

7 Favorite Hikes from the OC Hiking Club

*By Suki Reed, OCHC President, as
Published in the Orange County Register
May 2010*

Here are a few of the folks who have led hikes for the OC Hiking Club and a description of some of their favorite hikes.

Mitch Barry

I am a Costa Mesa-based small business owner who has been living in Orange County since 1967. I was active with the Boy Scouts as a boy and later as a leader, and have backpacked all over Southern California. I also spent two years as a National Forest Service volunteer ranger in the San Geronimo Wilderness. I specialize in leading backpacking trips in the San Gabriel and San Bernardino mountains, especially for beginners.

Favorite hike: I love to hike the Holy Jim Trail to the top of Santiago Peak (Old Saddleback). It's one of the more interesting and challenging hikes in Southern California. It features 4,000 feet of elevation gain in about eight miles, beginning alongside a shady bubbling creek and rising up through chaparral- and Manzanita-covered slopes to 5,687-foot Santiago Peak, the highest point in Orange County. Though the summit is covered with transmission towers, the views from the top are spectacular. When you get back to your car after a 16-mile hike, you know you've had a great workout.

Judith Epstein

I was born and raised in Argentina, but later when I moved to Israel, I learned to love hiking. In 1992, I moved to Costa Mesa, where I work in a medical and dental software development company.

Favorite hike: Crystal Cove/Laguna Canyon Wilderness Areas – I like to hike with breathtaking ocean views and refreshing breezes. In the spring, I can't get enough of the flowers. You may find yourself suddenly in a forest where the trees embrace and protect you. Regardless of geography, my favorite hike is the one with friendly people who care about each other's well-being. They are the ones who look back to see if the person behind needs a helping hand.

Harish Jani

I was born among the rolling hills of India in 1949. I came to the USA in 1999, and since joining the club in December 2006 I have done almost 600 hikes. I am rejuvenated through nature.



Mitch Barry, who owns a small business in Costa Mesa, loves to hike the Holy Jim Trail to the top of Santiago

Favorite hike: O'Neil Park and the adjoining Ramakrishna Monastery is my favorite. This hike has all the ingredients of a good workout as well as spiritual enrichment. The monastery's one-mile shrine hike has symbols of the major world religions displayed to remind us of the importance, respect and diversity each of them has to offer.

Lisa Pederson

My love of nature began while growing up in the heart of the woods and farmland of Southern New Jersey. I reside in North Orange County where I work for the Kerr Corporation and go to school. My education consists of a BA in communications, and this year I will graduate with masters in organization leadership. From the time I have been a member of the hiking club, I've met all sorts of wonderful people from different backgrounds, have seen the beauty of the land, and have learned a lot about the local habitat.

Favorite hike: I love getting away from civilization in Chino Hills State Park. There are many different trails that accommodate all different levels of hikers, bikers, and horseback riders. Two interesting facts that many people do not know about Chino Hills State Park is: There is a well-maintained campground, and right outside of the park on the west side is Carbon Canyon Park, with a 10-acre grove of coastal redwoods.

Danielle Lee Desmarais

After graduating from Syracuse University in 2003, I moved to California and now reside in Downey. I am 29, work as a graphic designer for a swimwear company designing fabric. I lead nature-themed hikes.

Favorite hike: My favorite place is Oak Canyon Nature Center in Anaheim. I love the steam trail, shade, sage and woodpeckers. It's a place where I can unwind.

Gerald Madrigal

I am 58 years young and joyfully married. I am a Mission Viejo resident, and employed by the LA County Men's Central jail as a sheet metal worker. I commute on the Metrolink every day at 4 a.m.

Favorite hike: I like hiking Salt Creek, because I can do it all winter. It is a paved walk that goes to the ocean and back and a great mid-week two-hour workout. My favorite longer hike is Santiago Peak, because it is such an accomplishment. I am impressed when I look at it from home and think that I can hike to the top of it. I love the times when I find myself alone during the hike and can get a sense of spiritual renewal from the wilderness and still be so close to home.

Neil Fricke

I'm a retired licensed customs broker and single father of two boys, living in Los Angeles County. I'm 55 and with a B.A. in psychology from the University of Redlands. I became permanently disabled at 48 because of a severe neck injury. Approved exercise aids my condition, and I receive the greatest relief from chronic pain from walking and hiking.

Favorite hike: I love hiking Shady Canyon in Irvine. It's easy enough for beginners, yet still a workout; dog-friendly; a nature preserve where deer, turkey vultures, hawks and rabbits can be seen along with vistas of the beautiful homes.

This summer key Hike Organizers and volunteers will pow-wow with Suki and other experts as they prepare the "Wildlife Communication & Wilderness Skills" curriculum for our Taking Teens to the Top Program. The updated program will be launched within various school districts at the start of the school year - September 2010.

Help is needed! OCHC needs donations and community support as well as volunteers.

Please contact President Suki Reed for volunteer opportunities.



Taking Teens to the Top!

OCHC Hike Organizer Mitch shares about his first outing with local teens.

Mishe Mokwa Trail hike, May 15, 2010

After our first overnight last month, it was decided that what the kids needed were some more day hikes. So we scheduled an exploratory climb (so called because I've never been there before) along the Mishe Mokwa Trail in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area west of Malibu.

I was pleasantly surprised by this spectacular hike through some of the most interesting and exciting topography in California's coastal mountains. The trail basically loops around the north of the Boney Mountain/Sandstone Peak massif before climbing up to a sort of small, high plateau covered with dense chaparral and accented by jutting rock formations, joining the Backbone Trail. It is really beautiful.

Most important of all, the kids really seemed to have had a good time, despite some challenging aspects of the trail, which alternately climbs and plunges steeply as it makes its way to Sandstone Peak, the highest point in the Santa Monica Mountains. Everyone made it to the top, and took justifiable pride in what for most was their first summit climb of any kind.

It was a gorgeous day, but a little warm. I wouldn't expect to come back here until the autumn. It would be a good cool weather hike, especially on a clear winter day.

Trailhead elevation: **2,030**
Summit: **3,111** (Sandstone Peak)
Elevation gain: **1,081**
Miles (loop): **6** (approx)

Mitch

For more information about upcoming Taking Teens to the Top! events, check out the OCHC calendar <http://www.meetup.com/OC-HIKING-com/calendar/>



Intro to Hiking with Gideon, May 2010

Our Hike Organizer, Gideon, makes a presentation on backpacking followed by a local conditioning hike with full backpacks! For additional photos, check out the OC-Hiking Club Facebook page.



Eating out with hiking foodies

By SUKI REED

For THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER, JUNE 2010

Cooking on the trail is limited only to your imagination – and the amount of weight you are willing to carry on your back. Keep in mind that the goal of eating on the trail is to cram a lot of calories into a little weight. A rule of thumb suggests 2 pounds of dense-caloric food per day for men and 1.5 pounds for women. Here are a few tips for that range from sparse eating to gourmet trail dining. The dehydrated prepackaged meals can be purchased at any outdoor supply store. These are easy to use and can become the base for a more elaborate meal by adding other ingredients.

The basics for cooking a Mountain House dehydrated meal on the trail are outlined below by OC Hiking Club hike organizer Larry Beck from San Juan Capistrano.

Boil water

Open the meal and remove the silicate packet.

Pour in the boiling water and mix.

Seal the bag while it cooks.

Open the bag, cut down the package and eat.

Be sure to stow all garbage into your trash bag.

Simple, tasty, and best of all, no dishes to wash!

Neil Fricke, vice president of the OC Hiking Club, says he likes, "meals on the trail to be quick, tasty and filling, with minimal preparation and clean-up." He suggests starting with prepackaged dehydrated vegetables and then adding sun-dried tomatoes, a teaspoon or two of a favorite spice blend such as curry, pesto, and chili powder and top it off with chicken, salmon, or dried shrimp. He also suggests, "a long handled spoon lets you eat directly from the bag."



Edd Ruskowitz from Anaheim Hills and organizer for the OC Hiking Club Sunday Brunch Hikes, loves to cook up tasty, nutritious meals on the trail.

For more elaborate meals, be prepared to carry more weight, including the necessary pots and pans.

Edd Ruskowitz from Anaheim Hills is the organizer for the OC Hiking Club Sunday Brunch Hikes and his favorite trail dish is pretty easy.

Ruskowitz starts with a frozen bag of Trader Joe's roasted potatoes and peppers. He adds some pre-cooked chicken sausages and pours some eggs over it. Before the hike, slice and zip-loc the sausages, then throw everything in the baggie along with some salt, pepper, crushed red pepper, Parmesan cheese and a little olive oil.

For cooking on the trail, you will use a lightweight fry pan and spatula, pour in a little oil and toss in the pre-chopped onions and peppers from the Trader Joe's pouch. Then add the sausages and when they've browned, pour in the now-thawed potatoes.

"The coups de grace comes when everything is hot, and you pour on the eggs – lot o' protein, lots o' carbs -- a perfect trail brunch." For variety try adding red pepper, sun dried tomatoes and mushrooms.

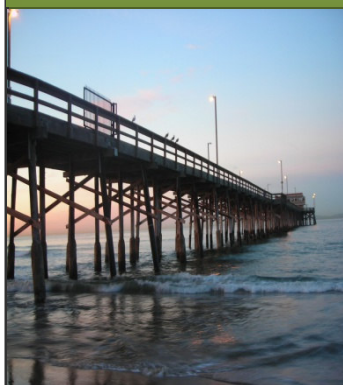
And the final word on trail dining is summed up by Mike Cabourne of Fullerton:

"When camping on the trail" he says, "I always look for two things: 1. A nearby restaurant or 2. A campmate who's a good cook!! I've been lucky so far with that objective in mind."

Wishing you a satisfying trail experience – Bon appetite!



Suki Reed in the OC Register!



Suki Reed, President of OC Hiking Club, is a writer for the Orange County Register. Past articles include topics such as hiking for stress relief, camera tips, and favorite local hiking spots. Look for her articles on the back page of the Outdoor Section every Monday. Past articles can be found at:

<http://www.ocregister.com/fi/search?q=suki+reed>

REI SPECIAL FOR OCHC MEMBERS ONLY!

Learning to backpack for the first time? OC Hiking Club Members receive 25% off the cost of first time equipment rental at REI.

*Members must provide a printout of the OC Hiking Club event posting at the time of rental.

Interested in Advertising?

Ad space is now available

For more information please contact:
Suki Reed, President
Newsletter @ OC-Hiking.com

Costume Hell

A BIG thank you to Costume Hell for their generous sponsorship of the MileMarker newsletter!

THE ORANGE COUNTY
REGISTER



Special Thanks To Our Business Partners: