

Summit Lela Peak

Information

Date/ Time: Saturday, December 12, 7:30 am – Late Afternoon

Meet at: [Oasis Visitor Center](#)

74485 National Park Drive, Twentynine Palms, CA

Instructor: Kevin Powell, Joshua Tree Hiking Guidebook Author

Overview

This strenuous, Five mile round trip hike leads to the top of the seldom-visited Lela Peak, Elevation 4734 feet. Lela is the highpoint of the northern Hexie Mountains and offers one of the best Three Hundred and Sixty degree views to be found within the park.

The hike begins at the Squaw Tank parking area, located five miles down a dirt road known as the Geology Tour Road. From here the hike passes through interesting geologic formations and into a classic desert wash. A strenuous climb leaves the wash and ascends up a rocky drainage to a large plateau. From here the actual summit is visible. The hike crosses the plateau and then ascends a moderate slope to the top.

Once on top the hiker will enjoy unobstructed views off to the east of the Pinto, Coxcombs and Eagle Mountains and, to the south, the terminus of the Little San Bernardino Mountains and parts of Pleasant Valley. To the west, down in to Queen Valley and Malapai Hill and further west, Ryan and Quail Mountain. The upper portion of Queen Valley and Queen Mountain will be seen off to the north.

For those seeking solitude, outstanding views and the chance to travel in a seldom-visited area of the park, this hike will certainly reward you with those desires.

Itinerary

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Oasis Visitor Center

- Introduction
- Caravan to the trailhead
- Field class
- Lunch/snack break, **bring your own food**
- Field class

What to Bring to the Course

Optional Class Materials

- 7.5" USGS Malapai Hill quad
- Compass/GPS device
- Camera
- Binoculars
- Field guides

Suggested Reading:

- *John Sowell, Desert Ecology, University of Utah Press, 2001*
- *Bruce Pavlik, The California Deserts, University of California Press, 2008*

The 10 Essentials: Every day in the Desert

- Day pack
- 4 quarts of water
- Closed toe hiking shoes - No sandals or equivalent type of footwear
- Lunch and snacks
- Clothing layers
- Hat
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- Notebook and pencil/pen
- Whistle

Fitness Requirements

Participants must be in good physical condition for courses/activities in a desert that may be hot, dry, windy, and sometimes surprisingly cold.

Hike Level

Strenuous, 5 miles round trip 1200 feet of elevation gain

Guidelines

- You are responsible for your safety.
- Park your car in designated areas only. Parking along the side of the road is dangerous to you and the environment.
- Rattlesnakes are present in the desert. Avoid contact with wildlife. Put your hands and feet only where you can see them.

- Only you know your limits, please let the instructor or Desert Institute Representative know if you do not want to continue. This is a long hike; only go if you are confident in your balance and scrambling skills.
- Stay with the group. If you get lost, stay put.
- Drink plenty of water. If you run out, notify the instructor or the Desert Institute Representative.
- Before leaving the class, check out with the Desert Institute Representative.

Instructor Biography

KEVIN POWELL, Local Author and Photographer was intrigued at an early age by the quiet complexity of this unique desert playground. As a result of this intrigue, he has spent forty-six years hiking, rock climbing, photographing and exploring within Joshua Tree National Park. His first book, 40 Classic Day Hikes of Joshua Tree National Park, is available at Park Visitor Centers and through local retailers.

* The Desert Institute staff/instructors will attempt to accommodate participants needs, however we reserve the right to deny a student participation in the course due to concerns regarding health and safety issues.