

COX PEAK

Very Strenuous/Expert



Challenge type: Hiking

Challenge length: 4.4 miles

Trail Notes: This 5,936 ft. peak rises above the Potrillo section of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument only 9 miles north of the Mexican border. (In fact, your cell phone carrier may send you a text message welcoming you to Mexico.) The climb has no defined trails and is slow-going over rocky terrain. It requires about 1,500 feet in elevation gain.

Driving Directions: Allow 1-2 hours to arrive at the starting point. Take I-10 to Texas to Exit 8. Head west on Texas Hwy. 178. In 3 miles you re-enter NM and the road becomes NM 136. After traveling 9.2 miles from the interstate, turn right on NM Hwy. 9. After traveling 23 miles, at mile marker 124, start looking for a right turn on County Road A-005. It will be just prior to mile marker 123. Turn right and continue north. Proceed through two ranch gates skirting cattle pens. In about 4.5 miles from Hwy. 9, you will turn right on County Road A-007 and continue 2.4 miles. You will see earthworks for a water catchment. At 6.9 miles from Hwy. 9 you will see the first pull off to the right with an arroyo on the left. Park here.

Hiking Directions: The first order of business is to identify your objective. The parking area is well southeast of Cox Peak. To the north, you will see Mt. Riley. Left of it, you will see some peaks setting back further north. Left of them, you will see the ridge that leads to Cox Peak. The summit is obscured behind a high knoll on the ridge from this angle. Cox Peak is at the northeast corner of this L-shaped ridge. You want to approach the summit by taking the ridge that includes what you see as the false

summit east of Cox Peak. Hollows and canyons are carpeted with loose rocks that make for treacherous footing. It is particularly bad in the canyon leading to the saddle just east of Cox Peak.

With all this in mind, head off in the arroyo directly across from your parking area and work your way northwest toward the base of the mountain. Alluvial fans at the base feature a forest of ocotillo that makes it difficult to walk a straight line. Work your way up the fan and seek out a firm climbing route to the ridge. Once on the ridge, head west over the false summit, down to the saddle and up the final quarter-mile to the summit.



(Take your selfie here.) From here you can enjoy outstanding views. To the east past Mt. Riley you get a great view of Kilbourne Hole. To the northeast you can see Las Cruces and the Organ Mountains. To the southeast are the East Potrillo Mountains. To the west is Potrillo Peak. To the south is Mexico.

Return the same way. The up-and-back trip is approximately 4.4 miles. But be aware that these can be very slow-going miles. Give yourself a full day to complete both driving and hiking.

See next page for map and selfie spot.



DON'T FORGET TO
take & post your selfie with the summit.

