

San Gorgonio Mountain 24I- Star Emblem Peak

Lat/lon 34.1005667,-116.8286341
UTM 11S 515807E 3773320N

Elevation: 11,499'

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San Gorgonio Mountain on [Peakbagger.com](#)

Current Weather on [NOAA](#)

Location: San Bernardino County, about 12 miles north of Banning, 90 miles from Los Angeles

Nearby peaks: Charlton Peak, Jepson Peak, Dobbs Peak

Land Manager: San Bernardino National Forest, Front Country Ranger District (909) 382-2851

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

About the peak

As the highest peak in Southern California, Mount San Gorgonio, affectionately referred to as “Old Greyback” for its characteristic shape, is considered an iconic “must do” for serious hikers. San Gorgonio is visible from Mount Whitney 190 miles away, and has the longest recorded line of sight in the contiguous US. It can also be backpacked, with campsites at Halfway and High Creek; water is usually present year around there but not always in dry years. There are a variety of cross country routes to nearby HPS peaks that make for interesting and challenging combinations. Experienced mountaineers sometimes do winter or spring ascents but the steep trails can be treacherous for the inexperienced. Permits are required for all peaks in the area, and can be obtained in advance online through the San Gorgonio Wilderness Association at [swga.org](#).

The most popular route is Route 1, the Vivian Creek Trail, but there are outstanding though strenuous hikes from the South Fork trailhead; Route 2 leaves the South Fork Trail for the Dollar Lake Trail then continues past Charlton and Jepson Peaks, allowing for an interesting but demanding combination, to the summit. Route 3 starts from the South Fork Trail as well then continues past Dry Lake to Mineshaft Saddle before winding around the back and switchbacking up to the summit. One can leave the trail at Mineshaft Saddle and make a steep ridge ascent directly to the peak, gaining a humbling 1600' in 1 mile, but cutting off more than 3 miles. One can also come in from the Fish Creek Trail; see the directions for Lake Peak. All of these trails are beautiful and offer access to a variety of combinations with adjacent peaks.

Special conditions: Permits for day or overnight use are required for all routes and have a limit of 12. Permits can be obtained online from the San Gorgonio Wilderness Association at [swga.org](#) up to 90 days in advance or at the Mill Creek Ranger Station, 9 miles from Redlands on SR 38.

Historical note: San Gorgonio Mountain, the highest peak in Southern California, is surrounded by nine peaks over 10,000' in elevation. It lies in the San Gorgonio Wilderness Area (34,718 acres).

Created in 1931, the Wilderness designation will preserve this area in its unspoiled state as long as it remains protected.

San Geronio Mountain has 3 official HPS routes:

San Gorgonio Mountain Route 1- Vivian Creek Trail

Distance: 17.5 miles round trip on trail

Gain: 5420

Difficulty rating: Class 1, strenuous

Time: 7-8 hours round trip

Trailhead location on [Google Maps](#)

Navigation difficulty: Easy

Adventure Pass may be required

Road type: Paved

Driving directions:

- Take I-10 east past San Bernardino to the Orange Street exit (SR 38).
- Go one block east, then go north (left) 0.5 mile to Lugonia Avenue. Turn right on SR 38 (east).
- Go 8.0 miles to the Mill Creek Ranger Station.
- Continue east on SR 38 about 5 miles to the Valley of the Falls Road on the right. Turn right.
- Drive 4.25 miles to the Vivian Creek parking area at the end of the road. Park here.

Hiking directions:

- From the parking area (6080'), hike past the locked gate on the initially paved road east for 1/2 mile to where the trail descends into the wash.
- Cross the wash and pick up the trail again on the north side.
- Hike up the trail to where it intersects the San Bernardino Peak Trail (1W07) at 11,240'.
- Turn right and hike 1/4 mile to the junction with the Sky High Trail on the right.
- Keep left and follow the trail up to the summit.

Additional Route notes:

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: Wilderness permits for day or overnight use are required for all routes. They can be obtained online at sgwa.org or at the Mill Creek Ranger Station, 9 miles from Redlands on SR 38. Mill Creek Ranger Station, Route 1, Box 264, Mentone, CA 92359, (909) 794-1123

San Gorgonio Mountain Route 2- South Fork Trail via Dollar Lake

Distance: 19 miles round trip on trail and cross-country

Difficulty rating: Class 1, very strenuous

Trailhead location on [Google Maps](#)

Adventure Pass may be required

Gain: 5350

Time: 8-9 hours round trip

Navigation difficulty: Easy

Road type: Paved

Driving directions:

- Take I-10 east past San Bernardino to the Orange Street exit (SR 38).
- Go one block east, then go north (left) 0.5 mile to Lugonia Avenue. Turn right on SR 38 (east).
- Continue east on SR 38 about 26 miles to Jenks Lake Road on the right. Turn right (south).
- Continue to the signed South Fork Trailhead parking lot on the left. Park here.

Hiking directions:

- From the parking area (6850'), hike the South Fork Trail (1E04) past the old Poopout Hill trailhead to South Fork at Slushy Meadows where the Dry Lake Trail forks left (8200').
- Keep right on the South Fork Trail and continue to the fork to Dollar Lake (9520').
- Keep right again and continue to Dollar Lake Saddle (9960'), at a junction with the San Bernardino Peak Trail (1W07).
- Turn left on 1W07 and follow it south and east past the turnoffs for Charlton Peak, Jepson Peak, and Dobbs Peak and on to the junction with the Vivian Creek Trail.
- Continue east about 1/4 mile to the junction with the Sky High Trail on the right.
- Keep left and follow the trail up to the summit.

Additional Route notes:

San Gorgonio Mountain Route 3- South Fork Trail via Dry Lake

Distance: 22 miles round trip on trail

Gain: 5350

Time: 9-10 hours round trip

Difficulty rating: Class 1, very strenuous

Navigation difficulty: Easy

Trailhead location on [Google Maps](#)

Road type: Paved

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Driving directions:

- Take I-10 east past San Bernardino to the Orange Street exit (SR 38).
- Go one block east, then go north (left) 0.5 mile to Lugonia Avenue. Turn right on SR 38 (east).
- Continue east on SR 38 about 26 miles to Jenks Lake Road on the right. Turn right (south).
- Continue to the signed South Fork Trailhead parking lot on the left. Park here.

Hiking directions:

- From the parking area (6850'), hike the South Fork Trail (1E04) past the old Poopout Hill trailhead to South Fork at Slushy Meadows where the Dry Lake Trail forks left (8200').
- Turn left (southeast) follow this trail 1 1/2 miles to Dry Lake where there is another trail fork.
- Go right and hike 2 miles more to Mineshaft Saddle (9936') and another fork.
- Go right (southeast) and follow the Sky High Trail to its junction with the San Bernardino Peak Divide Trail at 11,360'.
- Turn right and hike east up to the summit.

Additional Route notes:

