

## USE AT YOUR OWN RISK

### Cahuenga Peak

1821'

Location: Hollywood Hills  
Maps: Thomas Guide -Los Angeles Edition Grid #593  
Topo: Burbank 7½

#### **Primary Route: 2.0 mi. o/w, 1000' gain**

##### **Driving Directions:**

From I-101 in Hollywood, exit on Hollywood Blvd, turn right (north) and take the next left turn to Van Ness. Continue up to Franklin and turn left. At Beachwood turn right and follow the road 1.7 miles to the intersection of Beachwood and Hollyridge Drive. Park here on Beachwood.

##### **Hiking Instructions:**

The trailhead is through the Sunset Ranch gate at the end of the road. Go through the gate and make a sharp right, where the trail begins. Do not go to the horse ranch. Go up the little hill, which curves around to the left and follow the signs. Follow this to the intersection of the Hollyridge Trail where you will turn left. Continue up to the intersection of the Mulholland Trail (the first major left-almost a 360 degree turn). Follow this to the paved Mt. Lee drive and head uphill. Just where the road comes around the western edge of Mt. Lee (near the top) you will notice a peak to the right. This is Cahuenga Peak. There is a plaque commemorating the trail Follow the well defined use trail to the peak. Follow the ridge to an overlook another ¼ mile to see views of the Cahuenga Pass. (This is Burbank Peak.)

#### **Alternate Route: 1.2 mi o/w, 900' gain**

From I-101 in Universal City, exit on Barham Blvd and head north to Lake Hollywood Drive. Wind your way up to where Lake Hollywood Dr. meets Wonderview Drive. Park as close as you can to Wonderview Dr. No street parking on Lake Hollywood Dr. Start hiking up Wonderview Dr. Go past the gate and continue up the now dirt road to a water tank. As the road levels off you will see a gate to the left where the dirt road continues, and a spur to the right. You will see a large plaque commemorating the trail. Take this spur and locate the cut trail up the side of the mountain. It is a very steep and continuous climb to the ridge. A short distance to the left (west) is "Burbank Peak," which can be quickly tagged. There is also a survey marker for the County/City of L.A. Continue back to the east along the ridge trail to the real summit another ¼ mile. The USGS marker reads "Cahuenga 1933." You can make this a loop by descending the peak off a side trail on the Valley side of the Peak. Come back down the Peak about 200 feet and locate the trail you can see going off over the ridge to the right. This will make the hike about 1 mile longer. It is a steep, rocky descent. It will drop you off on the dirt road you left at the trailhead. Hike back to the left past 5 high tension power towers.

#### **Alternate Route, w/ Mt Hollywood: 3.5-4 miles o/w, 2700' gain**

This peak can be combined with the other nearby Lower Peaks summit, Mt. Hollywood. For driving directions, refer to the Mt Hollywood guide. From the Griffith Observatory

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parking lot, hike up the Charlie Turner Trail to Mt Hollywood, 1.5 miles. From there, continue north on the ridge trail, then west past Mt Bell and Mt Chapel to the paved road leading up to Mt. Lee. Continue to Cahuenga as above. Of course, you could use the primary route and add a round trip to Mt Hollywood as part of that hike.

### Notes:

As you ascend on the Hollyridge Trail (primary route) take in the views of the Hollywood sign to the left and Mt. Hollywood to the right. Soon you will see the Griffith Park Observatory to the right as well. Before going around the fence, continue up to the top of Mt. Lee (1640') above the Hollywood sign (fenced in and illegal to enter). On a clear winter day there are spectacular views of the San Fernando Valley, L.A. basin, Rancho Palos Verdes, Catalina, the Verdugos, the San Gabriels and Santa Paula Peak to the north.

Cahuenga Peak is the tallest summit in the area and many Angelinos have wondered why this area was not part of Griffith Park. In 2008, Fox River Financial Services of Illinois, which owned the land which includes the peak and 138 surrounding acres, offered the parcel for \$22 million. Fox River had bought the land from the Howard Hughes Estate for 1.67 million in 2002. In 1940, Hughes wanted to build a love nest mansion for him and Ginger Rogers. Ginger wanted no part of it. Hughes did manage to get the mountain top rezoned Residential and he assumed Tommy Lee, the owner of Mt Lee, would give him access via his road. Lee denied access and thus ended their friendship.

Once Fox River put the land up for sale, Los Angeles City Councilman Tom LaBonge launched an effort to save the peak. With major contributions from Hugh Hefner, Aileen Getty, and the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation, the land was bought through a transaction led by the Trust for Public Land. Cahuenga Peak has been saved and is now part of Griffith Park.

Reference: John McKinney, Walking Los Angeles-Adventures on the Urban Edge. Dana Hunter, 2003. Michael Gosnell, 2008. Coby King 2013