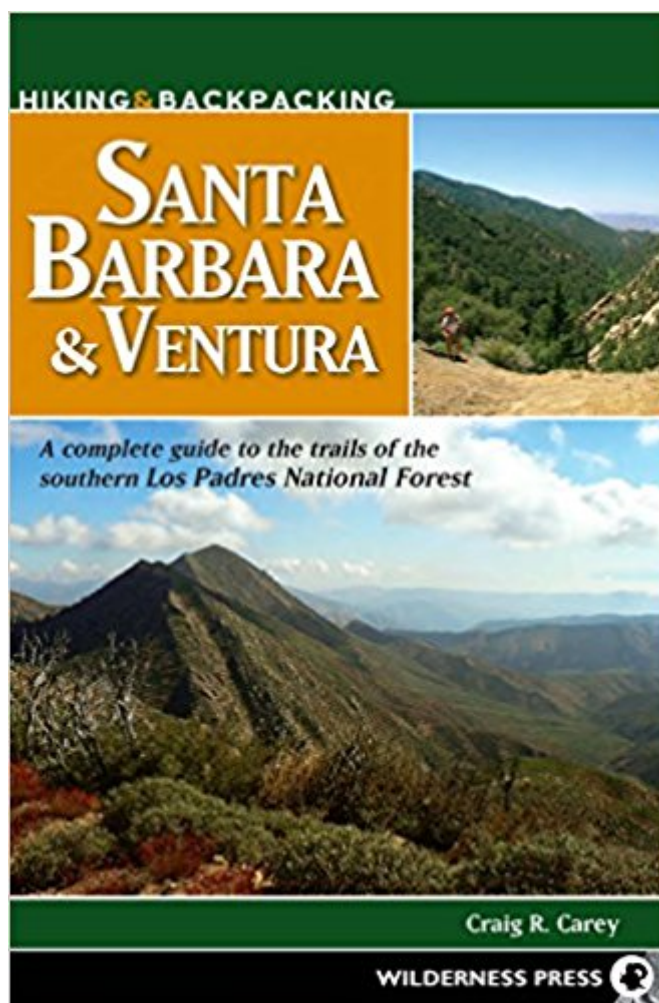




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# Hiking And Backpacking Santa Barbara And Ventura



## Synopsis

Named for the Spanish padres who established a network of missions along California's southern and central coasts, the Los Padres National Forest is the second-largest National Forest in the state, encompassing approximately 1,950,000 acres -- nearly half of which is federally-designated wilderness. Hiking and Backpacking Santa Barbara and Ventura fills a huge gap in coverage of this great hiking and backpacking destination, leading the reader through the varied terrain of the forest's southern districts, from the fern-clad grottoes of the Santa Barbara frontcountry to the sweeping vistas and granite-clad ridges of the Chumash Wilderness. No other guide covers the region in such detail, and not since Dennis Gagnon's near-legendary guides in the 70s and 80s has the Santa Barbara (and Ventura) backcountry been given the guidebook treatment ... but this book goes even further. Every official trail (and many use trails) in the Santa Barbara, Ojai, and Mt. Piñon districts are covered here, including those in the southern San Rafael Wilderness, Dick Smith Wilderness, Matilija Wilderness, Sespe Wilderness, Chumash Wilderness, the Santa Ynez Recreation Area, Rose Valley, the Santa Barbara and Montecito frontcountry, the Ojai frontcountry, and the Santa Paula/Fillmore frontcountry.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"...the definitive guide to hiking and backpacking the southern Los Padres National Forest, and the first comprehensive guide released in decades." - Santa Barbara Independent June 2012 "All in all, Carey's book is an 'instant classic.' Wilderness Press has been setting the gold standard for hiking guidebooks since 1967, and Hiking & Backpacking Santa Barbara & Ventura continues that tradition

with extremely detailed route descriptions and copious supplemental information about the area." - CaliforniaTrekkng Website April 2013

Bitten by the trail bug the moment his parents strapped a little Kelty frame pack to his six-year-old shoulders and led him across a stretch of the El Dorado National Forest, Craig R. Carey grew up hiking and backpacking the trails of the southern Los Padres (with "side-trips" across the U.S., Mexico, Canada, Europe, and New Zealand). An active scout leader and rugby follower, Craig holds a BA in History from the University of California at Santa Barbara. His work has appeared in Wilderness New Zealand, Islands, Hooked on the Outdoors, Rugby, The Green, and New Zealand Adventure.

Santa Barbara features some of the most extensive and (outside of the Sierra) some of the most challenging hiking in the state. A south facing coastline and Mediterranean climate make the area suitable for year round exploration and the mountain backdrop of the region is among the most rugged in the state. Although hiking is a more popular form of recreation here as compared to the rest of southern California, you can still find solitude and wilderness in this area. Indeed, the Los Padres National Forest offers so much backcountry recreation that other guides to the region have not even attempted to cover it all. But this new book by Craig Carey does. From the area around Gaviota pass, to the high country of Mt. Pinos, and all the ridges and high plateaus in between, including the wild and scenic Sespe River Wilderness, this guidebook explores trails that you will not find described elsewhere. There are two features of this book that set it apart from other guidebooks to the region, even aside from its comprehensive coverage. Both involve maps. The book contains twelve hiking chapters, each covering a specific geographical region, and each chapter includes an overview map showing not only the location of trailheads, but also other recreation facilities (campgrounds, picnic areas, ranger stations, etc). Individual hikes often feature a detailed topographical map. Even where the detailed topographical map is not available, route descriptions are clear, and insofar as I have hiked these trails, accurate. Carey takes care to describe every trail junction and notes the presence of historical as well as currently maintained trails and backcountry camps. Most of the hikes here can be accomplished by strong day hikers, but those looking for year round or off season backpacking opportunities will not be disappointed. Many routes are more than 10 miles and one hike is 26.5 miles one way, with many camping opportunities interspersed throughout. If this book is missing anything, it is the Channel Islands. While not part of the Los Padres National Forest, the subject of this book, these islands also offer day hiking, camping, and

limited backpacking opportunities to residents and visitors in the Santa Barbara and Ventura area. But I can't dock this book a star for failing to include this area (or the numerous little open space preserves along the bluffs and by the ocean.) The Los Padres forest is among the most under-utilized recreation areas in the state and this book makes accessible trails and camps that were previously known only to locals. It is a great buy and is the best book to come from Wilderness Press in a long time.

The Los Padres National Forest stretches along California's Coast Range from just south of Carmel at its northern end to just west of Interstate 5 near Castaic at its southern end. The largest contiguous portion of the forest lies in the northern reaches of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. Until now, the only truly thorough hiking guide to this sprawling region was Dennis Gagnon's *Hiking the Santa Barbara Backcountry*, last published in 1991 and long out-of-print and out-of-date. Fortunately, Craig Carey has come to the rescue with this brand-new, up-to-date guidebook, which covers just about every trail, trailhead, and trail camp in the Santa Barbara, Ojai, and Mount PiÃfÂ os Ranger Districts of the Los Padres. Ninety-six hikes are included, all with highly detailed information about not only the trails themselves, but also the fascinating geology and history (both natural and human) of the area. As befitting a 21st Century hiking guidebook, each hike includes GPS coordinates for every major point of interest along the route. These coordinates are particularly valuable, as the effects of massive wildfires in recent years and sporadic trail maintenance have made navigation particularly challenging on many of the more remote backcountry trails. While maps are included for all of the hikes, they are generally not suitable for use out on the trail, and are intended as a general overview only. Fortunately, Carey provides information about several commercially-produced maps for the area, including excellent maps by Tom Harrison Maps and Bryan Conant (both available on ). Known errors in the most recent USGS topographic maps (mostly involving the location of obscure trail camps) are also pointed out and corrected. One slightly disappointing omission is the exclusion of coverage of the southern portion of the Santa Lucia Ranger District. Because of this, only the very southernmost corner of the San Rafael Wilderness is covered in the book. Popular destinations such as Manzana Schoolhouse and the Sisquoc River are left out. Old heads who still have a copy of Gagnon's guide would do well not to throw it out just yet. Perhaps a later edition will include the rest of this area. UPDATE: A Kindle edition of this book is now available. While most hikers won't want to lug a Kindle along on the trail, the Kindle apps for iPhone and Android allow access to the entire guidebook while hiking, using a device you're likely to already be carrying with you. As an added bonus, the photographs in the

Kindle edition are in color!

I have hiked and backpacked the Los Padres for 45 years; I still possess all four editions of the classic Dennis Gagnon hiking guide to the region. The last edition of Gagnon was published in 1991. It was time and it was worth the wait to find an author with the correct mix of talents to pull off this daunting feat. Carey's book, which I have been through end to end, is clearly the product of many miles on the trail, many hours of research and an impressive volume of careful, well crafted writing. Beyond that, I fully agree with the comments of the first reviewer. I will add that Carey has honored the work of Dennis Gagnon not by repeating it but by extending the paradigm and making it his own. If you want to hike the the Southern Los Padres you need this book.

This is probably the best trail book for the Los Padres Ventura & Santa Barbara county area that I've ever encountered. It also ranks up among the best trail books period I've ever read. Craig has a passion for this part of California and it shows in the completeness of his book. He's systematic in his approach to the trails, comprehensive in a really good description of what to expect as you walk the trails (it's obvious he's speaking first hand), has interesting tidbits of some of the more obscure history of the LPNF, and in general gives you everything you need to know to get out there and go exploring. I wish more hiking guides were as comprehensive, easy to read, and informative as this guide was. It obviously is a labor of love, and combined with some of the local maps (Harrison and Conant maps), you have an \*excellent\* foundation for plotting your own adventure. Also, check his blog out for continuing research and exploration of lost gems and obscure lore for the Los Padres. It's a fun read.

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