



Trail 31—Guardsman Pass

Duration: 2 hours

Distance: 3 miles round trip

Difficulty: Moderate

Trailhead: Guardsman Pass

Elevation: Guardsman Pass Trailhead 8921'; Road Split off Guardsman 9175';
Guardsman Pass 9505'

Avalanche: Low

Map: Brighton 7.5 quadrangle

GPS Coordinates: Point where you leave the groomed Guardsman's Pass road and head into the evergreens—12 T 451768/4495839;

Dogs: Not allowed in Big Cottonwood Canyon

Introduction: Guardsman Pass is one of the beautiful snowshoe trails that will most consistently have snow in the winter. The highlight of this trail centers on the views that begin at the trailhead and culminate at the pass. Guardsman's Pass is one of the few places in the canyon where snowmobiles are allowed. This road is groomed and easy to follow. While traveling along the groomed section of road you may encounter grooming machines or snowmobiles.

Once you leave the Guardsman Pass summer road (trail) you will enjoy a change of trail which narrows and heads through the trees, up a steep climb and then reconnects with the Guardsman Pass road for the final few hundred feet to the pass. The trail provides a nice arrangement of open snowshoeing, trees, climbing and views.

How to Get There: The turn-off to Guardsman's Pass sits just below Brighton Ski Resort. A road sign indicates the pass is closed for winter (which it is), but the road to the parking area is not. Turn left past steep banks of snow (hard to see the road because the snow is so high) and follow the road a short way until it dead ends where winter maintenance is discontinued. A bathroom is available at this trailhead/turnaround. Parking in the turnaround is not allowed so vehicles must park down the north side of the road leaving room for snowmobile trailers to use the turnaround.

Trail Description: From the trailhead enjoy the views and take a photo or two. Follow the groomed road/trail to the east. As you make your way up the mountain the wide trail passes next between forests of evergreens on both sides. The road is wide and easy for larger groups to walk side-by-side. Three-quarters of a mile up the trail, an offshoot trail heads straight off the Guardsman Pass groomed trail/road, into a canopy of evergreens. There is a sign here that warns snowmobilers that they are not allowed off the state road. Many ignore this sign, and the path is paved by snowmobile tracks. At this sharp turn (to the west) in the road, head east off the Guardsman Pass road and enjoy the trail as it narrows and climbs closer to the pass. The trail transitions into one of more solitude. The trail leads to a steep climb to the power pole sitting near the top. From the power pole begin to make your way forward or climb north and east to intersect with the Guardsman Pass road that is just above you. The road takes you right to Guardsman Pass, which is the summer pass which connects Park City to Big Cottonwood Canyon.

On your return trip, if you circle down the southwest side of the mountain, going off trail and making your way through the trees, you can reconnect with the groomed road below while enjoying powder stashes in the trees on the way down.

Option: Stay on the Guardsman Pass road all the way to the pass. This lengthens the trail to 4.6 miles and takes about 3 hours. It is moderately difficult as the trail ascends, but requires less climbing than the other option, and it is easy to follow the road.