

60 Hikes within 60 MILES

LOS ANGELES

INCLUDING SAN GABRIEL, VENTURA,
AND ORANGE COUNTIES

Laura Randall

Caballero Canyon Trail

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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

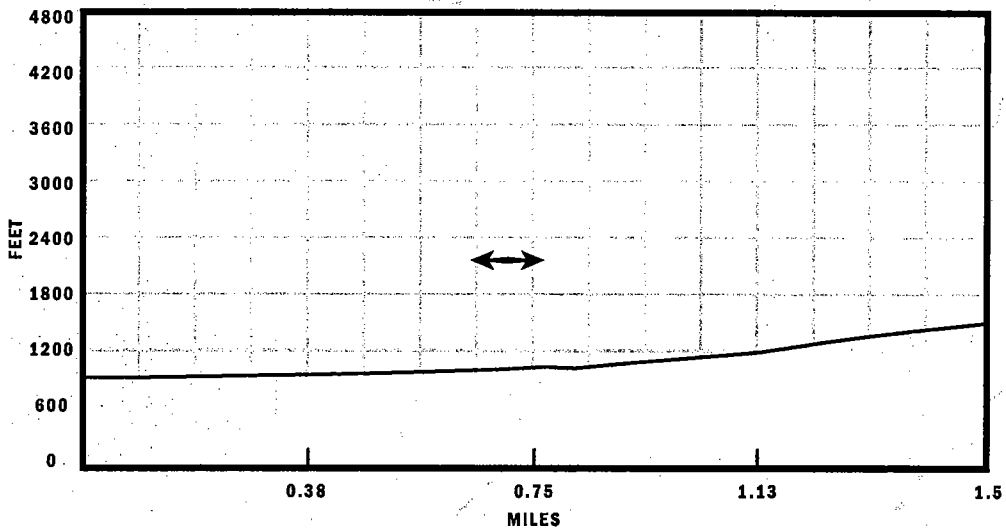
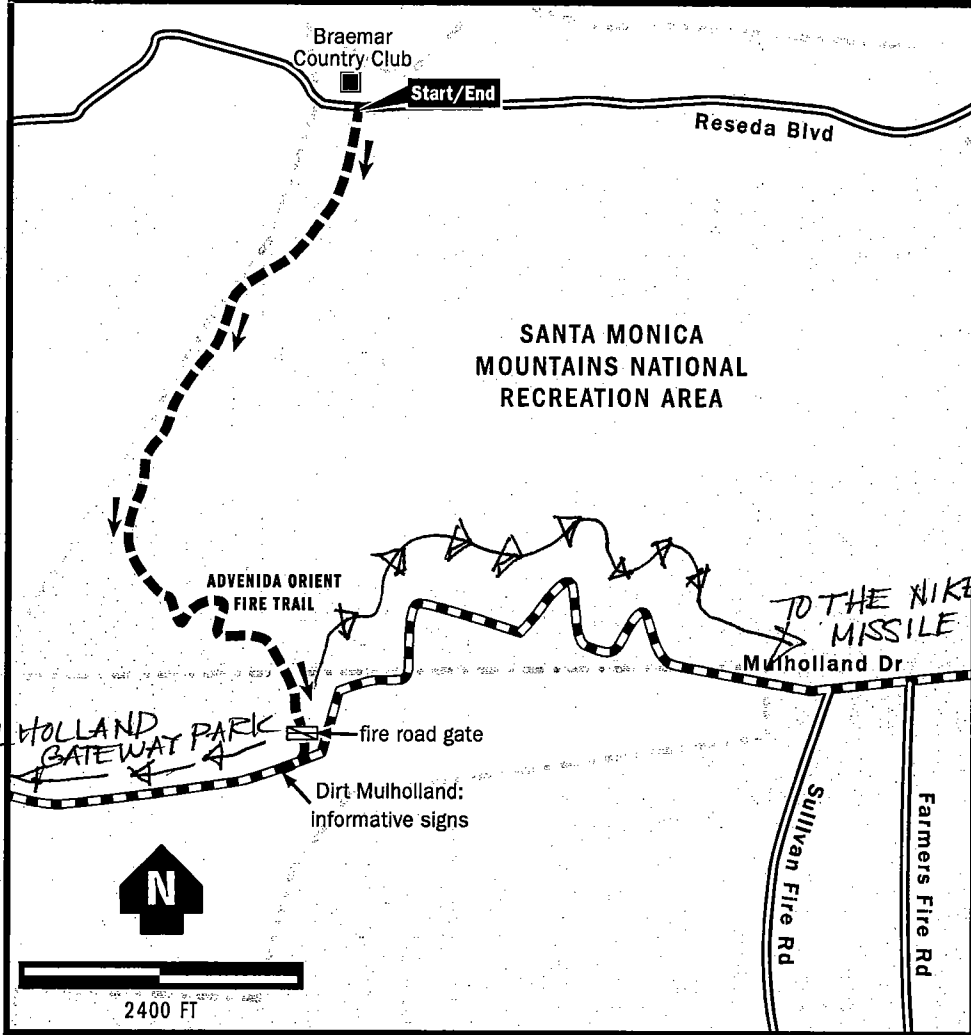
UTM Trailhead Coordinates for
Caballero Canyon Trail

UTM Zone (WGS84) 11S

Easting 357936

Northing 3779050

13 Caballero Canyon Trail











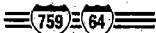
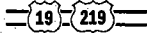
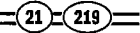












At about 0.75 miles, you will come to a turnoff for an unmarked narrow trail on the left. This leads to a seasonal streambed, though you won't be able to see it or hear it well from the canyon trail. You want to continue straight in tandem with Reseda Boulevard. Most of the path is flanked by tall grass, 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

White Wolf  Campground name and location	 Individual tent and RV campsites within campground area	Table Rock  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

Duluth  City or town	 Indicates north	CAPITAL  Capital	Ward Lake  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

