

Aspen Ranger District  
806 West Hallam  
Aspen, CO 81611  
(970) 925-3445  
(970) 925-5277- Fax



United States Department of Agriculture

### **CASTLE PEAK 14,265 feet (4347 meters)**

**LENGTH:** 6 ½ miles from paved road;  
1 ½ miles from Montezuma Basin

**ELEVATION GAIN:** 4,400 feet from paved road;  
1,800 feet from Montezuma Basin

**AVERAGE HIKING/CLIMBING TIME:**  
6 hours from paved road (on foot)

**USGS MAP(S):** Hayden Peak

**SKILL FACTOR:** All 14'ers within the Aspen  
District are for experienced mountaineers only.

**RECOMMENDED SEASON(S):**  
Late spring and summer

**ATTRACTIONS/CONSIDERATIONS:** Castle Peak is the highest summit in the Elk Mountains. The main route has a north aspect and always has snow. An ice axe and knowledge of how to use it is required.

**ACCESS:** Drive ½ mile west of Aspen on Highway 82 to the Roundabout. Turn right onto Castle Creek Road. Drive 13 ½ miles up the road (past Ashcroft). Take the right fork which leads to Pearl Pass and Montezuma Basin. Follow this road about ½ mile into a stand of Aspen trees and park. A high clearance 4WD vehicle can drive to the base of Castle Peak. The road is a very rough 4WD road.

**NARRATIVE:** From the Aspen trees you can either drive or walk along the 4WD road. 2 ½ miles up the road you come to the Pearl Pass junction. The right fork leading to Montezuma Basin is the route to the top of Castle Peak. Regardless of whether you are on foot or in a 4WD vehicle, you follow the road to its end at Montezuma Basin. From the road, climb southwest for ¾ miles gaining about 7500 feet in elevation to the top of the first bench. From this point you have two choices for the final ascent. The route up the bowl isn't too steep but it usually has snow. Turn left (southeast) and climb the ridge up scree and loose rock slopes and turn right toward the summit. It gets exposed near the top. Return the same way. The second way is to continue from the bench southwest and head for the saddle between Conundrum Peak and Castle Peak. The route is steep and may have ice and snow. From the saddle turn east and walk to the summit. Return the same way. Ice axes are recommended!

It is your responsibility to know the hazards involved in your activities and to use the proper safety procedures and equipment to minimize the inherent risks and hazards related to your activity. As a user of National Forest System Lands, you have significant responsibility for your personal safety during any activity you might pursue. The Forest Service installs signs and other information devices at various locations where conditions limit placement of signs or other specific warnings and necessitates the use of more general education efforts. Hazards are not limited to, but include: changing weather conditions, snow, avalanche, landslides and falling rock, caves, overlooks, falling trees or limbs, high or rushing water, contaminated water, wild animals, becoming lost or over exerted, hypothermia, remnants of mining and other activities involving excavation, tunnels, shafts, decaying structures and a variety of equipment, and changing road and trail conditions. You may also be exposed to unreasonable acts of others. **The Forest Service does not manage or control all of these occurrences.**

The peaks in the White River National Forest do not have designated routes to the top. The Forest Service is currently studying the present, user-created trails to determine the feasibility and desirability of designated routes. For further sources on information and routes to the peaks, please call the office at (970) 925-3445.

**IN CASE OF EMERGENCY CALL - PITKIN COUNTY SHERIFF - 920-5310**

