

Bear Lake Winter Trail Guide



Exploring the outdoors in winter is undeniably magical. It is also challenging. Use this map and guide to plan a safe, enjoyable trip.

Tips for a Great Hike

Navigating in Winter Can Be Hard
Park trails are not marked or maintained for winter use. You can’t rely on others’ tracks—they may have been headed somewhere else or made a wrong turn. To find your way in winter:

- Have and know how to use a topographic map and compass. When used correctly, GPS units can also be helpful.
- Discuss your plans with park staff at visitor centers and trailhead kiosks.

Be Avalanche Aware
Avalanches can be easily triggered by back-country travelers.

- Visit avalanche.state.co.us/ for the latest avalanche forecast. If danger is high, consider staying home.
- Avoid traveling in steep gullies and on ridge tops. Open slopes of 30 to 45 degrees can be loaded with dangerous masses of snow.
- If you choose to travel in these areas, carry an avalanche beacon, probe, and shovel. However, don’t take extra risks just because you are carrying this equipment.
- If caught in an avalanche, make swimming motions and try to stay on top of the snow.

Pay Attention to Weather and Conditions
Expect snow, gusty winds, and cold temperatures at any time. Winter days are short—start early and plan conservatively.

Streams and lakes can have thin ice and be very dangerous. If you choose to cross, first test your steps with a pole.

Only travel off-trail if you are extremely familiar with the area. Snow-covered landscapes look very different than in summer. Snow can be deep once you are off-trail.

Watch for Hypothermia
When your body loses heat faster than it can produce it, your body temperature begins to drop. This is an emergency medical condition called hypothermia. It is serious and can be fatal.

Symptoms include shivering, drowsiness, exhaustion, loss of coordination, impaired judgment, and slurred or incoherent speech.

Wear warm, quick-drying layers of clothes. Stay dry. Take frequent stops to warm up. If symptoms occur, warm the chilled person with dry clothing and warm, non-alcoholic liquids. Get back to your car, and promptly seek medical attention.

Bring the Right Gear

- ✓ Wear layers of synthetic or wool clothing that wick moisture.
- ✓ Take extra layers of clothing (socks included).
- ✓ Bring windproof outer layers, a warm hat, and warm gloves or mittens.
- ✓ Wear sunglasses and sunscreen. Sunlight can damage your eyes and skin even on cold days.
- ✓ Drink lots of water and eat high-energy snacks.

Follow the Rules, Practice Good Etiquette
Sledding is not allowed at Bear Lake. Please go to the Hidden Valley Snowplay Area, the only place in Rocky where sledding is permitted.

Don’t walk or snowshoe in ski tracks: it creates dangerous conditions for skiers.

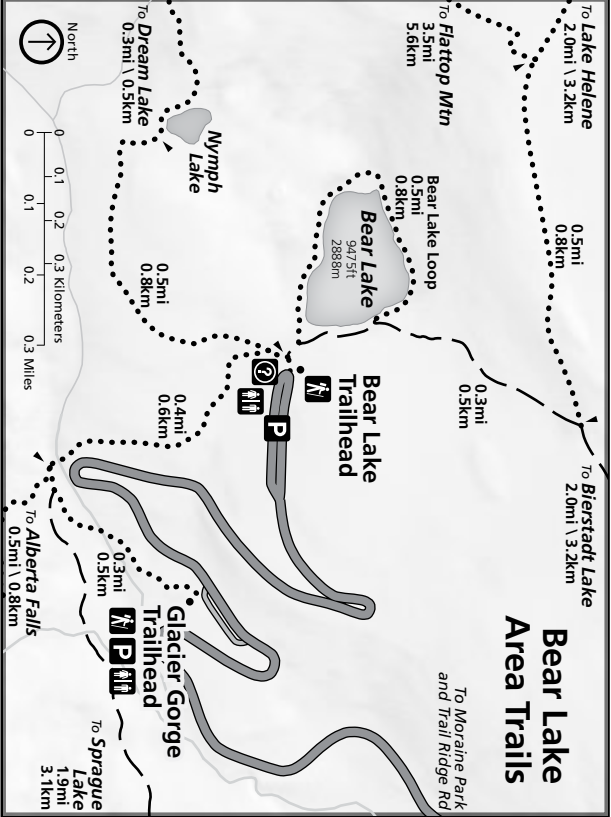
You must be in control at all times and let others know when you’re approaching them. Yield to those traveling faster than you. Pass with care.

For More Information

Park Information	(970) 586-1206 or www.nps.gov/romo
Trail Ridge Road Status.....	(970) 586-1222
Emergencies	911. Tell the dispatcher you are in Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado

Bear Lake Corridor Trails

Rocky can be busy on winter weekends. Congestion on roads, in parking areas, and along popular trails is possible. Parking areas can fill by mid-morning. Consider carpooling to the trailhead.



DESTINATION	DISTANCE	ELEVATION	GAIN
one way from nearest TH	mi	ft	m
Alberta Falls	0.8	1,300	49
Bear Lake Loop	0.5	0.8	20
Bierstadt Lake	2.3	3,700	-34
Cub Lake	2.3	3,700	165
Dream Lake	0.8	1,300	425
Emerald Lake	1.5	2,400	605
Fern Lake	3.8	6,100	1,375
Lake Helene	2.9	4,700	1,215
Mills Lake	1.8	2,900	750
Nymph Lake	0.5	0.8	225
Sprague Lake Loop	0.5	0.8	20
The Loch	2.1	3,400	302
The Pool	2.5	4,000	75

All Glacier Gorge trails can be accessed from Bear Lake. Add 0.1 miles to trail distance.

Shuttle buses do not operate in winter.

High risk avalanche areas are marked, but avalanches can happen almost anywhere in this area.

