



## SUNSET PEAK - BIG COTTONWOOD CANYON



**Rating:** Moderate Hike

**Length:** 3-4 hours (6 miles)

**Gear:** Standard Hiking Gear

**Maps:** BRIGHTON, UT

**Water:** Filterable at lakes along the way.

**Season:** Summer, Fall

**Waypoints:**

Trailhead	12T 450566mE 4494340mN N40° 35' 54" W111° 35' 03"
Trail	12T 450661mE 4494223mN N40° 35' 50" W111° 34' 59"
Dog Lake Jct	12T 450580mE 4493358mN N40° 35' 22" W111° 35' 02"
Lake Mary-Twin Lakes Jct	12T 450500mE 4493366mN N40° 35' 23" W111° 35' 06"
Jct - Left to Lake	12T 449905mE 4492595mN N40° 34' 57" W111° 35' 31"
Lake Catherine	12T 449766mE 4492456mN N40° 34' 53" W111° 35' 37"
Top of Pass - Left	12T 449337mE 4492388mN N40° 34' 51" W111° 35' 55"
Jct - Left	12T 449450mE 4492040mN N40° 34' 39" W111° 35' 50"
Jct - Right (Down hill)	12T 449359mE 4492052mN N40° 34' 40" W111° 35' 54"
Sunset Peak	12T 449752mE 4491982mN N40° 34' 38" W111° 35' 37"

## Hype

The aptly-named Sunset Peak is THE place to see a sunset over the canyons. From the peak, the sunset of Brighton and surrounding ridges are spectacular. The hike to the summit passes Lake Mary, Lake Martha, and Lake Catherine en route, so there is much to see and do along the way. Being a camera and a picnic, and make a full evening of the outing.

I had procrastinated visiting this summit because I had heard it was often quite busy. On the evening I visited, I had the mountain and most of the hike to myself. The sunset from the peak didn't disappoint!

**Tags:** *peak, hike, wildflowers, access: paved*

## Trailhead

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

Follow 6200 South which becomes Wasatch Blvd for 1.8 miles to the stop light and signs for Big Cottonwood Canyon.

Turn left at the light and reset your odometer.

Drive up Big Cottonwood Canyon 14 miles to the small community of Brighton. At the loop, go right, with Brighton Ski resort just ahead. Parking in the large parking lot near the main Brighton Ski Resort Building.

## Route

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### **To Lake Mary (1.25 miles one way)**

From the Brighton parking lot, go just right (south) of the main Brighton building. A path leads up the slope, then heads right and passes between large logs to become a single narrower track. The single track switchbacks up the hillside, crossing under the ski lifts, before heading more south. After a short steep section is a junction to Dog Lake.

Dog Lake is a recommended side trip and takes only a few minutes. At the intersection to Clayton Peak, stay right for Dog Lake.

From the Dog Lake junction, it is a couple of minutes to the Lake Mary/Twin Lakes junction. Stay left here, passing under the Lake Mary Dam, then up to the lake proper.

### **To Lake Catherine (1 mile from Lake Mary)**

From Lake Mary, the trail follows the shoreline south, then begins climbing. You can see Lake Martha below as the trail climbs, but it is not directly along the trail.

Past Lake Martha, the trail continues to climb steeply, leaves the trees, and the headwall of Catherine Pass comes into view. At the junction, left goes to Lake Catherine in a minute or two and is a nice side trip. For Sunset Peak, stay right.

### **To The Summit ( 1 mile from Lake Catherine)**

The trail soon climbs the steep rocky slope to Catherine Pass with glimpses into Little Cottonwood Canyon and the ridges to the south. The ridge is a mess of trails from here. Stay on the most used trail that climbs the ridge via a couple of switchbacks.

At the ridge, go right for a minute or two to another junction, then left at a signed junction for TR 157. From this junction, the trail stays closer to the ridgeline proper and is easy to follow — the trail winds around the east side of the peak and up to the summit.

Note: A more direct trail is visible from along the ridge that goes down to Lake Catherine. I recommend Catherine Pass on the way up for the views, but the well used social trail makes a quicker descend to the lake on the return.

