

Palace Butte

Overview

Accessed from the Maid of the Mist drainage, Palace Butte offers the chance to reach nearly 10000 feet of elevation and access the wonderful high alpine terrain of Hyalite. The skin track is gnarly by almost any measure, though ski crampons can help in firm conditions. Once you gain the first hanging valley, the terrain opens up to afford a variety of options from mild to wild. Spend some time up high to explore and find an untracked line. Viewing Palace Butte from below, it seems impossible to ascend; however, a circuitous route up the back provides a way to get up and ski down this unique geological formation.

HIGH ALPINE
ADVENTURE

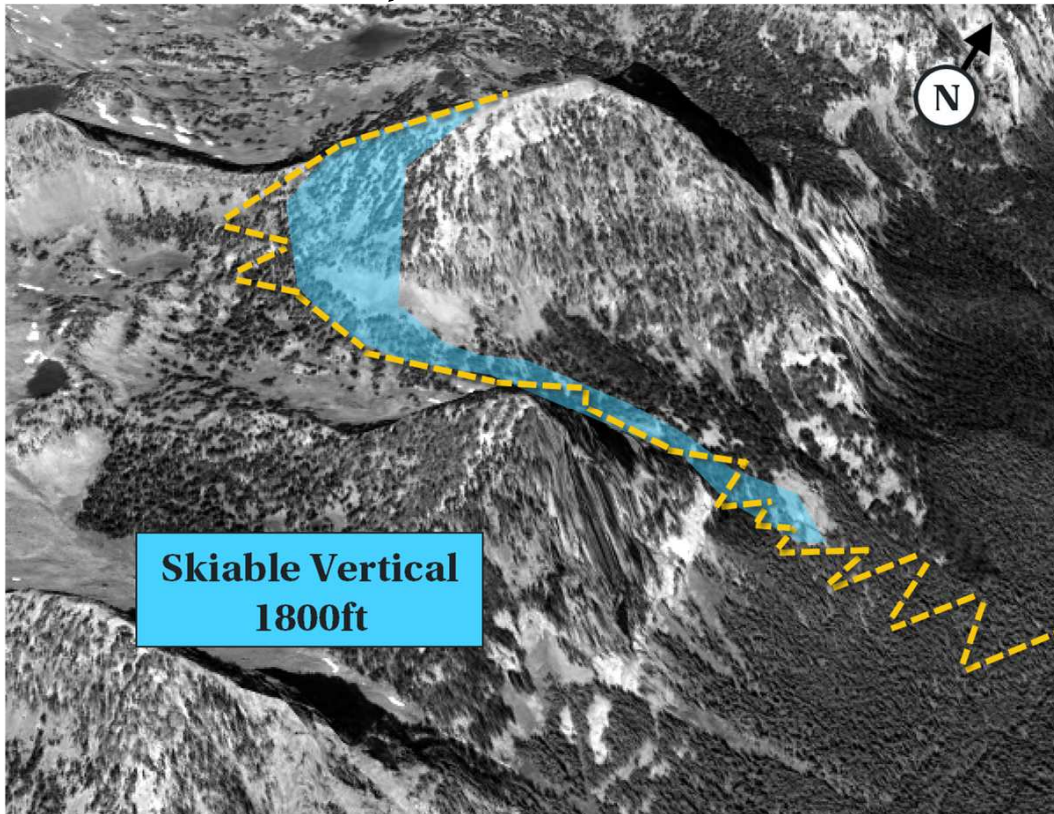
Avalanche Information

On this route, it's impossible to avoid avalanche terrain; however, your biggest hazard will likely be the steep trees that you must pass through during the skin track ascent and again on the way home. While the density of trees might lull you into thinking you aren't in risky terrain, the slope angles are formidable, and you certainly wouldn't want to get strained through forest in a slide. There is also some steeper terrain towards the summit that warrants some extra vigilance.

Getting There

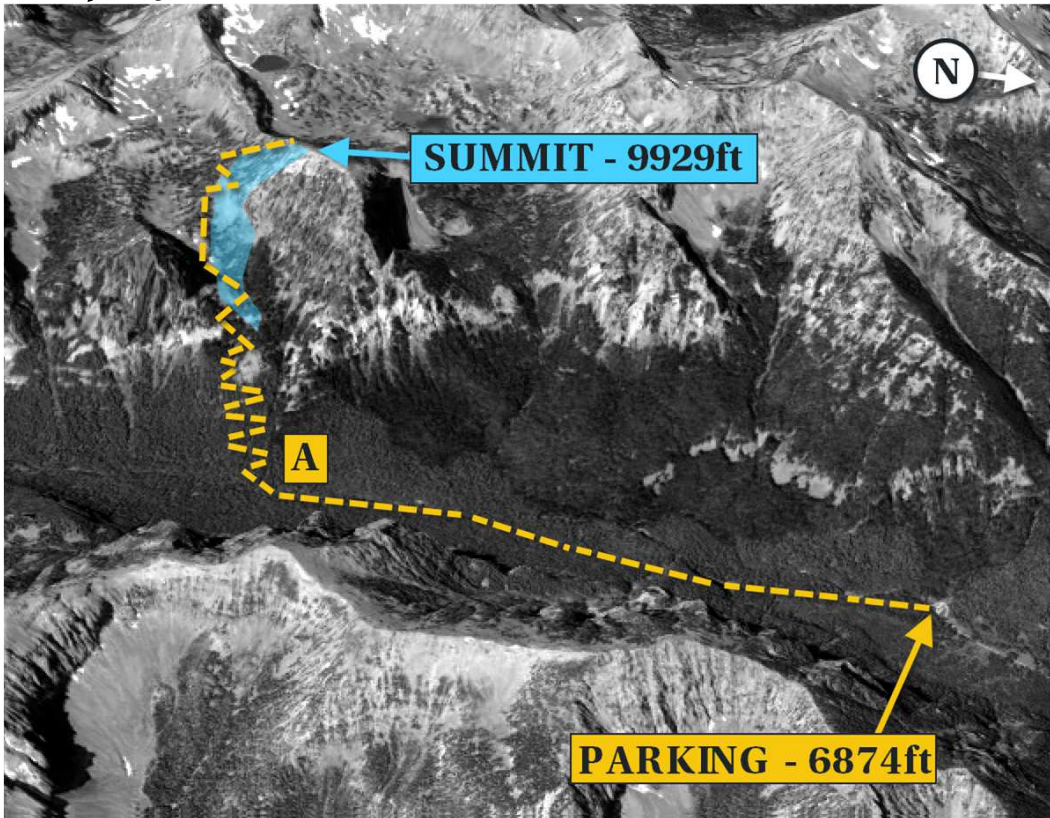
Take 19th Avenue south out of Bozeman and follow it as it bends around to the right and continues heading west. Look for the sign to Hyalite Canyon and take a left. Continue heading up Hyalite Canyon and follow the road all the way around and past the reservoir until it ends at the Hyalite Creek parking area. The skin track follows the summer hiking trail for Hyalite Creek before crossing the creek at (A).

Descent Close-Up



From the summit of Palace Butte, the topmost ridge has fantastic views in good weather but is usually too windblown for great skiing. Begin your descent where the snow depths starts to increase and enjoy the first pitch. Then descend down the basin through a few small pitches that lead you back the way you came up. Depending on conditions, you may be able to ski down the thick trees and get some more turns in, or else in low-snow conditions you may have to traverse or even down hike some to pick your way through it all until you reach the Hyalite Creek floor.

Map of the Area



The ascent to Palace Butte follows the summer hiking trail through the heavily treed glacial valley of Hyalite Creek. Follow the hiking trail cut until you reach tree line (A), then find a suitable creek crossing. After you cross the creek, stay left of a steep, treeless rollover and find your way up to the south side of the Maid of the Mist creek. Once you gain the first hanging valley, the terrain starts to open up considerably, and you can explore the Maid of the Mist drainage or start your ascent around to the back of Palace Butte.





Skiing Palace Butte

Palace Butte Statistics

Total Elevation Gain	3055 ft
Skiable Vertical	1800 ft
Slope Aspect	South to Northeast
Distance to Summit	~3.7 mi
Annual Snowfall	300–400 in
Terrain Danger	High
Skier Traffic	Medium

GPS Waypoints (Map Datum: WGS84)

Parking	45°26'51.54N, 110°57'44.64W
A	45°25'27.28N, 110°57'37.33W
Summit	45°25'15.44N, 110°58'39.00W