

Hiker's Guide

Big Basin Redwoods State Park
The Wilderness on Your Doorstep

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Introduction

The Wilderness on Your Doorstep

Welcome to Big Basin Redwoods State Park – California’s oldest state park. Big Basin opened in 1902 and is the 1st park to protect the planet’s tallest tree species – Coast Redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*).

Big Basin contains over 80 miles of trails. Our trail system connects to trail systems in adjacent state parks: Castle Rock, Portola, Butano, Año Nuevo, and adjacent redwood County Parks and Regional Open Space – totaling more than 300 miles of connected hiking trails.

Trails range from leisurely half-hour strolls to challenging multi-night wilderness adventures, with many options in between. Equestrians and mountain bikes are permitted on some trails.

The Park’s backcountry is traversed by the magnificent Skyline-to-the-Sea trail, a 31 mile transect from the crest of the Santa Cruz Mountains to Waddell Beach. Connecting trails take hikers through ancient Redwood and Douglas-fir forest and provide access to several primitive backpack camps, panoramic ocean views and several beautiful waterfalls – including 65 ft. Berry Creek Falls.

Wilderness within 90 minutes of over 4 million people! Big Basin’s continuing challenge is to preserve and protect this ancient forest and its wildlife in an undiminished condition for your enjoyment, and for the enjoyment of all future generations.

Backcountry Etiquette

Trail Use – To minimize the destruction of rare native plants and to reduce topsoil erosion, please stay on designated trails and don’t short-cut switchbacks. Do not enter sensitive, degraded or restored areas that are signed as closed.

Trash – Have a seal-able plastic bag with you to transport trash back to the trailhead. Orange and banana peels take years to decompose and should not be discarded.

Discarded apple cores introduce non-native seeds into pristine ecosystems. Any discarded food scraps will concentrate animals, including their predators, near trails and camps.

Drinking Water – On day hikes, carry at least one liter of water per person. If surface water (creeks, etc.) is ever consumed always boil, chemically treat or micro-filter it.

Human Waste – Whenever possible, use the toilets in backpacker trail camps at Alder, Jay, Lane, Sunset and Twin Redwoods (shown as black tent symbols on your map).

Otherwise, at a location 200 ft. (60 meters) away from water and trails, dig a hole at least 6 inches (15 cm.) deep to bury human waste where soil microbes can decompose it, and where animals will not dig it up. Carry out all soiled tissue in your plastic trash bag.

We ask trail users to
**“Take only pictures and
leave only footprints”.**



Navigating the Backcountry

Before Starting Your Hike

Always Carry a Map, even if you primarily use GPS. GPS units have many advantages – but you need a back-up. Batteries can become depleted, you may not always connect with orbiting satellites in a dense forest or narrow canyons. In addition, GPS units can fail after dropping in the water or onto a hard surface.

Make a Note of Your Map’s Mileage Scale. For example – is a mile roughly the width of your thumb-nail, or a whole finger length? That way you can judge when to start looking for your next trail junction, or how far a detour to a great view might be.

Find the Map’s “Legend”. It will show how a foot trail is depicted versus a fire road...or how seasonally dry creeks are depicted versus permanent creeks.

Pay Attention to Vertical Scale. Look for topographic lines (i.e., lines of equal elevation above sea level). The map will indicate whether the elevation change between two adjacent topo lines is 40 ft., 100 ft., 400 ft., etc. Topo lines that are close together mean steep terrain.

Know How to Interpret Topographic Lines. On the map, pick a trail and try a “virtual hike”:

- Does the trail generally ascend, or does it generally descend? Or is it repeatedly going up and down?
- How are ridge tops depicted compared to slopes? Compared to canyon bottoms?

Don’t Rely Solely on a Text Description of Your Hike. If you take a wrong turn from the written route you will have no way to know where you are without a map.

While on the Trail

On the Map, Frequently Verify Your Progress.

- Confirm your location on the map each time you arrive at a trail junction or other significant feature such as a stream crossing, road crossing, waterfall, ridge top, etc.
- Keep your map handy for easy reference, not in the bottom of your pack.
- Don’t wait to pull out your map until you are unsure of your location.

Align the Map With Your Surroundings.

- North is usually at the top of a map, but you should always look closely at the map to verify the direction of North on the map – in case North is not at the top.
- Have a compass with you and rotate the map to align Map-North with Compass-North.
- For more precision learn how Magnetic North deviates from True North at your location.

As a Back-Up, know how to estimate North based on the time of day and the position of the sun. Remember that the sun rises in the East, sets in the West and will be approximately South at mid-day.



Day Hike Essentials

Nobody ever plans to miss a trail junction and come back 3 hours later than planned in the dark! And nobody expects to slip on a root in the trail and become immobile with a sprained ankle 6 miles from the trailhead.

But accidents happen all too frequently at Big Basin, which (like every park) has limited backcountry search and rescue resources. Even day hikers need to carry minimal survival gear, in case they spend an unplanned night in the woods.

The most common problems that hikers face are all preventable, such as:

- Injuries from hiking in the dark without a light.
- Dehydration from lack of sufficient drinking water (if a rescue takes more than a day).
- Dehydration from vomiting and diarrhea caused by drinking untreated surface water.
- Impaired judgment or unconsciousness caused by hypothermia (i.e., body heat loss due to wet and cold conditions).

Be Prepared – Searchers are not sent at night, or during other dangerous conditions.

It is always better to prevent problems – so they don't occur in the first place:

- To minimize slips, trips and falls wear lug-sole hiking shoes / boots. Avoid shoes with smooth soles. Avoid open toe shoes – they provide no ankle support and won't protect your toes if you hit a rock or root.
- Match your clothing to the weather forecast.
- To avoid getting lost, become proficient with map and compass.

TIP: Big Basin is significantly cooler, and receives 3 times the rainfall of the Bay Area.

If the unexpected does happen, you will appreciate these items in your day hike pack:

- ✓ Simple First Aid Kit (band-aids, sterile wipes, headache / inflammation remedy).
- ✓ Small LED Flashlight (LED lamps are brighter and greatly extend battery life).
- ✓ Water Bottle and Water Purification Tablets / Powder.
- ✓ Rain Poncho – overnight rain protection for head and torso.
- ✓ "Space Blanket" (reflective film makes a waterproof overnight "bivy sack" for legs).
- ✓ Butane Lighter.
- ✓ Small Swiss Army Knife or small Multi-Tool.
- ✓ Small Notepad and Pen – to ensure that clear location and situation information is transmitted to authorities by hikers that are going to seek help.
- ✓ Extra Energy Bars.



Backpack Gear and Clothing

General Tips

If you are new to backpacking, consider initially renting your sleeping bag, tent and backpack – try before you buy the “Big 3”.

For your safety and comfort, stick with high quality items from wilderness outfitters. Performance and durability will be much higher than gear from stores that sell everything from golf clubs to baseball bats. You may pay more, but your gear won't fail when you really need it – and quality items won't need to be replaced for many years.

Gear / Clothing List

- ✓ Backpack – whether you pick a small or X-large volume bag you'll be tempted to fill it with “nice-to-have” (but non-essential) items that just add weight. Err towards smaller packs.
- ✓ Tent (weight is about 2 lbs per person, except for winter models).
- ✓ One (1) trekking pole – for uneven trail surfaces, crossing streams, steep slopes.
- ✓ Rain poncho (covers you and the pack). Can also be tent floor liner or emergency shelter.
- ✓ First Aid Kit (keep it basic – band-aids, sterile wipes, headache / inflammation remedy).
- ✓ White Gas Stove (most efficient) + Butane Lighter + Wood Matches (back-up).
- ✓ Small cook pot + lid, spoon, steel sierra cup – keep it simple.
- ✓ Sleeping Bag (goose down is warmest & lightest / 1-3 lbs. total).
- ✓ Sleeping Pad (for thermal insulation).
- ✓ Toilet Kit (toilet paper, tooth brush, sun screen, insect repellent, face soap, etc.).
- ✓ Quick-Dry Shirt w. long sleeves that can be easily rolled up.
- ✓ Quick-Dry Underwear.
- ✓ Cap / Hat to shade face and neck.
- ✓ Fleece Cap (for cold weather and sleeping).
- ✓ Quick-Dry Cargo Pants with zip-off legs.
- ✓ Thin Liner Socks + Wool Socks.
- ✓ Boots – mid-height boots give ample ankle support (about 3 lb. per pair).
- ✓ Down Jacket (light duty, aka Down Sweater) – can wear in sleeping bag as needed.

How to Minimize Gear Weight:

- 1) Every item must pass the test – is it **truly essential** or just **nice-to-have**.
- 2) Go for **multiple use**:
 - 2 bandanas will serve as face cloth, towel, dish wipe, sweat band, tourniquet, etc.
 - Don't take spare shirts & pants – rinse Quick-Dry items as needed.
 - One stainless steel sierra cup can be your food bowl, plate, drink cup and digging tool.

- ✓ Wind & Rain Parka with hood
- ✓ Rain Pants or Chaps.
- ✓ Critter-proof food canister (flat bottom canisters also make excellent camp stools).
- ✓ Topographic Map + Compass (as a back-up if you primarily use GPS).
- ✓ Water bag with spigot – fill and hang in camp. Black bags warm quickly in the sun, providing bath and laundry water.
- ✓ Water Filter (hand pump style) or plenty of water treatment pills / powder.
- ✓ 30 ft. small diameter nylon cord.



Backpack Food and Menu Planner

General Tips

Save the steak, baked potatoes and bottle of wine for car camping!
 Even the lightest food choices (stripped of packaging) will total about 6 lbs. per person for a 2 night trip.

Far better to go light and enjoy the scenery:

- 1) Maximize the use of freeze dried foods – saves weight and space in your pack. Also requires you to carry less stove fuel and allows for a much simpler kitchen set.
- 2) Minimize the kitchen set. Don't take a pot, pan, cup, plate, bowl, knife, fork and spoon if you can make do with: **A.)** Small pot + lid, **B.)** Bowl-shaped sierra cup, and **C.)** Spoon.
- 3) Closely plan each day's menu – food weight adds up quickly (see Menu Planner below).
- 4) Repackage to reduce weight – don't take a cardboard box containing 8 oatmeal packets if your menu only calls for 5 packets (with no box needed).

Breakfast Ideas

Even summer mornings can be cool, so hot and hearty breakfast drinks and food items will be most welcome:

- Orange juice crystals (try it warm on frosty mornings as a first drink).
- Instant coffee or instant cocoa – or mix them for café mocha.
- Breakfast Burrito – freeze dried Mexican entrée in a large wheat or corn tortilla.
- Instant oatmeal + granola + trail mix (add boiling water – powdered milk isn't essential).
- Freeze dried eggs. At best they taste OK – but provide variety on longer trips.
- Freeze dried blueberries, strawberries, etc. Sun dried apricots or bananas are heavier.
- If you arrive at the trailhead the night before departure for the backcountry, bring a real first breakfast – fresh fruit, yogurt, bear claw, hardboiled egg, real orange juice, etc.

Keep trailhead breakfasts simple ... with minimal cooking and clean-up before you can hit the trail.

Trail Lunch Options

Unless you are in base camp all day, trail lunches should be simple (with no cooking) – making for a short, relaxing trail-side break from hiking:

- Lemonade crystals. Minimizes dehydration – you are more likely to drink tangy lemonade than plain water.
- Tortilla or Pita pocket – packs compactly in a large slide-lock bag without breaking up.
- Herb-cheese wheat crackers, etc.
- Freeze dried tuna or chicken salad.
- Smoked salmon or trout, salami or beef jerky.
- Hard cheese (Manchego, Romano, etc.).
- Energy Bars.
- Fruit & Nut Trail Mix (in a handy bag for frequent snacks, even without stopping).

To Plan All Meals –
See Example of
Daily Menu + Buy / Pack List

Dinner Tips

By emphasizing freeze dried food, you will need only a simple kitchen set – primarily for boiling water that is added to various pouches. You will also need much less stove fuel since there will be little actual cooking or simmering:

- Instant soup powder – Miso, mushroom, chicken noodle, split pea, onion, etc. Excellent way to start the rehydration process after a day on the trail.
- Pita bread or Tortilla.
- Freeze dried entrée – Lasagna, Beef Stroganoff, Sweet and Sour Pork, Fajita, etc.
- Ramen (noodle bowl) – to make a hearty entrée add dried herbs and freeze dried chicken / tuna / vegetables, etc.
- For dessert – Freeze dried berries, freeze dried chocolate mousse, etc.
- Instant coffee, instant cocoa, tea bags. Mix coffee and cocoa for café mocha.

*“Go to the mountains and get their glad tidings.
Nature’s peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees.
The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy
While cares will drop off like autumn leaves.” – John Muir*

Menu Example (4 nights)

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Start - Day 1	At Home	At Trailhead: Bagel / Pita Cream Cheese Salami Apple Lemonade Crystals	Instant Soup & Tortilla Freeze Dried Entrée Energy Bar Instant Coffee + Cocoa (café mocha)
Trail Day 2	Orange Juice Crystals Coffee + Cocoa Burrito – ½ F.D Mex. Entrée in Tortilla	Tortilla Hard Cheese Jerky Trail Mix Lemonade Crystals	Instant Soup & Tortilla F.D. Entrée F.D. Dessert Instant Coffee + Cocoa
Trail Day 3	Orange Juice Crystals Coffee + Cocoa Oatmeal + Granola + Trail Mix	Tortilla F.D. Chicken Salad Trail Mix Lemonade Crystals	Instant Soup & Tortilla F.D. Entrée Energy Bar Instant Coffee + Cocoa
Trail Day 4	Orange Juice Crystals Coffee + Cocoa Burrito – ½ F.D Mex. Entrée in Tortilla	Tortilla Hard Cheese Jerky Trail Mix Lemonade Crystals	Instant Soup & Tortilla F.D. Entrée F.D. Fruit Instant Coffee + Cocoa
End - Day 5	Orange Juice Crystals Coffee + Cocoa Oatmeal + Granola + Trail Mix	Back at Car: Bagel + Deviled Ham (left in car) Trail Mix Lemonade Crystals	At Home

Buy / Pack List (per person) – from above Menu Example

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 @ Bagels • 2 portions Hard Cheese • 1 portion Cream Cheese • 2 portions Jerky • 1 portion Salami • 1 @ Apple • 5 portions Lemonade Crystals • 4 portions Trail Mix • 10 @ Tortillas (flour and corn) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 F.D. Chicken Salad • 4 portions Orange Juice Crystals • 8 portions Coffee + Cocoa • 2 portions Oatmeal + Granola + Trail Mix • 2 portions F.D. Mexican Entree • 4 @ Instant Soup • 2 @ Energy Bars (for Dessert) • 4 portions F.D. Entrée • 2 portions F.D. Dessert or F.D. Fruit
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Big Basin Hikes – A Sampler

From stroller-friendly walks, 3 mile leisurely hikes, 6 mile moderate loops, and 12 mile watershed transects to overnight backpack trips and 5 night wilderness immersions – Big Basin has it all.

The following day hikes and backpack trips are only a few of the many routes you can put together with the Park’s trail map.

For even more wilderness adventures, explore the Big Basin trails that connect to the trail systems in adjacent state parks – Castle Rock, Butano, Portola and Año Nuevo.

General Tips

You don’t want to be on the trail after sunset when it is hard to avoid trips and falls.

When choosing a hike always leave some extra time as a “safety margin” – in case you waste an hour or two by missing a trail junction, or have some other unplanned delay.

Adults in good condition can average 2 miles per hour for the first couple of hours. Add in lunch and photo-breaks and most hikers will average less than 2 miles per hour on hikes lasting more than 3 or 4 hours. Carrying an overnight backpack brings your average speed closer to 1 mile per hour.

Important: Always know the approximate time of sunset. In December and January it can be earlier than 5:00 pm! For example, don’t start a 9 mile day hike (about 5 hours) at Noon on New Year’s Day – you will have zero safety margin before dark.

For day hikes longer than a few miles, pick a time when you will turn back, regardless of where you are. For example, if you start a hike at 10 am, and sunset is 6 pm (i.e., 8 hours of light) you should set 10 am + 4 hours (i.e., 2 pm) as an absolute “turn-back” time.

Easy Day Hikes

Redwood Trail (Loop)

Length	Time	Elev. Gain	Highlights
0.6 mi (1 km)	1/2 hr	10 ft (3 m)	Mother & Father of the Forest, stroller/wheelchair friendly
Big Basin HQ > Cross Street > Redwood Loop Trail			

Maddock Cabin Site (Out & Back)

Length	Time	Elev. Gain	Highlights
2.5 mi (4 km)	1.5 hr	100 ft (30 m)	Virgin Redwoods, along creek, historic settler cabin site, azaleas
Big Basin HQ > Skyline-to-Sea Trail > Maddock Cabin Site (return the way you came)			

Creeping Forest (Semi-Loop)

Length	Time	Elev. Gain	Highlights
2.5 mi (4 km)	2 hr	500 ft (150 m)	Along creek, virgin Redwoods, azaleas, landslide tilted trees
Big Basin HQ > Skyline-to-Sea Trail > Creeping Forest Trail > Dool Trail > Skyline-to-Sea Trail > Big Basin HQ			

Skyline-Sunset (Loop)

Length	Time	Elev. Gain	Highlights
3 mi (4.8 km)	2 hr	600 ft (180 m)	Along creek, virgin Redwood forest
Big Basin HQ > Skyline-to-Sea Trail > Dool Trail > Sunset Trail > Sunset Connector Trail > Skyline-to-Sea Trail > Big Basin HQ			

Sempervirens Falls (Out & Back)

Length	Time	Elev. Gain	Highlights
3.7 mi (5.9 km)	2 hr	150 ft (45 m)	20 ft (6 m) waterfall in fern grotto, virgin Redwoods
Big Basin HQ > Sequoia Trail > Sempervirens Falls (return the way you came)			

Moderate Day Hikes

Buzzard's Roost (Out & Back)

Length	Time	Elev. Gain	Highlights
5 mi (8 km)	3 hr	1200 ft (360 m)	Less travelled, panoramic view, sun & rocky outcrops, along creek
Big Basin HQ > Skyline-to-Sea Trail > Hihn Hammond Connector > East Ridge Trail > Pine Mountain Trail > Buzzard's Roost rocky knob (return the way you came)			

Ocean View Summit (Loop)

Length	Time	Elev. Gain	Highlights
6 mi (9.6 km)	3 hr	800 ft (240 m)	Along creek, virgin Redwoods, chaparral, panoramic views
Big Basin HQ > Skyline-to-Sea Trail > Meteor Trail > Middle Ridge Fire Rd > Ocean View Summit > Middle Ridge Fire Rd > Dool Trail > Skyline-to-Sea Trail > Big Basin HQ			

Sempervirens Falls (Loop)

Length	Time	Elev. Gain	Highlights
6 mi (9.6 km)	3 hr	600 ft (180 m)	Along creeks, waterfall, virgin Redwoods, azaleas, Slippery Rock
Big Basin HQ > Sequoia Trail > Bob Kirsch Connector Trail > Shadowbrook Trail > Sempervirens Falls > Sequoia Trail > Skyline-to-Sea Trail > Big Basin HQ			

Westridge Overlook (Out & Back)

Length	Time	Elev. Gain	Highlights
6 mi (9.6 km)	4 hr	1000 ft (300 m)	Beach, marsh, Monterey Pine forest, chaparral, panoramic views
Waddell Beach (Rancho del Oso) > Skyline-to-Sea Bypass Trail > Clark Connector Trail > Westridge Trail > Un-named peak (return the way you came)			

Mt. McAbee Overlook (Out & Back)

Length	Time	Elev. Gain	Highlights
7 mi (11 km)	4 hr	800 ft (240 m)	Virgin & 2 nd growth Redwood forest, chaparral, ocean views
Big Basin HQ > Skyline-to-Sea Trail > Howard King Trail > McAbee Overlook (return the way you came), or loop back to Big Basin HQ on Hihn Hammond Rd (fire road).			

Timm's Creek (Loop)

Length	Time	Elev. Gain	Highlights
7 mi (11 km)	4 hr	1000 ft (300 m)	Less travelled, virgin Douglas-fir & Redwoods, along creeks
Big Basin HQ > Skyline-to-Sea Trail > Dool Trail > Sunset Trail > Timm's Creek Trail > Skyline-to-Sea Trail > Big Basin HQ			

Hollow Tree – Meteor (Semi-Loop)

Length	Time	Elev. Gain	Highlights
8 mi (13 km)	5 hr	1000 ft (300 m)	Remote, along creeks, virgin Douglas-fir & Redwoods, chaparral
Big Basin HQ > S-to-S Trail > Hollow Tree Trail > Middle Ridge Rd > Meteor Trail > S-to-S Trail > HQ			

Strenuous Day Hikes

Mt. McAbee – Berry Creek Falls (Loop)

Length	Time	Elev. Gain	Highlights
10 mi (16 km)	6 hr	1600 ft (480 m)	Virgin Redwoods, chaparral, ocean views, 65 ft (20 m) waterfall
Big Basin HQ > Skyline-to-Sea Trail > Howard King Trail > McAbee Overlook > Howard King Trail > S-to-S Trail > Berry Creek Falls > S-to-S Trail > HQ			

Eastridge – Skyline (Loop)

Length	Time	Elev. Gain	Highlights
11 mi (17 km)	6 hr	1400 ft (425 m)	Virgin Douglas-fir & Redwoods, along creek, panoramic views
Big Basin HQ > S-to-S Trail > Hihn Hammond Connector > Eastridge Trail > S-to-S Trail > HQ			

Berry Creek – Sunset (Loop)

Length	Time	Elev. Gain	Highlights
11 mi (17 km)	6 hr	2100 ft (640 m)	Along creeks, 4 waterfalls, virgin Douglas-fir & Redwoods
Big Basin HQ > S-to-S Trail > Berry Creek Falls Trail > Sunset Trail > Dool Trail > S-to-S Trail > HQ			

Basin Rim (Loop)

Length	Time	Elev. Gain	Highlights
12 mi (19 km)	7 hr	1900 ft (575 m)	Remote, along creek, multiple habitat types, panoramic views
Big Basin HQ > S-to-S Trail > Basin Trail > Hollow Tree Trail > Middle Ridge Rd > Ocean View Summit > Middle Ridge Rd > Dool Trail > S-to-S Trail > HQ			

Chalk Mountain (Out & Back)

Length	Time	Elev. Gain	Highlights
14 mi (22 km)	8 hr	1800 ft (550 m)	Remote, beach, marsh, forest, chaparral, panoramic views
Waddell Beach (Rancho del Oso) > Skyline-to-Sea Bypass Trail > Clark Connector Trail > Westridge Trail > Chalk Mountain (return the way you came)			

Backpack Trips

For millions in the Bay Area, Big Basin offers immersive wilderness backpack opportunities without that long drive to the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

Backpack camping is allowed in designated primitive trail camps. Each camp has well separated sites for at least 6 parties. Reservations are required – Go online and search for “**Santa Cruz Mountains Backpack**”.

Each trail camp has a pit toilet. Campfires and pets are not allowed. All food must be stored in the critter-proof metal lockers. There are no picnic tables and no trash cans – pack it out.

When reserving, ask about water at the camps you will use. Very few trail camps have piped water. For most trail camps you need a microfiltration device (or water treatment pills) and a carry bag for creek water – which may be up to 2 miles from some camps.

Never wash dishes, clothing or yourself creeks. Always carry wash water well away from the source. When done washing, distribute the water widely on the soil. Carry out all trash.

Twin Redwoods Camp (Loop)

Nites	Length	Elev. Gain	Highlights
1 nite	3 mi (5 km)	200 ft (60 m)	Good 1 st backpack trip – beach, marsh, diverse forest, along creek
Day 1: Rancho del Oso Ranger Sta. > Skyline-to-Sea Bypass Trail > <u>Twin Redwoods Camp</u>			
Day 2: Skyline-to-Sea Trail > Rancho del Oso Ranger Station			

Sunset Camp (Thru Hike)

Nites	Length	Elev. Gain	Highlights
1 nite	13 mi (21 km)	900 ft (270 m)	Virgin Redwoods, 65 ft. waterfall, along creeks, marsh, beach
Day 1: Big Basin HQ > S-to-S Trail > Sunset Connector Trail > Sunset Trail > <u>Sunset Camp</u> Day 2: Berry Creek Falls Trail > S-to-S Trail > Rancho del Oso (Waddell Beach)			

Lane – Sunset Camps (Loop)

Nites	Length	Elev. Gain	Highlights
2 nites	20 mi (32 km)	2500 ft (750 m)	Along creeks, virgin Redwoods, chaparral, 3 waterfalls
Day 1: Big Basin HQ > S-to-S Trail > Hollow Tree Trail > <u>Lane Camp</u> Day 2: Hollow Tree Trail > Middle Ridge Rd. > Sunset Trail > <u>Sunset Camp</u> Day 3: Berry Creek Falls Trail > S-to-S Trail > Big Basin HQ			

Twin Redwoods – Sunset Camps (Loop)

Nites	Length	Elev. Gain	Highlights
2 nites	20 mi (32 km)	2400 ft (730 m)	Ocean views, virgin Redwoods, 3 waterfalls, along creeks
Day 1: Big Basin HQ > Skyline-to-Sea Trail > Howard King Trail > McAbee Overlook > Hihn Hammond Rd. > McCrary Ridge Trail > Skyline-to-Sea Trail > <u>Twin Redwoods Camp</u> Day 2: Skyline-to-Sea Trail > Berry Creek Falls Trail > Sunset Trail > <u>Sunset Camp</u> Day 3: Sunset Trail > Timm’s Creek Trail > Skyline-to-Sea Trail > Big Basin HQ			

Twin Redwoods – Sunset – Lane Camps (Loop)

Nites	Length	Elev. Gain	Highlights
3 nites	32 mi (51 km)	3400 ft (1000 m)	Ocean views, Redwoods, 3 waterfalls, chaparral, creeks
Day 1: Big Basin HQ > S-to-S Trail > Howard King Trail > McAbee Overlook > Hihn Hammond Rd. > McCrary Ridge Trail > S-to-S Trail > <u>Twin Redwoods Camp</u> Day 2: S-to-S Trail > Berry Creek Falls Trail > Sunset Trail > <u>Sunset Camp</u> Day 3: Sunset Trail > Middle Ridge Rd. > Hollow Tree Trail > <u>Lane Camp</u> Day 4: Basin Trail > S-to-S Trail > HQ			

Castle Rock – Waterman Gap – Lane – Jay – Sunset Camps (Thru Hike)

Nites	Length	Elev. Gain	Highlights
5 nites	36 mi (57 km)	1100 ft (330 m)	Top of coast range to beach – panoramic views, Redwoods, 3 waterfalls, chaparral, along creeks, marsh, ocean
<p>Day 1: Castle Rock State Park Hwy 35 entrance > Saratoga Gap Trail > <u>Castle Rock Camp</u></p> <p>Day 2: Travertine Springs Trail > Saratoga Toll Rd. Trail > Beekhuis Rd. > S-to-S Trail > <u>Waterman Gap Camp</u></p> <p>Day 3: S-to-S Trail > Basin Trail > <u>Lane Camp</u></p> <p>Day 4: Hollow Tree Trail > S-to-S Trail > Big Basin HQ > Sequoia Trail > <u>Jay Camp</u></p> <p>Day 5: Sequoia Trail > Big Basin HQ > S-to-S Trail > Timm’s Creek Trail > Sunset Trail > <u>Sunset Camp</u></p> <p>Day 6: Berry Creek Falls Trail > S-to-S Trail > Rancho del Oso (Waddell Beach)</p>			



Next Steps – A Wealth of Wild Lands

Least Primitive Camping

Many California State Parks have excellent drive-in campgrounds – with flush toilets and showers in desert, forest and river environments.

<http://www.parks.ca.gov>

For Example – Big Basin and Henry Cowell Redwoods, Anza-Borrego State Parks.

National Parks also have similar drive-in campgrounds. <http://www.nps.gov>

For Example – Lassen, Lava Beds, Yosemite and Pinnacles National Parks.

Semi-Primitive Camping

California State and National Parks also have primitive drive-in, hike-in or paddle-in campgrounds with water and pit toilets.

National Forests also have less developed drive-in, hike-in or paddle-in campgrounds with water and pit toilets. <http://www.fs.fed.us>

For Example – Skyline-to-the-Sea Trail, Pfeiffer-Big Sur State Park, Pt. Reyes National Seashore, Lake Sonoma.

Most Primitive / Remote Camping

National Parks and National Forests offer backcountry hike-in camping (no facilities) in America’s most scenic wilderness areas.

Some National Forests also allow all wheel drive vehicle camping in some areas (no facilities).

For Example – Inyo and Sierra National Forests, Yosemite and Sequoia National Parks.

Variations

Some California State Parks, National Parks and National Forests also offer:

- Bicycle camping (**e.g.** Highway 1 State Parks & Hostels).
- Canoe / Kayak camping (**e.g.** Sierra Nevada Lakes Edison and Courtright, Pt. Reyes National Seashore, Lake Sonoma).
- Equestrian camping (**e.g.** Big Basin's Rancho del Oso, many National Park and National Forest trailheads on both the Sierra Nevada west and east sides have pack outfitters).

Getting Started

For your first overnight trip, test your new gear and menu items on an easy one-nighter. To learn those all important "power-user" tips and techniques, go with....

- Friends who are experienced campers / backpackers.
- Local "Meet-Up" Groups <http://www.meetup.com>
- California State Park Naturalists https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=26658
- Sierra Club trips (membership not required) <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings>

As you gain experience, there is a great sense of accomplishment in being self-reliant far from roads and trailheads.

"Go outside and play" – Mother