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Moonlight Lake, Inyo County

Fishing:

3/10

Hiking:

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Scenery:

6/10

Solitude:

9/10

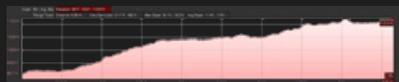
Distance:

6.98 mi 1-way

Map:



Elevation Profile 1:



Gallery:



Moonlight Lake - (Inyo County)

John Muir Wilderness

Pre 2010

Like 0



Getting There

The trailhead for this journey is located outside of [Bishop, California](#). The town of Bishop offers many dining and lodging opportunities so staying at a hotel one night before you begin might be a good idea. Pick up your wilderness permits at the [White Mountain Ranger Station](#) on the corner of North Main and East Yaney Street. Take route 168 that heads west and out of town to find the [Lake Sabrina trailhead](#). Parking is located about 1/2 mile from the trailhead so expect to park on the side of the road and hike some asphalt for a while.

The Hike

The hike to Moonlight Lake starts at the Lake Sabrina Trailhead and winds its way past Blue Lake, Dingleberry Lake, Topsy Turvey Lake and Drunken Sailor Lake, now known as simply "Sailor Lake". I recommend staying at Blue Lake on your first night to acclimate to the altitude and get some rest before continuing on to the other lakes. Once you pick up the trail past Blue Lake, you will pass the Emerald Lakes, Dingleberry Lake, Topsy Turvey Lake and eventually you will land at Sailor Lake. Because Moonlight Lake is encompassed on all sides by large boulders, Sailor Lake makes a much better spot to pitch your tent. In fact, other than the very north end of Moonlight Lake, I do not believe that there are many suitable camp sites in the Moonlight Lake vicinity. Aesthetically, Sailor Lake will be the better choice for setting up a camp site that will give you access to not only Moonlight Lake, but also Hungry Packer Lake, and ultimately Echo Lake.

The hike is moderate from Blue Lake to Sailor Lake and provides some exquisite views of the valley leading down to Lake Sabrina. I once got caught in a snow storm with plenty of thunder and lightning while trying to get out of Pee Wee Lake and rushed to our campsite at Hungry Packer Lake before my 9 foot flyrod turned into a deadly lightning rod.

The Fishing

The fishing at Moonlight Lake is fast action angling for small but very colorful Brook Trout. Every cast for me produced a fish. While I have studied fisheries biology and have been on numerous electroshock surveys, I generally do not recommend culling a fishery unless it is painfully obvious that it may help. In this case, I recommend culling the population at this particular lake due to the overpopulation of stunted Brook Trout. It may be that the shoreline and sub-surface stratum, littered with huge boulders, does not provide the best conditions for producing trout of any respectable size. In fact, it looks more like a lake on the moon than anything else. So, the taking a of a few trout for dinner will not hurt this fishery, in my opinion, as the spawning conditions seem to be really good. So, expect to land numerous fire-bellied Brook Trout while fishing here and eat a few with a clear conscience.

I recommend fishing the inlet stream, coming from Echo Lake, for small Brook Trout that require stealth and cunning for a challenge. The fishing at Echo Lake is excellent for large Rainbows and worthy of the hike.

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About

This site was created to provide information on fishing the lakes and streams in California's Sierra Nevada Mountains.

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