

OTP HIKE
Vincent Gap to Mt. Baden Powell

10/22/98

8 miles round trip, 2800' elev. gain

FEATURES

Next to Old Baldy, Baden-Powell (9399') is probably the most popular mountain climb in the San Gabriels. A superb trail climbs directly up the northeast ridge to the summit in 41 switchbacks (the most of any trail in the range), with panoramic views north over the Mojave Desert and southeast into the deep chasm of the East Fork, San Gabriel River. The trip is a living demonstration of how the forest changes with altitude: from oak and Jeffrey pine, through white fir, into lodgepole, and finally a scattering of ancient, gnarled limber pines clinging to bare slopes above 9000 feet.

water enroute. At about 2 miles, white fir begins to predominate, and shortly beyond that, the first lodgepoles appear. As the trail tops 8000' the view opens out to the north, where the tawny expanse of the Mojave Desert fades into distant desert ranges. Now the forest thins and becomes almost exclusively lodgepole pine, tall and erect. The trail steepens, and the switchbacks shorten.

At 3½ miles (9000') the first aged, gnarled limber pines are encountered. A small sign points right (southwest) to a limber pine forest, 300 yards on a side trail. Four switchbacks beyond, the trail abruptly emerges atop the ridge, with spectacular views eastward into the Prairie Fork of the San Gabriel, and the gray bulk of Old Baldy on the skyline. Just before the final climb to the summit, the crest trail branches off to the right; its sign indicates 6 miles to Little Jimmy Spring, 9 miles to Crystal Lake. Two more switchbacks, past scattered limber pine and lodgepole, and the trail reaches the 9399' summit, with its Boy Scout monument, metal register box (usually full) and flagpole. The panorama is well worth the climb (providing the lower atmosphere is not clogged with brown murkiness): a vast expanse of mountain, desert and lowland scenery.

Return the same way.

DESCRIPTION

Leave your car at the Vincent Gap parking area on the Angeles Crest Highway, 53 miles from La Canada, or 5½ miles from Big Pines. Mileage Paddle - 74.77 Elev. 6590

A large wooden sign indicates BADEN-POWELL TRAIL—4 MILES. The trail starts up wooden steps, then switchbacks upward through a lush forest of oak and Jeffrey pine, with a scattering of sugar pine and incense cedar also dotting the slopes. It continues climbing steadily up the long northeast ridge of the mountain. At 1½ miles an unmarked side trail leads left (southeast) 200 yards to Lamel Spring, the only

