



## Popular Day Hikes in Palm Springs - by Michael & Scott

While Palm Springs brings to mind images of palm-lined golf courses and swimming pools surrounded by lounge chairs, you might be surprised to know that Palm Springs is well known for hiking! You can find winding trails that lead to natural palm groves, seasonal waterfalls and streams, rocky gorges, unusual rock formations, and cactus-spiked desert terrain with lush palm tree canopies.

This packet is a “starter” guide listing of two of our favorite day hiking trails in and around Palm Springs. Many of the trailheads do not have addresses, making them difficult to find on a map. So, we’ve provided driving directions to help you navigate to the hiking trail. We’ve also provided GPS coordinates that you can input on your phone to get to the trailhead.

Many people who are new to hiking mistakenly think that everyday street clothes will suffice. But think of it this way: when you plan to spend the day at a beach or pool, you probably pack along a bathing suit, sunglasses and hat. Similarly, if you plan to hike, it’s equally important to bring along the right clothing. Here’s a checklist of clothing and necessities:

- Hiking shoes worn with Merino wool socks (flip flops, tennis shoes and casual street shoes are a no-no)
- Hiking pants and hiking shorts
- Tank top, T-shirt, long sleep top (depending on season)
- Top layer (fleece, nano puff, vest, or warm base layer)
- Hat with wide-brim visor, or baseball cap and bandana for your neck
- Sunglasses with UV rating
- Lightweight hiking backpack to hold water and safety gear
- Safety gear: See list on other page

Sunshine, low humidity, and high temperatures are the hallmarks of Palm Springs weather. Winter days are mild, though strong winds can sometimes make hiking challenging. Temperatures start climbing in April and May and are routinely 107-112°F during the summer months. For this reason, during the summer (and on unseasonably hot days), experts advise to only hike on short, easy trails in the extreme early morning at dawn, and to return to the car by 9:00 a.m.. Layered clothing is a good idea when hiking between September and May. Temperatures can fluctuate on the trails as you weave in and out of canyons and the mountains cast late-afternoon shadows across the terrain.

This guide is an introduction orientation only to some of the most popular hikes, and is not a substitute for an official trail map or guidebook. It’s easy to get lost or disoriented on all trails. Many trails quickly cut you off from civilization and disappear around mountain ridges and through thick desert vegetation. Know the trail and its surroundings before you go. Maps are available at the visitor centers in Palm Springs and Palm Desert, as well as the visitor center for the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument on CA Highway 74.

# Hiking Safety

The picturesque hiking trails can beckon you to head out as if you were taking a regular walk or run. But hiking—especially in Palm Springs—can be dangerous if you are not prepared. Here are a few tips to make your trip safer and thus enjoyable:



Photo: a trailhead warning sign at Skyline Trail (not in our list)

- Use a Trail map! Don't count on your mobile cell phone for your safety. Reception is nonexistent on many trails
- Always let someone know where you'll be hiking and how long you expect to be gone. It's a good idea to give that person a copy of your route, particularly if you're headed into any isolated trails.
- Stay on designated trails. Even on the most clearly marked trails, you usually reach a point where you have to stop and consider in which direction to head.
- Always carry food and LOTS of water, even for a short hike. And bring more water than you think you'll need.
- Be especially careful when crossing streams. Whether you're fording the stream or crossing on a log, make every step count. If you have any doubt about maintaining your balance on a log, ford the stream instead: use a trekking pole or stout stick for balance and face upstream as you cross.
- Stay back from the edge of outcrops, and make absolutely sure of your footing.
- Know the symptoms of subnormal body temperature, or hypothermia. Shivering and forgetfulness are the two most common indicators of this stealthy killer.
- **Do NOT hike mid-day on hot days. Go extremely early—before sunrise—and plan a short hike.**

## Safety Gear to Pack

- **Water: lots of water!**
- Extra food: trail mix, granola bars, or other high-energy snacks.
- Insect repellent
- Sun protection: sunglasses, sun hat, and sweatproof sunscreen with at least 30 SPF
- Travel size first aid kit
- Whistle and compass: It may become a lifesaver if you get lost or hurt.
- Flashlight or headlamp with extra bulb and batteries, for getting back to the trailhead if you get back late

**Every month, several tourists must be rescued by search and rescue teams while hiking in Palm Springs. These individuals were over-confident and under-prepared because they didn't take the necessary precautions. Even if you are physically fit and an avid outdoor enthusiast, the desert is not like the environment you are accustomed to at home.**

When you hike in Palm Springs, you need to stay hydrated! A hiker walking steadily in 90°F-degree heat needs about 10 quarts of fluid per day. That's 2.5 gallons—12 large water bottles or 16 small ones. A good rule of thumb is to hydrate before your hike, carry (and drink) 6 ounces of water for every mile you plan to hike, and hydrate again after the hike. So pack more water than you anticipate needing, even for short hikes. It's also a good idea to carry a bottle of sports drink such as Gatorade; the electrolytes replace essential salts that you sweat out.

Stay on trails, obey posted signs and follow all standard hiking guidelines. For more hiking safety tips, visit the following link provided by the U.S. National Park Service: [www.nps.gov/articles/hiking-safety](http://www.nps.gov/articles/hiking-safety)





### Andreas Canyon Trail

SCENERY: ★★★★★ Diverse Vistas

TRAIL CONDITION: ★★★★★ Stable with no surprises

CHILDREN: ★★★★★ All ages

DIFFICULTY: ★ Easy

GPS TRAILHEAD COORDINATES: N33° 45.653' W116° 32.976'

DISTANCE & CONFIGURATION: 1- to 3-mile loop

HIKING TIME: 40 minutes–1 hour

HIGHLIGHTS: California fan palms, caves, unusual rock formations, year-round stream

ACCESS: Fee applies. Check website for operating hours: [www.indian-canyons.com](http://www.indian-canyons.com)

This short, scenic loop should be a part of any trip to the Indian Canyons. It's especially good for families, bird-watchers, and anyone who wants to experience the serenity of the canyons in a short period of time. The well-marked path leads past sheer rock walls and a year-round stream shaded by California fan palms to a seasonal waterfall and 1925 clubhouse once used by local hunters, then gives way to wide-open desert landscape. Though the best scenery can be found along the main 1-mile loop, the hike can be extended by 2 miles by picking up the easy horse trail on the north side of the road just before the parking lot entrance.

**Directions:** From the house drive south on Palm Canyon Dr through downtown Palm Springs. Continue straight (south) on South Palm Canyon Drive for about 3 miles to the Indian Canyons toll gate, where you can pick up a map and pay the entrance fee. Turn right just after the entrance gate and go about a mile to the parking lot for Murray and Andreas Canyons.





## THE ART MUSEUM TRAIL

SCENERY: ★★★ Pleasant views

TRAIL CONDITION: ★★★ Average terrain to negotiate

CHILDREN: ★★ Generally not enjoyable for children under 12 years old

DIFFICULTY: ★★★★★ Strenuous – very steep incline

GPS TRAILHEAD COORDINATES: N33° 49.529' W116° 32.946'

DISTANCE & CONFIGURATION: 2-mile out-and-back

HIKING TIME: 1 hour

HIGHLIGHTS: Steep, rocky hillside; cactus and desert scrub; city and valley views

ACCESS: Free. Trailhead open sunrise–sunset

The Art Museum Trail in Palm Springs may only be 1.7 miles out-and-back and climb less than 1,000 feet, but this hike tests even our most experienced hiking guests due to the steep incline and rocky ground. Dogs are not allowed on this trail. The trail begins at the back corner of the Palm Springs Art Museum parking lot and scales a little less than 1 mile up the side of the San Jacinto Mountains. You are rewarded with breathtaking views of the city unfolding just 10 minutes in. The path levels off at a nice resting point with picnic tables to enjoy the beauty of Palm Springs. **There is no shade on this hike! Experts advise against hiking mid-day and on hot afternoons.**

**Directions:** From the house, head toward downtown by driving south on North Palm Canyon Drive about 1.5 miles. Turn right on West Tahquitz Canyon Way, then make a right on Museum Drive. Though you'll probably see other tourists park at the museum parking lot, please don't risk having your car towed! There are plenty of spaces in the parking garage across the street or along the paved roads.

