

Bayo Canyon Trailhead

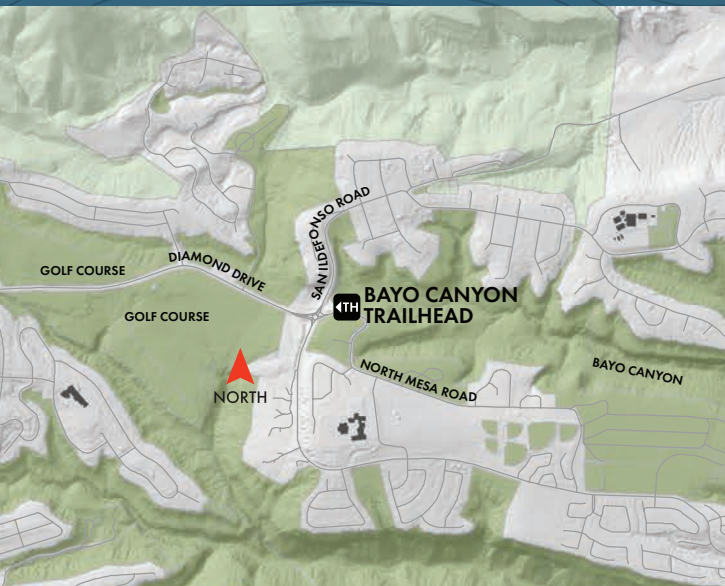


HISTORIC GONZALES ROAD LEADING DOWN INTO BAYO CANYON

The Bayo Canyon Trailhead at the San Ildefonso roundabout is centrally located on the Los Alamos Trail Network. Trails lead in all directions. To the east are the Bayo Benches and Bayo Canyon. The Dot Grant Trails are just through the tunnel and connect with the Perimeter Trail. To the south, across the roundabout, the East Fork Trail leads to destinations in Pueblo Canyon and to the downtown area.

FINDING THE BAYO CANYON TRAILHEAD

Finding the Trailhead: From 15th Street and Central Avenue in downtown Los Alamos, head west (towards the Jemez Mountains) on Central. In 0.8 miles, past Ashley Pond and the Aquatic Center, turn right onto Diamond Drive. Pass the Los Alamos High School and the Los Alamos Golf Course. At the San Ildefonso roundabout located 2.4 miles from the intersection of Central and Diamond, circle halfway through the roundabout and briefly head uphill on North Mesa Road. The trailhead is about 100 feet from the roundabout on the left and there is parking for about six vehicles.



SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

A 58-mile network of trails links the foothills, canyons, and mesas in and around Los Alamos. Hikers, runners, horseback riders, mountain bikers, and other trail users delight in the variety of trails from which to choose. The trails offer a quick escape from the hectic pace in town; a route to commute to work, an easy stroll or a physical challenge, the chance to observe wildlife, or simply soaking in the impressive views. The County Trail Network connects over 100 miles of trails on the surrounding Santa Fe National Forest and the adjacent Valles Caldera National Preserve.



DESERT ENVIRONMENTS CAN BE HARSH



HORNED OWL



DESERT COTTONTAIL



PRICKLY PEAR CACTUS IN BLOOM



VIEWS OF THE HOMES ATOP BARRANCA MESA FROM NORTH BAYO BENCH TRAIL

USING LOS ALAMOS COUNTY OPEN SPACE

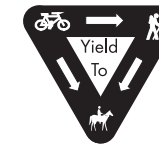
The Los Alamos County Trail Network is open to non-motorized use only.

RESOURCE PROTECTION

All cultural resources such as Ancestral Pueblo room blocks, pot shards, petroglyphs, and historical artifacts are protected by Federal and State law. Let all cultural resources lie undisturbed.

SHARE THE TRAIL

These are multi-use trails for pedestrians, equestrians, and bicyclists. Bicyclists should yield to all other users.



DOGS IN LOS ALAMOS COUNTY OPEN SPACE

All dogs must be on a leash when within 100 yards of a trailhead. Dogs must be under voice and sight control at all times.

SAFETY

When exploring, please stay on marked trails. Always carry water, sunscreen, a hat, extra clothing, a flashlight, and a navigational aid.

Trailhead guides are available at major trailheads, the Los Alamos County Customer Care Center in the Municipal Building, the Los Alamos Chamber of Commerce, and online.

For more information, visit www.losalamosnm.us, then follow the links to Open Space and Trails.



NORTH BENCH OVERLOOK



LENGTH: 3.2 MILES OUT-AND-BACK

ELEVATION GAIN: 200 FEET

FITNESS LEVEL: EASY

FEATURES: WAGON RUTS, VIEWS

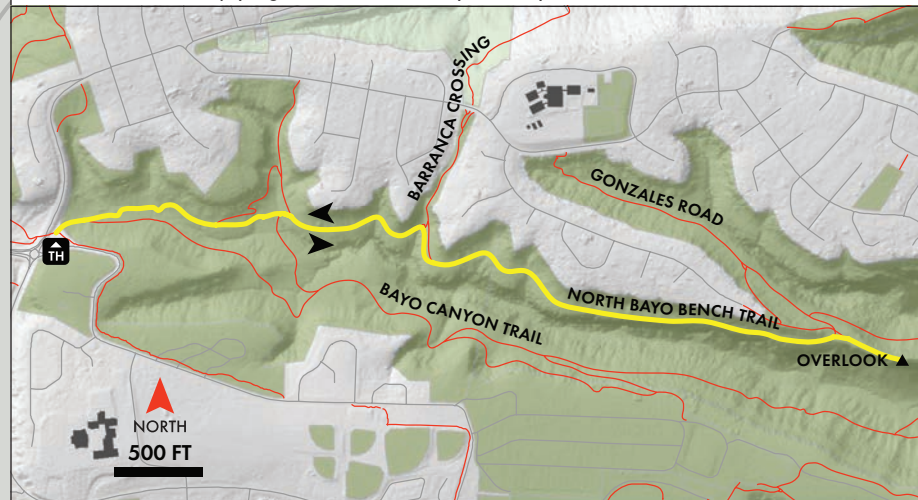
TRAIL SURFACE: PACKED DIRT

MOUNTAIN BIKE SKILL LEVEL: EASY

The North Bayo Bench Trail is an historic road ending at a viewpoint overlooking the orange-walled Bayo Canyon. This out-and-back trip is easy travelling with little elevation change. Along the way you can find ruts worn into the volcanic rock by wagon traffic more than 100 years ago.

From the kiosk, take the wide trail leading into the sledding bowl. At the east side of the bowl, take the left fork. After a few minutes, follow the ruts worn by wagons coming to homesteads on the mesa. Stay left at a slickrock trail junction. The trail now traverses along a bench about 50 feet below the mesa top. Along the way, you can enjoy the orange cliff which is volcanic tuff and the interesting growth forms of ponderosa pines surviving on thin soils and not much water.

After about 1.5 miles, go right and take a short spur trail to the Bayo Canyon overlook point. The scene encompasses the canyon, Barranca Mesa, and the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. After enjoying the view, retrace your way back to the trailhead.



LOOKING EAST TO THE SANGRE DE CRISTO MOUNTAINS FROM BAYO CANYON OVERLOOK

RENDIJA CRACK LOOP



LENGTH: 3.6 MILES

ELEVATION GAIN: 300 FEET

FITNESS LEVEL: MODERATE

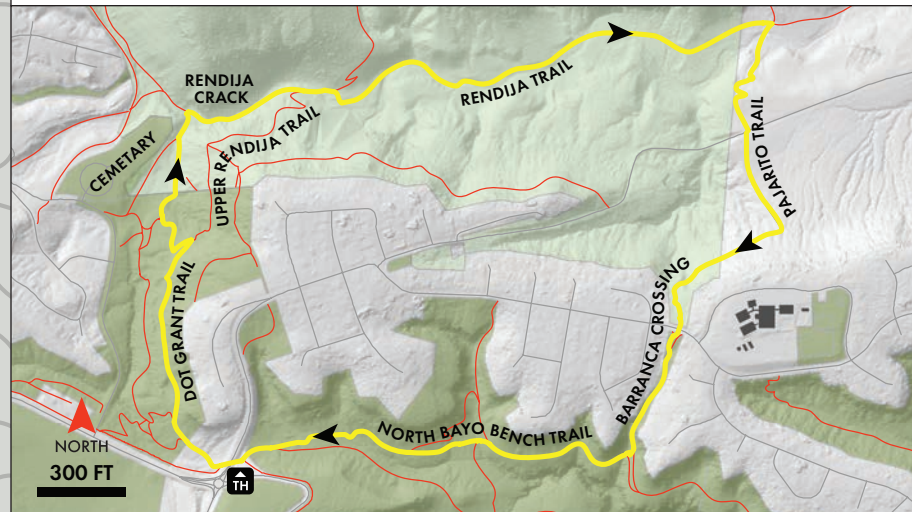
FEATURES: INTERESTING CANYON, HISTORIC ROADS

TRAIL SURFACE: PACKED DIRT

MOUNTAIN BIKE SKILL LEVEL: MODERATE

Rendiija is the Spanish word for crack, and in this case it is a reference to a point in Rendiija Canyon where the rhyolite walls pinch in to create a narrow passage only a few yards wide. It is an attractive spot—craggy rocks, perpetually shaded, cool in summer, and icy-cold in winter. The best way to explore the crack is using 100-year-old roads. O. O. Grant, called Dot by his family, set up a homestead at the current location of the Guaje Pines Cemetery. A road connecting to the Rio Grande Valley led up Rendiija Canyon to the site, and then continued along a tributary drainage to reach other homesteads on the mesa top near the present golf course. These roads form the backbone of the trail network today, but as reminders of their origin, visible throughout are ruts from cart traffic gouged in the soft tuff.

Starting from the trailhead, head downhill through the tunnel. On the west side, find the Dot Grant Trail angling to the right. The trail winds among rocks and ponderosa pines before meeting the Upper Rendiija Trail. Turn left, drop through a switchback and an S-turn, staying right at two minor junction signs. The trail reaches a sheer wall of rhyolite about a mile from the start. Near the wall, turn right onto the Rendiija Trail and pass through the crack. Continue down Rendiija Canyon about one mile, passing the Cabra Loop Trail signs, to meet the Pajarito Trail. Turn right and climb eroded switchbacks to reach a parking area. Head straight, cross Rendiija Canyon Road and pick up the unmarked Barranca Crossing on the south side of the gravel road. The Crossing begins as an old road ascending the slopes of Barranca Mesa. Cross Barranca Road after the road narrows, then pick up the trail on the other side. Descend to the North Bayo Bench and turn right on the trail of the same name. The trailhead is a little less than a mile away.



BAYO BENCHES LOOP



LENGTH: 4.5 MILES

ELEVATION GAIN: 400 FEET

FITNESS LEVEL: DIFFICULT

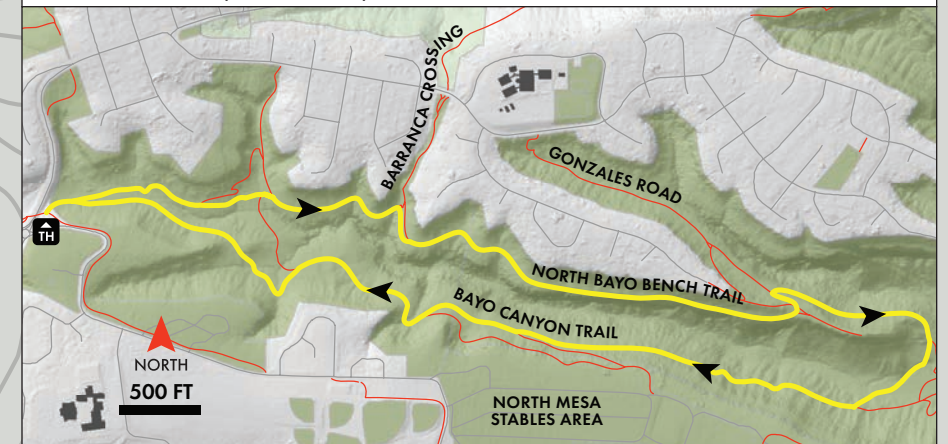
FEATURES: VIEWS, HISTORIC ROADS

TRAIL SURFACE: PACKED DIRT

MOUNTAIN BIKE SKILL LEVEL: CHALLENGING

The Bayo Benches Loop trip uses old homestead roads to circle around the head of Bayo Canyon between North and Barranca mesas. The loop offers long-range vistas of the Jemez and Sangre de Cristo mountains, shady but open ponderosa pine forests, and the chance to walk on 100-year-old trails.

Head downhill from the parking area, but don't go through the tunnel. Curl to the east across an open area, and then take the left fork, the North Bayo Bench Trail. This trail traverses along a bench about 50 feet below the mesa top. After about 1.5 miles, a short spur trail to the right heads to the Bayo Canyon overlook point. Visit the point or continue as the trail rounds the point of the mesa. In a few yards make a sharp right and angle down the north face of the mesa on a rutted old road. When the trail almost reaches the canyon bottom, take the left fork to avoid a sandy pitch. Cross the canyon bottom and pick up the Bayo Canyon Trail on the south side. Turn right and ascend this deeply incised trail to the south Bayo Bench. Stay on the bench for a mile back to the trailhead.



HIKE, BIKE, OR RUN IN THE WAGON RUTS ON THE NORTH BAYO BENCH TRAIL