

Griffin Butte

Overview

Starting from the Adam's Gulch trailhead, this hike links several trails to form a relatively long, moderately difficult loop. Along with a good cardio challenge, it offers excellent views of Griffin Butte and the Wood River Valley, followed by a pleasant descent through shaded forest.

One slight drawback is that the loop is also popular with mountain bikers. Stay aware of your surroundings and watch for approaching bikes, especially if you bring your dog.

Griffin Butte is an excellent choice for hikers looking to get their hearts pumping without busting a lung — and for those who want to venture off the beaten path while remaining close to town.

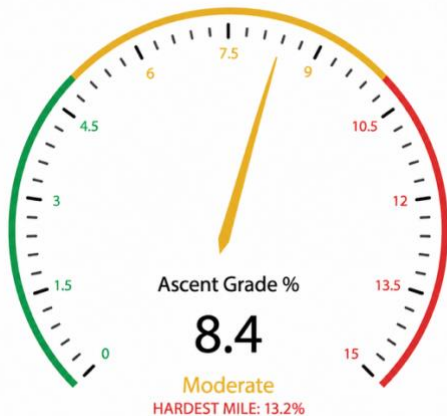
The Numbers

7.9-mile loop

1740 feet total elevation gain

Ascent Grade: 8.4% (Moderate)

Hardest Mile: 13.2% (Moderate/Difficult)



Water

The main ascent parallels a small stream and during wet seasons there is a small pond at the 1.5-mile mark, though it usually dries up by mid-summer. Most of the ascent is in the open sun, so carry plenty of water. The descent features several stream crossings and the final section briefly parallels a stream.

Drive

From downtown Ketchum, it is an easy 2.7-mile drive with all but .2 miles being on paved roads. [Click here](#) for directions to the trailhead. There is plenty of parking, but spots can get scarce by mid-morning on summer weekends.

There are bathroom facilities at the trailhead.



Parking Lot and Trailhead

Season

May through November

Route

Begin with the large Adam's Gulch trailhead board on your left. After about 400 feet, you will pass a sign marking the junction of Sunnyside-Lane's and Adams-Lake Connector. Stay left at this junction, then stay left again at another junction a few steps later.

Continue through small stands of pine and aspen. At .55 miles, you will reach the first signed junction with Old Adam's Gulch Road. Stay right to remain on Sunnyside-Lane's.



Signed junction with Old Adam's Gulch Road (Stay Right)

The trail continues to wind through similar terrain. Just before .8 miles stay right at another signed junction with Old Adam's Gulch Road.



Junction with Old Adam's Gulch Road (Stay Right)

Quickly come to another signed junction with Adam's Rib Trail just before .9 miles. Turn right.



Junction with Adam's Rib Trail (Turn Right)

This marks the beginning of the main ascent. The trail initially winds along a ridge on an open hillside before entering a grove of small aspens and scattered pines. A small stream runs below the trail to your left, then crosses it twice just beyond the one-mile mark. Except during very wet years, both crossings are easy.

The trail begins switchbacking as the trees gradually thin. At 1.5 miles, you will pass a small pond that usually dries up by midsummer. Beyond the pond, the trail flattens for a few beats and fantastic views toward Ketchum emerge. As you climb, the summit of Bald Mountain also comes into view to the south.

Pass an ill-defined trail branching off to the right just beyond 1.6 miles, then cross the stream again at 1.8 miles. The views across the Wood River Valley continue to improve as you gain elevation.

Enter a small stand of pine trees just after the 2-mile mark and at 2.2 miles, arrive at the signed junction with Harper's Trail. Stay straight.



Junction with Harper's (Stay Straight)

Beyond the junction, the trail continues climbing and soon emerges from the forest into open terrain. To your right, Griffin Butte's distinctive rock outcroppings rise above the sagebrush-covered hillside. Look back periodically for excellent views of Ketchum, which broaden as you gain elevation.

Just after the 2.5-mile mark, the trail levels a bit and then rolls along until you come to the signed junction of Adam's Rib and Griffin Butte Connector at 3.25 miles. Stay straight at the junction.



Junction at 3.25 miles (Stay Straight)

Shortly after the junction, re-enter the forest and begin the descent. Between 3.6 and 4.45 miles, the trail crosses a small stream five times while winding through the pleasant shade of the trees.

At 4.65 miles, come to a signed junction with Citizens Trail. Turn left to follow Citizens.



Junction at 4.65 miles (Turn Left)

Begin an easy ascent and eventually come back into an open field that winds along a small ridge. Just before the 5.9-mile mark, come to a signed junction with Lane's Trail and turn right.



Junction with Lane's Trail (Turn Right)

At 6 miles, come to another junction and turn right then shortly come to a signed junction of Shadyside and Old Adams Gulch Road. Turn left.



Two junctions starting at 6 miles (Turn Right then Turn Left)

The next 1.7 miles roll through the shade of a thicker forest. This is another popular mountain biking trail, so stay alert and use extra care around blind curves. Even so, the pleasant setting more than makes up for the slight inconvenience of sharing the trail. Along the way, you will pass a couple of junctions on the left leading to Old Adams Road. Ignore them and stay right.

At about 7.55 miles, you will reach the final key junction. The trail to the right climbs briefly but steeply over Heidelberg Hill before eventually descending into Ketchum's Warm Springs neighborhood. Turn left and head downhill.



Junction at 7.55 miles (Turn Left)

You will soon pass another junction to your left but stay right. The trail follows the riverbed, which usually dries up by July, and you will cross a small bridge to reach the parking lot.