

Adam's Gulch (Lane's/Sunnyside to Shadyside)

Overview

One of the most popular hikes among tourists and locals alike, this 4-mile loop through a small valley near the heart of town features striking views, varied terrain and just enough elevation gain to get the heart pumping.

Hit this trail early to avoid the height of the crowds. By 9:00 am, cars filled with hikers and mountain bikers will start piling into the lot. Still, its close proximity to town combined with its beauty and moderate degree of challenge make this hike is a great way to get in some decent exercise without burning half the day.

The Numbers

3.9-mile loop

585 total elevation gain

Ascent Grade: 6.4% (Moderate)

Water

The number of water crossing depends on the time of year and the amount of recent snow/rainfall. During wet years and always in the early spring as the snow melts, water can be found periodically throughout the hike. During dry years, there is only one crossing in the first 2.2 miles that usually holds water. During the driest years, even that source can dry up.

Drive

From downtown Ketchum, it is an easy 2.7-mile drive with all but .2 miles being on paved roads. [Click here](#) for directions to the trailhead. There is plenty of parking, but spots can get scarce by mid-morning on summer weekends.

There are bathroom facilities at the trailhead.



Parking Lot and Trailhead

Season

May through October

Route

To begin, keep the large Adam's Gulch trailhead sign to your left and then stay left at a few junctions within the first 500 feet. Continue past some small patches of trees and through a few aspen groves and come to the first signed key junction at .55 miles. Stay right.



First Key Junction (Stay Right)

The trail continues to wind through similar terrain. Just before .8 miles stay right at another signed junction.



Second Key Junction (Stay Right)

Quickly come to a third signed key junction just before .9 miles. The path to the right ("Porkchop") is a tough climb that connects you to a series of fantastic trails to the north. Turn left across the bridge. During dry years, this crossing provides the only source of water for the first 2.2 miles of the hike.



Third Key Junction (Turn Left)

Enter onto an open hillside and the climb intensifies. As the trail winds along, beautiful views open to the north and there are over-the-shoulder views back towards Ketchum.

At 1.4 miles, you will reach the apex of the hike. Take a second to visit the picnic table on top of the hill. It was placed there to honor local skiing legend Lane Parrish who died in a plane crash in 1990.



Head back to the trail and turn left to begin the descent to the valley floor. Just before the 2-mile mark you pass the fourth signed key junction. Stay left.



Fourth Key Junction (Stay Left)

Continue down the hill and come to another signed key junction at 2.15 miles. Most hikers will turn left here and follow Old Adam's Road, but those in the know turn right to the far more beautiful Shadyside Trail.



Fifth Key Junction (Turn Right)

Follow the path over a small bridge spanning a stream that often holds water. Straight ahead at 2.2 miles will be the sixth key junction. Veer left onto Shadyside Trail.



Sixth Key Junction (Veer Left on to Shadyside)

Here starts a 1.7 mile stretch that rolls through the shade of thicker forest. This is a popular mountain biking trail, so it pays be aware and take care at blind curves. Still, the setting more than makes up for the slight inconvenience of sharing the trail. As you continue along the path you will pass a couple junctions to the left that lead to Old Adams Road. Ignore those and stay right.



Shadyside Trail

At 3.6 miles you will come to the seventh and final key junction. To the right is [Heidelberg Hill](#), a short but steep climb that eventually connects you to a descent into Ketchum's Warm Springs neighborhood. Turn left and head down the hill.



Seventh Key Junction (Turn Left)

You will soon pass another minor junction to your left but stay right. The trail follows the riverbed, which usually dries up by July, and you will reach the parking lot at 3.9 miles.