

Hike #369

TRAILS OF THE ANGELES

72 Highway 39 to Bichota Canyon

6 miles round trip; 1200' elevation gain

Classification: Easy to Moderate

Season: November-May

Topo map: Crystal Lake

@ Mile Mkr. 29/49
Hike April 16 1997
Licho Trees

FEATURES

Bichota Canyon is once again worth visiting. Nature's redemptive powers have restored much of the sylvan beauty of the canyon, so badly marred in the terrible 1969 fire. Chaparral again clothes the hillsides, and the sparkling all-year creek is shaded, much of the way, by majestic live oak, alder, sycamore and a few big-cone spruce.

Although the Forest Service no longer maintains the canyon trail, the walk up Bichota Canyon is a delight, particularly on a cool fall or spring day. You follow the creek all the way to the canyon head, crossing via easy boulderhops many times, alternating between sunshine and shade. Few hikers use this trail, so you are likely to have the upper canyon all to yourself.

DESCRIPTION

Drive up Highway 39 to Bichota Mesa, 14 miles from Azusa, 2½ miles above the junction of the West and North forks of the San Gabriel River. Park on the right (east) side of the highway about 100 yards beyond the locked gate to the Bichota Canyon Road.

Walk past the locked gate and down the canyon access road, crossing the North Fork of the San Gabriel on a concrete bridge and, 50 yards beyond, Bichota Creek by boulder hopping. About 50 yards from road's end, amid a cluster of private cabins, go left and cross to the north side of Bichota Creek via a wooden bridge. Here you pick up the trail leading up-canyon just above the creek, passing three more cabins. In about 200 yards your path fords the creek and then follows a wooded bench above the south bank for ¼ mile before dropping to the creek once again. The trail now becomes difficult to follow as it continues up-canyon, fording the creek many times, 3 miles to the canyon head. However, the going is relatively easy if you don't mind boulder hopping and the many stream crossings.

* Poison oak