

Granite Lake

Moderate, 10.5 miles



The Granite Lake trail is very pretty, with meadows and waterfalls interspersed with forested canopy and views of red rock mountains. The lake itself is perfect for fishing or swimming, forested on the approach side with granite rock across the lake. In June and July the wildflowers are typically riotous, and camping at the lake is a wonderful way to enjoy the Alps. The trail includes some moderate climbing, depending on your hiking shape. But there are many spots to rest overlooking spectacular falls. Granite Lake and its trail make for a very rewarding hike.

Hikes

♦ Granite Lake (40° 57.249'N, 122° 51.453'W)

Total Length (round-trip): 10.5 miles via Swift Creek Trail

Elevation Gain: 1,995'

Difficulty: Moderate

Topo Map

♦ Covington Mill

Directions to Trailhead

7 miles to Swift Creek Trailhead

Take Hwy 3 north from Trinity Center about 1/4 mile to Swift Creek Road. Turn left and follow this road about 6.7 miles to the trailhead. There is plenty of parking, including stock parking. There are restroom facilities.

The Trail

The Granite Lake trail is a side trail to Swift Creek. You begin your trek at the north side of the Swift Creek Trailhead parking lot. The first mile and a quarter parallels Swift Creek. At about 1.1 miles, the trail forks. The right trail is Swift Creek Trail and continues to Mumford Meadows and Horseshoe Lake. The left fork is the Granite Lake trail. In another 1/10 mile you'll come to the Swift Creek bridge. At this spot you'll have a great view of Swift Creek, and for a short trip, this may be your destination for a picnic. It takes about 40 minutes to reach the bridge.

About a quarter mile past the bridge, the trail comes close to Granite Creek, and you'll hear the roar of the creek depending on the time of year, and the sound of the creek will likely stay with you all the way to the lake.

The trail climbs variously through forested canopy and open meadows. A few small side streams are crossed easily, except in the spring in a wet year. Then just be careful with the moving water.



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The wildflowers in the meadows can be spectacular, and usually last well into the summer. You can find star jasmine, azaleas, dogwood, pitcher plants, and much, much more.

There are a couple locations with a few switchbacks, but the trail is generally not so steep as to require them. Just before reaching the lake, you will cross a rocky bench just below the outlet to Granite Lake.

Granite Lake

While the lake can be very popular on summer weekends, you may be lucky enough to grab the campsite right on the beach. It is on the north shore of the lake, just past the inlet from upper Granite Creek. You will have the lake before you with granite Gibson Peak as its backdrop. The lake should have trout in it if you've a mind to go fishing.

If you camp for a couple nights, take one day and hike beyond the lake up to Seven Up Peak. The trail takes you through meadows of wildflowers with an amazing view when you reach the saddle. Or you can break camp and continue around Seven Up Peak and return to the trailhead via Bear Basin and Swift Creek trails. You might even consider spending a night at Parker Meadow or Foster's Cabin on the way out. Many trail guides write up the Granite Lake—Bear Basin loop.

However, a day trip to Granite Lake is spectacular, and you will be very glad to have made the hike up to the lake. If you hike mid-week or off-season, you may even have this jewel in the Alps to yourself!



