

December 31, 2010 - January 2, 2011

This New Year's Backpack takes us only a few miles from Tucson, but everything seems a world away once you're up there. This is a tough little two-night backpack to a spectacular mountain region in Tucson's backyard.

The Plan

We'll head up Esperero Canyon in mid-morning on Friday, December 31st. There will be plenty of time to get to camp, so we needn't rush. Waiting for us near the little campsite is lovely Bridal Veil Falls, which should be flowing freely. We can celebrate the coming New Year with a box of wine. Perhaps someone will carry a heavy bottle of champagne!



On Saturday, we'll have breakfast and break camp, then head up the mountain. We will turn right onto the Cathedral Rock Trail about a mile above the falls, hike past Cathedral Peak, and continue down to the West Fork Sabino Trail as we head for our second night on the trail at Hutch's Pool.

We can discuss an optional 4-mile, 1700-foot side trip to Window Peak and The Window.

After spending one more night in camp, we'll have a leisurely breakfast then pack up and head back to Tucson. We'll have three or four miles of hiking before we begin running into people.

You'll need food for two dinners, two breakfasts, and three lunches.

Water and Weather

There is plenty of water at both campsites, so there aren't any worries on that point.

The weather in the Catalinas in late December can be very nice. Daytime highs will most likely be in the 50s with lows in the 30s.

Our first campground at Bridal Veil Falls is at about 5,500 feet, while Hutch's Pool is lower at about 3,900 feet. It'll definitely be a bit cooler up there than it is in Tucson, perhaps by as much as 10 degrees or more. You will need a colder weather sleeping bag.

The Hike

day	miles	elev gain	destination
Friday	0.0 / 0.0	0 ft / 0 ft	Sabino Canyon Visitor Center
Friday	0.7 / 0.7	50 ft / 50 ft	Jct with Esperero Canyon Trail
Friday	2.9 / 3.6	1650 ft / 1700 ft	Cardiac Gap
Friday	2.4 / 6.2	1100 ft / 2800 ft	Bridal Veil Falls
Saturday	0.9 / 7.1	600 ft / 3400 ft	Cathedral Trail Jct
Saturday	4.0 / 11.1	1700 ft / 5100 ft	<i>Optional side trip to Window Peak and the Window</i>
Saturday	1.1 / 8.2 or 12.2	800 ft / 4200 ft or 5900 ft	Cathedral Peak Route Jct
Saturday	1.8 / 10.0 or 14.0	-1400 ft / 4200 ft or 5900 ft	West Fork Sabino Trail Jct
Saturday	3.4 / 13.4 or 17.4	-1600 ft / 4200 ft or 5900 ft	Hutch's Pool
Sunday	1.6 / 15.0 or 19.0	-200 ft / 4200 ft or 5900 ft	East Fork/West Fork Jct
Sunday	2.5 / 17.5 or 21.5	200 ft / 4400 ft or 6100 ft	Lunch Rock
Sunday	3.1 / 20.6 or 24.6	200 ft / 4600 ft or 6300 ft	Blackett's Ridge Trail Jct
Sunday	1.4 / 22.0 or 26.0	100 ft / 4700 ft or 6400 ft	Sabino Canyon Visitor Center