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# T H E S L E E P I N G G I A N T



**Photograph by  
Jamie Out**

**Location:  
Washington's  
North Cascades**

We tried to hike to Hidden Lake Lookout in the North Cascades one May, but the road was closed due to snow. A few weeks later, my friend Eric and I tried again, driving three hours from Vancouver, B.C., to the trailhead. Our two-wheel-drive Subaru made it up the bumpy old logging road, albeit slowly. For the first part of the 8-mile round-trip hike we were walking through evergreen forest. Then we popped out into alpine terrain, where in spring

and summer you find flower meadows or, in our case, snowy avalanche chutes.

I had done enough research to know that the weather would be clear and the risk of an avalanche was low, but we did have one scare while traveling up the valley. Some hikers above us had broken off a snow cornice, sending massive snowballs down the hill—several of them half the size of my body. We had to dodge them left and right, but thankfully we had a big enough line of sight to avoid them.

We continued trekking on a trail buried in snow. We got to one spot where we could see the fire lookout tower, but we weren't sure whether to dip down into the valley next to the lake or scramble across the side of the hill to reach it. One wrong step and we'd be sliding a long way down toward the water, but we decided to scramble across anyway to save time. There were a couple of slick patches, but we made it to the lookout in one piece.

Where they built the cabin—at nearly 7,000 feet—is a giant boulder field that's somehow on top of a peak. The boulders are big



enough to pitch your tent on, and because the rocks are dark, the snow had melted quickly so it was totally dry on top. When the light turned golden, I climbed to a higher perch to take this photo of Eric staring into the warm sun toward Mt. Baker. The hard work and sore feet disappeared when we were there on the mountain. I never remember the struggle when I'm on a summit. It's a euphoric moment capable of eliminating all pain.

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Vancouver, B.C.-based photographer Jamie Out can often be found scrambling up rocks or shooting through trees to share new perspectives on familiar scenes. Follow him on Instagram @jamieout.



STOP  
REST  
JUL

## Game Plan

Hikers heading to Hidden Lake Lookout ([fs.usda.gov](http://fs.usda.gov)) should pack lots of water and sunscreen, as well as crampons, a helmet, and an ice axe if you're there early in the season. Wearing long pants and sleeves is also recommended, as well as checking for ticks after your hike (Jamie found out the hard way). You can camp at the lookout's cabin, but Colonial Creek Campground (\$16; [nps.gov/noca](http://nps.gov/noca)), about 40 miles away, offers sites under fir trees right on the lake.

## Civilized Rewards

Grab a beer and tempura-battered Cascade oysters at the cedar-planked Buffalo Run Restaurant ([buffaloruninn.com](http://buffaloruninn.com)) in Marblemount. Burger patties range from venison, elk, and wild boar to alligator and even yak at times. Or save yourself for a Disco Lemonade, poutine with waffle fries, and a root-beer float (made from house-brewed root beer) at Aslan Brewing Company ([aslanbrewing.com](http://aslanbrewing.com)) in Bellingham.

▶ 48°30'N  
121°12'W