

3. Cerro Alto Peak

Driving Directions:

From Highway 101 take the Highway 41 West exit in Atascadero. Head 8.7 miles toward Morro Bay to the Cerro Alto Campground turnoff. Hang a left and continue for 0.9 miles up the winding road to the parking lot at the end. Pay your 5 bucks and grumble about the government.

From Highway 1 turn onto Highway 41 East and follow the road 7.2 miles. The campground turnoff will be on the right. Follow the road for 0.9 miles and park at the end. Pay up... 5 bucks.

Hiking Directions:

Once you park your car, you will have to return back down the road 20 or 30 yards or so to the trail sign which is on the left of Campsite 16. From that point you will descend into a forest of live oaks and bay trees. You will then cross a wood bridge over the East Fork of Morro Creek and switchbacks will lead you through the forest onto the chaparral-covered hillside. Continue up the drainage to a trail sign at the junction with AT&T Cable Road. Head left for about 200 yards uphill where you find a sign marking the Cerro Alto Summit Trail which you will follow to the peak. Enjoy the spectacular views from the top!

Come back down by retracing your steps and, if you still have enough energy, we recommend following AT&T Cable Road on your way back to create a loop with the Canyon Trail. It leads to a magnificent walk along the East Fork of Morro Creek. Although it is significantly longer, the walk is pretty mellow. In fact, if you are reluctant to do the peak, this would be a nice alternative but in reverse: head up the Canyon Trail and connect with AT&T Cable Road the return to the trailhead by taking a right on the Cerro Alto trail.

NOTE - This is a big hike with significant elevation change. So, do not attempt if you are in "iffy" shape. Make sure you have plenty of water and snacks, too.



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