

Hiking in Central Montana

Crown Mountain

5.8 miles to 8.5 miles

Moderate

Overview:

Offering dramatic views of Crown Mountain, Haystack Butte and waterfalls; this trail keeps hikers' eyes as busy as their feet. Follow Trail 270 for 2.9 miles up the drainage of Whitewater Creek, traversing scattered forests of pine and fir before reaching a low saddle and the Petty Creek Trail (Trail 232). This is also a good place to spot bighorn sheep. Several add-on trips are available from this point. Continuing on the Crown Mountain Trail from this point, hikers can access a high pass after a half mile of strenuous climbing. In this area and hikers can view the west side of Crown Mountain along with occasional mountain goat sightings. Hikers desiring a loop hike can take Crown trail number 232 from the low saddle. This trail will lead 3.3 miles before reaching Petty Ford trail number 244. The Petty Ford trail leads direction to Double Falls camping area after 2.3 miles just off of Benchmark Road.

Directions:

Take I-15 North from Great Falls 20.4 miles to exit 290. Take Montana 200/US 89 North 20.4 miles merging slightly right onto Montana 21 West. Turn left onto US 287 and travel 1.3 miles to Augusta. From Augusta, take the Benchmark road west about 14 miles. At the junction with the Beaver Willow road number 233, turn left and follow the road for 5.3 miles. Turn left off the main road in the Crown Mountain parking area, which is marked. Go straight down this road for 250 feet; there is a small parking area on the right side of the road. To get to the trail, walk paralleling the main Benchmark road. Pass the green pipe gate and cross the bridge over Whitewater creek. After the bridge, turn onto the trail marked by the small sign nailed to a tree on the right.