

Meandering with Mike

10-05-18

These are a few of the places that I have visited and that I have enjoyed. Some are from my old 4WD days and others are from my current hiking days. More will be added occasionally.

The ones described here are mainly accessible with 2WD with good ground clearance. For some of them careful driving is a must.

Most of the information for each entry is contained in the web site accompanying that entry.

Monache Meadows <https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/invo/recarea/?recid=81037>

My favorite is Monache Meadows. It is at about 8,000 feet elevation in the Eastern Sierra. It is about a mile wide and perhaps three or four miles long. It is surrounded by the Golden Trout Wilderness and by mountains and forest. The South Fork of the Kern river flows through it, and the fishing is pretty good. It is covered with a coarse grass. The ranchers in the valley graze their cattle there in the summer. There is a ranger station there. There are several good camping places and many good hiking trails. There are, however, no facilities available other than potties. You will be on your own in the wilderness. If there's anything you need, you better bring it in with you. The problem is; the last few miles are on a jeep road that will require 4WD. The first time that I went there, I backpacked in from 395 on a trail near Olancho. It's an excellent experience for the knowledgeable back packer.

El Paso Mountains <http://www.drivingline.com/articles/exploring-the-el-paso-mountains/>

There are many features to visit in the El Paso Mountains. Restaurants and motels are available in Mojave.

Last Chance Canyon <http://www.drivingline.com/articles/last-chance-canyon-trail-red-rock-canyon-state-park/>

Last Chance Canyon is in the El Paso mountains, north of Mojave and it is an interesting drive. It requires 4WD with good ground clearance. It's probably too rough for nearly all of us.

Burro Schmidt's Tunnel <https://www.desertusa.com/desert-prospecting/burro-schmidt-tunnel.html>

Burro Schmidt's tunnel in the El Paso Mountains is worth visiting. Burro Schmidt had a gold claim in the area many years ago and supposedly dug the tunnel get his ore out to the highway. The Last Chance Canyon road made his tunnel unnecessary.

Joshua Tree National Park https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joshua_Tree_National_Park

Joshua Tree National Park has many historic sites and scenic locations that are of interest to all. The city of Yucca valley has numerous motels and restaurants. The area near the city also has many interesting places to visit.

Keys Desert Queen Ranch https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keys_Desert_Queen_Ranch

Bill Keys was one of the more colorful characters in California Desert history. He was at one time a colleague of Death Valley Scotty and participated in The Battle of Wingate Pass .

http://www.dustyway.com/2015/04/ambush-at-wingate-pass_20.html

Bill Keys later established the Desert Queen Ranch in what is now Joshua Tree NP. Where he raised a large family. The Desert Queen Ranch has been abandoned for years.

Ten best hikes in Joshua Tree https://10hikes.com/usa/joshua-tree-national-park-hikes/?gclid=EAiaIQobChMIhKef-Lbz1QIVhYF-Ch0n4g8IEAAYASAAEgKlvPD_BwE

Bodie <https://www.bodie.com/>

Bodie is the best preserved ghost town in California. There are many old buildings in arrested decay to visit. Bodie is an interesting place as an historic relic. In its day, it was considered to be one of the roughest mining towns in California. Thus, the legend of “The Bad Man From Bodie”. The town ghosted in 1934 when the last residents left. It is said that in its heyday when a little girl was informed that her family was moving to Bodie, a Godless place, she wrote in her diary, “Goodbye God, I’m moving to Bodie”. It is listed as a California Historic Park. The Park Service maintains it in arrested decay. When I’ve gone there, I stayed in a motel in Bridgeport.

Ghost town Gallery <http://www.ghosttowngallery.com/htme/bodie.htm>

Little Petroglyph Canyon <https://maturango.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/2017-Fall-Petro-Application-Package-RevA.pdf>

Petroglyph Tours, DO revue the Petroglyph procedures on the following web site.

<https://maturango.org/petroglyph-tours/>

Little Petroglyph Canyon has the largest number of petroglyphs to be found in the US. It is a bit awkward to visit because it is on a Navy Base, China Lake Naval Air Weapons Center. The security there is quite stringent. There is a multi-page application that must be filled out to visit. While you are there they inspect your car thoroughly. They even use a mirror to inspect underneath your car. Maturango Museum manages visitor applications and conducts the tour onto the base. Motel accommodations are available in nearby Ridgecrest.

Carrizo Plain

<http://www.wondermondo.com/Countries/NA/US/California/CarrizoPlainsFlowers.htm>

The best time to visit is in the spring during wildflower season. I usually approach the Carrizo Plain on S-58 from I-5. After travelling through the plain I exit to US 101 at Santa Margarita. I usually spend the nights before and after in convenient motels at the beginning and end.

Saline Valley <http://www.atlasobscura.com/places/saline-valley-hot-springs-2>

Saline Valley hot springs is an unusual adventure. It is east of 395 in a barren part of the desert. There are no facilities available, but there are a number of primitive campsites. There is a hot spring where three pools have been built. The pools are of varying temperature. It is a clothing optional place, so most of the visitors are nude. If you are sensitive about nudity, you might be happier going somewhere else.

Mitchell Caverns https://www.desertusa.com/mnp/mnp_mc.html

After being closed for nearly seven years due to major infrastructure upgrades, Providence Mountains State Recreation Area is now open. Likewise, our neighbor, Mojave National Preserve has patched and resealed the entire length of Essex Road from the freeway to the park gate.

Santa Rosa Plateau <http://californiathroughmylens.com/santa-rosa-plateau-vernal-pools-wildflowers-adobes/>

The Santa Rosa Plateau is a marvelous place to visit in the spring time when the wildflowers are out. http://www.rivcoparks.org/wp-content/uploads/santa_rosa_trail_map_2011_new1.pdf

Photo Gallery

<https://www.google.com/search?q=santa+rosa+plateau&sa=X&tbn=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&ved=0ahUKEwjhcD-3OHVAhXCh1QKHZg7AJQOsAQIVA&biw=1146&bih=920>

Catalina Island <https://www.catalinachamber.com/outdoors-nature/>

Catalina Island offers everything you might desire for a nearby get-away. There are ocean activities, hikes in the back country and restaurants and hotels in Avalon.

Santa Cruz Island <http://islandpackers.com/santa-cruz-island/>

This island adventure includes a boat ride to and from the island plus an opportunity to hike through beautiful island scenery and an historic ranch. Watch for wild foxes.

<https://www.nps.gov/chis/planyourvisit/santa-cruz-things-to-do.htm>

Hiking eastern Santa Cruz Island

Scorpion Canyon <http://californiathroughmylens.com/scorpion-canyon-loop-trail>

Telescope Peak <https://www.hikespeak.com/trails/wildrose-peak-death-valley/>

Drive up Wild Rose Canyon past the historic charcoal kilns and hike up the telescope peak trail. From one spot on the trail, one can look down on Badwater and up to Mount McKinley. These are the lowest and highest elevations on this continent.

Bridge to Nowhere <http://californiathroughmylens.com/2011/08/bridge-to-nowhere-azua-ca-photo/>

In 1938 a road and a bridge was built. The rains in 1938 were excessive and the road was washed out, leaving the bridge alone in the wilderness.

Vasquez Rocks <http://californiathroughmylens.com/vasquez-rocks>

Solstice Canyon <http://californiathroughmylens.com/solstice-canyon-malibu/>