

California / Tehachapi

Tehachapi Mountain

DISTANCE: 5.8 miles

ELEVATION GAIN: 2020 feet

ROUTE TYPE: Out & Back



Tehachapi Mountain Trail is located within Tehachapi Mountain Park. This is a popular trail, but nowhere near as crowded as the trails in Southern California. On this day, we arrived at 10am to find about 6 cars at the trailhead. The last quarter mile or so of this hike is on private land that is listed as restricted. This private land is also used by hunters and loggers, so be mindful. The official Tehachapi Mountain Trail does not actually go to the summit of Tehachapi Mountain for this reason. There is a use trail to the summit that many hikers, myself included have used to reach the peak of Tehachapi Mountain. You can read more about the private land owned by the Wymans family and the issues of hiker restriction at Bakersfield.com. There are a lot of new trail signs with information on the peak, so I'm thinking a lot of these land usage issues have been resolved.

Hike Description: The trailhead for Tehachapi Mountain Trail begins just after the first few campsite locations within Tehachapi Mountain Park. Keep an eye out for a small white retaining wall and a stone drinking fountain. There are two trails that start from this location. The Nuooah Nature Trail begins on the right and the Tehachapi Mountain Trail begins on the left. Start out on the left, and follow the gradual uphill grade until you find another trail sign linking the trail with a fireroad.

The fireroad section of Tehachapi Mountain Trail gradually gains in elevation, and slowly begins to offer up views of the surrounding valley. The surrounding white fir, black oak, and jeffery pine begins to give way to a mixed conifer forest as the elevation moves towards 7000ft. At 1.75 miles into the hike, the trail leaves the fireroad behind for a steep ridge towards the summit.

The final mile of trail gains just shy of 1000ft, so be prepared to climb! Although the trail is narrower than the fireroad, it's still very easy to follow, as it cuts through the conifer forest towards the summit.

Once you reach the 2.5 mile mark of the hike, you find a fork in the trail. The left fork leads to a wide stretch of trail, the right fork leads to two pine trees joined by a chainlink fence to block the path. The fork towards the chain link is the trail. You can walk around the pine tree on the right hand side to continue following the trail up the ridge towards the summit, or you can just hop over the chain. You can also take the left fork and follow a use trail to the summit. The use trail is not as easy to follow as the trail on the right, but it's a nice option. You can see on my Google Map below that I took the left fork on my ascent, and I took the right fork on the way down. I'll only be adding photos for the right fork, since that is the established trail.

The final stretch of trail leading towards the summit levels out a bit after the steep stretch after leaving the fireroad. Make sure to go slow here and take in all of the views.

The summit of Tehachapi Mountain sits at 7960ft, and although it doesn't offer up any uninterrupted bird's eye view, the small windows out are pretty impressive.

Hike back down the same way you came, and take a walk on the Nuooah Nature Trail if you have a little extra time. The Nuooah were native to the area and ground the black oak acorns on some of the surrounding rocks. There are a lot of nice grinding stones on the nature trail.