

USE AT YOUR OWN RISK

Big Dome

2,900'

Location: Santa Monica Mountains, Ventura County, adjoining Mugu State Park
Maps: Harrison - Trail Map of the Santa Monica Mountains Western Section
Topo: Trifuno Pass 7.5 and Newbury Park 7.5

Primary Route: 4.0 miles o/w, 1,300' gain

Driving Instruction:

From Pacific Coast Highway, just past the Ventura County Line, take the Yerba Buena Road to your right 6 miles to Circle X Ranch Ranger Station. Free Trail Maps are available here. Continue 1 m further to the signed 'Backbone Parking' lot (2,030' elev.) on your left. No fee.

Hiking Instructions:

See hiking instructions to Tri Peaks. You have to climb Tri Peaks first before crossing over to Big Dome. From the Tri Peaks summit follow a use trail around the summit block, turning to the North. This trail winds through the rocks and is clipped as of 2002. At one point you crawl underneath a rock crevice, the trail continues downhill and soon reaches an open ridge between Tri Peaks and Big Dome. From this direction the 'dome' is not seen as clearly as it is from the northern approach. Follow the trail uphill in a north-easterly direction to the Big Dome, easily climbed. The peak to the right is Goat Hill and is identified by many small caves, as well as some lateral rock formation on its west side.

Either return the same way to the parking lot, or take the Misha Mokwa Trail back (east), past Split Rock and Balanced Rock View to shortly before the Misha Mokwa Trailhead, where a connector trail brings you back to the original Backbone Trail and the trailhead. This makes for a 9 mile RT hike.

Alternate Route: 5.5 miles o/w, 2600' gain, 6 miles o/w, 2700' gain with Tri Peak

This peak can be climbed from the North side of Mugu SP. The Park Service does not maintain these trails and discourages hikers using them. Nevertheless, plenty of local hikers use these trails.

Driving Instruction:

From Fwy. 101 in Thousand Oaks exit on Lynn Road and drive south, then west 5.4 mi. Shortly after the intersection with Via Las Brisas turn left through a gate with an iron sign on top 'Rancho Sierra Vista/Satiwa. Continue 0.6 mi to the parking lot and park. Trail maps are available here. Lot opens 8:00 AM, no fee. There is also earlier parking available at the end of Wendy Drive.

Hiking Instructions Alternate Route:

Start hiking to the Satiwa Native American Indian Natural Area, a short distance to the south-east. Soon you reach a paved road. This is the Sycamore Canyon Trail, leading 8 miles to the ocean, first paved, then unpaved. At the road, cross a small wooden bridge and take the trail leading South-East, leaving the Satiwa Center and a small pool on your left. This is part of the Satiwa Loop Trail. In ½ miles you reach an intersection: the Boney Mountain Trail to your right (East) and straight ahead (South), and on the left (North East) a continuation of the Wendy Trail. Continue on the Boney Mountain Trail straight ahead and follow any directions to 'Waterfall' and/or 'Old Cabin', there are several side trails. The good road first continues uphill, then drops downhill to a creek. Just before the creek you see a sharp turn to the right marked 'trail', do NOT take it. This is only one of several connector trails from the Boney Mountain Trail to the Sycamore Trail. Continue and cross the creek. After a short distance you see a sign 'No Horses', this trail leads to the Upper Sycamore Waterfall, a pleasant short side trip. Take the

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trail turning sharply to your right (West), now steeply uphill. After two switchbacks with good views the trail levels. Straight ahead you see a sign 'Old Cabin'. Take this trail, slightly downhill. Boney Mountain Trail switches to the right, do NOT take it. Soon you reach the Old Cabin Site, only a chimney is left. There is also a memorial to the Danielson family who donated this area to the Park Service. Up to here (3 miles) all the trails are heavily used and in excellent condition. Continue on the trail, now badly eroded with some very deep crevices and steep rocky areas, obviously not maintained, but volunteers cut the brush. You hike through beautiful Manzanita, Ceanothus and Red Shank Chamise. When you reach the more open ridge you soon see Big Dome: a rock shaped like a cupola or church-like dome to the south. The hill to the left (East) is Goat Hill. Once on the ridge, follow the trail until it turns to the South-West. Here a use trail leads to Big Dome, a small dome and easily climbed. Great place to take in the views: Tri Peaks to the South-West can be identified by the three large rock groups, Sandstone Peak to the south-east as well as Exchange Peak, Inspiration Point and Boney Peak. Return the way you came.

It is easy to take a side trip to Tri Peak, 1 mile round trip. Follow the use trail downhill South-West to the saddle, stay on the ridge and to the left. A clipped trail (2002) leads around the base of the summit block, first South-East, then around the block to the summit of Tri Peak. At one point you crawl underneath a rock crevice. Enjoy the views, and return the way you came.

If you start at the Wendy Drive Parking lot, follow Wendy Trail in a south-easterly direction crossing the Satiwa Loop Trail once, to the intersection with the Satiwa Loop Trail and the Boney Mountain Trail. See above.

Notes:

Water available at the Circle X Ranch, Satiwa Center, as well as at the Falls (to be treated). Summers are hot! For information, call National Park Service at (818) 597-9192 x 201

Many of the colorful peak names (like Big Dome, Goat Hill, Turtle, Sleeping Indian, Egypt God, Beehive, Inspiration Point) go back to the Exchange Club, a former LA Youth Organization, and later to the Boy Scouts, who owned the Circle X Scout Ranch (Camp W. Herbert Allen) in this area until 1987, when the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy bought the area. See Sandstone Peak Guide. Sandstone Peak is sometimes called 'Mt. Allen'.

Near-by Peaks: Sandstone Peak, Boney Peak, Inspiration Point, Exchange Peak, Tri Peaks

Original: Louis Quirarte 1987

Alternate: Gabriele Rau 2002, rev. 2004