

USE AT YOUR OWN RISK

Trabuco Peak

4,604'

Location: Santa Ana Mountains
Maps: Cleveland National Forest
Topo: Santiago Peak 7.5 and Alberhill 7.5

Primary Route: 6 miles, 3,000' gain/200' loss

Driving Instruction:

In Lake Forest, exit I-5 on El Toro Road (S18), turn North on El Toro Road for 7.3 miles to junction with Live Oak Canyon Road at Cooks Corner. Turn right on Live Oaks Canyon Road for about 4 ½ miles past O'Neill Park and Trabuco Oaks intersection to Trabuco wash. Cross the wash and on the far side, turn left up the wash to the main dirt road. Follow the poor dirt road into Trabuco Canyon for about 5 miles, past houses, old mining sites and several stream crossings. After passing the closed Trabuco Campground and Fire Station the road splits toward Holy Jim Canyon and Trabuco Canyon. Park in the large parking area.

Hiking Instructions:

From the parking area proceed up Trabuco Canyon (the canyon on the right) on a jeep road/trail for about 2.5 miles to a stream crossing. Just before the stream crossing turn left or North into a canyon opening and the start of the West Horsethief Trail. (The right trail, after crossing the creek, is the Trabuco Canyon Trail). Follow the trail as it passes a flat area to the start of switchbacks that climb up the mountain side in 2 miles to the junction with the Main Divide Truck Trail. Trabuco Peak is visible from this point. Turn left or North and follow the Main Divide Truck Trail for 1.5 miles to where the road turns left and on the right (South) is a very steep use trail. Across (North) ORV tracks lead to another hill. Scramble to a small sandy flat area. Turn South-East, now through high chaparral, to the first pine tree. The Summit and the County Line Marker (two of them) are located directly under the tree.

Return trip can be either back the same way or you can follow the Main Divide Truck Trail past the West Horsethief Trail to the saddle at Los Pinos Peak and return on the Trabuco Canyon Trail back to the cars.

Alternate Route: 5.5 miles, 1,900' gain/700' loss

Driving Instruction:

In San Juan Capistrano, exit on Hwy. 74 (Ortega Hwy.) and drive North for 23 miles to El Cariso Ranger Station. (Also reached from Elsinore by driving 8 miles west on Hwy. 74) Turn left past the Ranger Station (or right just before the Ranger Station, coming from Elsinore) on the North Main Divide Road. Follow the paved road 4 miles to a Y, where the Main Divide Road turns right, the left road leads to Blue Jay Campground. Park here.

Hiking Instructions:

Start hiking up the North Main Divide Road 3S04 1.8 miles to Los Pinos Saddle. Continue on the road for 3.7 long miles to the junction with the West Horsethief trail, then follow instructions above. Return the way you came, or take the Horsethief or Trabuco Trail downhill and arrange for a car shuttle.

Notes:

Adventure Pass required. No water on trail.

According to Folklore, a Spanish soldier lost his gun, called a 'Trabuco', in this canyon and both the canyon and the peak are named not after the soldier, but after the gun.