DAY TRIP TO MONTE CRISTO

From Granite Falls · Snohomish County, Washington

GOLD MINING

Photo: Junkyardsparkle, Wikimedia Commons, CC0

WALK-IN SITE

A ghost town in the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, reopened in 2016 after a mine-waste cleanup. Some land along the way is private.

Monte Cristo makes a full day from Granite Falls: about an hour's drive to Barlow Pass, then eight miles out and back on an old road. Plan on a bike or a long walk, a river crossing, and carrying every drop of water.

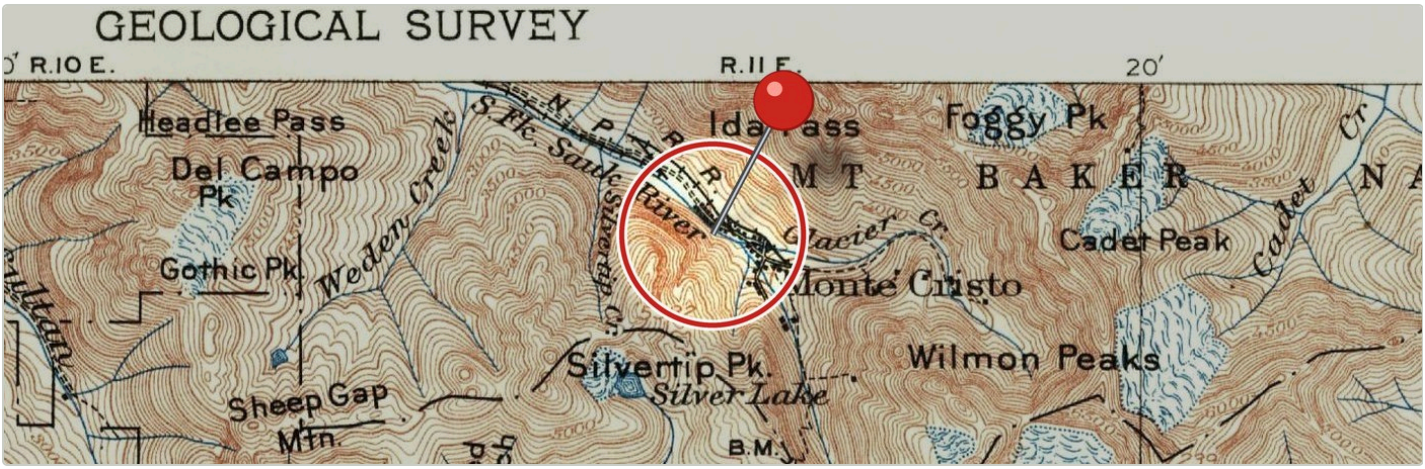
A SAMPLE DAY

☐ Morning	Drive from Granite Falls up the Mountain Loop Highway to Barlow Pass and display your pass.
☐ Late morning	Walk or ride the gated road, cross the South Fork Sauk, and pass the Weden House site.
☐ Midday	Lunch at the campground, then explore the townsite, Dumas Street and the concentrator foundations. Stay out of the mine tunnels.
☐ Afternoon	Back the same way to Barlow Pass and down the valley to Granite Falls.

Check the Darrington Ranger District for river and road conditions before you go.

WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

- **The townsite meadow.** Look northeast across the open ground to the cabin and the peaks behind it, as in the 2014 photo in the gallery.
- **The South Fork Sauk.** The footbridge at the townsite frames the river and the forest.
- **Then and now.** Bring the 1895 view from the concentrator switchback and try to find the same angle.
- **Peaks.** Cadet, Del Campo and Monte Cristo peaks show along the road in.



USGS topographic map, 1902 (public domain). The ring and pin mark the town.

DAY TRIP ESSENTIALS

DRIVE	31 mi, about 55 min each way from downtown Granite Falls. From Everett: 46 mi, about 1 h 20 min.
OPEN	The Forest Service lists no posted hours. The road is gated to cars and open to foot and non-motorized travel.
PARKING	Barlow Pass Trailhead. A valid Recreation Pass is required.
DISTANCE	About 4 miles each way from Barlow Pass. The old Weden House Station site is at 1.7 miles.
RIVER	No bridge over the South Fork Sauk, about a mile in. Low water in late summer makes the crossing easier.
RESTROOMS	A toilet at the Monte Cristo campground at the townsite. Hikers also report one at the Barlow Pass trailhead; bring your own paper.
WATER	Bring your own. Local water carries arsenic and heavy metals.
SEASON	The highway to Barlow Pass is gated at Deer Creek in winter and has reopened between mid-April and late May. Go between late spring and fall.
ON SITE	Posted signs ask you not to take or disturb artifacts and warn of leftover hazardous materials. Stay out of the rotting buildings and the mine tunnels.
WEBSITE	fs.usda.gov/r06/mbs/recreation/trails/old-monte-cristo-townsite-trail

BEFORE YOU GO

- Check the status with the land manager before you go; conditions change.
- Stay out of mine shafts, tunnels and unstable buildings.
- Leave artifacts where they lie. Removing them can be a crime.
- Carry water, a paper map and a charged phone; signal is often poor.

Coordinates 47.98556, −121.39389 · 47°59′08″N 121°23′38″W

Directions Google Maps

Full guide abandonedtowns.com/washington/monte-cristo/

Details checked October 2026. Hours, prices and access change: confirm before you go.