

## Cathedral Circumnavigation 2011

### **Back-o-Beyond Trailhead**

**5.21 miles**

**1156 ft cumulative elevation change**

**2 h 40 min moving time 3 h 30 min total**

This trail circles Cathedral Rock using Forest Service trails as well as other routes described below, affording views of Oak Creek, Napoleon's Tomb, Oak Creek Village in the Verde Valley School Road district, and a walk across the broad grassy plain between the Rock and SR 179.

Start at Back o' Beyond trailhead for Cathedral Rock and start up the Cathedral Rock trail until it crosses Templeton trail. Take a right on Templeton. (Alternately, take the social trail off to the right from the Cathedral trail to cut off the corner and join Templeton a bit further in.) Follow the Templeton trail over to a lookout point of Oak Creek and then drop down the switchbacks to Oak Creek and the junction with the Baldwin trail. Turn left onto Baldwin and follow the trail between Cathedral Rock and Napoleon's tomb. After passing about half of the length of the Tomb (about one hour from start of hike) and after crossing an assortment of rock ledges on the trail and climbing up a small rise, turn left onto a trail blocked by a fallen tree (Jct 1). At this point there are several dead juniper trees on the right side of the Baldwin trail and there is a forest service cairn.

This trail first crosses a sandy field and then follows a wash for a time and climbs steeply up the western base of Cathedral Rock. Follow bike tire tracks up the rock levels until you can see Cathedral Rock above you. Eventually the trail will follow a long rock ledge to the south and then make a sharp u-turn to continue a long path on a higher ledge until finally working its way up to the spine between Cathedral and the mountain to the south.

At this point your trail meets the Highline trail coming across the spine. Turn right on the Highline trail (Jct 2) and take it south until you rise up a small wooded mound on your left. At a clearing in the vegetation (about 1/3 of the way up) you turn left (Jct 3) and cross the clearing and there should be some cairns to lead you on a steep rugged trail that takes you down to the Templeton Trail below. Follow the cairns through the vegetation down until you reach the shelves just above Templeton. You will be able to see the trail through the trees as you go. Cross the shelves and work your way down to the trail.

At Templeton (Jct 4), turn right and take this trail until it makes a sharp right turn. At this point, keep going straight (Jct 5) and you will see some metal left over from a car that will point you the way to a social trail through the meadow. Take this trail across the meadow until it meets a bike trail coming from the direction of Rte 179. Turn left on the bike trail and it will take you back to the parking lot through a wash at its end.

