

Mountaintop Adventures

Big Bear

Adventure #4: Gold Fever Trail

Take this scenic auto tour through Holcomb Valley north of Big Bear Lake. Named for an early prospector and miner, this remote valley makes you feel like you're in the old west. (Many Westerns were filmed here!). Site of the biggest gold strike in Southern California in 1859, you can still find a few historic buildings and cemeteries. Pick up an auto tour guide at the Discovery Center.

Directions: On Highway 38 between Fawnskin and the Discovery Center, turn north on Forest Road 2N09. This becomes Polique Canyon Road and joins Forest Road 3N16, the Gold Fever Trail. The route continues east and comes out at the north end of Baldwin Lake.

Distance, time and difficulty: The auto tour is 12.3 miles. Plan on 2-4 hours to enjoy all the stops. This unpaved road can be rough, especially at the both ends.

Season: spring, summer, and fall (check for road conditions during wet seasons).

Points of Interest: Hangman's Tree, Pygmy Cabin, Ross' grave, stamp mill, views of Baldwin Lake.

Adventure #5: Cougar Crest Hike

For the best views of Big Bear Lake, take this short trail along a ridge of Bertha Peak. The trail climbs gently through pinyon pines, junipers, and scattered Jeffrey pines. After two miles it meets the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT). You can continue on the PCT for almost 40 miles through the Big Bear area!

Directions: The Cougar Crest Trailhead is on Highway 38, 2.3 miles east of Fawnskin.

Distance, time and difficulty: two miles to the junction with the Pacific Crest Trail; 1.5 hours. The trail is moderately strenuous—bring plenty of water!

Season: year round- this south facing slope is often free of snow in winter.

Points of Interest: views of Big Bear Lake and San Gorgonio Wilderness, and the Pacific Crest Trail.



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Adventure #6: Alpine Pedal Path

For a quick introduction to the lake environment, walk the Alpine Pedal Path on the north shore of Big Bear Lake. Stroll through pine trees and open meadows close to the water's edge. This popular path is also open to bike riders, joggers, and rollerbladers.

Directions: Park at either Meadow's Edge Picnic Area or Stanfield Cut-off on the north shore of Big Bear Lake.

Distance, time and difficulty: 2.5 miles, 1 to 2 hours, easy, paved path.

Season: All year, but in winter the nearby Meadow's Edge Picnic Area and Serrano Campground are closed to protect eagle roosting areas.

Points of Interest: wet meadows, junipers, sagebrush, and wildflowers (please stay on the path!), pelicans and other water birds in the lake.

