

## Lookout Mountain Trails

A beautiful eight mile loop can be found in the Ochoco Mountains of central Oregon. The loop begins from the Independent Mine Trailhead and climbs through a cool forest of Douglas-fir, grand fir, and subalpine fir. About a mile later as you slowly climb out of the forest, the trail reaches a beautiful late spring flower-laden shrub land. The trail winds through a few pockets of trees, and finally reaches the top of Lookout Mountain, which is actually a long ridge top full of great vistas, and occasional collections of spring flowers.

It can be reached by following Highway 26 out of Prineville, Oregon for 16 miles, and then turning right onto NE Ochoco Ranger Station Road. That road changes into Canyon Creek Road and after travelling on that for six miles, you turn right onto Lookout Mountain Road and arrive at the trailhead in less than two miles.



*An incredible view of the central Cascades to the west from the top*

Trees you are likely to see are western larch, lodgepole and ponderosa pine, grand and subalpine fir, Douglas-fir, western juniper, and quaking aspen. Two flowers we saw blooming on a late May day were Indian Paintbrush and Mulesear Wyethia.

As weather permits you are likely to see mountain bicyclists, and possibly people on horses. This is probably a good day hike area. Bring plenty of water as the only running water I saw was small Brush Creek fed by a few springs halfway through the loop.

There were a few patches of snow on the trail in late May, so it may be a great early season warm-up for those summer backpack trips.



*Some of the spire-like subalpine fir you are likely to see*



*Western larch, fairly common in the Ochocos*



*Indian Paintbrush*



*Mulesear Wyethia*



*On the Lookout Mountain ridge*



*On the ridge looking south towards the Maury Mountains*



*A snow cabin near the top*



*Transition zone between dense forest and open ridgetop*

