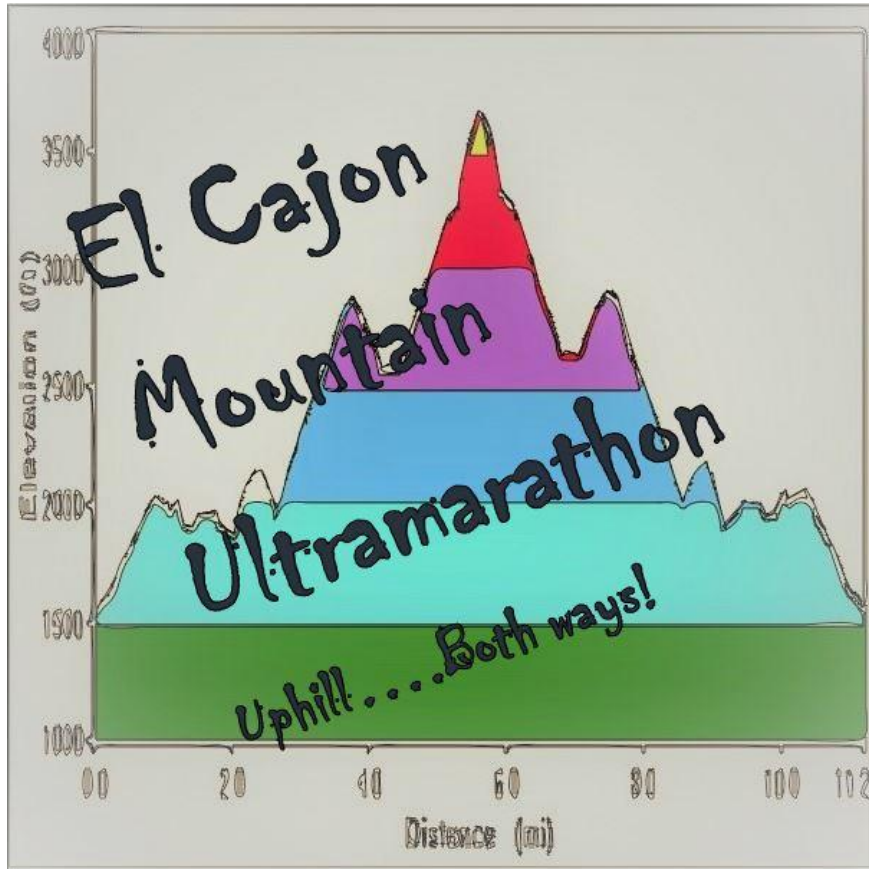


El Cajon Mountain Ultramarathon's Book of Wisdom (Runner's Guide)



Welcome to El Capitan County Preserve in beautiful Lakeside, California!

Warning	2
Directions & Parking	3
Race General Info	4
The Course	8

Warning

If this race interests you and you do not live in the San Diego area, please do a five-minute Google search for 'El Cajon Mountain hike' and read up.

One query result from lastadventurer.com reads:

I am generally not a fan of descriptors of "toughest" with regard to hikes...Without getting into the particulars of which hike is the absolute toughest in the County, let me say that the hype for this hike is justified. This is a difficult approach due to three things: the distance; the elevation gain; and the lack of coverage throughout the entirety of the hike. While none of these things are insurmountable, hikers should be aware that the combination of these factors makes the hike strenuous.

Search result after search result will find you reading time and time again: this trail and this hike, is tough.

I have hiked El Cajon Mountain many times in preparation for an ultra. You get real climbing legs fast going up and down this beast. Every time I've done it, I've thought—why not a double? But every time I get back to my car to re-up my water, I am spent and the temptation is too great to continue.

This run invites you to do just that—come back in, and have the wherewithal to get back out there. Two more times; for a total of three legs, out-and-back.

If you enjoy scenic point-to-point ultras there are lots of those. If you enjoy short, easy and flat 5k and 10ks there are also lots of those and you should go run them. This race is a 3-time psychologically-devastating, quad-and-hamstring-destroying 11-mile out-and-back.

If you don't like that, then please do not sign up. While San Diego County Parks is all-inclusive, come one come all, we **strongly suggest** you have some familiarity with running trail ultramarathons before taking this one on. At minimum, a 50K distance within time limits. Its probably a good idea you've run a 50 mile distance before. If you believe you have the equivalent training to attempt this run, then by all means email us with questions: trevorowenjones@gmail.com.

Please understand: This is entirely do-able. The cutoff is generous enough there should be ample time to complete it for persons of reasonable fitness (hopefully you've gotten your hill training in!).

You will need to stay focused and determined. You will need to stay in motion for much of the day. You will need to fight any urge to call it a day when you are back at the trailhead and get back up the switchbacks before you try to back out.

If you can do all that, then you can run the El Cajon Mountain Ultramarathon.

Directions: The trailhead to the peak is located in the El Capitan Open Space Preserve, which is located at 13775 Blue Sky Ranch Road, Lakeside, CA, 92040. The turnoff for Blue Sky Ranch Road is located directly to the South of Wildcat Canyon Road, and is clearly marked. It is important to note that while the peak is located in the El Capitan Open Space Preserve, the parking area is directly next to Wildcat Canyon Road.

Please note: as the trailhead is adjacent to a private ranch, we ask that all participants keep noise to a minimum.

Parking on the side of Wildcat Canyon Road by the parking lot is possible. the gate will not be open when we start. You will need to park on the side of Wildcat Canyon Road.

RACE GENERAL INFO

Running this ultra you will experience Southern California chaparral at its finest; you will run/hike/walk up and down an old mining road three (3) times from the staging area (Race HQ and aid station) to the summit sign turnaround. You will also have the amazing option of doing a 4th return!

This is a **TOUGH** trail race. You will be responsible for yourself. We are there to support you emotionally, supply you with food and water, and recognize supremely

valiant physical efforts to accomplish this. In the end however, you will need to look after yourself on this run.

A 3 repeat run/hike of the mountain results in approximately **33 miles** and **10,500** feet of elevation gain.

A 4 repeat run/hike is 44 miles and 14,000 ft of elevation gain!

A 5 repeat run/hike is 55 miles and 17,500 ft of elevation gain!

If that sounds scary/weird/crazy/awful to you, *please do not sign up for this run!*

If that sounds amazingly awesome to you (and you are adequately trained) then you belong here with us on race day!

The summit of El Cajon Mountain is at 3648 feet. The mountain is almost completely surrounded by private property or an Indian reservation, but the mountain itself is mostly within the Cleveland National Forest or the County of San Diego's El Capitan Open Space Preserve.

The official trailhead begins less than a mile from the parking area up Blue Sky Ranch Road. Walk up Blue Sky Ranch Road without making too much noise to the staging area and Race HQ.

Race starts at 5am, Friday November 16th.

Check-in starts at 4:30am.

You must check in on race morning. To check in you must do two (2) things:

- 1) Announce and identify yourself and receive your bib. If you are not wearing a bib I do not know you are here.
- 2) Sign waiver. If you do not sign the waiver for this race then you are not running.

Aid Station(s), Critical Turns and Race HQ:

The one-and-only true aid station is “**Race HQ**” (henceforth referred to as Race HQ). Here volunteers and the Race Director will assist you with water, snacks, sports drink and other items to make your day as smooth (lol) as possible. Be sure to fill up here.

~~“**Stop Sign**” is just a water drop to fill your bottle(s). Waste not, want not. Once water runs out here, we can’t re-supply. No water at Stop Sign!~~

“**Junction**” is where the trail runs to your left (to the summit of El Cajon Mountain), straight (to the cliffs’ edge, part of a conservation effort by the San Diego River Foundation), or right, to the top of El Capitan itself and an old shed. You **TURN LEFT** at the junction. There is no aid or volunteers here.

“**Summit Sign**” is the turnaround at the very top. Holepunch your bib with the correct leg symbol and head on down. No water or aid is available here.

Announce your bib number to volunteers at Race HQ! At Race HQ, after heading out again on another leg, please shout out your bib #!

DNFs: If you choose to DNF you must turn in your bib to the Race Director at HQ.

If you don’t do this you will be held financially responsible for any search-and-rescue efforts made because you could not communicate properly.

We will encourage you to not quit, but at a certain point, you must decide what you want to do. The clock for cutoffs does not stop ticking. **This is an extremely tough race.** If its not your day on race day, then we would warmly invite and challenge you to come back the next year to try again.

Please understand the Race Director and Assistant Race Director’s words are final. Please do not argue with any of us and remember unsportsmanlike conduct is grounds for disqualification. Emotions can run high during an ultra, so we would remind anyone to keep it real and remember it’s just a run.

Packet Pick-up : There is no packet pick-up. You receive your bib on race day morning at check-in.

Drop Bags: You may bring one (1) drop bag to Race HQ where it will stay for the entire race. Please mark it your name and bib # for a volunteer to easily grab it and bring it to you.

Aid Station Fare

Aid Stations will be stocked with water, electrolyte drink, potatoes, oranges, bananas, chips, m&ms, pretzels, pb&j sandwiches, Coke, etc
Electrolyte tablets will be available.

Ibuprofen and other painkillers WILL NOT be available. *If you have a special diet please consider bringing your own food as we are limited by budget on what we can offer.*

Pacers/Crew

Pacers and crew are not allowed. There is simply not room at the staging area for loads of people. We respectfully ask spectators to sit this one out as well. It's a public park so we can't keep you away, but for the event's sake we are trying to not impact the parking and trail too much. Please invite friends/family to *those other* ultras, cause this is not the one...

This race ***isn't*** the Barkley Marathons, but it is in the sense its very much about the runners. If you want to be around on race day, consider running yourself or volunteer (limited spots available).

Trail Manners

"Leave No Trace" ethics are in effect here. It is after all a nature preserve, and we are graciously being allowed by San Diego County Parks to have an event here (well, it's a fatass run, but either way...) . Pack it in, pack it out. Any runner spotted littering will be disqualified.

This is 'only' an 11 mile out-and-back. Please use the toilets at Race HQ. If you have a bathroom emergency, go off trail (watch out for rattlesnakes) and bury it!

The trail is open to other hikers and recreationists. Please follow the right of way with them and be courteous.

Weather

Average weather in Lakeside this time of year is a high of 75 degrees, low of 48 degrees. Be smart, check the weather a few days before the event and plan accordingly.

Race goes on rain or shine.

If for whatever reason you cannot make it, please understand there are **no refunds**.

Trail Work Requirement: There is no trail work requirement but we think you should say thank you to San Diego County Parks, their Rangers and staff. Please consider thinking about public lands and how important they are in America if you don't think about these things very much.

Gear Check

There is no gear check as we are not babysitters; however, if we notice you are running with no water bottle or a tiny water bottle you are going to be asked questions....Special note: its 10 miles in between aid stations! You might consider busting out the 'camelbak' this time.

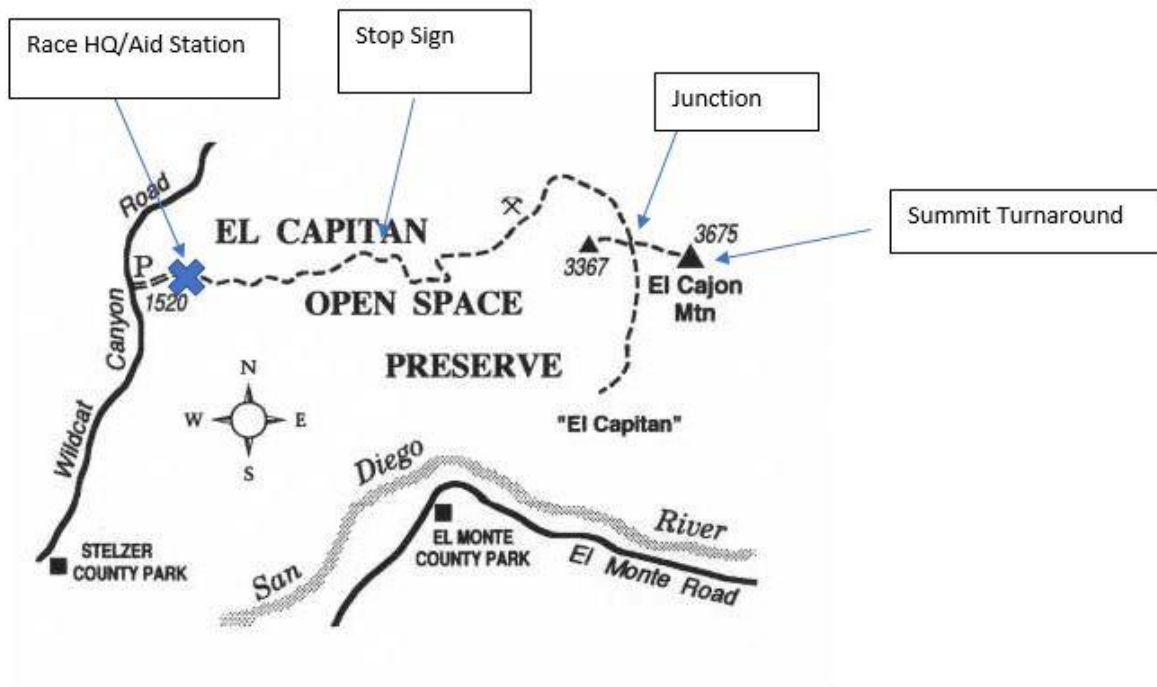
Bear in mind the trail is entirely exposed, so a hat is a good idea.

Trekking poles are absolutely allowed.

Earbuds—don't run this race with them—the area is full of rattlers who announce themselves by rattling (you are after all in their home!). Do not play music at all from any device.

Headlamps will be needed at the start and possibly end of the race.

The Course



Friday (race day)

3:30am Race Staff & Volunteers Set-Up

4:30am Runner Check-In Begins

4:45am Race Director Briefing

5am Race Start

Leg 3 cutoff: 3pm

Overall cutoff: 5pm

The official 'race' is 3 legs. If you do not run three (3) legs you are a DNF.

However you can be bold and go out for the 4th leg if its before 2pm.

That's a 12 hour overall cutoff, which ain't bad....but on this trail it's a different matter...

The course will NOT be marked. The course has excellent signage thanks to the efforts of San Diego County Parks and Adventure16. Study the map beforehand and you will be fine.

This is the staging area:



- 1) At the start of the race, you will descend back to the parking lot and touch the gate before returning to the staging area. The reason for this dog-leg is to ensure 33 miles by the end. You will do this at the beginning of every leg—more chances to swing through the aid station!
- 2) From the staging area (Race HQ), there is a single-track trail (switchbacks) going up to the main trail. *When you are **leaving for the summit**, go out the switchbacks.* Once you come out on top, turn left to continue on the main trail.
- 3) You will follow the trail to 'Stop Sign', then 'Jeep', then 'the Junction'.
- 4) After the Junction, turn left and follow the reflector posts to the summit. Here you leave County Parks land and enter Cleveland National Forest for a bit. Watch your footing in the dark and as always in the southwest, look out for snakes.

When you are **coming back** from the summit, continue past the turnoff for the switchbacks (the way you came up) and go down the trail/dirt road to Race HQ. *If*

you come back down the switchbacks, you'll be asked to go back up and down the main trail/dirt road again.

We can better keep track of all runners coming and going this way.

Stop Sign is about halfway up.

When you see The Jeep, it means you're almost to the Junction.

Remember: turn LEFT at the Junction!

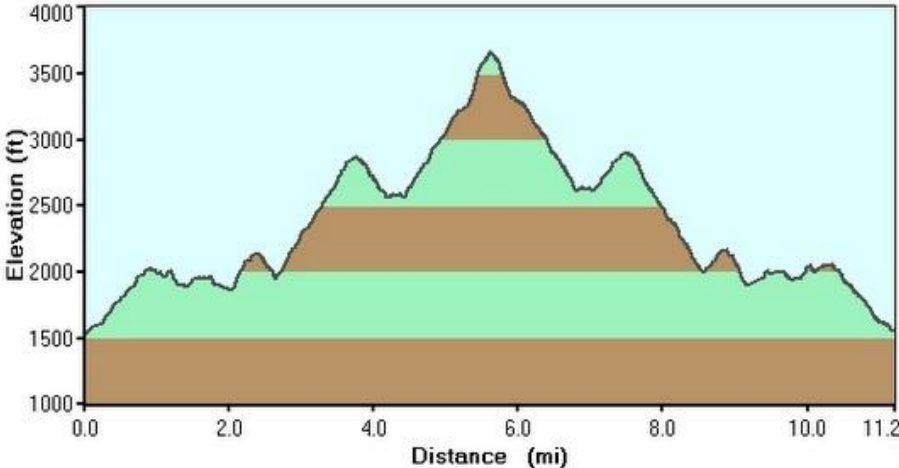
Summit Sign—find the appropriate holepunch, punch your bib, and head on down. There will be holepunches of different shape in the summit box - you are told which punch to use on a specific Leg (this way, no cheaters!).

Remember: it's the El Cajon Mountain/El Capitan trail—there aren't any turnoffs until the Junction. Yes there are a few side trails you will see on the way up—do not go down those! Return the same way you came.

If you're not concerned about your time, be sure to visit the old mines just after the 3.5 mile marker (an uphill turnout about .1 miles long, so it won't suck up too much time)

See the website for more info and pictures of the course if any of this is confusing.

Elevation Profile:



Good luck to every runner. Email questions trevorowenjones@gmail.com