

Baker Lake

Overview

For Sun Valley locals, no hiking season is complete without a visit to one of our picturesque alpine lakes. Although Baker Lake may not offer the tranquil beauty or seclusion of our higher elevation lakes, its easy accessibility makes it a favored destination among both residents and tourists.

Featuring a moderately difficult ascent, most of the hike passes through the charred remains of forest damaged by 2013's Beaver Creek fire. Still, there is beauty to be found as the forest strains to recover and the lake itself is surrounded by thriving trees untouched by the fire, making it an excellent spot for a mid-hike picnic.

The Numbers

3.3 mile out and back

870 feet total elevation gain

Ascent Grade: 9.9% (Moderate/Hard)

Water

While there are a few stream crossings and, of course, Baker Lake, the climb is in open sun, so carrying water is highly recommended.

Drive

From downtown Ketchum, it is a 24.2-mile drive with the last 9.1 miles on a well-maintained dirt road. [Click here](#) for directions. There is parking for about 30 cars, though the lot will fill up on summer weekends.

There are bathrooms at the trailhead.



Parking and Trailhead

Season

Mid-June through early October

Route

The trail starts with a bridge crossing of Baker Creek and then passes through a meadow dotted with trees charred by the 2013 Beaver Creek fire. Around the .4-mile mark, come to the first in a series of turns and switchbacks and take a hard right.



Switchback at .4 miles (Hard Right)

The climb slightly intensifies after the turn as it continues along an open ridge. The destruction of the Beaver Creek fire remains in evidence as you pass through blackened groves. At .8 miles, dip down towards the creek, crossing it on cut deadfall.



Water crossing at .81 miles

The trail begins to rise again, weaving along the ridge. At about 1.4 miles, come to a signed intersection with the Apollo Creek Trail and continue straight.



Intersection with Apollo Creek at 1.4 miles (Stay Straight)

At the 1.5-mile mark, the trail levels and at about 1.6 miles, come to an intersection. Either path takes you to the lake but continue straight and hit the lake's edge at 1.65 miles.



Baker Lake

There are several trails that take you around the lake and any number of spots to sit and enjoy the views or have a picnic.

As you re-trace your steps, enjoy solid views of the Smokey Mountains and observe how the area is slowly healing itself after the fire.