

Oregon Gulch

Overview

This pleasant stroll through an attractive gulch is an excellent hike for families with young children and anyone who struggles with tough climbs or descents. The sun-soaked trail begins in a wide gully that narrows as you head towards the Smoky Mountains. A stream parallels the trail and there is a small pond for dogs to swim in along the way. Although the trail extends beyond this hike's designated endpoint to link with the Chocolate Gulch and Baker Road systems, our recommended turnaround location is situated under the shade of Douglas pines – an ideal setting for rest or a picnic.

Be aware that this is a multi-use trail. Its gentle slope makes it a very popular mountain bike route and you may even see an occasional horseback rider or the very rare motorcyclist. Be aware of your surroundings, particularly if you have small children and/or a dog.

The Numbers

3.9 mile out and back

315 total elevation gain

Ascent Grade: 2.6% (Very Easy)

Water

A stream parallels most of the route, though it can run dry for the first half mile. There is a small pond for dogs to play in just before the half mile mark. The hike is in full sun, so water will come in handy on warm days.

Drive

From downtown Ketchum, it is an easy 7.5-mile drive with only the last tenth mile on a dirt road. [Click here](#) for directions. There is parking for about 15 cars and it is rarely full.

There are bathrooms at the trailhead.



Parking and Trailhead

Season

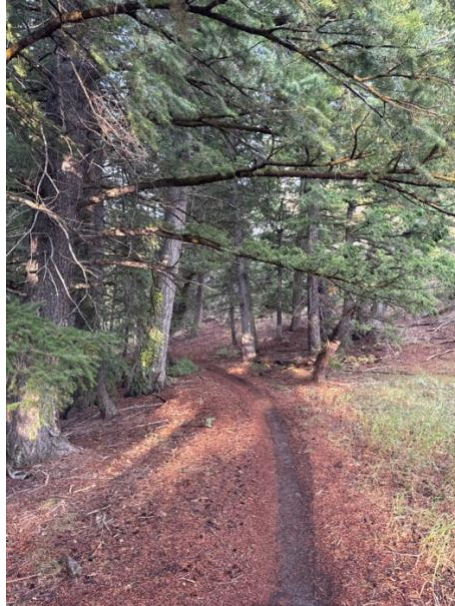
May through October

Route

Take the right fork at the signed junction that marks the trailhead – the left fork takes you to the [Saddle trail](#). Quickly cross a wooden bridge and enter an open, grassy gulch. The trail rises very gradually with only a few very short spurts of climb. Willows line the left side of the trail, though the creek can run dry for the first half mile of the hike.

Just before the half mile mark, come to a pond on your left and shortly afterwards pass through a small aspen grove. The gulch narrows as you continue walking towards the Smoky Mountains. Pass some old fence posts at about 1.2 miles and then an old corral shortly afterwards.

During wet season, there are a couple of areas along this section that may require a simple crossing. The stream nestles up to the trail at 1.5 miles and again at about 1.75 miles. Finally, at 1.9 miles, come to the final destination under the welcome shade of tall Douglas fir trees. This is an excellent spot to stop and enjoy a picnic.



Final Destination

The trail continues to connect with the Chocolate Gulch and Baker Road trail systems. You can make an 11.7-mile loop with the Saddle Trail by turning left at a junction at the 4-mile mark.