



## Gold Rush Routes



Except for those lucky Californios, reaching the Sierra **foothills** to search for gold required a difficult journey lasting three to six months. From the eastern United States thousands of would-be miners followed one of three difficult routes. Each route required a different set of hardships.

The quickest route was to sail to Central America, then walk across the Isthmus of Panama, which was infested with diseases called malaria and cholera, or through the **deserts** of northern Mexico. The second choice was to sail around South America. This trip around the icy waters of Cape Horn involved dangerous storms, scurvy, malaria, dysentery, rancid water, and rotten food. The third option was a 2,000-mile overland trip on either the California or Gila River Trail. Travelers on this route often ran short of food and water, lost the trail, and fought with American Indians.

Chinese miners also packed small boats for the dangerous four to eight week sail across the Pacific Ocean. Whether traveling overland or by sea, many gold seekers were not prepared for the immense hardships of the journey.

