



Sandstone Peak Trail Guide

DISTANCE: 6.25 Miles Roundtrip

ELEVATION: 3111'

ELEVATION GAIN: 1075'

TYPE: Loop

HIKING TIME: 3.5 Hours, add time if making the trek to Tri Peaks

RATING: Strenuous

Directions to Trailhead

Circle X Ranch

12554 Yerba Buena Road

Malibu, CA 90265

Take the PCH Highway through Malibu. Turn right up Yerba Buena Road (alongside Neptune's Net Restaurant) and continue for 6.5 miles to a dirt turnout on the left. A sign on the hill for Sandstone Peak marks the turnout. There is a large parking area above Yerba Buena not visible from the roadway. A pit toilet is available at the far end of the parking area, but no water. A water fountain is located at the Circle X Ranch about one mile back down the road.



Parking

Pull into the dirt turnout about 1 mile past the Circle X Ranch. The turnout is located on the left side of Yerba Buena and leads to a large parking area above the road. A pit toilet is available at the far end of the parking area, but no water. A water fountain is located back at the Circle X Ranch.



Trailhead

The trailhead is located at the northern end of the parking lot with a large information sign. Walk uphill about a third of a mile to the first trail junction.



Trail Junction 1: Backbone Trail

At the junction, follow the Backbone Trail to your right for about .2 mile to reach the Mishe Mokwa Trailhead. You will be returning from Sandstone Peak on the trail to your left.



Trail Junction 2: Mishe Mokwa Trailhead

Continue moving forward onto the Mishe Mokwa Trail toward Split Rock located

1.3 miles ahead. The Backbone Trail will hairpin to your right.



Balance Rock

A large triangular shaped rock precariously balanced on a promontory. You will pass this point on the opposite side of the canyon at about 1.6 miles into your hike.



Split Rock Picnic Area

At 1.85 miles you will pass through a riparian landscape and reach the Split Rock Picnic Area. A picnic table with lots of shade and a large boulder split into thirds are a good point to rest.



Trail Junction 3: Balance Rock Trail

Keep to the left to stay on the Mishe Mokwa Trail for 1.5 miles to reach the Tri Peaks Trail Junction. The Balance Rock Trail to the right is not developed nor maintained by the park service, is difficult to maneuver and rattle snakes are prevalent in the underbrush and on rocks. It is not a good trail to hike. Stay on the Mishe Mokwa Trail!



False Trail Junction

You're right below Tri Peaks and there is broken sign marking the trail branching off to the right, so this must be the trail to Tri Peaks, right? Wrong. The trail dead ends in a gully. Continue on the Mishe Mokwa Trail around a wide sweeping curve for about .25 mile to reach the Tri Peaks Trail Junction.



Trail Junction 4: Tri Peaks

Turn right on the Tri Peaks trail for a .5 mile trek to this large jutting rock formation. Otherwise, turn left to once again rejoin the Backbone Trail to continue 1/3 mile to Inspiration Point. The Mishe Mokwa Trail terminates at this junction.



Tri Peaks, 3,100'

A 3,100' outcropping of sandstone makes for some great bouldering and excellent western views.



Trail Junction 5: Inspiration Point

Fantastic views of the surrounding ranges are to be had at this 2,800' overlook a short distance from the main trail. Sandstone Peak is roughly .9 mile from this point.



Trail Junction 6: Sandstone Peak

Take the steep steps up this short 1/8th mile spur trail to the summit of Sandstone Peak. When you come down, turn right and continue on the Backbone Trail for 1.5 miles to the trailhead and parking area.



Sandstone Peak

Congratulations, you've bagged the highest peak in the Santa Monica Mountains and one of the 5 Peaks, the tallest points in each of the 5 mountain ranges surrounding Los Angeles. A small monument marks the summit.



Trail Junction 7

The Backbone Trail reconnects with the spur trail to the parking lot. Turn right and continue downhill about a third of a mile. Marker is hidden under marker 2.