



LENTEN 20
HIKES 22

ABOUT THE HIKES

We have a variety of hikes for a variety of needs and abilities. Some are on paved walkways and mostly flat; others might take you up steep trails cut through native rock and soil. The purpose of all of our hikes is simple: get outside, get out-of-your-head, and get connected with each other. There is no prize for getting to the end first. Everyone is invited to go at their own pace.

A MARATHON? REALLY?

IF you do all six hikes you'll walk 26.2 miles. And you can combine 3 hikes for a half-marathon (13.1 miles). Sound like too much? Most hikes have a EZ version that cuts your mileage down quite a bit (total miles = 21.8)

YOUR HIKING KEY

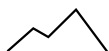
TO SUCCESS



dogs allowed/not allowed on trails



stroller rating: 1=umbrella stroller, 3=jogging stroller only,
5= strollers not recommended



maximum elevation gain, from lowest point on trail to highest



terrain rating: 1= paved, 3= packed dirt, 5=rocks, gravel



difficulty rating: 1=easy, 5= tough



water available, toilets available



sunset hike (see starting time)



Find the e-version
on-line to get links
to trailheads

HIKE #1: HIDDEN PONDS TRAIL

SATURDAY, MARCH 5 - 9AM • 4.0 MILES



TRAILHEAD: CAÑADA VISTA PARK, OFF ANTONIO, ABOUT 1 MILE SOUTH OF BANDERAS

ABOUT THIS HIKE:

This is a “single-track” section of the Tijeras Creek Trail. It weaves in and out of old oak trees and grassy flats as it travels along a small creek. This trail is used by mountain bikers, but they rarely ride fast along this mostly-flat section of trail. The trail passes under the toll road at about the 1 mile mark. There are a few short steep sections, but 20-30 long strides will get you over most of the hills. The trail ends just south of Antonio Plaza.

On the way back, we’ll pass by 2-3 small ponds just south of the Plaza. Even with our dry conditions, there should be some water in the larger ponds. These small aquatic ecosystems are home to many insects, frogs, and other wildlife.



HIKE #2: OSO CREEK TRAIL

SATURDAY, MARCH 12 - 9AM • 4.3 MILES



TRAIL HEAD: MARGUERITE @ ESTANCIERO
(TRADER JOE'S PARKING LOT)

ABOUT THIS HIKE:

This is one of our more popular hikes. We'll start at the entrance just south of Del Taco on Marguerite. Park in the Trader Joe's lot, and maybe even grab a cup of coffee at It's a Grind first. This trail has many options, so if your limit is just a couple of miles, you can head back to your car at any point.

After walking through Oso Viejo Park, we'll continue on up Jeronimo about half way up the hill. We'll turn back and enjoy a mostly downhill return to the cars. This hike is super dog-friendly and kid-friendly. Around mile 3 there's a lovely playground. You'll also find some outdoor art installations along most of this hike.





HIKE #3: DRIPPING CAVE

SATURDAY, MARCH 19 - 9AM • 5.2 MILES



TRAIL HEAD: ALISO/WOODS CANYON

(SOUTH OF ALISO CREEK ROAD AND ALICIA IN LAGUNA NIGUEL - \$)

ABOUT THIS HIKE:

This is our most requested “new hike.” Yes, it is one of the longer walks, but more than half is paved and it’s mostly flat. There is a fee parking lot at Awma Rd and Alicia Pkwy near Wood Canyon Elementary, but you can often find street parking nearby. The first (and last) 1.5 miles is on a paved road. The 2 miles in and out to the cave is a dirt trail.

Legend has it that the cave was used by outlaws as a hideout in the 19th century. Today it is one of OC’s hidden secrets. Due to recent fires, the trails is only open to foot traffic, so we (probably) won’t get run over by mountain bikers.

Speaking of bikes, this is a great chance to have kids pedal the paved section. Make sure to bring a lock so your bike is secure for the middle section.

HIKE #4: ALISO CREEK SUNSET TRAIL

SATURDAY, MARCH 26 - 6 PM • 4.0 MILES



TRAIL HEAD: EL TORO @ MARGUERITE

(PARKING LOT JUST WEST OF SADDLEBACK CHURCH BRIDGE)



ABOUT THIS HIKE:

This hike has been a standard for years, but we are adding a bit of a twist (or two). First, you'll note that this is a sunset hike. The sun will be setting as we descend a high hill around mile 2. The first 2 miles are all paved; the second 2 miles are (mostly) dirt.

This hike does climb steadily for about 2 miles, then dips up and down through some coastal sage scrub. Even though the rains have been sparse this winter, expect some wildflowers and native plants to be in bloom.

As with any sunset hike, **BE PREPARED!** Bring a warm jacket and a flashlight. We should be back at the cars before it gets too dark, but there are few if any outdoor lights in this area. And even though we are doing some dirt trails, dogs are allowed on this small section adjacent to Whiting Ranch.

If this hike seems like too much, there is a "shortcut" that will take the hike down to 3 miles and only 1 hill. Remember, there is no water or bathroom along this hike.





HIKE #5: O'NEILL PARK SHADE

SATURDAY, APRIL 2 - 9 AM • 4.0 MILES



TRAIL HEAD: EL CAMINO MONTANA @ PRIMROSE
(STREET PARKING JUST PAST CHURCH ROW IN RSM)

ABOUT THIS HIKE:

We're bringing back another favorite here. The hike "as-is" totals 4 miles, but we have an alternate hike (see last paragraph) that cuts this down to 3.

We begin on El Camino Montana, RSM, just past "church row." We quickly descend into the park and walk along shaded roads that parallel Trabuco Canyon Road. At mile 1.5, the trail turns to dirt (no doggies on this section) and ends at Monastery Road. Then we head back and tackle that last hill.

If this hike seems like too much, park your car in the park (\$5 fee at gate) and meet us at the playground. This will shorten your walk to 3 miles and eliminate the BIG hill. Want to bring your dog? Just hang out at mile 1.5 while the rest of us stroll along the Homestead Trail.

HIKE #6: PATRIOT'S HILL

SATURDAY, APRIL 9 - 4:30 PM • 4.8 MILES*



TRAIL HEAD: CAMINO LAS RAMBLAS NEAR ACU CANYON PARK
CAPO BEACH NORTH OF 5 FWY

ABOUT THIS HIKE:

This is a brand new trail for us. The hike is somewhat level, but with intermittent hills and a few steep sections. To get to 4.8 miles we'll start 1/2 mile short of the trail head on the north side of Camino Las Ramblas near Acu Canyon Park. A short but steep 1/2 mile trek up the sidewalk gives way to a very wide dirt trail that splits in many directions. We'll take the easiest trail that wraps around the hill and takes us to the top of Patriot Hill, where you can find a very large American flag that's visible from the 5 Fwy. After taking in the views, we'll head back to the cars.

*If you're looking for a slightly easier walk, join us at the top of Las Ramblas. You'll shave a mile off your trip and 140 ft of elevation gain.

Whether you take the whole trip or the shorter version, we'll end this last hike with a dinner at the Shwack, a great burger and taco place in Dana Point. Directions to the Shwack will be passed out at the beginning of the hike.

