



United States
Department of
Agriculture



United States
Forest Service

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National Forests

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Suggested Day Hikes

TURQUOISE LAKE AREA

Bear Lake – #1 is 3.5 miles (one way), 1370 feet gain / #2 is 1.5 miles (one way), 400 feet gain

The trailheads into the Holy Cross Wilderness* can be accessed 2 ways: #1) via Timberline Lake trailhead on the west side of Turquoise Lake or #2) via Forest Service Road 107, which is north of Lake County Road 9. From the top of the ridges, you can see a large part of the upper Arkansas Valley before dropping into spruce-fir forest, wandering past several little ponds and lakes. Idyllic Bear Lake sits on a wide flat bench bordered by big boulders on its west side. Day travelers do not need to fill out permits to enter the Holy Cross Wilderness.

Colorado Midland Trail – 3.8 miles (one way), 400 feet gain

A moderately easy hike on an old railroad grade in the Hagerman Pass area. To reach the trailhead, take the Hagerman Pass Road (Forest Road 105) 4.5 miles to the parking area on the right. The trail begins across the road from the parking area, and proceeds past the site of the old mining town of Douglas City and ends at the Hagerman tunnel, which can have ice inside year round (entering tunnels is not advised).

Turquoise Lake Trail – 6.4 miles (one way), minimal gain/loss

This trail parallels the shoreline of Turquoise Lake from the Dam to May Queen Campground. The section of trail from the Dam to Tabor Campground is 2.2 miles of easy hiking, passing by many picnic areas and campgrounds. The remainder of this trail offers moderate hiking with spectacular views of the Turquoise Lake Recreation Area.

TWIN LAKES AREA

Big Willis Gulch – 5.5 miles (one way), 2400 feet gain

This is a moderate hike with an end destination of Willis Lake and a mine just beyond the lake. The trailhead is shared with Little Willis Gulch, with hiking access to Hope Pass. The trailhead is found two miles west of Twin Lakes Village on Highway 82. Look for a signed parking lot (Willis Gulch Trailhead) to the south. The trail is accessed south across the bridge over Lake Creek. Follow the road to the trail on the left side. The first part of the trail is fairly steep.

Independence Pass - .25 miles (one way), minimal gain/loss

A short, scenic walk to the Independence Pass overlook, this paved trail offers spectacular views of the peaks and ridges of the Continental Divide.

Interlaken – 2 miles (one way), minimal gain/loss

This popular trail offers an easy walk to the historic resort cabins of Interlaken. The trailhead is located 0.7 mile W of Highway 82 on County Road 25 before Twin Lakes. From the southeast side of the dam, follow the trail along the lakeside to Interlaken. You can then continue to the east end of Twin Lakes or follow the Colorado trail up to Hope Pass (approximately 8 miles).

CLEAR CREEK AREA

Missouri Gulch – 6.8 miles (one way), 3740 feet gain in first 3 miles

This trail begins at the large parking area south of Clear Creek Road (Chaffee County 390) across the road from the old town of Vicksburg. The Missouri Gulch trail enters into the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness* and ends at its junction with the Pine Creek Trail in Missouri Basin. The first 3.5 miles is strenuous, with an elevation gain of 3,750 feet. The next three miles has an elevation loss of 1,670 feet. This area is extremely popular with hikers and climbers accessing Mounts Belford & Oxford and Missouri Mountain. Plan your trip for a weekday if you are hoping for solitude.



COLORADO TRAIL

Colorado Trail: Segment #8 – 25.4 miles (one way), 4417 feet gain

Segment #8 starts at the Tennessee Pass trailhead on Highway 24 across from Ski Cooper, and ends near Copper Mountain Ski Resort to the North. Crossing several different landscapes, this trail ranges from ski resorts and high ridgelines to dense forest and swampy creek crossings. Important viewpoints include the historic Camp Hale and multiple opportunities to view the photogenic Mount of the Holy Cross. As this segment is within the White River National Forest, visitors are encouraged to check with this forest for any other restrictions.

Colorado Trail: Segment #9 – 13.6 miles (one way), 2627 feet gain

Segment #9 can be accessed from the parking lot of the Tennessee Pass trailhead, located on Highway 24 across from Ski Cooper. From this trailhead, the trail heads southeast for 6.7 miles before reaching the Wilderness Boundary for the Holy Cross Wilderness*. Lakes, both named and unnamed, dot the landscape along the trail as the Mosquito Range rises to the east and the Sawatch Range rises to west.

Colorado Trail: Segment #10 – 13 miles (one way), 2000 feet gain

Segment #10 can be accessed from the parking lot of the Timberline Lake trailhead, located at the west end of Turquoise Lake. From the Timberline Lake parking area, Segment #10 trends 13.0 miles to Halfmoon Creek, traveling along the east side of Mt. Massive and through the Mt. Massive Wilderness* and the Leadville National Fish Hatchery. Fishing restrictions apply in this section; please check trailheads for specific information.

Colorado Trail: Segment #11 – 21.1 miles (one way), 1520 feet gain

Segment #11 begins at Halfmoon Creek at the Mt. Elbert trailhead and ends 21.2 miles later at the Clear Creek Road (Chaffee County Road 390) just west of the Colorado Division of Wildlife Campground. The trail hugs the eastern base of Mt. Elbert (the highest mountain in Colorado) and then skirts the east side of Twin Lakes. The trail then climbs and crosses Lost Canyon before linking with a re-route completed in 2007 and dropping into Clear Creek. The section provides a good example of the typical forest ecosystems between 9,500 and 11,000 feet. Be sure to notice the remnants of old-growth Douglas-fir trees just south of Twin Lakes.

Colorado Trail: Segment #12 – 18.5 miles (one way), 4520 feet gain

Segment #12 begins at Clear Creek on Chaffee County Road 390 just west of the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Campground and ends at North Cottonwood Creek 18.5 miles to the south. A re-route completed in 2007 moves the trail off private property, making access easier. The trail climbs out of Clear Creek and enters the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness*. The trail then continues into Pine Creek before dropping into the North Cottonwood drainage. This segment spends a good portion above 11,000 feet and brings you close to three Fourteeners (Mounts Oxford, Harvard and Columbia).

****SPECIAL NOTES ON WILDERNESS***

When entering Wilderness, be aware of special regulations concerning group size, pets, and permits. No mechanical (bicycles), motorized vehicles, or drones are allowed in the Wilderness and, in keeping with the character of the Wilderness, signage is minimal. Also, keep in mind that the high altitude can affect even the healthiest and fittest of people. Be aware of symptoms of acute mountain sickness, particularly with children who are more susceptible than adults. Weather in the high country is unpredictable and changes rapidly, so it is a good idea to always carry rain gear and cold weather clothes with you, as well as food and water. Have a safe and enjoyable hike!

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