



HORTON PEAK

Map Located on Page 191

Coordinates

Trailhead:

N 43° 57.435'
W 114° 46.904'

Horton Peak:

N 43° 57.942'
W 114° 44.904'

Distance: 6.8 miles out-and-back

Total Elevation Gain: 2,750 feet

Difficulty: Very Strenuous

Elevation Range: 7,150 to 9,900 feet

Topographic Map: Alturas Lake, Horton Peak

Time: 4 to 5 hours

Season: Mid July through early October

Water Availability: None

Cautionary Advice: There is no reliable water source along this trail. Make sure to pack plenty.

Information: Sawtooth National Recreation Area
(208) 774-3000

Restroom: No

HORTON PEAK

Horton Peak sits on the western perimeter of the White Cloud Mountain Range and provides one of the most spectacular views to the east face of the Sawtooth Mountains available. The 9,986-foot peak towers 3,400 feet above Sawtooth Valley, and when you peer west the views extend over the valley floor to the lofty crest of the serrated Sawtooths. One of the better vistas is to the glaciated canyons emptying into the three big lakes on the Sawtooth's perimeter—Alturas, Pettit and Yellow Belly.

And if these views were not enough to make the sweat worthwhile, just take a gander east. Below Horton Peak, the narrow canyon of the South Fork of Champion Creek unfolds to a seemingly endless cluster of peaks. Lost Creek and a boomerang-shaped unnamed lake are directly north of Horton Peak, while further away, the Salmon River Mountains pierce the horizon. With a good map, you could spend hours on Horton Peak identifying this geographical wonderland.

The steep hike is along Horton's west face, so it catches the intense sun on

summer afternoons. It is best to hike in the morning or on cool days later in the afternoon when the hot sun is appreciated. The lower sections of the hike cross sagebrush hillsides, while the upper segments are more forested. There are many aspen at the lower elevations and their leaves usually turn a bright shade of gold in late September. Mid to late June may be the best time to visit the peak, when the lofty summits in the Sawtooth Mountains are covered in snow.

TRAILHEAD DIRECTIONS

From the intersection of Hwy. 21 and Hwy. 75 in Stanley, drive south on Hwy. 75 for 15.1 miles and turn left (east) onto Valley Road (FR 194). Continue 4.5 miles to a signed junction for the Horton Peak Lookout and turn left again. Continue 1 mile to the end of the road and trailhead.

THE HIKE

From the trailhead, marked with a “no motor vehicles” sign, ascend through aspen and sagebrush and weave through several switchbacks. At .4 mile, a few Douglas firs and interesting rock outcroppings offer a shaded destination for a short hike with good views west to the Sawtooth Mountains.



Horton Peak Lookout

The trail continues its ascent through sagebrush and climbs 200 feet through, the first of five switchbacks at .7 mile and passes another stand of Douglas firs and rock outcroppings perched high above Sawtooth Valley. At 1.4 miles, the trail enters dense forest for the first time and ascends again through five more switchbacks. As you gain elevation, the big lakes along the Sawtooth Mountain's eastern perimeter are visible.

At 1.7 miles, crest a flat knoll and descend a small hillside into a grove of aspen. The trail traverses a sagebrush hillside and ascends a steep 600 feet through many short switchbacks. At 2.5 miles, the trail flattens for a short respite and the tree-covered apex of Horton Peak is seen ahead. From here, continue in and out of forest through eight more switchbacks gaining more than 600 feet and finally arrive at the tiny crest of Horton Peak. On top, an unused fire lookout constructed in 1938 provides shade to enjoy the sensational vistas.

