

Pine Mountain

- Trip Name: Pine Mountain
- Trip Length: 4 miles out-and-back
- Trip Time: 2 hours
- Best time to visit: Spring to early fall
- Difficulty rating: 8
- Views: 8
- Wilderness experience: 8
- Recommended activities: Day hike
- Best for: Hikers
- Restroom: At trailhead
- Permit: n/a



Trip Technical Data

- Trailhead: Pine Mountain Observatory
- Trailhead Elevation: 6,280 feet
- Elevation of Pine Mountain: 6,509 feet
- Elevation Gain: 1,400 feet

Driving Directions from Bend:

Travel time: 1 hour

Head east on Highway 20 for just over 26 miles. At mile post 26 you will pass the closed Millican store on your right. One quarter mile after mile post 26 turn right onto County Road 2017 marked by a green sign pointing to Pine Mountain Observatory. Follow County Road 2017, which turns into Forest Road 2017, for 8.2 miles to the Pine Mountain Observatory. There is a parking area on the right side of the road, across the road from the observatory.

Trail Description:

The hike to the summit of Pine Mountain is relatively easy. However, there is no established trail to follow so basic off trail travel skills are necessary for this hike. Pine Mountain is one of the last major mountains before Central Oregon becomes a mostly flat desert landscape. This hike will pass over three (or more) open summits with views back towards Bend and the Cascade Mountains and also east over the Central Oregon high desert.

Starting from the parking area head towards the observatory's telescopes where you will find a small trail leading to the top of the hill behind the telescopes. This short trail to the top of this hill is the only real trail on this hike. From the top of the first hill continue straight over the back and down the other side of the hill to a Forest Road. Getting up and over this first hill is only about 0.3 mile.

Once down on the Forest Road follow it for 0.6 mile to a point where the road takes a sharp right turn and begins to go downhill. At this point head to the left (northeast) into the woods and follow a saddle towards your next small climb. After leaving the forest Road you will reach the summit of a craggy peak in about a half mile. As you approach this summit the easiest path around it is to the right (south) of the peak. You could climb to the top of the crags for a good view or you could wait for the view from the summit of Pine Mountain.

After crossing the high point near the crags you will drop into another saddle and then climb 250 vertical feet in 0.3 mile to the summit of Pine Mountain. Atop the summit of Pine Mountain you will find a broken wooden summit marker and a lone pine tree. The views from here are endless in all directions. On a clear day the Cascade Mountains to the west are particularly spectacular.

After summiting Pine Mountain you have a couple options. The first is to turn around and follow your path back to your car the way you came. The second is to continue along the ridge line to the next craggy outcrop. If you choose to continue on you will drop 150 vertical feet before gaining 100 vertical feet more to another fantastic viewpoint on top of the second craggy outcrop of the day. If you choose to turn around at the summit of Pine Mountain your hike will be about 4 miles and if you choose to continue to the second crag outcrop your hike will be about 5 miles.