



# Hiking Adventure Guide

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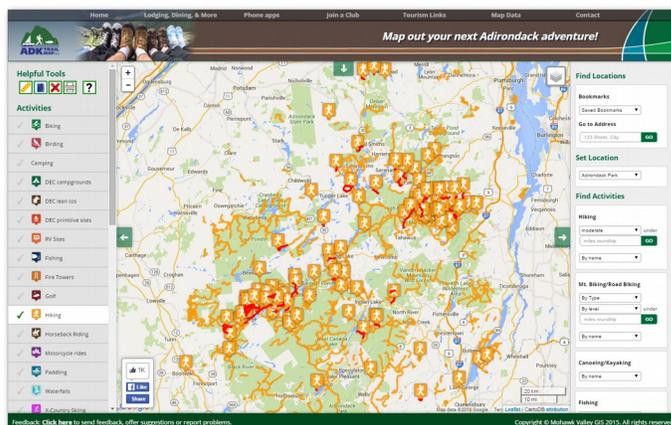
Whether you have hiking experience across the world or just in your backyard, there are an abundance of foot trails in the Adirondacks that will fit your interests and skill levels. To make the most out of your Adirondacks experience, we here at ADKTrailMap.com have assembled a guide to help you experience a safe and enjoyable journey while in the Adirondack Mountains. With content specific to the hiking trails in the Adirondacks, this guide provides info for hikers of all levels of availability. Whether you plan to summit a high peak or take a leisurely stroll around Gull Lake, remember to review this guide as you pack for your trip and before you begin your hike out on the trails.



Whiteface Mountain, Lake Placid

Although the vast majority of hikes go off without a hitch, preparation is critical to know what to do and have the supplies you need when something doesn't go as planned. Don't think anything will happen to you? The fact is that over 300 people require DEC Forest Ranger assistance *every year*. (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/regulations/43084.html>) **Be Prepared.**

The first stop for planning any hiking trip to New York's Adirondack Mountains should be to **ADKTrailMap.com**. From here you can plan your route by browsing trails by distance, difficulty, and location; seeing where to park for the trailhead; and exploring an array of other outdoor recreation activities.



ADKTrailMap.com is also available on mobile devices with limited features. For full functionality on smartphones, download our free 'Adirondack Trails' app from either the Google Play Store or the Apple App Store.

## Before You Start Hiking

### SAFETY

- **Tell someone where you're going and when you expect to return.**
- **Check the weather.**
  - If planning to summit a high peak, visit the NWS Burlington 'Mountain Forecast.' Weather at peaks is often quite different from lower ground: colder, windier, and rapidly changing.
  - Know what to do in the event of hazardous weather, particularly lightning:  
[http://rendezvous.nols.edu/files/Curriculum/research\\_projects/Risk%20Management%20Reports/NOLS%20Backcountry%20Lightning%20Safety%20Guidelines.pdf](http://rendezvous.nols.edu/files/Curriculum/research_projects/Risk%20Management%20Reports/NOLS%20Backcountry%20Lightning%20Safety%20Guidelines.pdf)
- **Check latest DEC updates for info about the trails.**
  - The DEC provides updates to alert you of any abnormal trail conditions: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7865.html>
- **Know when it's going to get dark.**
  - Have a plan to turn around by a certain time to avoid unplanned night hiking based on the duration of your hike, allowing for cushion time.
  - Use the US Naval Observatory's "Complete sun and moon data for one day" to get precise sunset and 'last light' times:  
[http://aa.usno.navy.mil/data/docs/RS\\_OneDay.php](http://aa.usno.navy.mil/data/docs/RS_OneDay.php)



Hiking at dusk is enjoyable, but only when planned and prepared. *Photo: Joe Parks*

### EQUIPMENT

To ensure a positive experience, PRIOR to leaving, use our helpful checklist to make sure no stone is left unturned when packing for the trip.

- WATER**
  - » 1 liter per 4 miles is a general rule – this varies by person's fitness level
  - » bring water purification tablets or a filter if back country camping
  - » pack extra water in the car for when you return
- FOOD**
- EXTRA CLOTHING (non-cotton)**
  - » dress in layers
  - » when cotton becomes wet, it loses its insulating properties, which can contribute to hypothermia, even in mild temperatures.
- HEADLIGHTS and/or FLASHLIGHTS**
  - » check that they work before heading out
  - » bring extra batteries
- FIRST AID SUPPLIES**
- MATCHES (waterproof) / CANDLES / LIGHTER**
- TOOLS / REPAIR KITS**
- EMERGENCY SHELTER**
  - » at a minimum, a garbage bag or poncho would suffice to help stay dry in the event of a sudden downpour
- SUN PROTECTION**
  - » sunscreen
  - » hat
  - » sunglasses
- BUG REPELLENT**
- MAPS / COMPASS / ADIRONDACK TRAILS PHONE APP**



**Balto's Tip:** To give you a better sense of the elevation change you will experience out on the trails, view the PDFs inside the "featured hikes" on ADKTrailMap.com and the Adirondack Trails app. In these PDFs you will find a map and elevation profile of the trail.

## When Out on the Trails

- **In case of any emergency:**

- know the DEC Forest Ranger Adirondacks Emergency Phone Line:

**518-891-0235**



- If you have cell service in the Adirondacks, dialing 911 may direct you to a 911 Dispatcher in a neighboring county or potentially even Vermont. If for any reason a 911 Dispatcher can not assist you, dial the DEC Forest Ranger Emergency Phone Line. DEC Forest Rangers are highly trained emergency responders knowledgeable of the geography and subtleties of the Adirondack Mountains.
- Be prepared with what steps to take if you become lost or disoriented.  
[http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/legal\\_protection\\_pdf/lostinwoods.pdf](http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/legal_protection_pdf/lostinwoods.pdf)

- **Stay on the trail**

- Follow your Adirondack Trails app with GPS enabled, however defer to the marked trail. DEC-maintained trails are indicated which are indicated by colored disk blazes, such as the yellow blaze at right
- Walk **through, not around** mud and puddles
  - Walking off trail or around puddles erodes the land and damages vegetation
- Do not create switchbacks, as these can further contribute to erosion
- When you reach a summit, stay along marked trails if symbolized by cairns (usually a pile of stones)
  - Several summits in the Adirondacks are not naturally “bald” and are only this way because of human disturbance.
  - Alpine vegetation is extremely fragile, and much of the vegetation you see at high peaks summits is regrowth thanks to the efforts of ecologists and alpine stewards. Please do not disrupt the progress of regrowth by staying on marked trails and not walking on alpine vegetation.
- Yield to oncoming hikers
- Be mindful of hikers behind you and allow them to pass



Grasses and mosses at the Mt. Marcy summit. Photo: Ari Epstei

- **Hike responsibly**

- When it comes to **anything** you bring with you on the trails, remember: “Pack-in, pack-out,” even if the items are biodegradable
- If there are no privies available, dispose of human waste by digging a 6” – 8” hole at least 150 feet from water or campsites.
  - Although it may seem unorthodox, consider packing out human waste as well if you have the proper equipment.



**Balto's Tip:** Looking for a bite to eat after hitting the trails? Not up for camping and would rather stay in a cozy cabin? Check out our business listings on ADKTrailMap.com and the Adirondack Trails App.

Follow the *Leave No Trace* principles:

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
3. Dispose of Waste Properly
4. Leave What You Find
5. Minimize Campfire Impacts
6. Respect Wildlife
7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors

(© Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics)

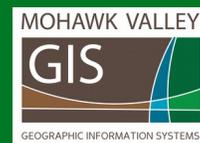


### **Please Do Not Solely Rely on Electronic Technology.**

When doing anything out on the trails, we urge you take a map, a compass, and know how to use them. We offer an online interactive map that allows you to zoom in print your own map. We also offer a wealth of downloadable PDFs about hiking, fishing, camping, birding, and more.

For smartphones, our Adirondack Trails app is GPS-enabled. Once downloaded to your smartphone, the app provides a happy marriage of old technology (maps and compasses) and new. It does not require cell phone service. Unlike a paper map, the app will show you exactly where you are: on or off the trail. Both maps and apps have their limitations. Use together, with common sense, and enjoy the beauty of the Adirondacks with confidence.

Find more helpful tips for an enjoyable Adirondacks trip from Balto at [ADKTrailMap.com](http://ADKTrailMap.com).



**ADKTrailMap is managed by Mohawk Valley GIS in Utica, NY**

Mohawk Valley GIS  
114 Genesee St, Floor 3  
Utica, NY 13502

*Questions or Comments?*

Phone: (315) 624-9545  
Email: [balto@MohawkValleyGIS.com](mailto:balto@MohawkValleyGIS.com)