot for Paramount Ranch and park in the large dirt parking area opposite the park headquarters. There is no parking fee to visit the Paramount Ranch. Gates open at 8 AM and close at sundown.

Trail Guide Locators



Parking

Park in the dirt lot across from the Park Headquarters.



Park Headquarters

The park headquarters are located across the road from the parking area. Here you will find information, trail maps and activity times for events in the park.



Rest Rooms

Rest rooms are located in the small building adjacent to the park headquarters.



Water Fountain

A water fountain is located at the rest rooms near the park headquarters. Two additional water fountains are located in the Old Western Town. The first is by the fence as you first enter the town, and the second is located behind the Sheriff's Office.



Trailhead

The trail begins on the Coyote Trail located just behind and to the right of the train station. On this portion of the trail you will be surrounded by dense chaparral mixed with some Valley Oak.



Trail Junction 1: Hacienda Trail

At roughly .5 miles, the Coyote Trail merges with the Hacienda Trail, named for an old ranch house

used as a set piece for numerous films. The chaparral will begin to thin out and climb the hillside to your left, while on the right you get your first views of the rolling hills of the Valley Oak Savanna. Continue about .25 miles on the Hacienda Trail to reach the next Trail Junction.



Trail Junction 2: Medicine Woman Trail

Cross the bridge and turn left onto Medicine Woman Trail. This section of the trail is short as you skirt just inside the perimeter of the savanna with some excellent views to the northwest. The trail is named for the TV show *Dr. Quinn: Medicine Woman* that filmed in the Old Western Town and on the hills of the savanna. Continue for just over .1 mile to the next Trail Junction and the Witches' Wood.



The Valley Oak Savanna

The savanna is lightly forested grassland of rolling hills dotted with California Coast Live Oak. The hills are blanketed with a mixture of grasses and tarweed, which blooms a brilliant yellow in the late spring and early summer months. The waving grass you see here today is mostly non-native wild oats.



Witches' Wood

As the Medicine Woman trail leads back into the trees, you will pass through the Witches' Wood. This was the site where fortune tellers, gypsies and other practitioners of the dark arts told the fortunes of those willing to pay a price during the *Original Renaissance Pleasure Faire* that played here in the 60s and 70s. Continue up the slight hill to the Trail Junction with the Backdrop Trail.



Trail Junction 3: The Backdrop Trail

The longest stretch of the interconnected trails forming the loop around Paramount Ranch, the Backdrop Trail is so named for the stunning backgrounds looking southeasterly across the savanna. The trail weaves in out of the trees with some fantastic views of Sugar Loaf Peak rising above the Savannah. Coming off the Medicine Woman Trail you will climb a short hill and veer to your right for the Backdrop Trail. Continue for .9 miles to the next trail junction.



Trail Junction 6: Bwana Trail

Hairpin to your right off the Backdrop Trail and onto the Bwana Trail. The Bwana Trail takes you across the heart of the savanna. The trail is named for the 1952 United Artists Release *Bwana Devil* starring Robert Stack. The hills along this section of the trail stood in for the plains of Africa. Portions of the film were shot in Africa, and this stateside location blends seamlessly in the movie.



Marco Polo Hill

As you make your way along the Bwana Trail, you will pass a hilltop on your right with several oak trees clustered at the top. This is Marco Polo Hill and was used as a stand-in for ancient China in

Samuel Goldwyn Pictures *The Adventures of Marco Polo* starring Gary Cooper.



Trail Junction 5: Medicine Woman Trail

The Bwana Trail connects with a southern portion of the Medicine Woman Trail, which crosses over a small hill with some fine views of the savanna. Continue for 642' to the next trail junction.



Trail Junction 6: Paramount Ranch Road

The Medicine Woman Trail ends at a bit of aging pavement. Now called Paramount Ranch Road, these are the remnants of the Paramount Racetrack that existed here for a brief time. Considered one of the most challenging tracks in the US, the track had no guard rails on its banked turns and 3 drivers lost their lives in short succession. As a result, the track closed after only 18 months. In its brief existence, the track did find film immortality in the 1957 feature *The Devil's Hairpin*. Continue for 641' on the Paramount Ranch Road and around one of the banked curves to return to the trailhead.



End of Trail

Congratulations! You've completed the 2.5-mile loop and taken a walk through cinematic history. If you haven't already, take some time and explore the Old Western Town, home to Dr. Quinn: Medicine Woman and HBO's *Carnivale* among others, before you complete your visit to Paramount Ranch.