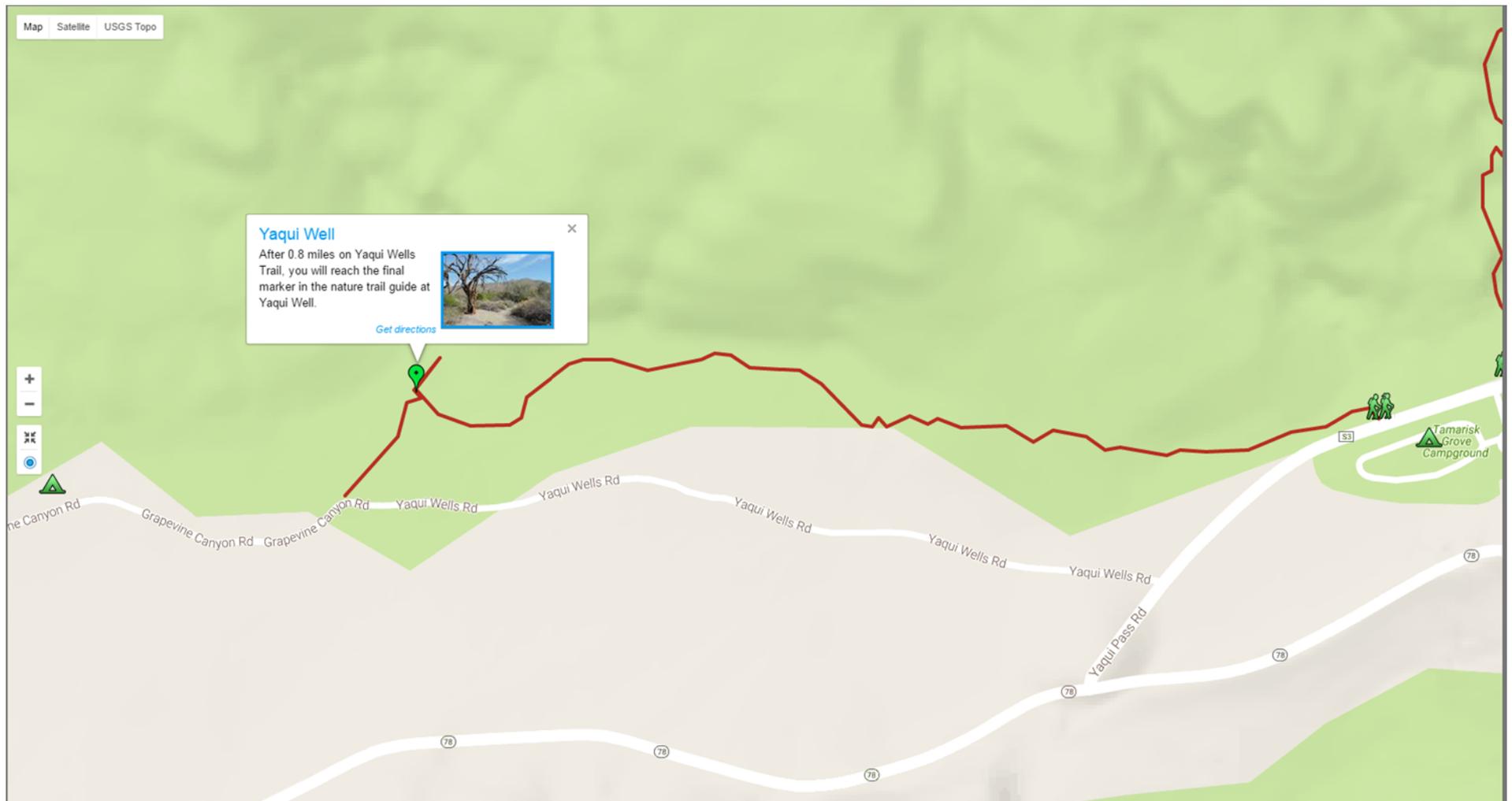


[Yaqui Well Trail in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park](#)

To get to the trailhead: From Christmas Circle in Borrego Springs, drive 5 miles southwest on Borrego Springs Road. Turn right on Route S3 (Yaqui Pass Road) and drive 6.5 miles south on Yaqui Pass Road. The trailhead is located on the right (west) side of the road across from Tamarisk Grove Campgrounds (if you reach Route 78, you went about 1/3 of a mile too far). There is roadside parking available at the trailhead.

Trailhead address: Yaqui Pass Road, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, Julian, CA 92036

Trailhead coordinates: 33.138333, -116.37649 (33° 08' 17.99"N 116° 22' 35.36"W)





Yaqui Well Trail is one of the free self-guided nature trails in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Pair a trail guide (that you can pick up at the trailhead) with numbered markers along the way to learn about the history and botany of [Anza-Borrego Desert State Park](#) as you enjoy the surrounding scenery. The 1.6-mile round trip trail with 100 feet of elevation gain ends at Yaqui Well, a vital year-

round water source that stands out from its arid desert surrounding.

The out-and-back hike up a rock and dirt single track starts from Yaqui Pass Road, just across from [Tamarisk Grove Campgrounds](#), one of four developed campgrounds in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Venture up a low ridge, ascending gradual boulder steps between tall ocotillo and other interesting desert plants like agave, chuparosa, beavertail cactus, and creosote bush. The state park provided nature trail guide has fourteen entries corresponding with numbered markers along the way. Entry two explains that the creosote bush, a common shrub in the California desert, was very useful to Native Americans.

The local Kumeyaay Indians developed dozens of medicines from this plant. Creosote tonics cured colds, healed wounds, prevented infections, relieved pain, and even got rid of dandruff.

As you cross the top of the ridge, about a third of a mile from the start, you will enter a landscape dominated by the cholla cactus, also known as the teddy-bear cactus. Don't try to hug or even touch this nasty cactus or you'll get pricked by its sharp little barbs. Hike downhill toward a level and sandy stretch of San Felipe Wash. When you reach the wash, it is another third of a mile of brisk hiking to Yaqui Well.

The fourteenth marker in the nature trail guide is for Yaqui Well itself, which Jerry Schad describes in his thorough hiking guide, *[Afoot and Afield San Diego County](#)* as, "one of the premier bird-watching sites in San Diego County." See if you can spot for hummingbirds, cactus wrens, quail, and roadrunners around the spring.

Unlike the harsh open landscape that surrounds the trail up San Felipe Wash, which is sparsely dotted with cacti and bushes, Yaqui Well hosts a dense thicket of honey mesquite, ironwoods, and desert willows. Elsewhere, mesquite branches are burned to give barbecue grilled meats that desired mesquite flavor (wood gathering is prohibited in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park).

Water can be hard to spot at Yaqui Well, with grass and trees soaking up the vital resource. Nevertheless, cattle ranchers and Native Americans relied heavily on this water source (along with area wildlife). A path continues beyond marker fourteen, but turn around once you reach Yaqui Well and leave the area un-trampled so that it can remain a natural gathering place for wildlife.

Just before Yaqui Well, you will pass a path on the left that heads south for less than a tenth of a mile to Yaqui Well Primitive Campground. Here you will find vault toilets and places to camp along a dirt road (Grapevine Canyon Road). There are no amenities at this free primitive campground other than the privies.

Unless you're camping or need the bathroom, just hike back down Yaqui Well Trail the way you came. There is nothing new to read in the nature trail guide on the return trip, so you can simply enjoy the scenery (and try to spot wildflowers in the spring). The nature trail guide is available at the trailhead, Tamarisk Grove Campgrounds, and the park visitor center at no charge. You are encouraged to return the pamphlet when you finish the hike so that it can be reused. To explore one of the other self-guided nature trails in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, check out Elephant Trees Trail, Narrows Earth Trail, and Cactus Loop Trail. The start of Cactus Loop Trail is just a few hundred feet up the road from the trailhead for Yaqui Well Trail and the two hikes can be easily combined for a great lesson in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park plants and history. Dogs and mountain bikes are not allowed on this trail. No fee or permit is required to hike Yaqui Well Trail, so get out and enjoy!

<http://www.hikespeak.com/trails/yaqui-well-trail-anza-borrego-desert/>

Map: <http://www.hikespeak.com/map-viewer/#/?t=Anza-Borrego-Desert-State-Park&lat=33.138773&lng=-116.3814&z=15>



Trees surrounding Yaqui Well