

Other Popular Trails and Trailheads



Along with the San Jacinto Mountains, and the Northern and Southern Santa Rosa Mountains, the following trails are some of the more popular ones in the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument. Please contact the National Monument Visitor Center for additional information about hiking opportunities and trailhead locations. It is advised that you obtain a map showing how the trail you choose twists and turns, and where it intersects other trails.

North Lykken Trail (southern segment)

1.8 miles, elevation change of 850 feet, moderate.

From South Palm Canyon Drive in downtown Palm Springs, turn west on Ramon Road and drive to where it ends. Parking is adjacent to the road on the dirt area. This segment of the North Lykken Trail combined with the Museum Trail (see below) comprises a challenging, but enjoyable loop overlooking the city. Return to the trailhead via the streets of Palm Springs.

Museum Trail

0.8 miles, elevation change of 831 feet, strenuous.

From Palm Canyon Drive in downtown Palm Springs, turn west on Tahquitz Canyon Way, then north on Museum Drive. The trail begins in the north parking lot of the Palm Springs Art Museum. This is one of the steepest trails in the San Jacinto Mountains.

South Lykken Trail

4.4 miles, elevation change of 1,004 feet, strenuous.

The north end of the trail starts at the west end of Mesquite Road, just south of downtown Palm Springs off South Palm Canyon Drive. However, no parking is available at this location. Plan on parking near the turnoff from South Palm Canyon Drive and walk along the road to the trailhead. The south end of the trail begins on South Palm Canyon Drive. Follow South Palm Canyon Drive toward the Indian Canyons, and park on the street where the road narrows from four lanes to two. Hike westerly along a dirt road adjacent to a residential development before beginning the ascent on the trail.

Garstin Trail

1.5 miles, elevation change of 893 feet, moderate.

From South Palm Canyon Drive, which heads toward the Indian Canyons, turn east on Bogert Trail. Just after crossing the bridge over Palm Canyon Wash, turn left into a cul-de-sac and park along the road. The trail begins at the end of the cul-de-sac, climbing steeply onto a short ridge. From here, the hiker can take several different loops. Ascend the Garstin, descend via the Shannon Trail, and then return to the trailhead by way of the Earl Henderson Trail. Or ascend the Garstin, roll along a 0.3-mile segment of the Wild Horse Trail, turn onto a couple of unnamed trails for 0.7 miles which take you to the intersection of the Araby and Berns Trails, then follow the Berns Trail back to the top of the Garstin. Be sure to take a map with you to avoid getting lost!

Wild Horse Trail

2.7 miles, elevation change of 510 feet, moderate.

Access the Wild Horse via the Garstin Trail (see directions to the trailhead above) or Fern Canyon Trail from the Indian Canyons. Serves as the primary trail linking trails north of Murray Hill (Garstin, Shannon, Araby, Berns, Henderson, and Goat Trails) with those to the south (Clara Burgess, Fern Canyon, Vendeventer, Hahn Buena Vista, East Fork, and Dry Wash Trails).

Clara Burgess Trail

2.2 miles, elevation change of 1,339 feet, strenuous.

This trail is the only route to the summit of Murray Hill, the prominent conical peak just south of Palm Springs, best seen when heading south on Gene Autry Trail (Highway 111). Although only 2.2 miles in length, you must take other trails to get to the Clara Burgess, all of which require additional gains of elevation. Commonly, it is approached via the Garstin or Fern Canyon Trails. These trails lead to different ends of the Wild Horse Trail from which the ascent to the top of Murray Hill begins on the Clara Burgess. Ascending or descending the Clara Burgess via the switchbacks on the north face of Murray Hill is not advised unless you already know the route – it's somewhat confusing getting to or from the bottom of the hill on the north side.

Bump and Grind Trail

1.1 miles, elevation change of 523 feet, moderate.

This has been heralded as the most popular low elevation trail in the National Monument, frequented by exercisers looking to raise their heart rates. A loop opportunity is afforded by starting behind Desert Crossing shopping center on Painters Path in Palm Desert. Beginning at the Hopalong Cassidy/Mike Schuler Trailhead, follow the "Hoppy" to the Herb Jeffries to the Bump and Grind, then return to your starting point via the Mike Schuler Trail. This yields a loop of about 3 miles. Going the other way, however, avoids climbing the steep Herb Jeffries Trail, instead challenging your knees on the descent.

Bear Creek Oasis Trail

4.5 miles, elevation change of 1,989 feet, strenuous.

From the Cove Oasis Trailhead at the top of La Quinta Cove, follow Bear Creek Canyon to where the trail leaves the sandy wash – look for the signs. A beautiful palm oasis awaits those hikers who can go the distance. From Highway 111 in La Quinta, go south on Washington Street, turn right on Eisenhower Drive (which eventually curves to the south) and continue going south to Calle Tecate. Parking is available in the trailhead parking lot or on the street.

La Quinta Cove to Lake Cahuilla Trail

2.9 miles, elevation change of 548 feet, moderate.

This trail crosses a divide separating a peninsula known as the Coral Reef Mountains to the north and the main Santa Rosas to the south. En route to Lake Cahuilla, be sure to follow the trail where it leaves the wash next to The Quarry golf course – the trail will take you away from the golf course in a couple of places. Access to the golf course is strictly prohibited, so do not even think about venturing onto it. Vehicle access to Lake Cahuilla County Park allows for a one-way hike with a shuttle pickup.

Trails in the Indian Canyons

Trails in the Indian Canyons provide hiking opportunities that range from easy to strenuous. While the Andreas Canyon loop of 2.9 miles with an elevation change of 442 feet offers an easy stroll along a perennial stream, the 9.2 mile combination of the West Fork and Jo Pond Trails gaining 5,977 feet to reach the Desert Divide and the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail is a strenuous undertaking, even for the experienced hiker. Other trails include the Maynard Mine Trail (a strenuous 3.2mile climb gaining 2,036 feet in elevation) and the easy Murray Canyon Trail, a 1.7 mile jaunt with an elevation change of only 524 feet.

Trails in the Idyllwild and Garner Valley Areas

A number of trails starting in and around Idyllwild and Garner Valley lead into the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument, including the Deer Springs, South Ridge, Spitler Peak, Fobes, and Cedar Spring Trails. Be sure to check with the San Jacinto Ranger Station of the San Bernardino National Forest for permit requirements.