



## 5 Hikes for 50 Years

In celebration of Anza-Borrego Foundation's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, ABF and Anza-Borrego Desert State Park are launching a 5 Hikes for 50 Years campaign to introduce visitors to the many wonders of California's largest state park.

The hikes will be completed on your own (these are not guided hikes) and range from the popular and well-signed Borrego Palm Canyon Nature Trail to less-visited hikes in more remote areas of the Park, such as Mountain Palm Springs. Stop at the Visitor Center or State Park Store for more information on the individual hikes and to learn more about how ABF helps support Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. When you finish all 5 hikes, you'll get a signed certificate from the Park and a commemorative 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary sticker!

### How To Play:

- Complete each of the 5 hikes before June 1, 2017, and take a selfie or groupie at an easily identifiable location unique to that hike. Examples would be: the palm grove up Borrego Palm Canyon, the Torote Bowl sign at Mountain Palm Springs, anywhere in The Slot, etc.
- Post each photo on Instagram and Facebook, using Anza-Borrego Foundation's usernames
  - Facebook: [facebook.com/AnzaBorregoFoundation](https://www.facebook.com/AnzaBorregoFoundation)
  - Instagram: [@anzaborrego](https://www.instagram.com/anzaborrego)
  - Tag each photo with #anzaborrego, #5hikes50years
- There are TWO ways to complete this challenge:
  - Once you have completed all 5 hikes, send an email to [info@theABF.org](mailto:info@theABF.org) with your 5 selfies or group photos attached. In your email, include:
    - Your first and last name or names of all who completed the challenge
    - What hikes you or your group completed
    - The dates you or your group completed the hikes
    - \*Please allow at least a week before coming to pick up your certificate from the State Park Store.
  - If you are in the town of Borrego Springs, stop by the State Park Store (587 Palm Canyon Dr, #110) to show us your pictures and we'll approve your completion while you're still here. State Park Store hours: October 15 – May 1, Fri – Wed from 9am – 5pm. The State Park Store can get busy during the season, so please be patient.



## The Hikes

The following hikes are ordered from easiest to hardest based on a combination of hike difficulty, signage, required desert know-how, and a variety of other factors. We recommend that hikers new to the desert environment tackle these hikes in the order listed, but it is not a requirement. All hikes are accessible with a 2-wheel drive passenger car, such as a sedan.

- 1. Borrego Palm Canyon Nature Trail:** This is a moderate 3-mile round trip hike featuring a native palm oasis. It is a well-marked self-guided nature trail, and you can pick up a brochure at the trailhead, the Visitor Center or the State Park Store. This is Anza-Borrego's most popular trail and is located in the Borrego Palm Canyon Campground/Day Use Area.
  - **Directions to the trailhead:** From Christmas Circle in Borrego Springs, travel west on Palm Canyon Drive for about 1.5 miles. Turn right when you see the sign that says "Camping" with an arrow to the right. Stop at the kiosk and either pay your day use fee or show your pass. The kiosk attendant can give you directions to the trailhead from there.
  - **Trail Description:** [Use the Borrego Palm Canyon Nature Trail Guide](#)
- 2. The Slot at Borrego Mountain:** This easy, 1.5-mile meander through a sandstone canyon gives a great example of the most powerful force in the desert- water. The canyon walls squeeze together, giving this hike its name.
  - **Directions to the trailhead:** From Christmas Circle in Borrego Springs, travel south on Borrego Springs Rd for 11.5 miles. Enjoy the trip through the Texas Dip! At the T in the road, turn left onto CA-78 East. After 1.5 miles, look for the very small sign that marks Buttes Pass Road, and turn left onto the dirt road. Continue straight on the dirt road (do NOT take any turns onto other roads) for about a mile, and park at the trailhead. Follow the signs for The Slot.
  - **Trail Description:** After parking your car, find the sign that says "The Slot." It's small, but it's there. Follow the path UPHILL and to the North of that sign until you reach another sign with an arrow pointing to the left (West) that says "TRAIL". Follow the path down until you reach the bottom and turn left (South). Follow this through the varying widths of The Slot for about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile until you hit a wide opening that will most likely have 4WD vehicle tracks. Turn around and go back the way you came.
- 3. Pictograph Trail, with optional Smuggler's Canyon extension:** This is an easy 2- or 3-mile out and back trail that leads to a pictograph-covered boulder. If you choose to do the extension, you will be rewarded with great views of the Vallecito Valley from the top of a steep dry waterfall.
  - **Directions to the trailhead:** From Christmas Circle in Borrego Springs, travel south on Borrego Springs Rd for about 5 miles. Turn right onto Yaqui Pass Rd (S-3) and continue for about 7 miles. At the T in the road, turn right onto CA-78 W and follow it for 7 miles. Turn left onto S-2 and continue 6 miles through the community of Shelter Valley. You will go up a small hill and as you top it, you will see a vault toilet. Turn left onto the dirt road and follow the signs for Pictograph Trail.
  - **Trail Description:** This is a well-travelled trail located in a sandy wash. If you stick to the main wash without taking any side trips, it should be easy to navigate out and back. About .8 miles in, you should see, on your right hand (south) side, a large boulder with several pictographs on it. Pictographs are pictures painted on a rock (petroglyphs are carved into stone), and these belong to the ancestral Kumeyaay, one of two main Native American groups that made their homes in Anza-Borrego and the surrounding regions. If you're feeling up for it, continue your hike for about another half mile. Keep in



mind this will add 1 mile to your hike, bringing it up to 3 miles total for your out and back adventure. If you choose to continue on, you will reach Smuggler Canyon overlook and be rewarded with breathtaking views of the Vallecito Valley. To return to your car, simply turn around and follow the main wash back to the trailhead.

4. **Calcite Mine Rd to the Calcite Mine:** 4 moderately strenuous miles following a steep jeep road will lead to a site that looks quite bare. Just after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, this mine was established to extract optical-grade calcite for gun sights, the only mine of its kind in the US. The mine was short lived, but the deep cuts in the earth are clear evidence of the operation.
  - **Directions to the trailhead:** From Christmas Circle in Borrego Springs, exit the traffic circle heading east on S-22, and follow the road (through a few right-angle turns) for about 18 miles. There will be a large pullout at approximately mile marker 38- park on the right side of the road. The trail begins on the north side of S-22. You will begin with a steep downhill, and then you will cross a wash before starting a steep uphill on Calcite Mine Jeep Road.
  - **Trail Descriptions:** From where your car is parked, you will need to cross the road and go down the steep jeep trail. At the bottom, you will be at a 4-way intersection. Continue straight, going UP the Calcite Mine Road. This road is fairly well-marked, so just stay the course. The beginning half of it often draws adventurous jeep drivers, so be aware of your surroundings. Make sure that you look around while hiking, as the views of the Santa Rosa Mountains are spectacular, and you will be rewarded with periodic views of the Salton Sea and the entirety of the Borrego Valley. Once you arrive at the end of the road, take some time to explore the area. There are a lot of pieces of calcite easily found at your feet, and you can see the visible scars left over by the process of mining the calcite out of the landscape. Remember to look, but do not take. These resources are for all of us to enjoy. To return, follow the road back to your car.
  
5. **Mountain Palm Springs- Southwest Grove Loop with optional Torote Bowl extension:** This is the most difficult of the five hikes, as the trail comes and goes as water routinely washes it out during the summer storms and it is not marked well. You must pay close attention to where you're going so you do not lose the trail. Please read the hike description for this route before embarking on your adventure. This is a moderately strenuous but very exposed 2.5-mile trail, with the optional strenuous side trip to Torote Bowl.
  - **Directions to the trailhead:** From Christmas Circle in Borrego Springs, travel south on Borrego Springs Rd for about 5 miles. Turn right onto Yaqui Pass Rd (S-3) and continue for about 7 miles. At the T in the road, turn right onto CA-78 W and follow it for 7 miles. Turn left onto S-2 and continue for about 30 miles. You will pass through Shelter Valley, an RV resort, Agua Caliente County Park, and the community of Canebrake. When you hit Canebrake, start looking for a small brown sign marking Mountain Palm Springs, on the right side of the road, at about mile marker 47. Turn right onto the dirt road, and follow the right fork when it splits to get to the trailhead. The left fork leads to a vault toilet and primitive campground.
  - **Trail Description:** Find your way to the interpretive panel that marks the start of the trail. You should already be able to see some palm trees up the canyon a bit. The trail does start right from the interpretive panel, but it may not be immediately clear. Start walking toward the palms, and you will run into the trail. Follow the wash until the trail splits, one route going up onto a sandy ridge and one continuing through the main sandy wash. Pick your route- both will lead you to the oasis you can see not



far from you- Southwest Grove. Once you get to Southwest Grove, take some time to explore. About halfway up the oasis, you should see a sign for Torote Bowl- a well-marked (with rock cairns) but very strenuous side trip to see a “bowl” rimmed with elephant trees. If you choose to do this add-on, be prepared to add a very strenuous extra hour to your hike. Once you hit the sign for Torote Bowl, take some time to explore the area and then return the way you came. From Southwest Grove, you can either go back the way you came, or you can make a loop and visit another palm grove or two.

If you choose to continue on the loop, find the start of the trail towards the back of the grove. The trail isn't labeled, but the entire length of it is well traveled and well-marked with rocks on the ground and also a few rock cairns (ducks) when the trail gets hard to find. Once you finish your traverse across the side of this ridge, you will begin to drop down into the next canyon over. Once you get to the bottom of the canyon, turn right to follow the trail back to your cars. Stick to the main wash until you get to the junction of two canyons- from here, there is a fairly well-marked trail leading you down to the main wash and back to your car.



## Tips for a Successful Desert Adventure/General Desert Safety

- Always bring more water than you think you need. During the desert season our temperatures are pleasant, but drinking water is still very important.
  - Don't just *carry* enough water, *drink* enough water. Saving your water for the hike back has led to serious problems in the desert. Drink water before you leave home, while you hike, and on your way back home. If you feel thirsty, drink your water.
- Make sure your vehicle is desert-ready.
  - Do you have an extra gallon of water in your trunk? How about a shade tarp, shovel, a spare tire, and some extra food?
- Be prepared for all the delights and hazards the desert has to offer.
  - Do you have enough water? Sunscreen? A long sleeve shirt and hat for sun protection? Closed-toe shoes? An extra layer just in case you get cold? What about an extra granola bar in your backpack? Cellphones are great to have, but will mostly only serve as a camera- cell service in many areas of ABDSP is spotty at best.
- Tell someone where you're going and when you plan to return, and make sure they know who to call if you don't return on time. This is general hike safety wherever you are, and a very important step in any outdoor adventure.
- Understand and recognize the symptoms of the three heat-related illnesses:
  - Heat Cramps- These are painful cramps in the legs and abs, along with feeling faint and sweating a lot. The cause is loss of salt.
    - Treatment: Get the person to a cool place. Give them sips of cool (not icy) water, sports drink, or other salty drink. Massage the cramping area to relieve pain. Go home, rehydrate, and come back another day.
  - Heat Exhaustion- Characterized by dizziness, nausea, headache, an irregular pulse, change in skin color, and/or disorientation, heat exhaustion happens when your body is trying to cool down its insides due to overheating.
    - Treatment: Move the person to a cool place and give them cool (not icy) water or sports drink. Fan the person to cool them off. Putting icepacks (if you have them) under their armpits and draping a wet shirt over their shoulders will help cool the person faster. Go home, rehydrate, and come back another day.
  - Heat Stroke- Symptoms to watch for include a lack of sweat; dilated pupils; dry, hot, and flushed skin; fast pulse; abnormal breathing patterns; and a fever. This is a true emergency situation, and you should call 911 if you can.
    - Treatment: Call 911 immediately, or drive the person to a medical facility. In the meantime, douse the person with water to help lower their body temperature. Ice packs (if you have them) in the armpits and pouring water over the person's head is recommended. Go immediately to a medical facility.
- Keep an eye out for snakes. Chances are, they will feel your footsteps and be out of your way before you come near them, but be aware. Never put your hands or feet in a place you cannot see, and never provoke a snake by trying to move it from your path.
- Watch out for the cactus and other pokey or spiny plants. They are very interesting to look at, but will most likely hurt and get stuck in your skin if you touch them.



- If you find yourself in an emergency, remember to stay calm.
  - If you're hiking- seek shelter and shade, and walk to a nearby high point to find cell service if you can. **DO NOT** break up your group.
  - If you're driving- **ALWAYS** stay with your vehicle. Put the hood up. It is much easier to find a car in the desert than it is to find a person.