

Black Mountain #1 (Lookout) 27C

Lat/lon 33.8241848,-116.757518
UTM 11S 522439E 3742689N

Elevation: 7772'

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Black Mountain #1 (Lookout) on
[Peakbagger.com](#)

Current Weather on [NOAA](#)

Location: Riverside County, about 10 miles southeast of Banning, 105 miles from Los Angeles

Nearby peaks: Castle Rocks

Land Manager: San Bernardino National Forest, San Jacinto Ranger District (909) 382-2921

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

About the peak

Black Mountain #1 is home to one of six active fire lookouts operated and staffed by the Southern California Mountains Foundation during fire season. It is open to the public when staffed. As expected, it has sweeping views of the surrounding areas. It is also home to a grove of sequoia redwoods that were planted by the forest service in 1974 (found along Route 1 or reached by walking about a mile down from the parking area for Route 2). Along with the grove at nearby Lake Fulmor, these are the only two human-made sequoia redwood groves, and the trees, though not yet huge, appear to be thriving. Black is usually hiked together with Castle Rocks, by continuing further up the road for Black Route 2.

Route 1 follows the Black Mount Trail from Highway 243. About 2 miles in, look for the sequoia redwoods, identifiable by their coarse bright reddish-brown bark. Route 2 starts from Boulder Basin campground along a seasonal road (high clearance preferred), and is a short walk on trail.

Notes: Volunteers man the lookout tower on the summit during the summer. The tower maintains a visitor sign-in book, which replaces the HPS summit register.

Black Mountain #1 (LO) is often combined with Castle Rocks in one hike. A permit is required to hike Castle Rocks. The permit can be obtained from the USFS Ranger Station in Idyllwild. It may be quicker to approach Idyllwild from the south via SR 60, SR 79, the Ramona Expressway, SR 74 and SR 243 (south) to obtain the permit.

Black Mountain #1 (Lookout) has 2 official HPS routes:

Black Mountain #1 (Lookout) Route 1- Black Mountain Trail

Distance: 8 miles round trip on trail and road

Gain: 2700

Time: 5 hours round trip

Difficulty rating: Class 1, moderate

Navigation difficulty: Easy

Trailhead location on [Google Maps](#)

Road type: Paved

Adventure Pass may be required

Driving directions:

- Drive I-10 to Banning. Exit at 8th Street (SR 243). Note your odometer and go as follows:
- At 0.2 mile, turn left.
- At 0.7 mile, turn right on San Geronio Avenue.
- At 1.4 miles, keep left on SR 243.
- At 11.8 miles, pass the Vista Grande Ranger Station.
- At 12.8 miles, fork on the left and a sign "Black Mountain Trail". Turn left on Black Mountain Trail.
- Drive 100 yards to the end of the road and park here.

Hiking directions:

- From the parking area (5120'), hike up Black Mountain Trail (2E35) for 3 1/2 miles to the Black Mountain Lookout Road near the summit.
- Turn right on this road to the summit. It is possible to shortcut this road by turning right just before reaching the road, then following a use trail to near the top of the Lookout Road.

Additional Route notes:

Black Mountain #1 (Lookout) Route 2

Distance: 1 mile round trip on road

Gain: 400

Difficulty rating: Class 1, easy

Time: 1 hour round trip

Trailhead location on [Google Maps](#)

Navigation difficulty: Easy

Adventure Pass may be required

Road type: Dirt

Driving directions:

- See instructions for Driving Route 1.
- At 12.8 miles, fork on the left at a sign "Black Mountain Trail". This is the turnoff for Route 1. Keep straight.
- At 15.6 miles, Indian Vista scenic stop and fork on the right with 4S21. This is the turnoff for Indian Mountain.
- At 16.9 miles, Black Mountain Road (4S01) on the left. Turn left. Note your odometer and go as follows:
- At 1.5 miles, fork. Keep left.
- At 4.8 miles, fork on the left to Boulder Basin Campground. Turn left. Continuing straight goes to the trailhead for Castle Rocks.
- At 5.3 miles, a campground in Boulder Basin. Drive through the campground and park at the left road fork signed "Locked Gate Ahead".

Hiking directions:

- From the parking area (7520'), hike up the left road fork (signed "Locked Gate Ahead") and follow the road to the summit lookout.

Additional Route notes: