



Trail 36--Lake Mary

Duration: 1.5 hours

Distance: 2 miles out-and-back

Difficulty: Easy

Trailhead: Begin behind Brighton Lodge

Elevation: Brighton 8755'; Lake Mary 9560'

Avalanche: Low

Map: Brighton 7.5' quadrangle

GPS Coordinates: Lake Mary/Dog Lake junction—12 T 0450653/4493152; Lake Mary—12 T 0450273/4493127

Dogs: No dogs allowed in Big Cottonwood Canyon

Introduction: Lake Mary is a glacial lake that sits on Brighton ski resort amidst other high elevation glacial lakes. This short snowshoe requires just over 800 feet of climbing and follows near a stream that drains from Lake Mary. In 1915 Lake Mary was enlarged and a 72 foot concrete dam was build to store the water from winter snowmelt for summer usage. The water from Lake Mary is used for culinary purposes in the Salt Lake Valley. Public access is unrestricted to the lake, as long as you don't get in the water. During the winter you may find the no swimming sign as a marker that you're looking at the lake, but the water will be covered with snow. The lake is easy to find as the dam isn't something you'd miss. The trip to Lake Mary spends time on the ski resort, but my favorite aspect is the quaint stream you find during the last .5 mile, the pleasant climb amidst the trees, and the trek up to the dam.

How to Get There: Brighton ski resort sits at the top of Big Cottonwood Canyon. Park in the far southern corner of the parking lot, next to Brighton Lodge. The trail begins to the south of this lot.

Trail Description: Exit the south side of the parking lot passing by the lodge pool. Cross to the left side of a pile of granite boulders and cliffs and climb east behind the Wasatch Mountain Club lodge, up through the trees, next to the stream, and parallel to the ski run. During summer months the trail to Lake Mary winds up the ski run, but during the winter it is best to stay off the run and head up the mountain through the trees. Stay to the right of the slope. About .5 mile up the mountain you will run into another face of granite cliffs slightly west of the run. Stay to the left/east of the cliffs, hugging the right side of the run as you climb up and around these cliffs. Head west to get atop of this outcropping. About 100 feet or so above the top of the cliff, you'll find the summer trail, which is more distinguishable. It winds to the west cutting perpendicular to the fall line. Not far from here you'll find a sign that signals a turn to the left for Dog Lake or a right to Lake Mary. Head right where you'll find the trail crosses a bridge and then snuggles next to the stream as it climbs up to the dam. The trail twists below the dam heading up the south side to the top. Lake Mary sits above the dam. To return to the parking lot, just retrace your steps, feeling free to cut off trail when a nice powder field opens up.

Other: You can continue on to Lake Martha, Lake Catherine, and Sunset Peak if you wish. Dog Lake is also an option. You can easily hit both Lake Mary and Dog Lake in the same trip.