

Roundhouse

Overview

This popular summer trail is a challenging climb up to Sun Valley's Roundhouse restaurant and the River Run gondola. The first mile and a half is extremely busy as hikers swarm towards the platform that marks the end of the [Overlook hike](#). The next 2 miles wind around Bald Mountain, crossing over a number of winter runs including Janss' Pass, Graduate and Holiday.

Although the trail can be extended as an out-and-back route, it is most popular as a one-way trek with a gondola descent. Sun Valley operates its lifts throughout July and August typically from Wednesday to Sunday between 9 am and 4 pm. Riding down the lifts is free of charge. Dog cannot ride Christmas lift, but are welcome onboard the gondola. Visit sunvalley.com or call (208) 622-6236 to confirm when the lifts will be running.

The trail is closed during the ski season.

The Numbers

3.75-mile one way with gondola ride down

1880 feet total elevation gain

Ascent Grade: 11.2% (Hard)

Water

There is very little water on this hike. 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.

Bring plenty of water, as much of the climb is in the sun.

Drive

The trailhead is at the north end of the base of Sun Valley's River Run ski area. From downtown Ketchum, it is an easy 1-mile drive, 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 after parking, pass over the bridge that spans the Big Wood River, pass between the two large lodge buildings, heading towards Lift #1 (River Run Express). Turn right just after passing the lodge to your right. The trailhead is just beyond the Kinderspielplatz kiddie ski run.

When either of the two lodge buildings are open, there are bathrooms near the trailhead.



Trailhead

Season

July and August

Route

The first quarter mile of the hike rolls through the woods alongside and above the Big Wood River. At .25 miles, the climb begins in earnest and at about .85 miles you make a sharp left hand turn at a sign marking the Bald Mountain Trail.



Sign at .85 miles

Continue to follow the trail as it makes hairpin turns through the forest. 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.

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. At 1.6 miles you will come to a viewing platform erected by the Bureau of Land Management. 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.

As you approach the platform, you will see a trail to the left. Follow that trail and continue ascending along the open sagebrush-covered ridge.



Observation Tower (Turn Left)

As you continue along the ridge, the lower terminal of the Frenchman's Lift will come into view. Shortly after the 2-mile mark, enter a short stretch of woods. As you leave the forest, look to the left to see the Janss' Pass and Graduate ski runs, both lined with snow guns. At 2.45 miles, you will cross over the Janss' Pass run and come to a sign marking the continuation of the trail to the summit and Roundhouse. Continue straight.



Continue straight at the trail sign

The trail continues its rise and crosses over the Graduate ski run a couple tenths of a mile later. Look down the run for excellent views towards Ketchum.



Graduate ski run and views to Ketchum

At about 2.75 miles, cross over the famous College ski run and at 2.95 miles, pass a tree marked by a couple memorials honoring Dr. James Gibson and Dr. Teresa Skidmore Flippo Morton. Dr. Gibson was a Utah veterinarian who passed suddenly in Sun Valley in 1998. Dr. Flippo Morton was a leading cancer surgeon in North Carolina who loved Sun Valley. She was stricken by pancreatic cancer in 2015.

Right after the memorials, the trail hairpins right and just after the 3-mile mark, come to the signed junction of the Bald Mountain Summit trail and the Roundhouse Connector. Turn left to follow the Connector.



Junction after the 3-mile mark (Turn Left)

The remainder of the trail undulates over an open ridge and it heads south towards Roundhouse. Cross over the Mid-River Run ski run at about 3.35 miles and re-enter the forest for a bit. As you leave the woods, cross over the difficult Holiday ski run before continuing onto the gondola and Roundhouse.

Make sure to take time to enjoy the view on the ride down the gondola!

