

## TIN MOUNTAIN 8953 FEET CLASS 2

MILEAGE: 306 miles of paved road, 10.5 miles of fair dirt road

DRIVE: From Ubehebe Crater at the N end of Death Valley National Park, take the Racetrack road S for about 10.5 miles to a wide spot in the road at about 4800 feet elevation. This point is located WSW of the summit of Tin Mountain. Park here, making sure to keep all tires on the graded portion of the road. According to the Backcountry Regulations of DVNP, you're subject to a fine if your tires are off the road.

CLIMB: Hike NE to the base of the mountain. Ascend the ridge that heads upward in a NE direction, following it as it gradually turns toward the SE. Leave the ridge at about the 8500 foot level (UTM 580818) in the pinyon pines. Now head NE up a wash and easy terrain between points 8660 and 8810 to the summit.

ROUND TRIP STATS: 4200 feet elevation gain, 6-7 miles, 8 hours

**SIDELINES**

1. This peak is located within the boundary of Death Valley National Park.
2. The only legal overnight car camping anywhere in the vicinity of Tin Mountain can be found at either the Racetrack campground described in Sidelines 5 below, or at Mesquite Springs Campground near the Grapevine Ranger Station.
3. Keep a sharp lookout for obsidian arrowheads, which have been found on the upper, forested slopes of Tin Mountain. The Shoshone probably traveled up to this high country in summer to escape the heat and in autumn to harvest an abundant supply of pine nuts found in this pinyon forest. Remember though, you're inside DVNP where collecting artifacts is illegal.
4. Ubehebe Crater and its smaller neighbor, Little Hebe Crater located at the northern end of the Racetrack Road are very good examples of volcanic activity in the region. They were formed by rising magma which contacted underground water, turning it to steam under pressure and creating a tremendous explosion which literally blew the ground away adjacent to the blast site. Geologically these craters are classified as maars or tuff cones and are characterized by their shallow, flat floor look. The largest crater measures more than 0.5 miles across its rim and is about 800 feet deep. A crude trail leads down from the rim to the floor of this largest crater.
5. If you have time, plan on a trip to the Racetrack. From the parking spot for Tin Mountain, continue driving S on the fair, washboard-like Racetrack road for just over 9 miles to Teakettle Junction, a signed confluence of roads easily recognized by its assortment of teapots nailed to a wooden cross structure. Turn right (SW) and drive 6 miles to the Racetrack parking area, a wide spot along the right side of the road. The Racetrack is a dried lake bed or playa about 3 miles long by 1.5 miles wide encircling a curious rock outcropping called the Grandstand near its western margin. The Grandstand is actually the summit block of an ancient desert peak rising from the bedrock thousands of feet below the present day lake level and

## TIN MOUNTAIN (CONTINUED)

almost completely covered by the debris from millions of years of geologic erosion. The Racetrack is famous for its large, moving rocks. The exact nature of this phenomenon is not clearly understood, but it is theorized that a thin, wet lake bed surface coupled with strong, gusty winds provide the necessary conditions to "break loose" these boulders and send them sailing down the playa. The source of these sliding rocks are the mountains on the S side of the lake.

From the Racetrack parking area, continue S for 4 miles to a DVNP primitive campsite. Although rather barren and exposed to winds, it does offer "legal" camping in this area. About 0.3 miles before reaching this campsite a road branches W from the main dirt road and provides a high clearance, 4WD short cut route to the southern end of Saline Valley, some 3 air miles to the west.

6. Ubehebe Peak, located W of the Racetrack parking area is a worthwhile scramble if time permits. Ascend the ridge between the two major washes on Ubehebe's E face. This ridge is at a bearing of 255° from the parking area. When two-thirds of the way up this ridge, diagonal up and right to a shallow draw which heads toward the peak. A chute through the rock band just below the summit is followed for the last 150 feet directly to the summit. Moderately loose and steep rock will be encountered on this mountain. ROUND TRIP: 2000 feet elevation gain, 2 miles, 2-3 hours.

The summit offers a great view down onto the Racetrack where "sliding rock" tracks can be easily recognized. Views W into Saline Valley and beyond to the Inyos and Whites, NE to the isolated summits of Dry and Tin and S to the Nelson Range and Hunter Mountain give one a keen sense of solitude and isolation.

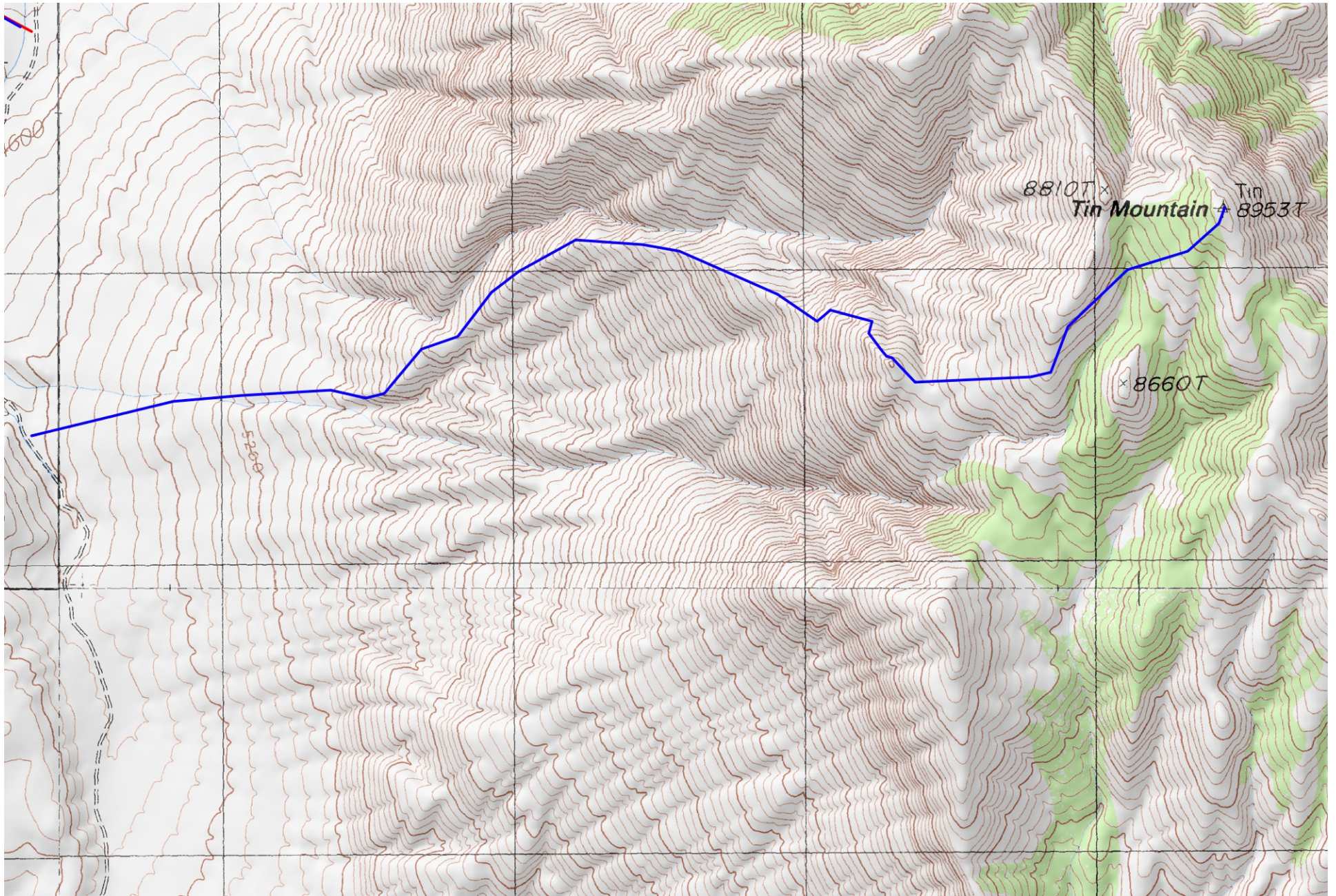
7. The Ubehebe Lead Mine with its many shafts and ruins offers an interesting diversion from peak bagging. The mine started operation in 1906 and closed in 1951 and produced 3500 tons of ore which included lead, gold and copper. A weather-beaten old cabin is still standing and close examination will reveal interior walls lined with turn of the century newspapers. To get to the mine drive 2 miles S from Teakettle Junction on the Racetrack Road and turn right (W) on a poor dirt road. In less than a mile you will arrive at the mine site.

8. Driving S on the Racetrack Road and turning left at Teakettle Junction will take you up through Lost Burro Gap and the very remote areas of Hidden Valley and Ulida Flats. Of particular interest in this area is the Lost Burro Mine with its reasonably well preserved cabin and stamp mill. To get to the mine drive S from Burro Gap for 1.5 miles into Hidden Valley and then turn right (W) on a good dirt road, going 1.0 mile to the mine cabin. There are many tempting shafts in the immediate area to explore. Because their structural integrity is questionable, better to stay out of these shafts.

From Ulida Flats the road continues S over Hunter Mountain and eventually connects with State Highway 190 between Panamint Springs and Olancho. The roads in this backcountry area of DVNP are mostly

good, however a few bad spots require that you have high clearance as a minimum and preferably 4WD. Also, the Death Valley AAA map is a bit sketchy in this area, so be sure to have the following 7.5 minute topo maps with you if planning to do this drive: Teakettle Junction, Ubehebe Peak, Sand Flat, Harris Hill and Jackass Canyon.





Mercator Projection  
WGS84  
USNG Zone 11SMA  
CalTopo.com

