

POTOSI MOUNTAIN 8514 FEET CLASS 2

MILEAGE: 300 miles of paved road, 4.5 miles of good to excellent dirt

DRIVE/ROUTE A: From the Blue Diamond/Pahrump exit off Interstate 15 (9 miles S of Las Vegas, NV), drive 18.5 miles W on State Highway 160 to the signed Potosi Mountain dirt road. This turnoff is 1.5 miles E or before Mountain Springs Summit. Turning left (SW) here on an excellent dirt road, drive 4.2 miles to Potosi Spring, en route going over Potosi Pass at 2.5 miles from Highway 160. Bear left at the road fork near the spring and go 0.3 miles uphill to the ruins of a mine and mill site. The last 20 yards to the ruins is 4WD and not worth the effort, so plan on parking 75 yards down the hill at a good campsite with lots of parking space.

CLIMB/ROUTE A: From the mill site hike up the 4WD road (impassable to all conventional 4WD vehicles) about 0.5 miles to 1900 meters (6235 feet) elevation, then turn left and ascend the ridge for 120 meters (400 feet) to the flattish area just NNE of the Potosi Mine. From here follow the main ridge NE over point 2224 at UTM 332815 and then E either over point 2431 or contouring low around it's S side to the deep saddle located 0.5 miles W of the peak. This saddle is easily recognized by the power poles located there. From the saddle head ESE, following the ridge up to point 2583, then SE to the summit.

CLIMB/ROUTE A VARIATION: Starting at Potosi Spring (0.3 miles down the road from the mill site) hike E, following the ridge line to where it joins up with Route A at about 2150 meters (7055 feet) elevation. Follow Route A from this point to the summit.

ROUND TRIP STATS/ROUTE A OR VARIATION: 2900 feet elevation gain, 6 miles, 6 hours

DRIVE/ROUTE B: Follow Drive/Route A directions to the Potosi Mountain dirt road junction with State Highway 160. Turn left (SW) and follow the excellent dirt road approximately 1.8 miles (0.5 miles past the entrance gate to the Spencer W. Kimball Boy Scout Reservation on the left or S side of the road) and park. As a check, you should be just about directly in line with the N-S power lines which run to the saddle just W of Potosi. Because the area is heavily posted as private property, this route is not recommended.

CLIMB/ROUTE B: Hike S, basically following the power lines to the deep saddle 0.5 miles W of the peak. Upon nearing the saddle, the climbing will get more difficult on class 3 rock with a bit of route-finding necessary. Once the saddle is gained, you will have joined up with ROUTE A, which is followed to the top.

ROUND TRIP STATS/ROUTE B: 2900 feet elevation gain, 4.5 miles, 5 hours

DRIVE/ROUTE C: Follow Drive/Route A directions to the Potosi Mountain dirt road junction with State Highway 160 and on to Potosi Spring. At Potosi Spring, bear right at the road fork and drive 0.9 miles on good dirt to a signed fork "Goodsprings 17, Sandy Valley 10" and "Rough Road Ahead. Passenger Vehicles

Not Recommended Beyond This Point". Take the left fork and drive 1.2 miles on good dirt to a steep, rocky uphill portion that can give standard clearance 2WD's a problem. Just beyond this hill is a fork where you'll bear left. Drive 0.25 miles to a fork and bear left. Continue 1.4 miles NE on a mostly fair dirt road to a cabin site on the left. Park. This last 1.4 miles has a few spots where high clearance might be helpful in getting past large rocks on the road.

CLIMB/ROUTE C: Hike up the wash behind and to the right of the cabin ruins, passing through some brushy areas and narrow water-carved rock formations for 0.25 miles to a 35 foot dry waterfall. Bypassing the waterfall on its left side, continue up the wash 0.25 miles to a fork. Take the ridge between the forks NE up to point 2234. From here either continue up to point 2431 or contour low around its S side to the deep saddle located 0.5 miles W of the peak. Join up with ROUTE A at the saddle and follow it to the top.

ROUND TRIP STATS/ROUTE C: 2700 feet elevation gain, 4.5 miles, 5 hours

SIDELINES

1. The summit of Potosi is missing its high point bench mark; probably the result of vandalism. There are two minor bench marks still intact within 30 feet of the true high point, one E of it and the other W of the high point, both with directional arrows pointing toward the missing mark. The missing benchmark was stamped "Olcott" and was placed on the high point by the US Geological Survey in 1950. They didn't climb to the summit from the base of the mountain to place the benchmarks; they instead landed a helicopter on the saddle about one mile S of the highpoint and packed along the ridge to the top.

2. 75 yards E of the summit are two antennae and a large metal-sided building at the end of a dirt road that accesses all the communications installations along the ridge to the south. This good dirt road, which starts up Potosi from a locked gate near the town of Jean, NV, is open only to authorized maintenance personnel who have work to perform at the installations.

3. Views from the summit include Las Vegas at bearing 64° and the following desert peaks: McCullough at 144°, Clark at 184°, Kingston at 234°, Nopah at 274°, Pahrump at 284°, Charleston at 334° and Mummy at 344°.

4. The Potosi Mine was established in 1858 when Nathaniel V. Jones, a Mormon, was sent out to recover ores from "the mountain of lead" 30 miles SW of the Mormon mission at Las Vegas Springs. 9000 pounds of lead were recovered before smelting difficulties forced the mine into abandonment a short time later. In 1861 powerful California mining interests reopened the mine. Construction of a new

smelter and numerous rock cabins made up the new mining camp of Potosi, which was home to about 100 miners. Upon completion of the Transcontinental Salt Lake and San Pedro Railroad (now Union Pacific) through the county in 1905, more extensive operations were undertaken at the mine. During World War I the Potosi Mine was an important source of zinc, helping to fuel America's war effort during that period.

115° 3
36° 00'

3984000N

3983

3982

3981

57° 30' 4WD

