

South Lake to Chocolate Peak

By the Parchers Resort Crew

Bishop Pass Trailhead at South Lake
(8 Miles Roundtrip and 1800 Vertical Ft.)

Chocolate Peak is a fantastic day hike. While the mountain looks formidable from the front, it is easily walked up from the back. This is not a technical climb and does not require mountaineering skills or equipment.

Catch the trail as it leaves the lower end of the South Lake parking lot. There are some nice wildflowers during the first 100 yards of trail. The trail ascends into the open, following above the shoreline. There are some spectacular views of the Sierra Crest and South Lake Island to be had in this stretch of trail.

The trail then moves into a draw before making a hairpin turn back toward the lake. At this point, the trail enters the John Muir Wilderness. There is a long straight stretch of trail through the forest before coming to the Treasure Lakes Trail Junction.

At the junction, take the trail to the left, marked Bishop Pass. Follow the path onto a wooded bench that slowly ascends as it moves southeast. Continue to follow the trail as it makes some gentle switchbacks, then straightening out again. Look for the trail marker denoting the Marie Louise Lakes Trail. The trail steepens as it make a hairpin turn that will soon provide a view down on Hurd Lake.

The trail moves straight across a rocky outcropping before making about a half dozen steeper switchbacks. The trail straightens out moving up a shallow draw, crosses to the other side and then finally comes to a cove of Long Lake. This is a great photo op. Continue to follow the trail as it winds along Long Lake.

About 2/3 of the way along the Long Lake shoreline will be the trail marker to Ruwau Lake. Take the wooden steps up to the switchbacks and follow the trail as it ascends above Long Lake. Be sure look back and catch the excellent panorama of Long Lake. The trail flattens out and then reaches Ruwau Lake.

Follow the trail along Ruwau Lake until it is adjacent to the island. The trail then leaves the lake ascending the back of Chocolate Peak. There will be a few switchbacks and the trail worsens. When the trail straightens out, look to the left for trail markers consisting of piled rocks. Go off-trail, scrambling where need be to work your way up the mountain. There is no technical climbing required. Just follow the foot prints when you can find them.

You will finally reach the shale hog back of the mountain. Proceed to the highest point and enjoy the 360 view. Nearly all of the lakes in the Bishop Creek basin can be seen from the top of Chocolate Peak. Be sure to sign the registry which can be found in a PVC tube.



118°35.000' W

118°34.000' W

118°33.000' W

WGS84 118°32.000' W

37°10.000' N

37°10.000' N

37°09.000' N

37°09.000' N

37°08.000' N

37°08.000' N

37°07.000' N

37°07.000' N



118°35.000' W

118°34.000' W

118°33.000' W

WGS84 118°32.000' W



0 1000 FEET 0 500 1000 METERS

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