

LOS ALAMOS COUNTY TRAIL NETWORK GUIDE



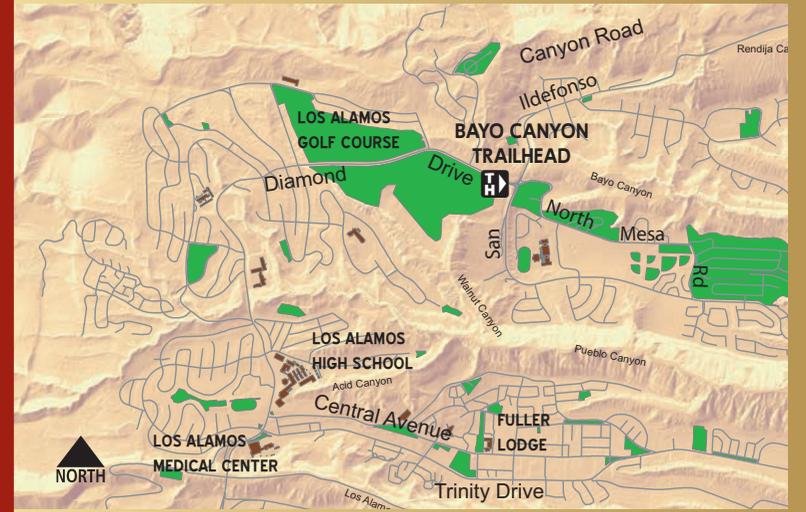
# BAYO CANYON TRAILHEAD



Kwage Mesa

The Bayo Canyon Trailhead at the San Ildefonso roundabout is centrally located on the Los Alamos Trail Network. Trails lead in all directions. To the east are the Bayo Benches and Bayo Canyon. The Dot Grant Trails are just through the colorful tunnel and connect with the Perimeter Trail. To the south, across the roundabout, the East Fork Trail leads to destinations in Pueblo Canyon and to the downtown area.

**Finding the Trailhead:** From 15th Street and Central Avenue in downtown Los Alamos, head west (towards the Jemez Mountains) on Central. In 0.8 miles, past Ashley Pond and the Aquatic Center, turn right onto Diamond Drive. Pass the Los Alamos High School and the Los Alamos Golf Course. At the San Ildefonso roundabout located 2.4 miles from the intersection of Central and Diamond, circle half-way through the roundabout and briefly head uphill on North Mesa Road. The trailhead is about 100 feet from the roundabout on the left and there is parking for about six vehicles.



## USING LOS ALAMOS COUNTY OPEN SPACE

The Los Alamos County Trail Network is open to non-motorized use only.

**Resource Protection:** All cultural resources such as Ancestral Pueblo room blocks, pot sherds, petroglyphs, and historical artifacts are protected by Federal and State law. Let all cultural resources lie undisturbed.

**Share the Trail:** These are multi-use trails for pedestrians, equestrians, and bicyclists. Bicyclists should yield to all other users.

**Dogs in Los Alamos County Open Space:** All dogs must be on a leash when within 100 yards of a trailhead. Dogs must be under voice and sight control at all times.

**Safety:** When exploring trails, always carry water, sunscreen, a hat, extra clothing, a flashlight, and a navigational aid.

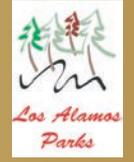


The foothills, canyons, and mesas in and around Los Alamos are linked by a 58-mile network of trails. Hikers, runners, horseback riders, mountain bikers, and other trail users delight in the variety of trails from which to choose. The trails offer a quick escape from the hectic pace in the town; a route by which to commute to work; an easy stroll or a physical challenge; and a chance to observe wildlife or to soak in impressive views. The County Trail Network links with over 100 miles of trails on the surrounding Santa Fe National Forest and the adjacent Valles Caldera National Preserve. Trailhead guides are available at major trailheads, at the Los Alamos County Customer Care Center in the Municipal Building, at the Los Alamos Chamber of Commerce, and online at the web address below.



For more information on Los Alamos County Open Space and Trails, visit [www.losalamosnm.us/parks](http://www.losalamosnm.us/parks)

Download maps and trail descriptions to your mobile device at [www.everytrail.com](http://www.everytrail.com)



## NORTH BENCH OVERLOOK



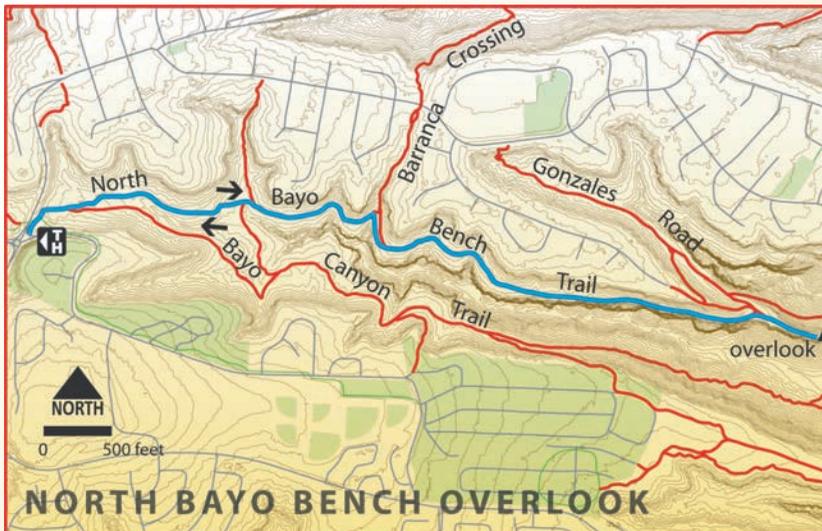
**Length:** 3.2 miles out-and-back  
**Fitness Level:** easy  
**Trail surface:** packed dirt

**Elevation Gain:** 200 feet  
**Mountain bike skill level:** easy  
**Features:** wagon ruts, views

The North Bayo Bench Trail is a historic road ending at a viewpoint overlooking the orange-walled Bayo Canyon. This out-and-back trip is easy travelling with little elevation change. Along the way you can find ruts worn into the volcanic rock by wagon traffic more than 100 years ago.

From the kiosk, take the wide trail leading into the sledding bowl. At the east side of the bowl, take the left fork. After a few minutes, follow the ruts worn by wagons coming to homesteads on the mesa. Stay left at a slickrock trail junction. The trail now traverses along a bench about 50 feet below the mesa top. Along the way, you can enjoy the orange cliff volcanic tuff and the interesting growth forms of ponderosa pines surviving on thin soils and not much water.

After about 1.5 miles, bear right and take a short spur trail to the Bayo Canyon overlook point. The scene encompasses the canyon, Barranca Mesa, and the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. After enjoying the view, retrace your way back to the trailhead.



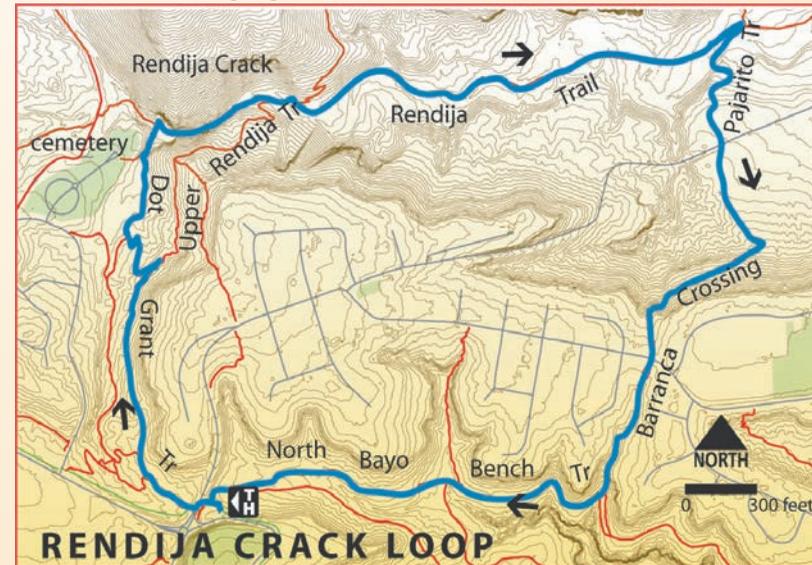
## RENDIJA CRACK LOOP



**Length:** 3.6 miles  
**Fitness Level:** moderate  
**Trail surface:** packed dirt

**Elevation Gain:** 300 feet  
**Mountain bike skill level:** moderate  
**Features:** interesting canyon, historic roads

*Rendija* is the Spanish word for crack, and in this case it is a reference to a point in Rendija Canyon where the rhyolite walls pinch in to create a narrow passage only a few yards wide. It is an attractive spot—craggy rocks, perpetually shaded, cool in summer, and icy-cold in winter. The best way to explore the crack is using 100-year-old roads. O. O. Grant, called Dot by his family, set up a homestead at the current location of the Guaje Pines Cemetery. A road connecting to the Rio Grande Valley led up Rendija Canyon to the site, and then continued along a tributary drainage to reach other homesteads on the mesa top near the present golf course. These roads form the backbone of the trail network today, but as reminders of their origin, visible throughout are ruts from cart traffic gouged in the soft tuff.



From the trailhead, head down hill through the colorful tunnel. On the west side, find the Dot Grant Trail angling to the right. The trail winds among rocks and ponderosa pines before meeting the Upper Rendija Trail. Turn left, drop through a switchback and an s-turn, staying right at two minor junctions. The trail reaches a sheer wall of rhyolite about a mile from the start. Near the wall, turn right onto the Rendija Trail and pass through the crack. Continue down Rendija Canyon about one mile, passing the Cabra Loop Trail, to meet the Pajarito Trail. Turn right and climb eroded switchbacks to reach a parking area. Head straight, cross Rendija Canyon Road and pick up the unmarked Barranca Crossing on the south side of the gravel road. The Crossing begins as an old road ascending the slopes of Barranca Mesa. After the road narrows, cross Barranca Road and pick up the trail on the other side. Descend to the North Bayo Bench and turn right on the trail of the same name. The trailhead is a little less than a mile away.

## BAYO BENCHES LOOP



**Length:** 4.5 miles  
**Fitness Level:** difficult  
**Trail surface:** packed dirt

**Elevation Gain:** 400 feet  
**Mountain bike skill level:** challenging  
**Features:** views, historic roads

The Bayo Benches Loop trip uses old homestead roads to circle around the head of Bayo Canyon between North and Barranca mesas. The loop offers long-range vistas of the Jemez and Sangre de Cristo mountains, shady but open ponderosa pine forests, and the chance to walk on 100-year-old trails.

Head downhill from the parking area, but don't go through the tunnel. Curl to the east across an open area, and then take the left fork, the North Bayo Bench Trail. This trail traverses along a bench about 50 feet below the mesa top. After about 1.5 miles, a short spur trail to the right heads to the Bayo Canyon overlook point. Visit the point or continue as the trail rounds the point of the mesa. In a few yards make a sharp right and angle down the north face of the mesa on a rutted old road. When the trail almost reaches the canyon bottom, take the left fork to avoid a sandy pitch. Cross the canyon bottom and pick up the Bayo Canyon Trail on the south side. Turn right and ascend this deeply incised trail to the south Bayo Bench. Stay on the bench for a mile back to the trailhead.

