

Dollar Mountain

Overview

Dollar Mountain may be Baldy's little sister, but it's no cakewalk of a hike. You cannot escape the sun as you trudge up the steep trail and the footing is tough, but the reward is 360° views of the Wood River Valley. Besides, there's just something about climbing up a ski mountain.

There are a number of trails that braid up the mountain and some are incredibly steep and difficult, particularly on the descent. We chose a route with a tough ascent (though there are plenty of sharper climbs) and a descent that is challenging, but easier than other options.

A few words of warning: Small packs of coyotes make Dollar their home, so keep your dogs under your control, particularly early in the morning. As mentioned, there is no shade on the hike and the climb is tough, so avoid the hike during the heat of the day. Finally, anyone with less than sure footing should bring poles for the descent.

The Numbers

1.95 mile loop

685 feet total elevation gain (all in the first mile)

Ascent Grade: 13% (Hard)

Water

There is no water on Dollar Mountain.

Drive

From downtown Ketchum, it is a 2-mile drive. [Click here](#) for directions. There is plenty of parking in the lodge lot. When the lot is closed, park across the street from the lodge's front entrance.

There are bathrooms in the lodge.



Parking and Trailhead

Season

May to October

Route

The trail begins at the wide path between the lodge and the base terminal for the classic Quarter Dollar lift. Follow the path/road as it winds to the left and crosses a small wooden bridge. The path climbs and comes to a T-intersection at .25 miles. Turn right.



T-intersection at .25 miles (Turn Right)

The trail heads towards the top terminal of the Quarter Dollar lift. At the lift, turn to the left and scramble up the trail that runs to the right of the Train Yard sign.



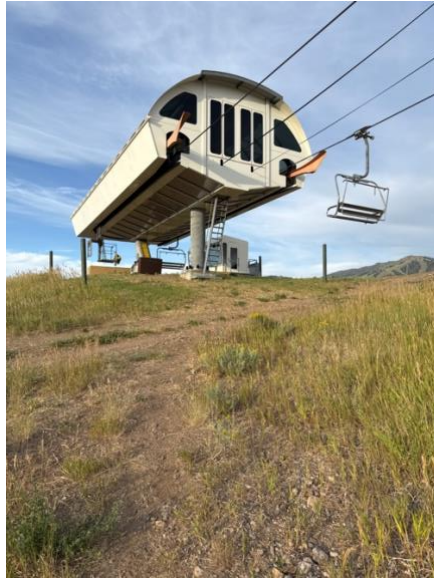
Follow trail to the right of the sign (at about .35 miles)

This begins the toughest section of the climb, a 3/10th mile march up a narrow path. At about .65 miles, come to an intersection marked by a sign for Bitterroot Bowl and turn left to follow a wide path.



Intersection at .65 miles (Turn Left)

The path winds around a small knob and comes to the top terminal of the Dollar Lift at about .8 miles. Cross under the cables keeping the terminal to your left, then pass between the ski patrol cabin and an electrical shack to head to the radio tower, which is the apex of the hike. Take time to snap a few photos.



Pass under the cable to the right



Views from the top



Radio tower at hike's apex

To find the descent, stay close to the radio tower, keeping it to your left and then look left to see the clearly defined trail heading southeast.



Descending trail

Your goal is to get to the valley floor that is to your right as you start the descent. The path winds around the mountain and just after the mile mark, come to an intersection. Turn right (to the northwest and back towards Dollar Lodge) to continue the descent.



Intersection at 1.05 miles (Turn Right)

The descent steepens and footing gets tough on the dusty trail. Poles will come in handy. At about 1.25 miles, come to another intersection and turn right to continue towards the lodge.



Intersection at 1.25 miles (Turn Right)

From here the trail braids through a small valley. This section of the trail sees heavy use by Sun Valley's team of horses which carry tourists down to the nearby stables, so be ready to control your dogs if the horses are present. A few trails shoot up to the right. These are alternate paths to the apex, but we avoid these during horse season.

Keep braiding your way down the mountain, but make sure to keep the “Closed Area” signs to your left. If you find yourself passing one of the signs, simply turn to the right, re-connect with the trail and continue downwards.



Keep these signs to your left

Continue to wind along the trail, which widens again as you near the bottom. You will reconnect with the loop at that small wooden bridge.