

USE AT YOUR OWN RISK

Mt. Mel

3,814'

Location: Joshua Tree National Monument, 6 mi SW of Twentynine Palms
Maps: AAA San Bernardino County
Topo: Twentynine Palms 15', Indian Cove 7.5'

Primary Route: 2 miles o/w, 600' gain, Class 2-3 rock scrambling

Driving Instruction:

From the junction of I-10 and State Highway 62 north of Palm Springs, take Hwy. 62 east for 36 miles to Indian Cove Road on the right. Turn right (south) on Indian Cove Road, drive 1 mi to the Monument Entrance and pay fee. Continue south another 1.9 mile to a T junction. Turn right, then right again and go to the western loop of the main campground at the Nature Trailhead parking area. Park here.

Parking in the Campground area is not permitted unless you have a reservation for a site.

Hiking Instructions:

From the Nature Trail Parking area you can see the summit of Mt Mel at a bearing of about 295 deg. You want to hike to the shallow saddle (3650') to the left of the summit. Hike west on the Nature Trail to the wash, leave the Nature Trail, cross the wash, continue NW along another wash, then leave the wash and proceed cross-country to saddle 3650'. From the saddle, turn right (NE) and scramble up boulders (class 2-3) directly toward the summit but go around the left side near the summit to avoid the worst class 3 boulders.

Alternate Route:

Refer to the Keys Peak guide. Continue North and East on the Boy Scout trail for about 2.5 miles to a point NW of saddle 3,650', turn right and scramble up a class 2 gully to the saddle. Continue to the summit as for the primary route.

Notes:

This is a WTC training peak. No water on route.

This peak is often combined with Keys Peak, see Keys Peak Alternate route.

Caution: There is much cholla on this hike. Rattlesnakes, scorpions, coyotes, rabbits, and tortoises have been observed in this area.

The peak is named after Mel Johnson, who climbed it first 1971 with the Orange County BMTC.

Near-by Peaks: Keys Peak, Mastodon Peak

Original: Bob Sumner 1988, Rev. 2004