Pay Attention to Rock Cairns

Portions of the Marufo Vega Trail may be difficult to follow because of overgrown vegetation. Paths used by loose livestock may intersect the trail in places. When in doubt look for rock cairns, small stacks of stones used to mark the course of a trail.

You will often be able to see from one cairn to another along the trail. If you become disoriented do not panic. Retrace your steps to the last cairn you saw, and from there look around for the next cairn. Take your time: cairns can be difficult to see!

Bring the Right Gear

- ☑ Pack extra water and snacks. The park recommends bringing at least 1 gallon (4 l) per person, per day.
- ☑ Wear a hat, sunglasses, long sleeves, and sun screen. Sunlight can damage your eyes and skin, even on cloudy days.
- ☑ Bring waterproof outer layers and extra layers for changing weather.
- ☑ Carry a map and compass or GPS and know how to use them.
- ☑ Wear sturdy footwear with good ankle support and a treaded sole.
- ☒ Don't rely on cell phones. There is no cell reception on the Marufo Vega Trail.

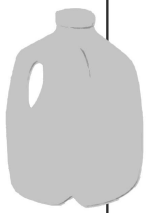
Stay Safe and Practice Good Etiquette

- Pets are prohibited on all Big Bend National Park trails.
- Bicycles and strollers are prohibited on all Big Bend National Park trails.
- Stay together! Keep everyone, especially children, within the group.
- Stay on the trail. Shortcutting causes erosion.

Bring Water!

The park recommends that day hikers bring 1 gallon of water per person, per day. What does 1 gallon (4 l) of water look like?

One gallon (4 l) of water is the amount in a full-size jug of milk.



Or about 4 standard 1,000 ml reusable water bottles.

Or about eight 12 ounce single-use water bottles.

For More Information

Park Information .....(432) 477 - 2251 or www.nps.gov/bibe

Emergencies ..... 911 Tell the dispatcher you are in Big Bend National Park, Texas.

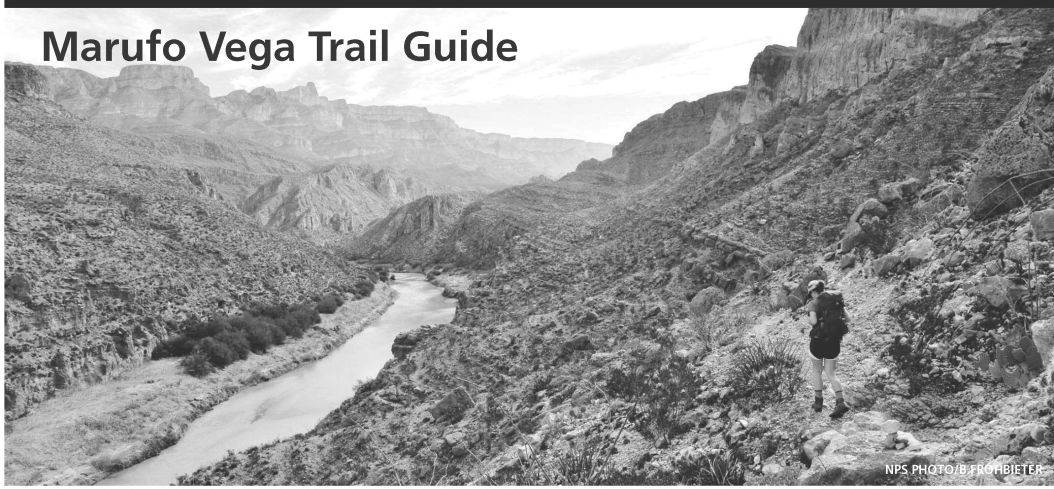
NPS BIBE 2017

Big Bend

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Big Bend National Park
Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River

Marufo Vega Trail Guide



NPS PHOTO/B.FROHBIETER

Marufo Vega is a strenuous but spectacular day hike or overnight backpacking trip. The entire loop is 14 miles (22.5 km) round-trip. Temperatures may exceed 110° F (43° C). There is NO WATER available along this trail. River water is not potable.

Extreme Heat Warning

Exposure and extreme heat make this trail potentially deadly during the late spring and summer. There is no shade or water along this trail. Be prepared for changing weather conditions.

Camping by Permit Only

Permits are required for camping. Permits are issued at park visitor centers during business hours and must be obtained before the intended backcountry use. Campfires are prohibited.

Prevent Theft

Vehicle break-ins and property theft have occured at the Marufo Vega Trailhead. Prevent theft by locking vehicles and placing valuables out of sight or keeping them with you.

Tell Someone About Your Plans

Be sure to inform someone about your plans before beginning your hike. Let them know when you have returned safely.

The National Park Service does not monitor the individual use of backcountry trails. Safety is your responsibility.

Guide to the Numbers

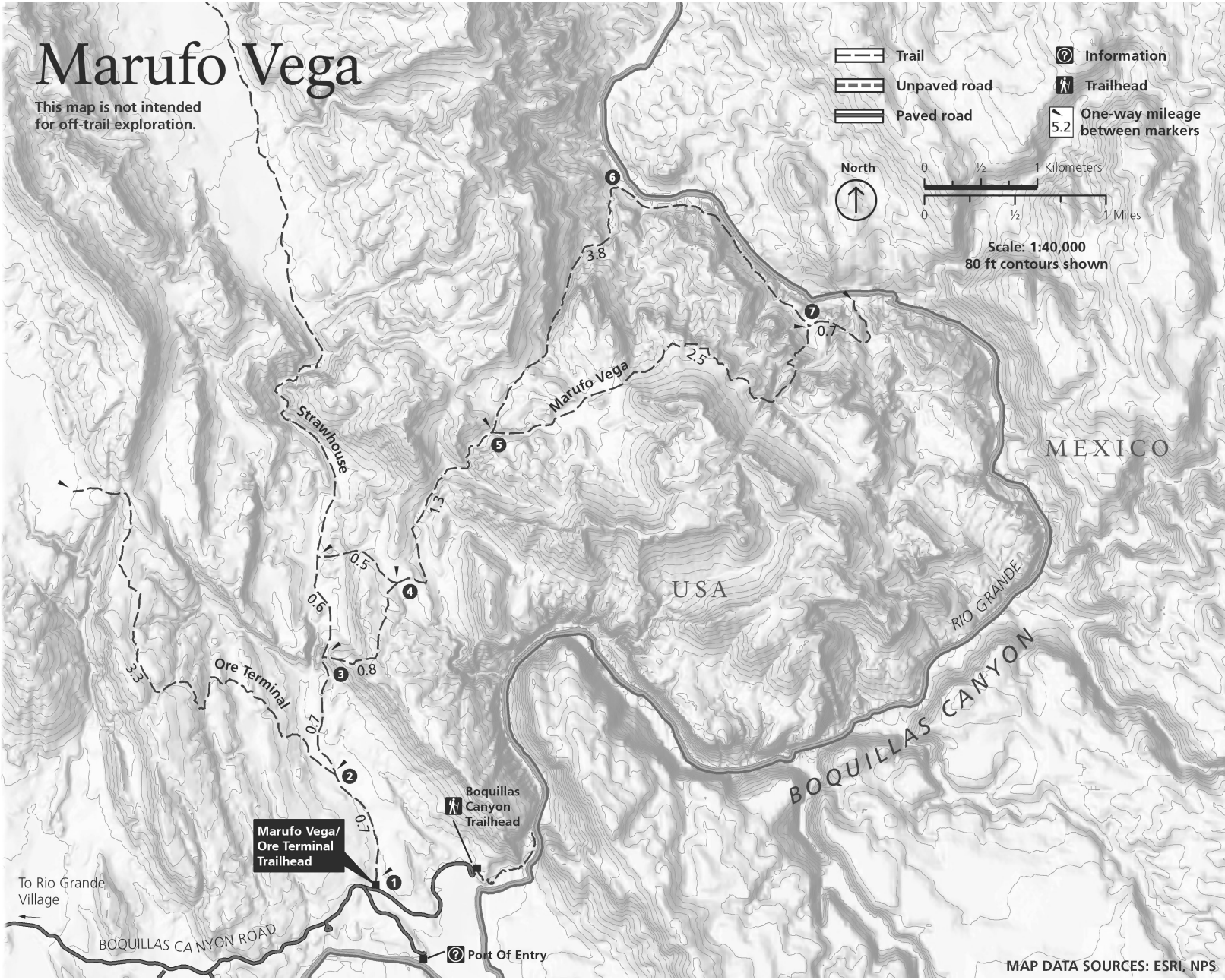
1. The parking area is on the south side of the road to Boquillas Canyon, just past the Boquillas Canyon Overlook. The trail drops down into a wash a short distance from the trailhead.

2. Approximately 1 mile from the trailhead rock cairns indicate where you head to higher ground. The trail soon reaches the remains of the ore tramway line. The Marufo Vega (MV) Trail bears to the right and gradually ascends through an outcropping of sparkling calcite crystals toward a small saddle to the right of the large canyon. The Ore Terminal Trail follows the old cable line that once carried silver from the Puerto Rico mine near Boquillas, Mexico. The Strawhouse Trail continues up the wash through the large canyon.

3. Within the small saddle the MV Trail begins a strenuous but short climb for 1/4 mile (.4 km). Along the climb are outstanding views of Boquillas Canyon, the river floodplain, and the Dead Horse Mountains.

4. An easier trail, more accessible for horses, connects the Strawhouse and MV Trail here. This intersection is well marked with a metal sign.

5. The MV Trail weaves through the wash. Carefully watch for cairns marking the trail. About 1/2 mile (.8 km) into the wash the trail splits. The north fork intersection is marked with cairns and a sign, climbing out of the wash to descend to the river through a canyon. The south fork stays in the wash as it veers right, then leaves the wash after 1/2 mile, crossing a ridge offering views of the river and the Sierra del Carmen before descending 800 feet (240 m) to the river through a steep canyon.

6. From the north fork a signed trail outside the canyon to the east parallels the river from above and connects with the south fork. From the south fork, finding the north fork branch might be difficult, but the junction is marked. Cairns are evident up the canyon of the north fork.

7. From the north fork south, the route along the river intersects with the south fork with a sign at the intersection. This intersection has a sign. A spur trail descends steeply to the river from this location.