



Trail 27--Days Fork

Duration: 2 hours

Distance: 3.2 out-and-back

Difficulty: Easy

Trailhead: Spruces Campground Parking Lot

Elevation: Spruces 7400'; Day's Fork 8126'

Avalanche: To Lower Meadow-low; Past Lower Meadow-high

Map: Mount Aire and Dromedary Peak 7.5' quadrangle

GPS Coordinates: Lower Meadow--12 T 0446179/4496842;

Dogs: Not allowed in Big Cottonwood Canyon

Introduction: Days Fork trail rambles through evergreens and sunny openings. It has a fair amount of shade in spots, and is pleasant and not too long. Because winter access to this trail is easy it sees a good deal of use. Short but sweet, the trail is usually defined by those who have gone before, but take a map and the GPS coordinates provided here if you're making first tracks. The length of Days Fork trail is determined only by your preparedness and stamina. You can rim out and come down the other side of the mountain into the town of Alta if you desire, but I have chosen to end the trail at Lower Meadow because once you pass Lower Meadow you enter serious avalanche terrain, on both sides of the trail. Lower Meadow itself is an avalanche trap that, should you choose to go farther, should be crossed one at a time in usual avalanche safety routine. Past Lower Meadow you will need to have a beacon, shovel, and probe.

How to Get There: Spruces Campground sits 9.7 miles up Big Cottonwood Canyon. Park in the Spruces parking lot off to the south side of the road. The lot sits just past the railroad-crossing road blocks. Park here.

Trail Description: The trail takes off directly from the southwest corner of the Spruces parking lot. It winds south around a group of trees, and passes a restroom which is open for winter use. Shortly after passing the restroom, you will pass a trail sign for Days Fork trail. Use these markers to make sure you're on the right path, as there are a couple paths that head out from Spruces parking lot. The trail winds its way west and south after the sign as it climbs up Days Fork. At times the trail winds right through the trees while at other times it breaks out of the trees into open sections. You can't go wrong as long as you make your way up the fork. At 1.3 miles the trail passes beneath an avalanche shoot. It is easy to tell where it has run before as the mountainside is bare of trees. The trail passes at the bottom of the avalanche run out, simply use caution. You will know you have reached Lower Meadow by the steep slopes that come in on your right while the path opens into a wider meadow area. Lower Meadows lies 1.6 miles from the trailhead. Remember that going any further will be dangerous during unstable avalanche conditions. Return back down the fork to get to your car.