

PHOENIX MOUNTAIN PRESERVE • OFFICIAL ULTRA ROUTE

Phoenix Phearsome Phour 70K

FOUR MOUNTAINS • ONE CONTINUOUS LINE • NO AID • NO SHORTCUTS

43.8 mi

Total Distance

70.4 km

Metric Distance

11,312 ft

Elevation Gain

4

Mountains



What You're Getting Into

The Phoenix Phearsome Phour 70K is a continuous out-and-back ultra linking all four major summits of the Phoenix Mountain Preserve: Camelback Mountain, Piastewa Peak, North Mountain, and Shaw Butte. Start and finish at the intersection of 36th St and Pima Canyon Dr. Street parking available on 36th St. Eight total summit hits. One continuous push.

The route opens with a Camelback yoyo: south on 36th St to Lincoln Dr, east on Lincoln to Tatum Blvd, south on Tatum to Echo Canyon Trailhead, up to the Camelback summit, down Cholla, back up Cholla, summit again, back down Echo Canyon, west on Lincoln, north on 36th St into the Phoenix Mountain Preserve, then left heading west to the Piastewa Peak Trailhead: east side up, 302 connector and Freedom Trail down, Pearl Charles Trail, Dreamy Draw, west on Trail 100 through the SR-51 and Cave Creek Road tunnels to 7th Street Trailhead, North Mountain out-and-back to the Quechan Area 7 ramada and back (summit hit twice before moving on), then Shaw Butte double summit as the turnaround.

After Shaw Butte, runners return to 7th Street Trailhead, then head east on Trail 100 through the Cave Creek Road and SR-51 tunnels to Dreamy Draw. From Dreamy Draw the route reverses all the way back east: Pearl Charles Trail, Freedom Trail, 302 connector, up Piastewa one last time, east-side descent, back to 36th Street, east on Lincoln, south on Tatum, east on Lincoln, south on 36th St to the finish.

This is the first time this route has been formally defined and documented. The official TCX file is the canonical record going forward. There is no official FKT yet. The record is open.

43.8 mi Total Distance	70.4 km Metric	11,312 ft Gain	11,312 ft Loss
2,660 ft Max Elevation	1,320 ft Min Elevation	1,474 ft Start / Finish	5 AM - 11 PM Access Window

WAYPOINTS

Full Route Waypoints

Camelback is summited twice at the start before heading north. Piestewa, North Mountain, and Shaw Butte are each hit once outbound and once on the return. The turnaround is the second Shaw Butte summit near mile 27.4.

MILE	LOCATION	ELEV
0.0	36th St at Pima Canyon Dr [START] Intersection of 36th St and Pima Canyon Dr. Street parking on 36th St.	1,474 ft
~2.70	Echo Canyon Trailhead [WATER STOP] Fountain, restrooms, soda machine with Gatorade.	1,320 ft
~3.79	Camelback Mountain Summit [SUMMIT] Echo Canyon up. Summit 1 of 8.	2,660 ft
~5.19	Cholla Trailhead [WATER STOP] Restrooms, wash sink, water. Between the two Camelback summits.	1,359 ft
~6.60	Camelback Mountain Summit [SUMMIT] Cholla back up. Summit 2 of 8.	2,660 ft
~7.67	Echo Canyon Trailhead [WATER STOP] Fountain, restrooms, Gatorade. Last water before Piestewa.	1,320 ft
~10.10	36th St and Lincoln Dr Turn right heading north on 36th St toward the preserve entrance.	1,320 ft
~11.84	Upper Ramada [WATER STOP] Parking, water, restrooms.	
~12.11	Freedom Trail Trailhead [WATER STOP] Parking, water, restrooms.	
~12.50	Piestewa Peak Trailhead [WATER STOP] Main east-side trailhead. Parking, water, restrooms.	
~13.60	Piestewa Peak Summit [SUMMIT] East-side up, 302 connector, Freedom Trail descent. Summit 3 of 8.	2,542 ft
~16.75	Dreamy Draw Recreation Area [WATER STOP] Westbound outbound. Fountain, restrooms, ramadas.	1,389 ft
~16.94	Trail 100 Tunnel Underpass beneath SR-51. Heading west.	

~17.73	Cave Creek Road Tunnel Underpass beneath Cave Creek Rd. Heading west.	
~21.53	7th Street TH / North Mtn Visitor Ctr [WATER STOP] Fountain, restrooms, snack shop (hours vary).	1,389 ft
~22.80	North Mountain Summit [SUMMIT] Up and over to Quechan Area 7 ramada. Summit 4 of 8.	2,061 ft
~24.00	North Mountain Summit [SUMMIT] Return from ramada back over summit. Summit 5 of 8.	2,061 ft
~25.30	7th Street TH / North Mtn Visitor Ctr [WATER STOP] Fountain, restrooms, snack shop (hours vary).	1,389 ft
~26.06	Shaw Butte Trailhead [WATER STOP] Fountain at the base before the double summit.	1,374 ft
~27.41	Shaw Butte Summit [SUMMIT] First Shaw Butte summit. Turnaround point. Summit 6 of 8.	2,124 ft
~28.79	Shaw Butte Trailhead [WATER STOP] Fountain between the two Shaw Butte summits.	1,374 ft
~30.12	Shaw Butte Summit [SUMMIT] Second Shaw Butte summit. Begin return. Summit 7 of 8.	2,124 ft
~32.15	7th Street TH / North Mtn Visitor Ctr [WATER STOP] Fountain, restrooms. Head east on Trail 100 back to Dreamy Draw.	1,389 ft
~34.00	Cave Creek Road Tunnel Underpass beneath Cave Creek Rd. Heading east.	
~36.76	Trail 100 Tunnel Underpass beneath SR-51. Heading east toward Dreamy Draw.	
~37.03	Dreamy Draw Recreation Area [WATER STOP] Eastbound return. Fountain, restrooms, ramadas.	1,389 ft
~40.15	Piestewa Peak Summit [SUMMIT] 302 connector up, east-side descent. Summit 8 of 8.	2,542 ft
~41.67	Piestewa Peak Trailhead [WATER STOP] Main east-side trailhead. Parking, water, restrooms.	
~43.20	Turn right onto 36th St Head south on 36th St to finish.	
43.8	36th St at Pima Canyon Dr [FINISH] Intersection of 36th St and Pima Canyon Dr. You earned this.	1,474 ft

HYDRATION

Water Stops

Seven confirmed public water sources on the outbound leg, all accessible again on the return. That is 14 total water access points across the full route. For a self-supported desert ultra, that is unusually good coverage. Use every one of them.

Note: The church fountain at Lincoln and 36th St is community-reported and not city-maintained. Verify it is operational before your attempt.

APPROX. MILE	WATER STOP	FACILITIES
~2.70 / ~7.67	Echo Canyon Trailhead	Fountain, restrooms, soda machine with Gatorade
~5.19	Cholla Trailhead	Fountain, restrooms, wash sink
~10.0	Lincoln Dr and 36th St, SW corner church	Outdoor fountain, 24/7. Community-reported.
~12.5 / ~41.67	Piestewa Peak Trailhead	Fountain, restrooms
~16.75 / ~37.03	Dreamy Draw Recreation Area	Fountain, restrooms, ramadas
~21.53 / ~25.30 / ~32.15	7th Street TH / North Mtn Visitor Ctr	Fountain, restrooms, snacks and water for purchase (hours vary, verify before your attempt)
~26.06 / ~28.79	Shaw Butte Trailhead	Fountain

What Makes It Official

01

Start and finish at the intersection of 36th St and Pima Canyon Dr. Street parking available on 36th St. Do not park on church property at Lincoln and 36th St.

02

Complete all summits in sequence using the designated trails. Camelback: road approach via Lincoln and Tatum to Echo Canyon, up to summit, down Cholla, back up Cholla, summit again, back down Echo Canyon (both summits hit at the start before heading north). Piastewa: east-side trailhead approach to summit, 302 connector and Freedom Trail descent (reversed on return). North Mountain: out-and-back from 7th Street Trailhead, over the summit to Quechan Area 7 ramada and back the same way (summit hit twice). Shaw Butte: double summit at the turnaround. Eight total summit hits required.

03

The route is out-and-back. You must return via the same trail corridor you used on the outbound leg. Side trails that rejoin the main route are not permitted.

04

The official TCX file (Strava route #3504854829813372808, documented by Matthew Hinman @cosmicsea) is the canonical route definition. Disputes about course compliance reference this file.

05

No pacers allowed at any point. Outside crewing must be noted when submitting results, to distinguish between supported and unsupported completions.

06

The route must be completed between 5 a.m. and 11 p.m. Know the access hours for each trail section before you start.

This Route Will Try to Kill You

That is not hyperbole. The Phoenix Phearsome Phour 70K is 44 miles of fully exposed Sonoran Desert with over 11,000 feet of climbing. There is no shade. Not on any of the peaks. Not on the trails between them. Not on the road connectors. Nowhere.

- ▲ **Heat.** This is Phoenix. Ground temperatures on exposed rock can exceed 150 degrees Fahrenheit in summer. The city will close trails during excessive heat warnings. Know the forecast before you start. Most deaths and rescues on these trails are heat-related.
- ▲ **Sun exposure.** There is no shade on this route. Not on Camelback. Not on Piestewa. Not on North Mountain. Not on Shaw Butte. Not on the road connectors. The entire route is fully exposed. Sunscreen, sun sleeves, and a hat are strongly recommended.
- ▲ **Trail access hours.** Camelback Mountain trails are open sunrise to sunset only. During excessive heat warnings, the city enforces a mandatory closure from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Camelback and Piestewa Peak. Know the hours for every section. Check the City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation website the morning of your attempt.
- ▲ **Do not attempt this in summer.** June through September in Phoenix are dangerous. Daytime temperatures routinely exceed 110 degrees Fahrenheit. This is a cool-season route. October through April. That is it. The heat in Arizona kills. Respect the heat. Come back in October.
- ▲ **Rocks.** Camelback's summit sections require hands-and-feet scrambling. Piestewa is loose and technical on the descent. North Mountain has exposed rocky ridgeline. One bad foot placement at mile 35 hurts a lot more than one at mile 5. Pay attention all the way to the finish.
- ▲ **Cactus.** Cholla cactus does not wait for you to touch it. Jumping cholla, prickly pear, and saguaro line the trails throughout the preserve. Stay on trail. Watch your footing. Bring tweezers and a comb. Don't pet the fuzzy cactus. Just. Don't.
- ▲ **Wildlife.** Rattlesnakes, scorpions, Gila monsters, javelinas, black widows, bees, bobcats, and "hikers" are all residents of the Phoenix Mountain Preserve and are not impressed by your finish-line goal. Watch where you step, where you put your hands, and where you sit down to rest. Africanized bees are established here and a disturbed hive will chase you a long way, so give any loud humming rock crevice or saguaro a wide berth.
- ▲ **You are on your own.** This is an unsupported route. There is no organization, no aid stations, no sweep team, and no one coming to find you if you go off-route. Carry what you need. Know your limits. Have an exit plan for every section.

We strongly encourage you not to attempt this route.

Seriously. We built it, we documented it, and we are telling you right now that attempting the Phoenix Phearsome Phour 70K is an objectively bad idea that a reasonable person would not pursue. You will be alone on 44 miles of desert trail in the sun, climbing over 11,000 feet across four mountains, dodging rattlesnakes, pulling cholla out of your legs, navigating around angry locals who did not come to Camelback to watch you suffer, and stepping around Runfluencers stopped dead on the trail trying to get the perfect shot for the Gram. All of this while questioning every decision that led you to this moment somewhere around mile 28 on the return leg of Piestewa while the Phoenix sun does what it does best.

There is no organization behind this. No one will pull you from the course when you stop making sense. No medic is standing by at Dreamy Draw. No one is tracking your dot. If something goes wrong out there, the desert will not care, and neither will the cholla.

If you choose to attempt this route anyway, you do so entirely by your own choice, of your own free will, under your own power, and at your own risk. The Phoenix Phearsome Phour Challenge, its creator, and anyone associated with it accept zero responsibility for what happens to you out there. That includes blisters, sunburn, dehydration, heat stroke, snake bites, cactus-related injuries, twisted ankles, existential crises, or the look on your family's face when you explain what you spent your weekend doing.

You have been warned. Repeatedly. In writing. On a website you had to find on purpose.

Now go drink some water and think about it.

SOURCE FILE

Official Strava Route

The route is documented on Strava as a saved route. Load it into your GPS device or phone before attempting the route. Do not rely on memory or third-party route interpretations.

Strava Route #3504854829813372808 • Matthew Hinman @cosmicsea • Trail Running
[strava.com/routes/3504854829813372808](https://www.strava.com/routes/3504854829813372808)