

# 60 Hikes within 60 MILES

**LOS ANGELES**

INCLUDING SAN GABRIEL, VENTURA,  
AND ORANGE COUNTIES

**Laura Randall**

## **Caballero Canyon Trail**

In Partnership with



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**MENASHA RIDGE PRESS**  
Birmingham, Alabama

## CABALLERO CANYON TRAIL

### ▶ IN BRIEF

There's not much in terms of scenery along this trail near one of L.A.'s busiest freeways, but its steady 700-foot elevation gain via switchbacks provides a good workout. It is also a popular link to Dirt Mulholland, a wide, no-cars path that leads to several major hiking destinations in the Santa Monica Mountains

### ▶ DESCRIPTION

The Caballero Canyon Trail was around long before the nearby gated residential developments and landscaped Mulholland Gateway Park showed up. It's a favorite Sierra Club hike in part because it leads to Dirt Mulholland, the 7-mile unpaved stretch of Mulholland Drive between Encino and Woodland Hills. From here, hikers can access the Santa Monica Mountains Backbone Trail, Temescal Canyon, and other trails leading all the way to the Pacific Ocean. Today, more hikers seem to use the shiny new gateway park (it opened in 2000) to connect with other mountain trails, but Caballero Canyon still attracts its share of hikers, mountain bikers, and others who don't want to pay the \$3 parking fee at Mulholland Gateway Park.

Look for the trailhead on the east side of Reseda Boulevard just north of the entrance to Braemar Country Club. The dirt-and-gravel trail begins a gradual descent past a dusty trail kiosk that hasn't been updated in ages. I encountered more mountain bikers than hikers on this trail on a Saturday afternoon. Most of them were headed north on the trail toward Reseda Boulevard.

### ▶ DIRECTIONS

From the Ventura Freeway (101), take the Reseda Boulevard exit and head south about 2 miles. Park on Reseda across from Braemar Country Club and look for the trailhead on the left side of the road.



### KEY AT-A-GLANCE INFORMATION

**LENGTH:** 3.1 miles

**CONFIGURATION:** Out-and-back

**DIFFICULTY:** Moderate

**SCENERY:** Chaparral, coastal sage scrub

**EXPOSURE:** Sunny

**TRAFFIC:** Light

**TRAIL SURFACE:** Dirt and gravel path

**HIKING TIME:** 1 hour

**ACCESS:** Free; gates open sunrise to sunset

**MAPS:** USGS Canoga Park

**FACILITIES:** None at trailhead; public restrooms available a mile up Reseda Boulevard at Mulholland Gateway Park

**SPECIAL COMMENTS:** Don't be put off by the gated communities that line Reseda Boulevard near the trailhead. This path quickly disappears into chaparral and sage scrub and makes you feel like you're a world away from urban sprawl

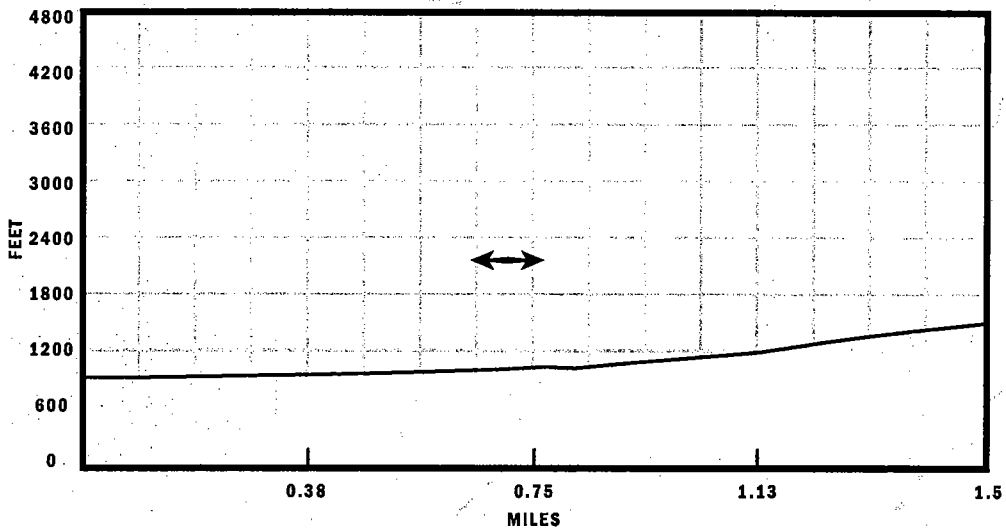
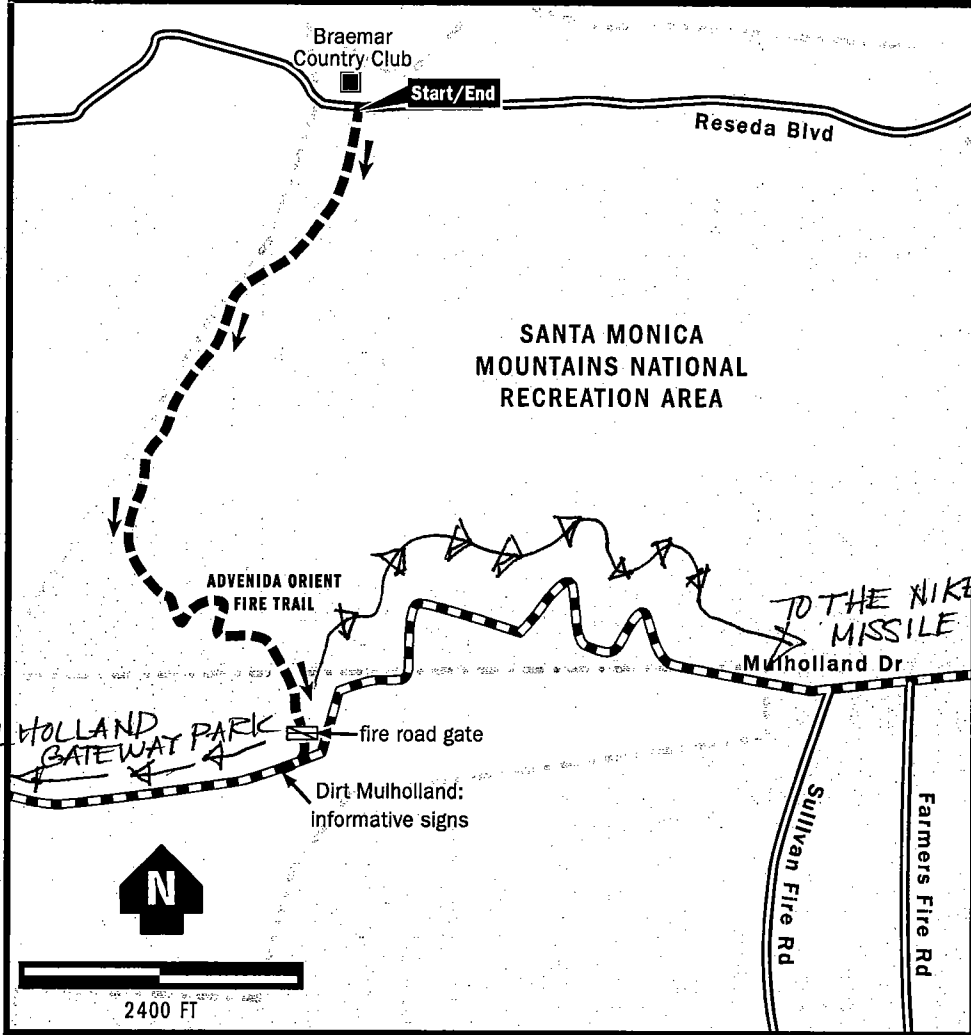
UTM Trailhead Coordinates for  
Caballero Canyon Trail

UTM Zone (WGS84) 11S

Easting 357936

Northing 3779050

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At about 0.75 miles, you will come to a turnoff for an unmarked narrow trail on the left. This leads to a seasonal streambed, though you won't be able to see it or hear it well from the canyon trail. You want to continue straight in tandem with Reseda Boulevard. Most of the path is flanked by tall grass, a scattering of sycamore trees, and coastal sage shrub, with the crest of the Santa Monica Mountains in full view most of the time. In the spring and summer, you can also spot clumps of California dodder, a leafless parasitic weed with orange buds that resembles spun sugar.









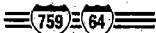
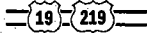
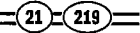












The path makes a sharp left at the 1-mile marker, heading east toward the hills before climbing south again. There is little shade along most of the path, so bring plenty of sunscreen and insect repellent. The path continues to climb past a bench and water fountain, then reaches a fire-road gate. If you look behind you at this point, you will get nice views of the San Fernando Valley on a clear day. Walk 50 more yards uphill and you will reach Dirt Mulholland and signs for other Santa Monica Mountains paths, including Topanga State Park, Temescal Ridge, and Westward Ridge, which leads to a former missile observation post that was folded into the Santa Monica Mountains Recreation Area in 1996 and turned into a park. From here, you can retrace your steps back to the parking lot or turn right and follow Dirt Mulholland west toward Mulholland Gateway Park, which empties you back on Reseda Boulevard. The downside to this loop route is that the last mile requires you to walk past the aforementioned residential developments. It's a bit jarring after the wilderness feel of Caballero Canyon, which is why I prefer to take the out-and-back option and return via the canyon.





### ▶ NEARBY ACTIVITIES































Ventura Boulevard is teeming with restaurants and shops. One standout place to get a bite is Empanada's Place, a pretty little diner specializing in empanadas, the meat- or cheese-stuffed pies from Argentina that make a great picnic offering. Choose from 16 varieties or opt for the tamales or Milanesa sandwiches with chimichurri sauce. It's located a few blocks west of Reseda Boulevard at 18912 Ventura Boulevard. For hours, call (818) 708-8640.



# MAP LEGEND

<b>White Wolf</b>  Campground name and location	 Individual tent and RV campsites within campground area	<b>Table Rock</b>  Other nearby campgrounds	 Preserve or other public land		
 Off map or pinpoint indication arrow	 Direction of travel	 Trailhead	 Trailhead locator		
 Interstate highways	 U.S. highways	 State roads	 Other roads	 Unpaved or gravel roads	
 Boardwalk or stairs	 State border	 County border	 Power line		
 Featured trail	 Hiking, biking, or horse trail	 Cliffs	 Railroads	 Ditch	 River or stream

<b>Duluth</b>  City or town	 Indicates north	<b>CAPITAL</b>  Capital	<b>Ward Lake</b>  Ocean, lake, or bay
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 Antenna or tower radio	 Food	 Rest room
 Bench	 Gate	 Shelter
 Boulders	 Hospital/first aid	 Sheltered picnic area
 Bridge or tunnel	 Information kiosk	 Spring/well
 Caution/warning	 Monument/sculpture	 Structure or feature
 Cemetery	 No swimming	 Summit or lookout
 Church	 Picnic area	 Wetlands
 Dam	 Playground	 Swimming
 Falls or rapids	 Parking	 Telephone
 Electric power tower	 Ranger station	 Water access

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *60 Hikes within 60 Miles: Los Angeles*. If you're new to hiking or even if you're a seasoned trailsmith, take a few minutes to read the following introduction. We explain how this book is organized and how to use it.

### ▶ HIKE DESCRIPTIONS

Each hike contains eight key items: an "In Brief" description of the trail, a key at-a-glance information box, directions to the trail, UTM trailhead coordinates, a trail map, an elevation profile, a trail description, and nearby activities. Combined, the maps and information provide a clear method to assess each trail from the comfort of your favorite reading chair.

#### IN BRIEF

A "taste of the trail." Think of this section as a snapshot focused on the historical landmarks, beautiful vistas, and other sights you may encounter on the trail.

#### KEY AT-A-GLANCE INFORMATION

The information in the key at-a-glance boxes gives you a quick idea of the specifics of each hike. There are 12 basic elements covered.

**LENGTH** The length of the trail from start to finish. There may be options to shorten or extend the hikes, but the mileage corresponds to the described hike. Consult the hike description to help decide how to customize the hike for your ability or time constraints.

**CONFIGURATION** A description of what the trail might look like from overhead. Trails can be loops, out-and-backs (that is, along the same route), figure eights, or balloons.

**DIFFICULTY** The degree of effort an "average" hiker should expect on a given hike. For simplicity, difficulty is described as "easy," "moderate," or "difficult."

**SCENERY** Rates the overall environs of the hike and what to expect in terms of plant life, wildlife, streams, and historic buildings.

**EXPOSURE** A quick check of how much sun you can expect on your shoulders during the hike. Descriptors used are self-explanatory and include terms such as shady, exposed, and sunny.

**TRAFFIC** Indicates how busy the trail might be on an average day, and if you might be able to find solitude out there. Trail traffic, of course, varies from day to day and season to season.

**TRAIL SURFACE** Indicates whether the trail is paved, rocky, smooth dirt, or a mixture of elements.

**HIKING TIME** How long it takes to hike the trail. A slow but steady hiker will average 2 to 3 miles an hour depending on the terrain. Most of the estimates in this book reflect a speed of about 2 mph.

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**ACCESS** Notes fees or permits needed to access the trail (if any) and whether pets and other forms of trail use are permitted.

**MAPS** Notes availability of onsite trailhead maps and the appropriate USGS topo.

**FACILITIES** What to expect in terms of restrooms, phones, water, and other amenities available at the trailhead or nearby.

**SPECIAL COMMENTS** These comments cover little extra details that don't fit into any of the above categories. Here you'll find information on trail-hiking options and facts, or tips on how to get the most out of your hike.

## **DIRECTIONS TO THE TRAIL**

Used with the locator map, the directions help you locate each trailhead.

## **TRAIL DESCRIPTIONS**

The trail description is the heart of each hike. Here, the author provides a summary of the trail's essence as well as highlights any special traits the hike offers. Ultimately, the hike description will help you choose which hikes are best for you.

## **NEARBY ACTIVITIES**

Look here for information on nearby activities or points of interest.

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## ▶ MAPS

The maps in this book have been produced with great care and, used with the hiking directions, will direct you to the trail and help you stay on course. However, you will find superior detail and valuable information in the U.S. Geological Survey's 7.5 minute series topographic maps. Topo maps are available online in many locations. Easy Web resources are located at [terraserver.microsoft.com](http://terraserver.microsoft.com) (free downloadable maps and aerial photos) and [www.topozone.com](http://www.topozone.com). The downside to topos is that most of them are outdated, some having been created 20 to 30 years ago. But they still provide excellent topographic detail.

If you're new to hiking, you might be wondering, "What's a topographic map?" In short, a topo indicates linear distance and elevation, using contour lines. The map scale defines distance between points on the map. Contour lines spread across the map like wavy spiderwebs define the elevation. Each line represents a particular elevation, and at the base of each topo, a contour's interval designation is given. If the contour interval is 20 feet, then the distance between each contour line is 20 feet. Follow 5 contour lines up on the same map, and the elevation has increased by 100 feet.

Let's assume that the 7.5-minute series topo reads "Contour Interval 40 feet," that the short trail we'll be hiking is 2 inches in length on the map, and that it crosses 5 contour lines from beginning to end. What do we know? Because the linear scale of this series is 2,000 feet to the inch, we know our trail is 4,000 feet in length. But we also know we'll be climbing or descending 200 vertical feet (five contour lines representing 40 feet each) over that distance. And the increase or decrease in elevation printed on the index contour lines (every fifth contour line) will tell us if we're heading up or down.

In addition to outdoor shops and bike shops, you'll find topos at major universities and some public libraries, where you might try photocopying the ones you need to avoid the cost of buying them. But if you want your own and can't find them locally, visit the U.S. Geological Survey Web site at [topomaps.usgs.gov](http://topomaps.usgs.gov).

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## GPS TRAILHEAD COORDINATES

To collect accurate map data, each trail was hiked with a handheld GPS unit (Garmin Etrex Venture). Data collected was downloaded and plotted onto a digital topo map. In addition to a highly specific trail outline, this book also includes the GPS coordinates for each trailhead. More accurately known as UTM coordinates, the numbers index a specific point using a grid method. The survey datum used to arrive at the coordinates is WGS84. For readers who own a GPS unit, whether handheld or onboard a vehicle, the UTM coordinates provided on the first page of each hike may be entered into the GPS unit. Just make sure your GPS unit is set to navigate using the UTM system in conjunction with WGS84 datum. Now you can navigate directly to the trailhead.

Most trailheads that begin in parking areas can be navigated to by car. However, some hikes still require a short walk to reach the trailhead from a parking area. In those cases, a handheld unit would be necessary to continue the GPS navigation process. However, readers can easily access all trailheads in this book by using the directions, the overview map, and the trail map, which shows at least one major road leading into the area. But for those who enjoy using the latest GPS technology to navigate, the necessary data has been provided. A brief explanation of the UTM coordinates follows.

## UTM COORDINATES: ZONE, EASTING, AND NORTHING

Within the UTM coordinates box on the first page of each hike, there are three numbers: zone, easting, and northing. Here is an example from the Runyon Canyon hike.

**UTM Zone (WGS84) 11S**

**Easting 375577**

**Northing 3774652**

The zone number (11) refers to one of the 60 longitudinal zones (vertical) of a map using the Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) projection. Each zone is 6° wide. The zone letter (S) refers to one of the 20 latitudinal zones (horizontal) that span from 80° South to 84° North.

The easting number (375577) references in meters how far east the point is from the zero value for eastings, which runs north-south through Greenwich, England. Increasing easting coordinates on a topo map or on your GPS screen indicate you are moving east. Decreasing easting coordinates indicate you are moving west. Since lines of longitude converge at the poles, they are not parallel as lines of latitude are. This means that the distance between full easting coordinates is 1,000 meters near the Equator but becomes smaller as you travel farther north or south. The difference is small enough to be ignored, but only until you reach the polar regions.

In the Northern Hemisphere, the northing number (3774652) references in meters how far you are from the Equator. Above the Equator, northing coordinates increase by

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1,000 meters between each parallel line of latitude (east-west lines). On a topo map or GPS receiver, increasing northing numbers indicate you are traveling north.

In the Southern Hemisphere, the northing number references how far you are from a latitude line that is 10 million meters south of the Equator. Below the Equator, northing coordinates decrease by 1,000 meters between each line of latitude. On a topo map, decreasing northing coordinates indicate you are traveling south.

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