

Mescal Mountain Trilobata

Long Canyon Trailhead

4 Miles

800 ft Cumulative Altitude

2 hr 41 min moving time

This hike takes you up the Mescal formation shaped like a three lobed leaf in aerial view. Beginning a short distance from the trailhead, the Mescal route has aspects of the good, the bad, and the ugly. On the good side, short climbs take you to outstanding views of the southern part of the Dry Creek drainage. On the bad side, there is a brief but tricky climb to one of the lobes that some might find uncomfortable. As to the ugly, the Seven Canyons golf resort to the east of Mescal provides this attraction, an artificial scar in the normally arid Sedona ecology. The following description scales the southwest lobe first, the southeast lobe second, and the northeast lobe third.

From the trailhead, take the Long Canyon FS trail until you reach the remnants of a high fence made of solid wooden posts just to the left of the trail. (This will be shortly before the sign-in podium for the trailhead and only about 15 minutes from the parking lot.) Turn left here **(1)** over the logs along the trail and follow a well-worn path that takes you up to a saddle between the northeast and southwest lobes of Mescal Mountain. There are many trails in this approach and you need to avoid taking trails that branch off in other directions.

Once on the saddle **(2)**, turn left, and take the path that leads up the main (southwest) lobe of the mountain. When you reach the rock wall, turn left and follow along the base of the wall and over some rock ledges until you are at the base of a small cross-hatched rock wall. There will be a pile of rocks at its base that will help you make the ascent up this wall to reach the top of the mountain. This ascent is the tricky part **(3)**. At the top be sure to look around you so you will recognize this place again since you will need to find it to get back down.

At the top circle around to catch the views in all directions. There are many paths to follow. When you have completed your circumnavigation and enjoyed the views, climb back down the same wall you climbed up, but this time continue to make your way along the rock wall in the direction of the second (southeast) lobe. Most of the way you will crawl along the rock wall but occasionally you will need to head downhill a bit. In particular, you will have to navigate down a slick rock with a big drop off at the end, and then you will have to squeeze through a narrow opening between two angled rocks back at the rock face. Avoid taking some possible trails that lead down the mountain. Continue along the rock face until you can see the rock shelves that will lead you to the second lobe ahead. At this point the trail will lead down to get you to the rock shelves that you will travel across to get to the second section of Mescal. Stay at about the same level across the rock shelves and then follow a trail along the left side of the next section. Eventually you will have to climb up to the top of the rocks to make further progress. Stay at the top and continue as far as you wish to catch the views or possibly enjoy lunch **(4)**.

Return the way you came, or at the slick rock just after the narrow squeeze, avoid the climb back up and simply head down the mountain a bit to catch a trail that will lead you back to the saddle you first climbed. This time, do not go down, but instead continue at the same level and then head up the final lobe of Mescal. Make your way all along the top until you reach the end of this section. At this point you will be facing the junction of the Deadman's Pass and Long Canyon trails. Your way down is either down a fairly steep crack at the end of the spit somewhat to the left of center, or down a more gradual trail that starts right at the left-most part of the spit **(5)** and then joins the Deadman's Pass trail for a short while. Rejoin the Long Canyon FS trail **(6)** to return to the trailhead.