

Saguaro

National Monument
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Day Hiking Trails of the Rincon Mountain District

You are invited to explore the heart of the cactus forest of the Sonoran Desert. Meet the plants and animals

that live here; stop . . . and listen, as the desert speaks to you.

Short walking loops for limited time



Tamarisk tree at Freeman Homestead

The **Desert Ecology Trail** at Stop 5 off the Cactus Forest Loop Drive is a quarter-mile paved loop trail (handicapped accessible), with signs that explain water use in the Sonoran Desert by plants, animals, and man.

The **Freeman Homestead Nature Trail** starts off the spur road to the Javelina Picnic Area. This one-mile loop trail descends slowly from the saguaro forest to a small wash. A large evergreen tamarisk tree grows next to the trail just as the trail drops to the wash. The tree was planted by homesteader Safford L. Freeman in the 1920s. Freeman built a three-room adobe house to stake his claim for

640 acres. The ruins of the house can be seen behind the tree. Freeman leased his land to James Converse for cattle grazing. The saguaro forest was used for grazing until 1956. In the wash, mesquite trees grow in profusion, creating quite a contrast with the desert vegetation. Areas such as this are called riparian habitats: places in the desert where plants grow readily because water is available a short distance underground. Riparian habitats are excellent areas for viewing desert wildlife. The trail follows up the wash a short way, then climbs back to the cactus forest for a return to the parking lot.

Saguaro forest trails for day hiking

Several trails wind through the saguaro forest, traversing fairly level terrain.

The **Cactus Forest Trail** crosses through the saguaro forest from Broadway Boulevard to Old Spanish Trail. After the first Loop Drive crossing, you will see the remains of the first ranger station built in the monument. Further up the trail, you will pass by two lime kilns on the left. Limestone heated in these kilns was used to manufacture lime around the turn of the century. The kilns were closed in 1920.

The **Loma Verde Trail** passes through a riparian habitat, supporting a large bosque of mesquite trees. This wash flows with water from snow melt during the early spring. Javelina and mule deer are often seen in this area. To the west of the trail, $\frac{1}{4}$ mile north of the North Cactus Trail junction, you

can see the remains of a mine. Loma Verde Copper Company dug a 350-foot shaft there in 1902, reportedly extracting ore of 16 percent copper. The mine closed shortly thereafter.

The **Wentworth Trail** crosses through beautiful desert grass areas and mesquite bosques. The trail turns sharply north and passes through an old fence that kept cattle from grazing in the saguaro forest before cattle grazing was abolished in the entire national monument in 1979.

While on the Wentworth Trail and many of the other trails in the area, you can **create your own hike** by joining onto the other saguaro forest trails available. Examine the map on the reverse side, which shows the existing trail system, then plan your own trip for exploring Saguaro National Monument.



Javelina

Backcountry access trails

The **Tanque Verde** and **Douglas Spring** trails lead into the Rincon Mountain Wilderness Area. Camping permits are required. For

information on backpacking, ask for the backcountry brochure available at the visitor center.

Regulations

By observing the following regulations, you can help preserve the unique natural features of the monument while assuring your personal safety and that of other visitors:

- Plants, animals, rocks, wood, and other natural features must be left undisturbed.
- Firearms or other weapons are prohibited.

- Pets are allowed on the Loop Drive only and must be kept on a leash. Pets are prohibited on trails and in the backcountry.
- Camping and fires are prohibited in the saguaro forest.
- Place all trash in litter containers.
- Stay on the trails.

Safety tips



Cholla cactus

Hiking and other strenuous activities in extreme heat can be hazardous. Pace yourself and rest often. Carry water (at least one gallon per person per day), and drink even when you don't feel thirsty. Hats and sunscreen are recommended.

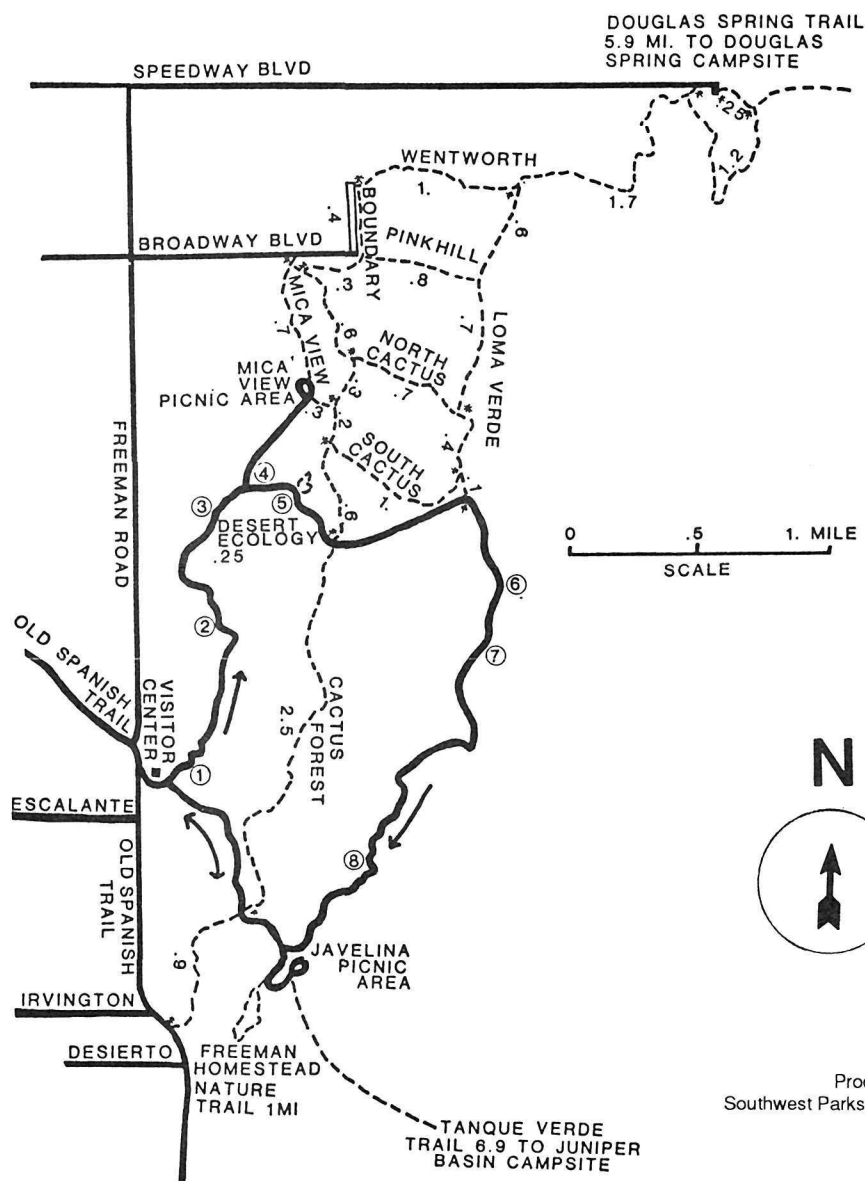
Be aware of painfully close encounters with cacti and other prickly plants. Be especially careful near cholla cactus spines, which can become

embedded in your skin with just the slightest touch. If a cactus joint attaches itself, use two sticks, a pocket comb, or other object as a lever to flip away the joint.

To avoid encountering poisonous rattlesnakes, scorpions, or gila monsters, beware of putting your hands and feet under rocks or in other hidden places and carry a flashlight at night.

WARNING: Numerous undesignated trails in area may confuse and disorient hikers.

Please stay on signed trails only.



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