

CALIFORNIA GIRL SCOUT BACKPACKERS

Forbush Flats

Cold Spring Saddle to Forbush Flats Camp

Itinerary provided by Trek Wild

Created: 12/19

Distance: 3.4 miles, ~800' elevation loss from the trailhead to camp

Starting Trailhead: Cold Spring Saddle on East Camino Cielo (Santa Barbara area)

Finishing Trailhead: Cold Spring Saddle

Best Months: End of March (to miss winter rains) through end of May or Sept-Oct. Too hot in the summer.

Permit Limit: None. I've heard of huge groups camping here since there is a (somewhat lumpy) meadow to spread out over. There are 2 main camps with fire rings which fit 6 to 10-ish people each.

Preview: Short and steep downhill trail to a nice campsite. There is a seasonal creek, 2 camp areas with picnic tables, and a big meadow for overflow camping. This is an old homestead site, and fruit trees remain. This is (arguably) the easiest, quickest backpacking trip in Santa Barbara county.

Girl Scout Progression Points: Beginner Backpacking Skills

Key Risks:

- Water: Check water reports at hikelospadres.com; you probably can't depend on water in the fall. But since the hike is downhill, it's not a disaster to carry all your water in.
- Poison Oak: Wear pants. Trail is popular and is pretty clear, but around camp, and around the creek, there are always a few branches you don't see. There is a pit toilet, but the access trail is often blocked by poison oak.
- Fire/Stove Restrictions: Check with Los Padres NF.

Sample Itinerary (By Day):

1. Hike to 1.7 mi to camp.
2. Return to trailhead.

Itinerary Options:

- Advanced Extensions: Blue Canyon Camp; Big Caliente Hot Springs (9.8 miles from trailhead).

DISCLAIMER: Although California Girl Scout Backpackers attempts to keep the content contained in their itineraries up to date and accurate, it is up to each individual to check the accuracy of such information on their own. We assume no liability or make representations or warranties (expressed or implied) of any kind regarding the information provided.

Permits Needed:

- California fire permit required for stoves or campfires (see Los Padres NF website). Depending on the season, campfires and stoves may or may not be allowed.
- No overnight permit required.
- No parking permit required.

Resources & Safety Management:

- Los Padres National Forest: fs.usda.gov/recarea/lpnf
- Map: Bryan Conant's Matilija and Dick Smith Wilderness map (bryanconant.com)
- Hikelospadres.com: Recent trip reports including water reports



Pear and Apple trees from the Forbush homestead remain near the camp.

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