



Trail 34-- Silver Fork

Duration: 3 hours

Distance: 3.81 out-and-back

Difficulty: Easy

Trailhead: Lower Solitude parking lot

Elevation: Solitude Parking Lot 8060'; First Mine 8580'; Davenport Hill 10120'

Avalanche: Crosses known avalanche paths

Map: Dromedary, Mount Aire, and Brighton 7.5' quadrangle

GPS Coordinates: First mine/top end of trail--12 T 447438/4495695

Dogs: Not allowed in Big Cottonwood Canyon

Introduction: Silver Fork was named for the silver mining that took place when settlers first came to the valley. This trail is comfortably pleasant with only 500 feet of elevation gain, but you can take it further if you want to make more of the trail. Spruce and fir dot the area. Honeycomb Canyon, which holds one of the Solitude ski lifts, sits just to the left/east of Silver Fork. You will find skiers accessing Silver Fork by taking the Honeycomb lift, continuing to climb higher, and then dropping in from the top. Some great backcountry ski runs dump into Silver Fork. Know your avalanche conditions before you go as the trail sits at the base of some nice clean slopes, and the bottom of the wash is a terrain trap. The highlights of Silver Fork include the beauty of the area and the easy meander back into the fork.

How to get there: Park in the lower Solitude parking lot found 11.6 miles up Big Cottonwood Canyon. A groomed road exits the parking lot in the far northwest corner. This road will lead you into Silver Fork.

Trail Description: Follow the packed groomed road at the northwest corner of the parking lot for .8 of a mile. The snow walls are deep on both sides and when you come to the road's conclusion, you will need to climb up and out and onto the snow above. Because the trail up Silver Fork is relatively easy it is well used and there will most likely be a path. The trail should take you up the fork where you will find yourself traipsing horizontally across the east face of the west slope rather than down in the wash itself. The east-facing chutes are called the Meadow Chutes. These are prime avalanche slopes in bad conditions. If no trail has been made before, just head straight up the fork on either side of the wash.

You will reach the first mine and tailings pile at 1.97 miles. The only sign marking the spot is a good sized hill and a solar screen sitting at its base. To return, you can either head back the way you came or loop around onto the east side of the wash to head back to the car with a little different scenery on the opposite side of the wash. This is an out and back trail.

Options: You can continue deeper into Silver Fork for more exploration. A four-mile jaunt will take you to the west bowl with 1500' of elevation gain. If you continue up Silver Fork you can access the ridge above Alta Ski Resort. Davenport Hill sits above.