

BIG HORN MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS

Big Horn Mountain Loop (Big Horn Mountain Wilderness). Rating B. This is a clockwise loop hike around Big Horn Peak of 9.3 miles with an elevation gain of 1600 ft. There is no formal trail, but for two-thirds of the hike the vegetation is scarce enough not to have to actually bushwhack. The climb up and back down is a steep, boulder filled bushwhack. There are lots of interesting rock formations along the way. There are no restrooms and no park fee. Driving distance is approx. 90 miles RT.

<http://pchikingclub.smugmug.com/BigHornMountainWilderness/BigHorn-Loop>

Directions to Big Horn West Trailhead

Go West on I-10 to Exit 81 (Salome Road).

Turn right (north) and go .6. miles to the canal.

Turn right on the dirt road just before the canal and go 3.5 miles.

Park on the left just east of the bridge across the canal.

Hike starts across the canal and to the right up the hill.

The final 3.5 miles is on a good dirt road (even a sedan could do it).

No facilities at the trailhead.

Big Horn Summit Trail (Big Horn Mountain Wilderness). Rating B+/A-. This is an 8 mile hike with an elevation gain of 2300 ft. The first part of the hike is easy desert hiking but as we start making our way up to the shoulder, route finding becomes critical. Above the shoulder it requires carefully navigating our way through a fairly dense area of Cholla. As we ascend farther up you have to work your way up a very steep loose section to reach the base of the peak. The climb at this point becomes a class 3 scramble (this is the A portion of the hike) for about 25-30 feet to the top. Working your way back down the steep loose section is tricky in that you must be careful not to start sliding. It is also not easy finding the same route down as it all looks alike. There are no restrooms and no park fee. Driving distance is approx. 90 miles.

<https://pchikingclub.smugmug.com/BigHornMountainWilderness/Big-Horn-Peak>

Directions to Big Horn West Trailhead

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Hike starts across the canal and to the right up the hill.

The final 3.5 miles is on a good dirt road (even a sedan could do it).

No facilities at the trailhead.

Big Horn Mountain Wash (Big Horn Mountain Wilderness). Rating C. This is a 7-8 mile in and out hike with an elevation gain of about 800 feet. While there are no formal trails in the area, the brush is scattered so hiking is easy until you start going up the mountainside. You head towards a finger of rock and then turn left up the mainwash. Shortly after turning left up the wash, look back to your right to see the Moon Arch, a nice round arch on a ridge. You can get to the arch by going up the ridge at the beginning of the wash, though you can't see the arch from this position. On the return, you simply head towards Black Mountain (in front of you as you park). There are lots of interesting rock formations along the wash including a 10 foot dry waterfall made of red rock. You can either climb up it or go around. From the ridgeline, you have great views of the surrounding region. No rest rooms and no park fee. Driving distance is 93 miles RT.

<http://pchikingclub.smugmug.com/BigHornMountainWilderness/Arch-Wash-Ridge>

Directions to Big Horn Wilderness

Go West on I-10 to 411th Ave (Exit 94)

Turn left across I-10.

Turn right on Indian School Road.

Drive 5.0 miles and turn right on another gravel road.

Follow the road as it winds towards I-10.

It will turn right near I-10 then make a sharp left to go under I-10.

[Once past I-10, you basically follow the power lines going between two mountains]

Turn left, then right to cross the Central Arizona Project canal.

There is a gate just across the canal – open it & drive through.

After a short distance, you come to another gate (about 11 miles from 411th) to open, go through and close.

When you come to a sign saying "Area Closed", park wherever you want and start exploring.

The fine print on the sign says closed to motorized traffic.

Indian School Road and beyond are gravel roads.

There is no real trailhead (and no facilities).