



Chapter 5. How to Use this Guide

This book is divided into two sections. The first is informational and will introduce you to the sport of snowshoeing, dressing, safety, and other items of importance. The second section is full of the best-loved snowshoe trails of the Wasatch Range. Each chapter covers a different area and holds information you may find helpful in that area.

At the beginning of each of these sections is an introduction to help orient you. Information on public transportation will be listed here when it's applicable. The "warm-up" section provides ideas for where to go for refreshment or lodging when you come off the trail.

Each trip includes the following information:

Duration: The time listed is the approximate time it will take the average snowshoer who hikes at 1 to 2 miles per hour to make it out and back on the trail. Children will inevitably take more time to dawdle on the trails, as will those who are not in the best of shape. Remember that the amount of time you spend on the trail will be determined by how often you stop to smell the fir trees and how long you spend at overlooks.

Distance: The trail length has been tracked using GPS technology. Routes are not always the same each winter as conditions and landscape vary, but they should be close. Often, on an out-and-back trail, you can cut distance off the trail by shortcutting down powder-filled slopes or by turning back early.

Difficulty: The trails are rated as: easy, moderate, or difficult, depending on the elevation gain and length of a trail.

Elevation: The elevation for both the trailhead and the destination is included. Combined with the mileage, you can determine generally how steep the trail is. Six hundred feet of elevation gain over 2 miles won't wear you out, but 600 feet of elevation gain in a half mile is another story. When appropriate, I have added elevation readings for other pertinent points along the route. Elevation was determined by GPS readings and USGS topographic maps. Note that lower-elevation trails are best in midwinter during the heaviest snow pack. Pre-season or spring snowshoeing will require the higher-elevation climbs in order to find good snow pack.

Avalanche: The steep and rugged nature of the Wasatch Range requires that you gauge the safety of each path. The three possible ratings are as follows: low— few or no known avalanches in the past; known avalanche path—those trails that cross below paths where avalanches have run before; and high—the trail crosses numerous steep slopes in the 35- to 40-degree range and regularly sees sliding. When the avalanche report says conditions are low for avalanches, tackling a trail with known avalanche paths may be just fine. When avalanche safety is in question, choose a route with a Low rating.

Map: Listed is the name of the USGS 7.5-minute map. In instances where that map is too small to cover the entire trail, another map is suggested.

GPS Coordinates: GPS coordinates are given using the UTM (Universal Transverse Mercator) system. UTM is a linear, square system that is fairly easy to plot on maps. The datum used is NAD27 CONUS. Most USGS topo maps use NAD27. Make sure, if you are using the GPS coordinates given, that your GPS is set to the same datum .

Trail Uses: This section points out which trails are most appropriate for children and indicates whether dogs are allowed.

Introduction: The introduction provides a brief overview of the trail, the area, the views, and, when appropriate, historical or geological trivia. It also lists whether the trail is open to other types of users or vehicles (this last section should be moved to Trail Uses – what do you think?).

How to Get There: This section provides instruction on how to get to the trailhead. At the beginning of each canyon section, directions to the mouth of the canyon have been given. The directions for each trip assume you start from the mouth of the appropriate canyon.

Trail Description: The trail description is the key to the route. It takes you from the trailhead and then provides information that will help you to keep your route to the final destination.

Options: Some trails have additional options for completing, prolonging, or shortening the trail.