

Overlook

Overview

If you are pressed for time, but still looking for a solid cardio challenge, it is hard to beat this hike. It is popular among locals and tourists alike because it is easy to access and features panoramic views of Ketchum and Sun Valley. It is also the start of the Bald Mountain Trail, a 5-mile, 3200-foot hike to the top of the ski mountain.

The trail is closed during the ski season.

The Numbers

3.2 mile out and back

911 total elevation gain

Ascent Grade: 9.5% (Moderate/Hard)

Water

There is no water on this hike, but you will pass over the Big Wood River as you cross from the parking lot to the trailhead and then again upon your return, giving dogs a chance to cool down and grab a drink. Even though much of the trail is shaded, the climb is tough enough that it is recommended you carry water with you.

Drive

The trailhead is at the base of Sun Valley's River Run ski area. From downtown Ketchum, it is an easy 1-mile drive with all on paved roads. [Click here](#) for directions to the trailhead. There are about 50 spots available at the lower lot and ample parking in Sun Valley's upper ski lot.

To get to the trailhead, pass over the bridge that spans the Big Wood River, continue straight passing between the two lodges and towards Lift #1 (River Run Express). Turn right just after passing the lodge on your right. The trailhead is just beyond the Kinderspielplatz kiddie ski run.

When either of the lodges are open, there are bathrooms near the trailhead.



Trailhead

Season

May through October

Route

The first quarter mile of the hike rolls through the woods alongside and above the Big Wood River. At .25 miles, you will come to the main climb, which continues all the way to the turnaround destination.



Beginning of the main climb

At .88 miles you make a sharp left hand turn at a sign marking the Bald Mountain Trail.



Sign at .88 miles

Continue east for a short while and at 1 mile take a sharp right turn back to the west. At 1.3 miles you will leave the trees and enter onto an open hillside. At 1.35 miles you will see a trail shooting off to the left towards Sun Valley's Frenchman's ski lift. Stay right.



Junction at 1.35 miles (Stay Right)

As you continue along the hillside, views of Ketchum will be straight ahead along with excellent over-the-shoulder views of the Big Wood River.



View of the Big Wood River towards South Valley

At 1.6 miles you will come to the destination, a viewing platform erected by the Bureau of Land Management. To its left you will see the trail that continues to the top of Bald Mountain.



Observation Tower (Destination)

This observation deck is usually occupied, but patience will allow you a chance to grab some spectacular photos of Ketchum and Sun Valley as well as peaks in the Boulder and Pioneer ranges.



View into Ketchum