

## Martinez Mountain 30C- Star Emblem Peak

Lat/lon 33.5575276,-116.3450109  
UTM 11S 560799E 3713289N

Elevation: 6560'+

View Caltopo [map](#) or download [GPX](#)

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Martinez Mountain on [Peakbagger.com](#)

Current Weather on [NOAA](#)

Location: Riverside County, about 11 miles south of Palm Desert, 129 miles from Los Angeles

Nearby peaks: Sheep Mountain

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

Martinez, named for the Spanish name for the Cahuilla Indian settlement that once existed in the canyon below, offers an adventurous outing in a beautiful desert setting. The peak has views of the Santa Rosa Mountains, with Santa Rosa and often snow-capped Toro to the west, the Coachella Valley to the east, and the Salton Sea to the southeast. Martinez is one of several peaks where the location of the HPS summit is different from the USGS summit.

Route 1 follows the Cactus Spring Trail, descending to Horsethief Creek then gradually climbing, past Cactus Spring (dry), then leaving it to continue east to climb a very steep gully to the summit. Though not an official route for some reason, the most common route to climb Martinez is to continue further on the Cactus Spring Trail to a saddle at the base of the east ridge of Martinez, then following that steep ridge to the top.

Martinez and Sheep are often hiked together as one long strenuous day, and there are a variety of ways to do this. One way is to hike to Sheep then continue cross country to Martinez and ascend via the gully of Route 1 or vice versa. There is water almost always year around at Horsethief Creek, and a few campsites.

Sheep Mountain and Martinez Mountain are subject to a voluntary seasonal closure to protect bighorn sheep habitat, except for the months of October, November, and December. This seasonal closure may become permanent at some time in the future.

Alternate route: This peak is often combined with Martinez Mountain. From the summit of Martinez, descend either gully, just north or just south of the peak, to about 4800' where they almost come together. From here hike northwest cross-country passing south of bump 5122' and north of bump 5027' and on to bump 5067'. From here turn right (north) and continue as above. The statistics for both peaks when done as a single hike are 18 miles and 5500' gain (very strenuous).

Alternate route for large parties: Where the trail leaves the gully, continue up the trail to where it crosses a saddle south-southwest of the summit. This is just north of BM 5168 on the topo. Leave the trail here and follow the ridge up to the summit keeping right at obstacles. This route is poorly ducked.

Note: There is water most of the year at Horsethief Creek and there are a few campsites there, allowing the peaks to be done as a pleasant and easier-paced overnight backpack. You should check on the water situation before going.

Natural historical note: The Cactus Spring Trail is an old Indian route.

Wilderness permits: Both Sheep Mountain and Martinez Mountain are in the Santa Rosa Wilderness, but your sign-in at a wilderness register box near the beginning of the Cactus Spring Trail currently replaces the usual wilderness permit process for both day hikes and overnight trips.

Note: Martinez Mountain is also on the Desert Peaks Section (DPS) List.

Martinez Mountain has 1 official HPS route:

## Martinez Mountain Route 1

Distance: 16 miles round trip on trail and cross-country

Difficulty rating: Class 2, strenuous

Trailhead location on [Google Maps](#)

Gain: 4300

Time: 8-9 hours round trip

Navigation difficulty: Intermediate

Road type: Paved

### Driving directions:

- From the west:
- Take I-10 or SR 60 east to SR 79 in Beaumont.
- Go south on SR 79 to the Ramona Expressway. Turn left (east).
- Go east and then southeast on the Ramona Expressway until it ends at SR 74. Turn left (east).
- Go east on SR 74 to Mountain Center (junction with Idyllwild Highway - SR 243).
- Continue east on SR 74 for about 21.5 miles to a paved road (7S06) at a sign "Cactus Spring Trail". This is just across from the entrance to Pinyon Flat Campground.
- Go south 1/4 mile to the (paved) "Sawmill Trailhead" parking lot.
- From the north:
- Travel east on I-10 to its interchange with Monterey Avenue near Palm Desert. Exit right (south) on Monterey. Reset your odometer.
- At 6.0 miles, Monterey crosses 111 in Palm Desert and becomes SR 74. Continue straight.
- At 21.3 miles, turn left (southeast) on a paved road (7S06) at a sign "Cactus Spring Trail". This is just across from the entrance to Pinyon Flat Campground.
- Go south 1/4 mile to the (paved) "Sawmill Trailhead" parking lot.

### Hiking directions:

- From the parking area (4040'), hike east along the road to an intersection.
- Continue straight ahead at the beginning of the Cactus Spring Trail. This is shown as a short road segment on the topo. Hike along the trail as it goes right at a fork and descends to a road near an old dolomite mine.
- Turn left (east) on this road and follow it past the mine to where the trail leaves the road. This is the old trailhead. Continue east on the trail as it goes over several rises and then descends to Horse Thief Creek near BM 3492.
- Follow it across the creek as it climbs over a hill to avoid a waterfall and then descends back into a wash.
- Follow it east along this wash to Cactus Spring (usually dry), about 2 miles beyond Horse Thief Creek.
- Continue on the trail as it follows a wide wash.
- Soon it leaves this wash on the right, just north of bump 4996'.

- From here, Martinez can be seen straight ahead. It has three saddles. A large gully descends from the saddle on the right. This is the one to aim for.
- Leave the trail and continue up the wash. Follow the wash around the left side of a low ridge and up this gully to the summit ridge.
- Turn left (north) and go up to the prominent summit block. It can be climbed from the southeast side. Elevation 6562', shown on the map, is not the summit.

**Additional Route 1 notes:**

