

Oaxaca

San Felipe

Trail Data Length round-trip circuit = 10 km. Exertion index = 285 going, 25 returning. Maximum elevation = 1943 m.

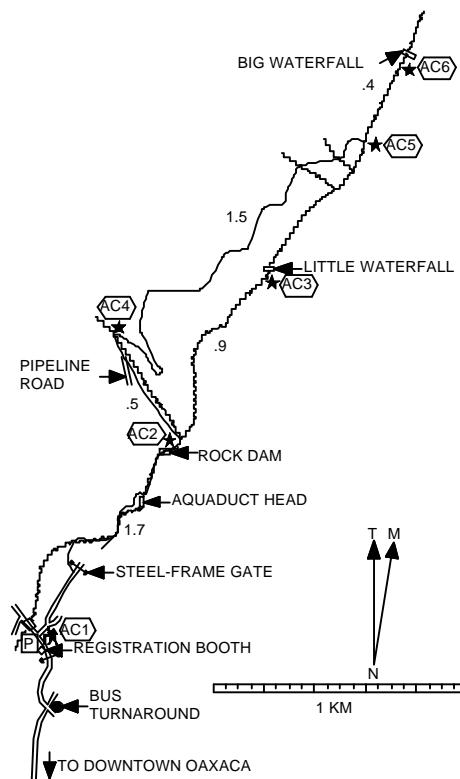
Above the Oaxaca suburb of San Felipe del Agua is a regional park, Parque Comunal de San Felipe, with cascading streams in their own arroyos. While the bony mountains are hot and dry, the arroyos are shady and green. The turnaround points are two waterfalls.

Finding the trailhead is the only real challenge. Because of one-way streets and dead-end streets, probably the best way to get there is by taxi. You can get pretty close by bus if you can find out where to catch it. Or taxi up and take the bus back from the bus turnaround point described below.

If you have to drive, the way to get there starts at the intersection of Heróico Colegio Militar with Heróica Escuela Naval Militar. Go west on Esc. Naval Militar to Emiliano Zapata (the northern extension of Nezhualcóyotl) and go right. Follow the worn pavement tracks as they zigzag and you'll come to a traffic circle on your left with a statue of an Indian chief on a pedestal surrounded by statues of Indian women; on your right is a white, ornately classical building. Go right on the other side of the white building onto Calzada San Felipe del Agua. In 1.1 miles (1.7 km), at the top of the rise, you'll reach a church on your right. 1000 meters (.6 mi) beyond that you'll reach an intersection with a bus turnaround point on the forward right corner. Go left here on a dirt road and reach the park entrance in 300 m. There's a registration booth where you sign in and out.

It is possible to get from the little waterfall to the bigger one without backtracking if you're okay with scaling cliffs. For sane people it's probably better to backtrack.

Thanks to Dave Atherton for this great tip.



Cuajimoloyas

Trail Data Length round-trip circuit = 16.6 km. Exertion index = 700. Maximum elevation = 3214 m.

If you're fond of pines whispering in the fresh mountain air and little streams splashing their way down wooded ravines, this is the one for you. The bonus is a marvelous gorge with a cascading stream. At the turnaround point another stream joins with it; follow that stream up another gorge a short way and then climb up to the plateau and continue back to the trailhead.

This hike has only one deficiency: it starts with a long downgrade, which means it ends with long upgrade.

The trails are part of the Pueblos Mancomunados system. If you're interested in taking some of the multi-day hikes, you can get more information at the SEDETUR Office in Oaxaca or, better, at the Tourist Information Office in Cuajimoloyas (see below).

Driving there is easy enough, even if it is slow on the mountain roads. Find the market town of Tlacolula, 32 km east of Oaxaca on Hwy 190. At the main intersection that would take you south into the town center, go north instead, to Díaz Ordaz. In that town, go west toward Yalalag. Keep following that road up into the mountains to Km 21, which puts you in Cuajimoloyas.

The trailhead is at the Hotel Yaa-Cuetzi, which is also where the Tourist Information Office is. You'll have to look around to find a parking place because this is a little mountain town with not much flat ground. The manager of the Tourist Information Office may be able to help you find a place to park. The office has more information as well, about the Pueblos Mancomunados trails. There's a fee charged for using the trails, which helps defray the costs of cleaning, maintaining, and signposting them.

