

## Backus Peak 01L

Lat/Lon 35.657301,-117.93458  
UTM 11S 415404E 3946341N

Elevation: 6651'

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Backus Peak on [Peakbagger.com](#)

Current Weather on [NOAA](#)

Location: Kern County, about 43 miles north of Mojave, 140 miles from Los Angeles

Nearby peaks: Russell Peak (Russell Peak can be hiked from Backus Peak.)

Land Manager: Bureau of Land Management, Owens Peak Wilderness (760) 384-5400

**USE AT YOUR OWN RISK. CONDITIONS MAY CHANGE, AND UNEXPECTED HAZARDS MAY BE PRESENT.**

### About the peak

Backus rises magnificently from the desert floor as you travel north from Mojave and almost beckons you for a visit. The summit has views of the Sierras, the high desert, and Indian Wells Valley. In 1999 the Hundred Peaks Section named this peak for John Backus, the first person to lead the entire Hundred Peaks Section List. The Hundred Peak Section's Leadership Award is named in honor of John Backus.

Route 1 starts near Freeman Junction and follows a dirt road to a saddle, then ascends a ridge to the summit with somewhat difficult route finding. Route 2 begins by climbing Russell Peak then follows the ridge southeast over several bumps to the summit of Backus. The ridge is only 2 miles long, but allow extra time for route finding and rocky cross-country travel. Backus and Russell are best hiked together in a semi-loop by ascending Backus via Route 1, traversing the ridge to Russell, then expeditiously descending Russell's enjoyable scree slope, with a short car shuttle.

Special conditions: All car travel is prohibited beyond the Wilderness marker on the dirt road. Along the ridge from Russell Peak to Backus Peak there are many cliffs and pinnacles. You can avoid all of these areas by generally staying to their south. If you find you are entering areas that require rock climbing skills, backtrack and find a better route.

Backus Peak has 2 official HPS routes:

## Backus Peak Route 1

Distance: 7.5 miles round trip on road and cross-country

Difficulty rating: Class 1, moderate

Trailhead location on [Google Maps](#)

Gain: 2900

Time: 4-5 hours round trip

Navigation difficulty: Moderate route finding

Road type: Paved

### Driving directions:

- Take SR 14 north to Mojave.
- Continue north on SR 14 to the intersection with SR 178 (Freeman Junction).
- Go west on SR 178 2.4 miles to a dirt road on the north side of the highway. Park here. Unlimited parking space. If you are coming from the west, it is 6 miles from Walker Pass summit to the parking location. There is a call box numbered 178-858 on the south side of SR 178 opposite the turnoff.

### Hiking directions:

- From the parking area walk north on the dirt road approximately 1 mile to where you are south-southeast of bump 5123'.
- Leave the road and walk northeast crossing several gullies aiming for just north of bump 5389'+ that is on the ridge that descends southeast from Backus Peak. Be sure to note the location where you left the road in relationship to bump 5389' for your return. You can also walk both up and down the prominent gully which starts at the parking area to the slope that leads up to bump 5389'. The gully runs generally north-south and parallels the road on the east.
- When you obtain this ridge turn northwest and walk up the ridge to the summit. Note the summit register is on the most northern bump.

### Additional Route notes:

## Backus Peak Route 2- From Russell Peak

Distance: 8 miles round trip on trail and rocky cross-country      Gain: 3700  
Difficulty rating: Class 2, strenuous      Time: 8 hours round trip  
Trailhead location on [Google Maps](#)      Navigation difficulty: Moderate route finding  
Road type: Paved

### Driving directions:

- Take SR 14 north to Mojave.
- Continue north on SR 14 to the intersection with SR 178 (Freeman Junction).
- Go west on SR 178 4.7 miles to a dirt road on the north side of the highway. Park here. Unlimited parking space. If you are coming from the west, it is 3.7 miles from Walker Pass summit to the parking location.

### Hiking directions:

- From Russell Peak hike southeast along the ridge passing over bump 6515'.
- Continue along the ridge staying to the south side of bumps 6661' and 6582'.
- Continue past bump 6582' up the ridge to Backus Peak.

### Additional Route notes:

Note: You will save several miles of hiking if you leave a car at the parking spot for Route 1. The ridge from Russell to Backus is only 2 miles long, but plan for it to take at least three hours due to route finding and rocky cross-country travel. There is 900' of gain and loss along this ridge. You should not traverse any of the bumps on the north side. All rock outcrops should be skirted to the south. There is a faint use trail developing and one should look for it. Note: The route can be hiked in reverse from Backus to Russell. This direction is recommended by some hikers. There is quite a bit of scree on Russell which would make a fast easy descent. The footing up Backus is good and would be easier to hike up. The route from Backus to Russell would add 500' of gain.

