

## Creel

Creel is the main center for hiking in the Copper Canyon area. There are two excellent hikes you can make from the town, and a number that are only a short drive away. The proximity of these hikes to Creel makes bicycle rentals a good choice. Several places rent mountain bikes; Tres Amigos Excursions is especially recommended because of their knowledge of the area plus a positive attitude toward independent travelers. They also rent pickup trucks suited to the roads. As always, though, it pays to compare costs.

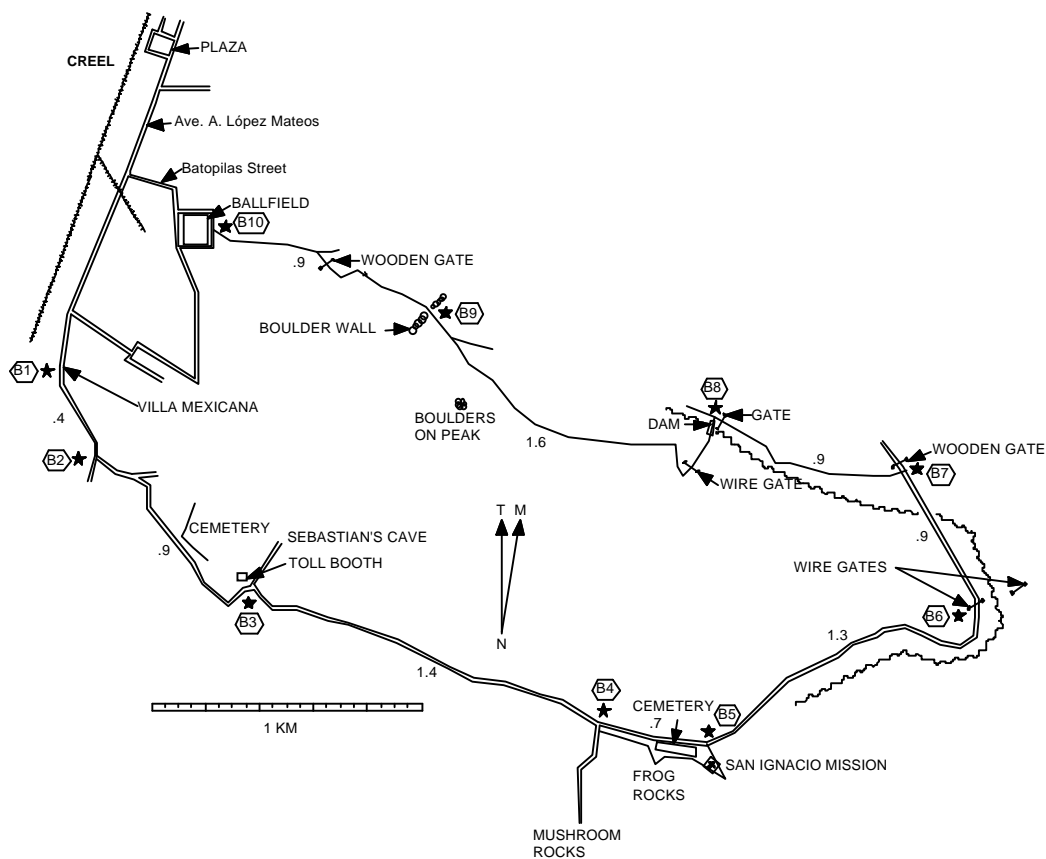
### San Ignacio



**Trail Data** Length of loop = 9 km. Exertion index = 215. Maximum elevation = 2402 m.

This loop hike starts at the south end of Creel and takes you around to the small, austere mission church at San Ignacio, through some odd-shaped boulders, into a humble farming area, and finally over a rocky hill back to Creel.

To start, go south down the main street, Ave. López Mateos, past the Villa Mexicana hotel/campground. Where the paved road bends toward the highway follow the dirt road straight to go past the cemetery. At the top of the hill past the cemetery there may or may not be a small toll, about 20 pesos.



## Cusarare

### Trail Data

Km. 108.2 to suspension bridge: Distance = 2.6 km. Exertion index = 45 going, 100 returning. Maximum elevation = 2245 m.

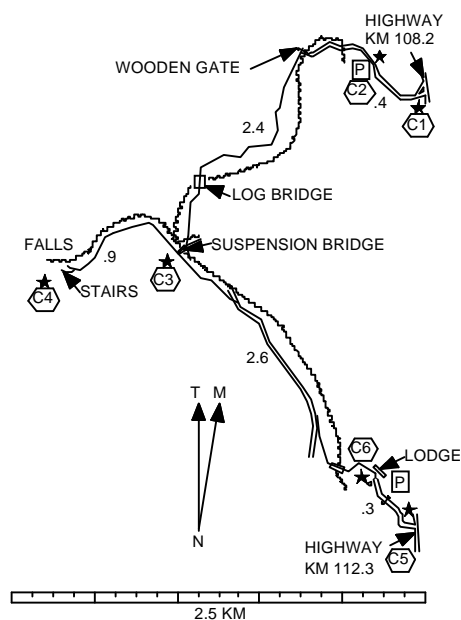
Km. 112.3 to suspension bridge: Distance = 2.9 km. Exertion index = 20 going, 40 returning.

Suspension bridge to falls: Distance = .9 km. Exertion index = 50 going, 95 returning.

There are two trails to the cascades. Both are equally beautiful, following streams through wooded canyons to a waterfall. The Raramuchi access (Km 108.2) is recommended because the access is much easier and safer. But there's nothing to keep you from hiking up the other way for extra distance before returning to your car. The toll for either is about 20 pesos per person.

Km 112.3 Access. On the right from Creel. There's a sharp dropoff at the entrance and it's tough getting back on the highway because you can't see traffic. You have to park near the highway unsupervised or drive down a treacherous road to the gate. There is a rustic lodge where you can stay for a change from the hustle and bustle of Creel.

Km 108.2 Access (Raramuchi). Better/safer exit than at Km 112.3. Follow the rough road .4 mi (.6 km) to a store/cafeteria to park. If the road is dry go on another .1 mi (.2 km) to the gate.



## Rekowata

### Trail Data

Creel-Rukiraso waterfall: Length = 9.3 km. Exertion index = 205 going, 215 returning.

Rukiraso waterfall to trail junction: Length = 3.9 km. Exertion index = 160 going, 80 returning.

Trail junction to hot springs: Length = 2.2 km. Exertion index = 5 going, 260 returning.

Trail junction to San Ignacio Canyon viewpoint: Length = 3.1 km. Exertion index = 85 going, 60 returning. Maximum elevation = 2462 m.

The Rekowata area can be reached by walking from Creel or by driving in from the Creel-Divisadero highway. It includes the beautiful Rukiraso waterfall, Rekowata hot springs, and a viewpoint over San Ignacio Canyon.

The waterfall and viewpoint hikes are pleasant rambles through sustainable-yield pine forest that culminate in great views.

The hot springs hike is quite different. All the hiking is on a steep, narrow, rough-cobbled roadway laid by hand. The labor that went into making the road is a marvel. But the point of it is to view the canyon all the way down to the stream at the bottom and soak in bath-temperature water in small concrete pools.

Camping is allowed at the parking lot and at the stream near the hot spring.

### From Creel

You can drive or walk to the trailhead from Creel. Follow the highway past the Divisadero turnoff, then past Km 94, to the near end of a bridge. Go right onto a dirt road and reach the tollhouse. The toll is about 20 pesos.

This is a hike with some variety. The first half takes you through a farming valley with lavish stone outcroppings and thick pine forests on the sides. Then there's a little rise to a stony ridge. Follow the stony ridge to where you can hear the falls to your left and a little behind you. There's no official viewpoint so you have to pick your way through the trees and shrubs to find a place where you can see the waterfall and catch a captivating view of the canyon.

### From the Creel-Divisadero Highway

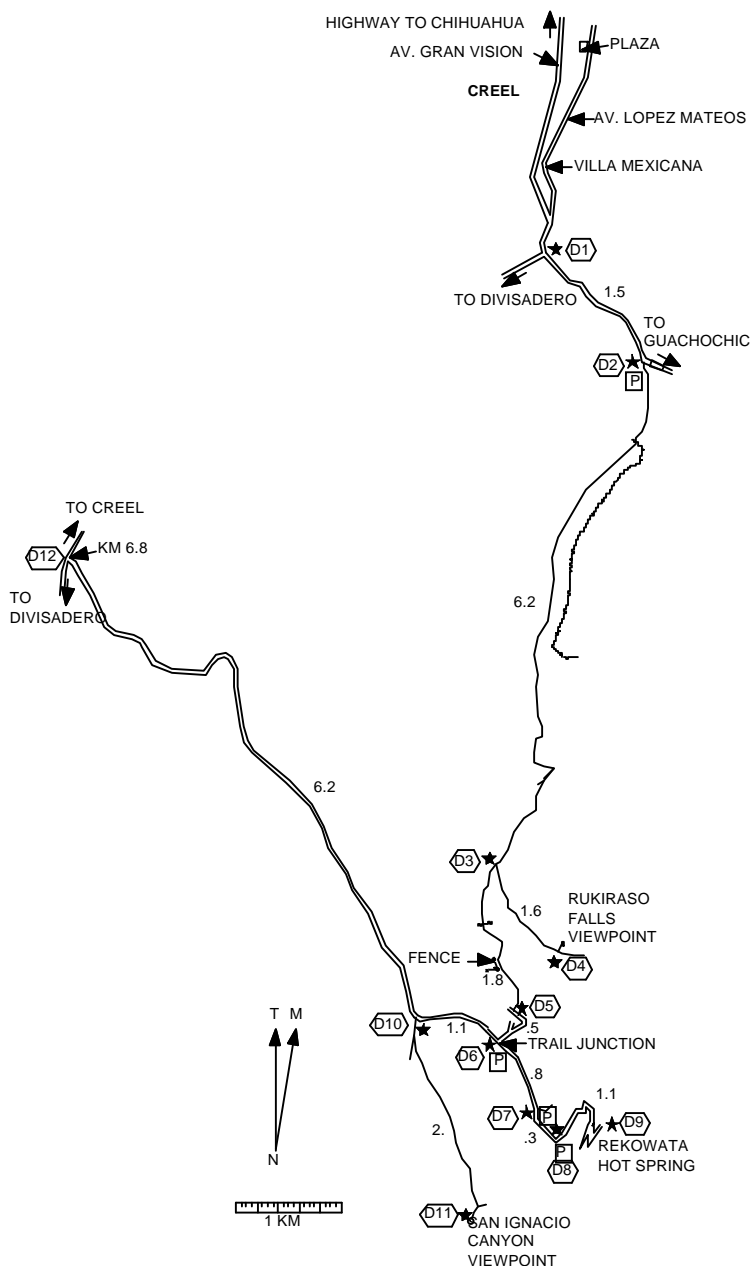
The turnoff to Rekowata is on the road to Divisadero at Km 6.8, on the left if coming from Creel. In 2.2 mi (3.5 km), pay a toll of about 20 pesos per person. In 1.6 mi (2.5 km), just short of Km 6, reach the trailhead for the Mirador, the viewpoint for San Ignacio Canyon. Going on, in 1.1 mi (1.8 km), reach a good place to park. Or, go on another .4 mi (.6 km) to the official parking lot at Km 8.3, on the cobbled road.

The trailhead for Rukiraso waterfall is on the road toward the Rekowata hot springs, at Km 7. Look for a break in the line of rocks on the left side of the road. There may be the lower

part of a tree trunk with its roots attached standing next to the trailhead. A few meters further on the road is a wide spot where three or so cars could park.

The walk to the waterfall is entirely in a pine forest. It requires crossing a stream and you may have to range upstream or downstream to find some rocks you can step across on. If the stream has pushed the rocks out of position it's possible you'll have to wade across. On the plus side, you can't get lost because you'll always have the canyon as a landmark; you just have to navigate around the side-gullies.

4x4 vehicles make the trip all the way down to the hot springs, even though that requires pushing fallen boulders off the roadway. If they meet traffic going the other way, someone has to back up quite a long distance. Of course, the problem is getting back up to the top. The surveyor got back from the official parking lot with his low-powered minivan, so any car should be able to do that part. If you care for your car, though, consider parking at the beginning of the descent and doing the whole thing on foot. There is a clear space on the left just as the road starts downhill.



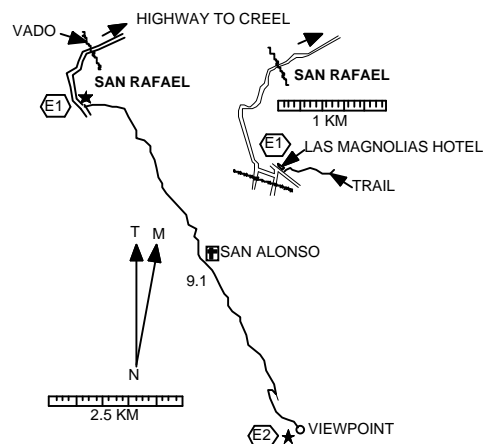
## Oteviachi



**Trail Data** Length each way = 9.1 km. Exertion index = 235 going, 365 returning.  
Maximum elevation = 2271 m.

This hike takes you over some volcanic rock formations and into a farming valley where you'll pass the little church of San Alonso and the littler school next to it. Then you'll go along a knife-edge ridge between two valleys to a viewpoint of canyons with toe-curling verticality.

To get there from Creel, go south to the Divisadero intersection and go right. Follow the highway all the way to San Rafael. At Km 55.3 you reach the end of the pavement. Soon after that you go over a vado and then get back on pavement. Just before the road goes over some RR tracks, go left at a tee and then make a quick right. In a short block you'll see comfortable-looking Hotel Las Magnolias on the left. Park next to it so it'll look like you're inside on business. Just to the right of the hotel is the jeep trail to Hostal Oteviachi. Just follow the jeep trail, no tricks, no turns.



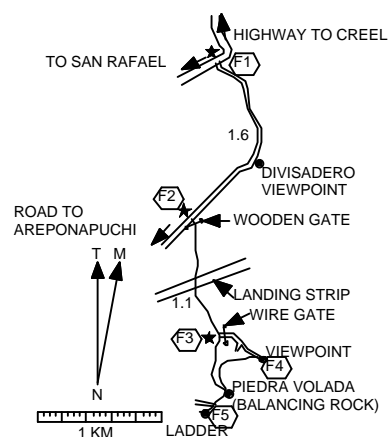
## Divisadero



**Trail Data** Length each way= 1.7 km. Exertion index = 70 going, 75 returning. Maximum elevation = 2403 m.

This short, easy hike with canyon views is a good add-on to the Oteviachi hike, since there's not much extra driving involved.

From San Rafael go back 11 km to the Divisadero turnoff. Go past the Posada Barranca Hotel .7 km to where you can see a wooden entrance gate 20 meters to the left of the road. That's the trail head. Follow the jeep trail, except that sometimes there is a foot trail nearer the rim. You'll come to the viewing point for the balancing rock, which is slightly to your left. You can climb onto the rock if you wish and feel it wobble and probably slide a little toward the precipice. Really, it's for indecisive suicides. Some 300 meters further along the rim is a ladder made by locals to access the trails below. If you feel confident enough in the ladder you can go down and ramble about the sparsely-populated hillsides.





## Rikinapuchi

**Trail Data** Length each way = 8.4 km. Exertion index = 300 going, 355 returning.  
Maximum elevation = 2451 m.

8 km each way is a long walk for a canyon view, but it's pleasant enough, with pine forest and tidy farms along the way and no painfully steep hills. The sign on the highway promises a hot spring, but none of the locals admit to knowing where it is.

Driving from Creel toward Divisadero, the trailhead is just a few meters short of the 10 Km mark, on the left. 90 meters down the jeep trail is a space wide enough for two cars to park. Another place where you can park is 180 meters further down, but the road is rough enough to require a pickup's road clearance.

