

MISSION VIEJO

Oso Creek Trail

Natural and cultural attractions make this walk a local favorite.

THE DETAILS

Two to three miles, easy, well-marked. From the 5 Freeway, exit at La Paz Road and head east on La Paz. Two lights east of Marguerite Parkway, turn left into the parking lot for the Thomas R. Potocki Conference Center, **27301 La Paz Road**.

Oso Creek Trail is a beloved walk along a charming creek that runs year-round (granted it's suburban runoff, but it's still scenic). The trail was designed to delight multiple senses. The creek burbles over rocks; a 3-foot hedge maze makes a cute hide-and-seek area for young children; the honeysuckle, rose, and butterfly bushes give off sweet scents; and the trail is dotted with mosaic-tile artworks.

From the parking lot, walk back to La Paz Road, turn right and take the overpass. Just afterward, turn right onto the easy-to-find asphalt trailhead. You'll pass through a pleasant mix of nature and signs of civilization as the path shifts from pavement to wood chips to dirt and back again. At the one-mile mark, you can lengthen the walk to three miles by turning left through a tunnel onto a less-developed one-mile spur trail along the creek. On the return, you'll go straight onto the asphalt to rejoin Oso Creek Trail and complete the loop. Bring a book; benches are strewn in serene little spots. Follow the return trail one mile to the parking lot.



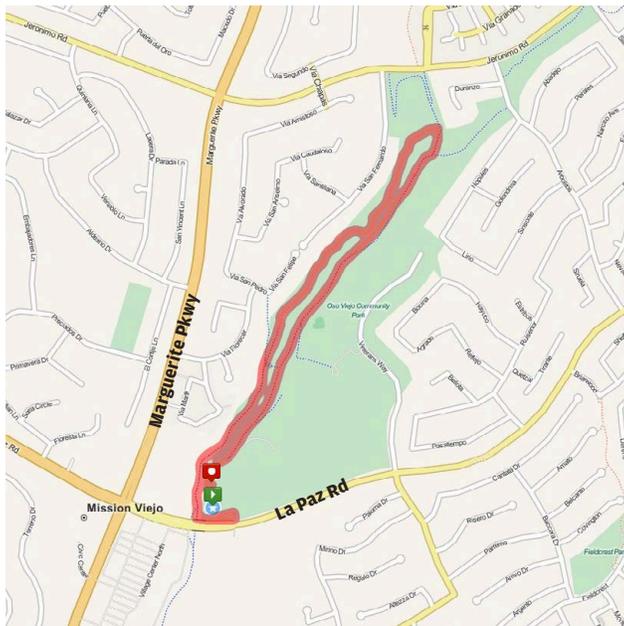
DOGS ALLOWED



PICNIC TABLES OR BENCHES



GOOD FOR CHILDREN



For turn-by-turn directions on the MapMyHike app (login required), go to bit.ly/OCwalks. Click "options" next to desired route, copy, then swipe down for the option to open via app. From a desktop browser, click "options," copy, check the "send to phone" box and click "save route."

LAKE FOREST

Serrano Creek Trail

This path will take you back in time, and into the woods.



THE DETAILS

2.5 or 5 miles, easy, mostly flat, partly paved. From the 405 Freeway, head east on Bake Parkway for 1.9 mile, turn right onto Toledo Way for 0.3 mile, then left on Serrano Road for 0.8 mile. Turn left into Heritage Hill Historical Park, **25151 Serrano Rd.** to park and start there.

Begin by visiting Heritage Hill Historical Park, a collection of some of the county's early buildings. Leave there through the Heritage Hill Plaza shopping center to Trabuco Road and turn left, taking the sidewalk for about one-tenth of a mile.

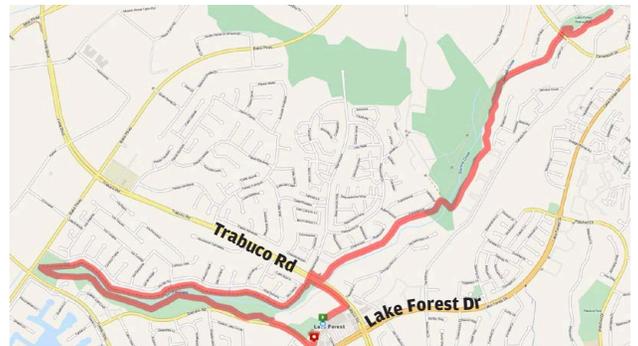
At the Peachwood Street traffic signal, cross Trabuco Road and turn right; you'll see the trailhead for the five-mile walk on your left about 20 feet ahead. Follow the wide dirt path next to the creek. At 0.75 miles, take the bridge on the right and continue along a shadier, more rustic path under oak and sycamore trees. At 1.1 miles, walk under the overpass and take the stairs to your left up to the Lake Forest Nature Park, which is a great picnic spot with tables and benches.

Return as you came. If you continue straight after re-crossing Trabuco, you'll find the start of a 2.5-mile jaunt. A stream and plants—willows and toyon—are on your left, and backyards are on your right. After a mile, you'll reach Bake Parkway. Turn left over the creek, then left again into Serrano Creek

Park. Take the narrow dirt path through the fragrant eucalyptus mini-forest until you come to a wide paved trail, which goes toward a play area. From there, head up to the sidewalk along Serrano Road and turn left, back to Heritage Hill.

POST-WALK EATS

► Bagels and Brew is part of a chain, but it has terrific bagels. *21771 Lake Forest Drive, Lake Forest, 949-951-8985, bagelsandbrew.com*



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