

7 BEST HIKES IN BIG SKY, MONTANA

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Hiking can take you to amazing places. Grab your hiking boots, bear spray, and other hiking essentials and hit the trails in Big Sky, Montana. With hundreds of miles of hiking trails criss crossing the mountains around Big Sky, it can be hard to choose what trail you want to hike first. Luckily, we are here to suggest some of the best hikes in Big Sky.

EXPLORE SOME OF THE BEST HIKES IN BIG SKY:



Ousel Falls | Photo: D. Lennon

Location: Big Sky Town Center
Trailhead: Ousel Falls TH
Distance: 1.5 miles round trip
Elevation Gain: 500 feet

Ousel Falls is probably the most popular hike in all of Big Sky. This mellow hike follows the South Fork of the West Fork of the Gallatin River to a stunning waterfall. It's easy access and appropriate for all ages.



Summit Lake | Photo: D. Lennon

Location: Summit Lake, Spanish Peaks, Lee Metcalf Wilderness, Madison Range
Trailhead: North Fork Trailhead – 7,250 feet
Distance: 15.7 miles total
Summit Lake Elevation: 9,560 feet
Elevation Gain: 3,250'+

Summit Lake sits in the middle of the Spanish Peaks. If you're looking for a big hike into Montana's high alpine environment, Summit Lake is an excellent choice.



Beehive Basin | Photo: Audrey Hall Photography

Location: Beehive Basin, Spanish Peaks, Lee Metcalf Wilderness, Madison Range
Trailhead: Upper Beehive Basin Trailhead – 7,900 feet
Distance: 6.6 round trip
Elevation Gain: 1,625 feet

Beehive Basin was named one of the world's greatest hikes and for excellent reasons. This hike provides easy access to stunning alpine terrain. If you're looking for lakes, towering peaks, and a well-trodden trail, then head to Beehive Basin.



Golden Trout Lake | Photo: D. Lennon

Location: Portal Creek, Gallatin Canyon, Gallatin Range
Trailhead: Upper Portal Creek TH – 8058 feet
Distance: 5 miles round trip
Golden Trout Lakes Elevation: 9075 feet
Elevation Gain : 1300 feet

Golden Trout Lakes is located up Portal Creek – a FS road heading into the Gallatin Range off of Highway 191 (about 6 miles north of Big Sky). Hop on the trail through scenic forest and climb to a beautiful alpine lake. It's an ideal place to camp, fish, and enjoy Montana.



Lava Lake | Photo: D. Lennon

Location: Lava Lake Trail aka Cascade Creek Trail
Trailhead: Lava Lake Trailhead – 5525 feet
Distance: 6 miles round trip
Lava Lake Elevation: 7115 feet
Elevation Gain: 1600 feet

Lava Lake is a popular hiking trail that is accessed near the 35 MPH bridge on Highway 191 in the Gallatin Canyon. The Lava Lake Trail parallels Cascade Creek and ends at Lava Lake – the only non-glacially carved lake in the Lee Metcalf Wilderness.



Uplands Trail | Photo: D. Lennon

Location: Big Sky Town Center
Trailhead: Uplands/Hummocks TH
Distance: 2.2 miles loop
Elevation Gain: 460 feet

Uplands Trail was created by the Big Sky Community Corporation in 2014. This multi-use trail starts at the far end of Aspen Leaf Drive and wanders uphill on a two mile loop that provides amazing views of Big Sky Town Center and the surrounding area.



Albino Lake | Photo: D. Lennon

Location: Albino Lake, Gallatin National Forest, Madison Range
Trailhead: Albino Lake Trailhead – 6,975 feet
Distance: 7.25 miles total
Albino Lake Elevation: 7,105 feet
Elevation Gain: 625 feet

Albino Lake is located just north of the Taylor Fork Road near the Nine Quarter Circle Ranch. This loop hike wanders through rolling meadows and wraps around Albino Lake before it heads back to the main road. Bring a camera because the views of Koch Peak and the Taylor Hilgards are impressive!

Check the weather, find a hiking buddy, and explore the best hikes in Big Sky. The things you will see will blow your mind! Bring your camera and share your photos on social media with #visitbigsky. Hiking is a free activity that can be enjoyed by all ages (and dogs too!). Take advantage of Mother Nature. Get outside and explore!

Find more hikes in Big Sky on Montana Wilderness Association's Montana Hiking Guide. [hike.wildmontana.org] This site rocks!

See Also: Be Bear Aware in Big Sky Country; What To Do If You're Lost In The Woods