

**Hike:** Fern Canyon — Trail and route

**Trailhead:** Pine Creek — marked

**Distance:** 2 or 4 miles — up and back

**Elevation gain:** minimal

**Elevation peak:** none

**Time:** 1.5 to 3 hours – up and back

**Difficulty:** 1 or 2

**Danger level:** 1 or 2

**Class:** 1 or 3

**How easy to follow:** 2

**Children:** no

**Waypoints (WGS84):** See Page 5

**Fees:** \$7 per car; \$30 for a yearly pass. National Park Pass accepted.

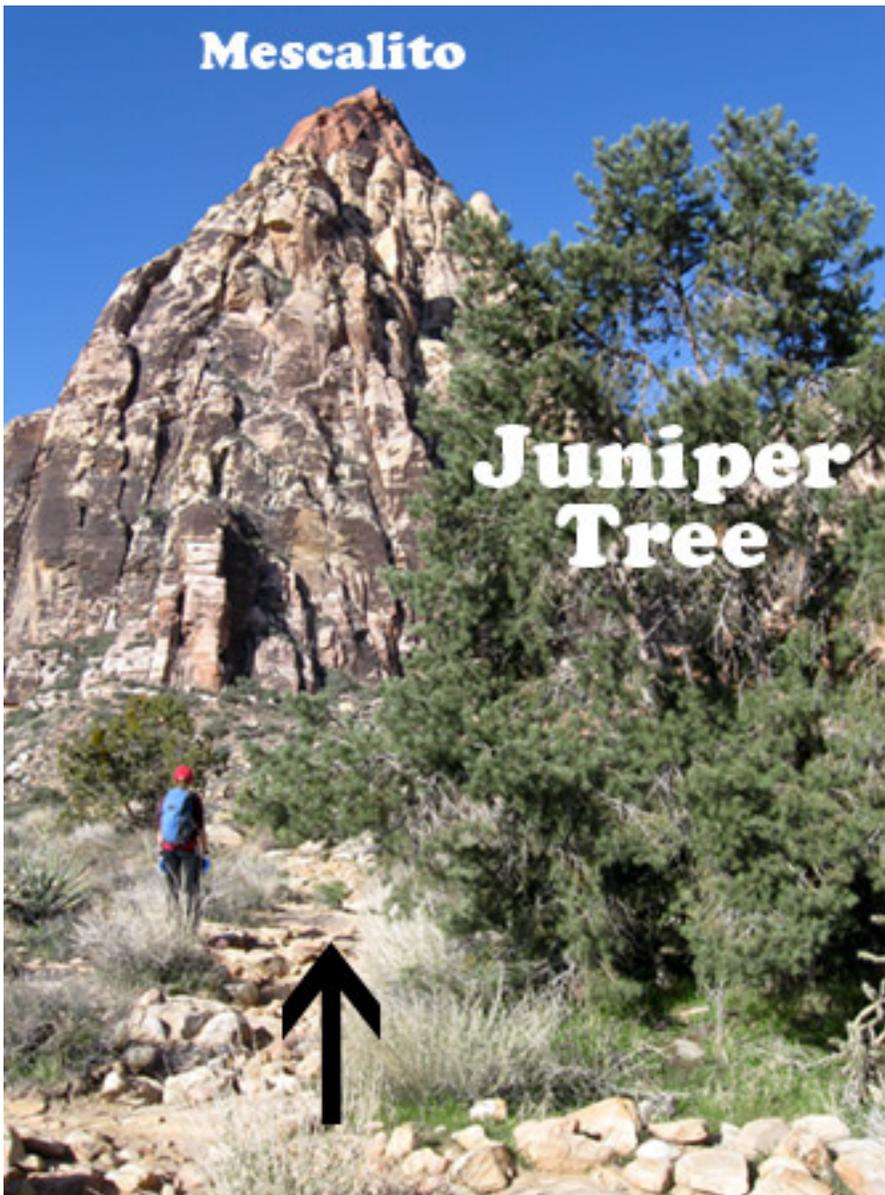
**Best season:** Spring and autumn

**Driving directions:** From the Mirage on Las Vegas Boulevard (the Strip) go north three miles and turn left (west) onto Charleston Boulevard. Drive 16 miles on Charleston to Red Rock Canyon. The signed parking area for Pine Creek Canyon is 10.3 miles past the fee booth. [Waypoint 1](#) is the trailhead.

**Comments:** This hike has various stopping points. Once in the wash it's less than 100 yards to the ferns. This hike is two miles, round trip. More adventurous hikers will want to hike to the **seasonal** waterfall. This hike is four miles, round trip, involves class 3 climbing and is much more difficult. The best time to see the waterfall flowing is late winter/early spring.

**The Hike:** Pine Creek Trail descends in a southerly direction and soon turns to the west toward the mouth of the canyon. Looking toward the canyon, you see Ponderosa Pines towering above the desert floor. It is rare to encounter these pines below 6,000 feet. The elevation along the trail is about 4,000 feet. Mescalito, a small, but majestic pyramid-shaped mountain, splits the canyon into north and south forks. This route heads into the North Fork, also known as Fern Canyon. When the trail passes the cement foundation of the old Wilson homestead, you have hiked 0.8 of a mile. The trail divides a little past this foundation. Head right as seen in **Photo 1** (no sign). The juniper tree is your landmark. ([Waypoint 2](#)) In about 30 yards the trail divides; again take the right fork. The trail again divides in about 40 yards. Take the right fork which weaves through scrub oak trees. If you miss this fork, you will descend into the wash way too soon.

Once the trail emerges from the trees, it climbs (class 1) red sandstone ledges. Just after the ledges the paths start to spider web. Ascend to the highest path ([Waypoint 3](#)), which drops into the wash further than other paths. The path ends at the wash. You are now in Fern Canyon. A popular rock climb named Dark Shadow starts here. The route through the wash is well cairned and easy to follow, though alternative routes have been



**Photo 1**

along the south wall. Soon you'll come to the tunnel in **Photo 4**.

Continue up the wash heading for the brushy looking chute in **Photo 5**. The seasonal waterfall ([Waypoint 4](#)) lies just below this chute. **Photo 6** is the waterfall.

created to avoid the excessive water from snow melt.

#### **Route through Fern Canyon:**

Start by heading up the wash. In a few yards the route crosses the water and then heads to the south (left) wall. You'll come to a very pretty spot with ferns. **See Photo 2**. This is one of the best spots to end the hike and enjoy the beauty of the canyon.

#### **Onto the seasonal waterfall:**

The route stays along the south wall for most of the way through the wash. In a few hundred yards you come to the boulder and log. **Photo 3** shows how to get past this obstacle. In a nutshell go to the right of the large boulder, then behind it and finally scramble up as the photo shows. The route then heads back



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4

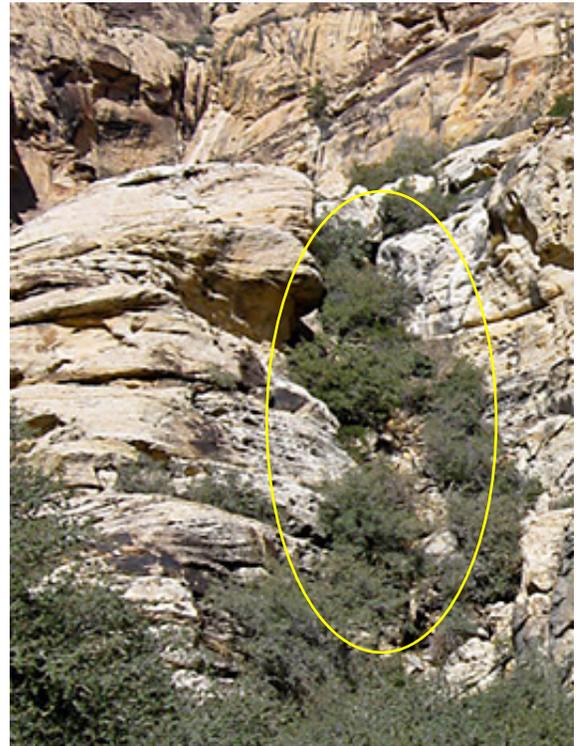


Photo 5



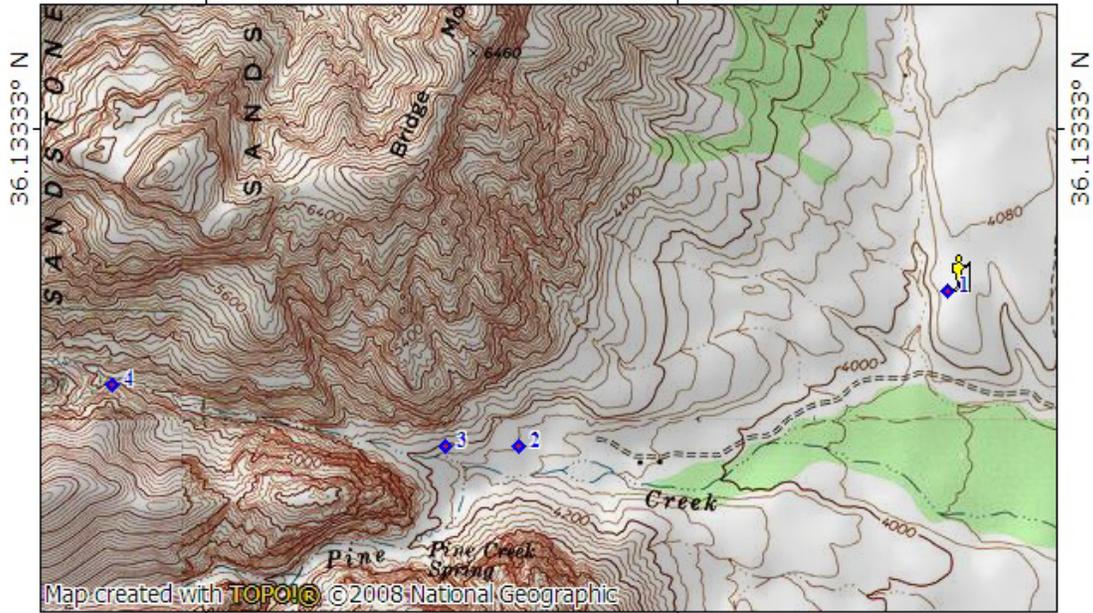
Photo 6

## Waypoints:

1	36.12869° N	115.47380° W	3868 ft. Trailhead
2	36.12424° N	115.48895° W	4098 ft. Trail divides at juniper tree
3	36.12421° N	115.49151° W	4176 ft. Highest path
4	36.12601° N	115.50327° W	4575 ft. Seasonal waterfall

TOPO! map printed on 03/15/10 from "fern canyon.tpo"

115.50000° W WGS84 115.48333° W



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