



SECRET (CECRET) LAKE - ALTA



Rating: Easy Hike

Length: 1-2 hours (1 - 2 miles)

Gear: Standard Hiking Gear

Maps: BRIGHTON, UT

Season: Summer, Fall

Waypoints:

Catherine Pass Trailhead

12T 447647mE 4492638mN

N40° 34' 58" W111° 37' 07"

Secret Lake Trailhead

12T 448119mE 4492085mN

N40° 34' 41" W111° 36' 47"

Trail

12T 448090mE 4492053mN

N40° 34' 39" W111° 36' 48"

Stay Left

12T 447869mE 4491689mN

N40° 34' 28" W111° 36' 57"

Secret Lake

12T 447393mE 4491386mN

N40° 34' 18" W111° 37' 17"

Hype

Secret Lake, or Cecret Lake as it is also known, is one of the premier wildflower hikes in Little Cottonwood. The hike is short, family-friendly, and usually bursting with color during wildflower season. At about a mile round trip, this is a hike even young children can likely do part or most of and have a good time. Older children will love clambering around on the small boulders that line the trail

The lake is situated at the base of Sugarloaf Peak and Devils Castle, which provide a stunning background to its crystal clear waters. Though anytime is an excellent time to visit, morning light is my personal favorite.

Unfortunately the areas beauty has created some problems in recent years. There are very few parking spots at the Secret Lake Trailhead and the Catherine Pass Trailhead (0.5 miles down the road from the Secret Lake Trailhead). These fill up early on weekends. By 7 or 7:30 in the morning, they will be full or nearly full! As of 2018, Alta is running the Sunnyside lift to help with congestion. There is a fee to use the ski lift, but the lift takes you from the larger parking lot at the base of Alta to the Catherine Pass Trailhead parking lot. It makes getting started hiking much less frustrating.

Tags: *wildflowers, family friendly, beginner, access: 2wd*

Trailhead

Little Cottonwood Canyon is on the east side of the Salt Lake City Valley. Get there by following I-215 to the east, taking exit 6 off the interstate and heading east toward the mountains.

Follow 6200 South which becomes Wasatch Blvd for 1.8 miles to the stop light and signs for Big Cottonwood Canyon. Continue south (straight) through the light an additional 2.3 miles to a junction and light. Stay left here, reaching the mouth of Little Cottonwood Canyon in an additional 1.6 miles.

From the mouth of Little Cottonwood, travel up the canyon 11.2 miles to the signed Secret Lake Trailhead parking, just before the Albion Basin Campground.

Note: The last section of road is dirt road, but passable by all vehicles. Beware a few drainage ruts that cross the road!

Route

Note: If you parked at the first parking lot (Catherine Pass), continue walking up the road 0.5 miles to the campground booth and gate.

From the parking area, the trail takes off from the campground booth/gate. It is well marked, wide, and easy to follow. The area is crisscrossed with trails that go to the campground and Albion Basin. Stay on the most used trail. The interpretive markers along the way offer some history and geology information and are worth the read.

After 15-20 minutes, the trail begins a steeper path up to Secret Lake proper. The setting is sublime, and an excellent break/lunch spot. Bring bug repellent; bugs can be troublesome around the lake at times.

