Scenic and Destination Hikes
Adirondack High Peaks

Mount Marcy

Starting Point: Heart Lake, from Adirondak Loj Rd.

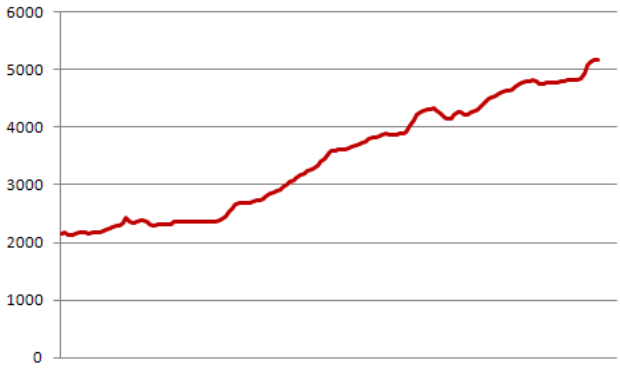
Length: a 14 mile round trip

Difficulty: Difficult

2-D view



Elevation profile (ft.)



Mount Marcy is New York's highest peak at 5344 feet (1629 meters) and as such, a very crowded peak in the summer months.

The mountain is named after former governor William L. Marcy, who authorized the environmental survey that explored the area including its highest peak, known at that time as Tahawus. "Tahawus" is an Indian word that means "cloud splitter;" the local Indians, however, actually had no name for this mountain - the name Tahawus was given to the mountain by white settlers of the area. The first recorded ascent of Mount Marcy was in 1837. The party was looking for the source of the East Fork of the Hudson River. Today the ascent is easier due to existing trails that require no technical skills, allowing ascent and descent to be made in a day.[1]

The shortest and most frequently used route up the mountain is via the Van Hoevenberg Trail, which starts at the Adirondak Loj near Heart Lake. From there it is 7.4 miles to the summit, a lengthy roundtrip which can nevertheless be done in a day. This route is included here.

The view is most likely the most outstanding in eastern North America with only one of the other 45 major peaks being totally hidden while the summits of 43 are clearly visible. The view of the Great Range falling off into the distance to the east is most impressive as is the panorama of the MacInyre range and Algonquin laid out to the west. To the north there is an impressive array of smaller peaks with the Whiteface and its small sibling Ester dominating the background. To the south and south west one gets a superb view of the wild area of the park with close up views of Grey & Skylight and the many tailless peaks far off in the distance. On a clear day one can see Mont Royal in Montreal to the north

and to the east, the Green Mountains of Vermont with Camel's Hump clearly discernable. On a clear winter's day one can see the White Mountains of New Hampshire poking up far to the South East.[2]

Marcy can easily be described as one of the most visited remote peaks in the world. It lies well over 7 miles from the nearest trailhead, and even the easiest trail can only be described as wet, rough and in sections quite steep. It can see weather that can rival the blows of New Hampshire's Mt. Washington and is usually snow-covered from October to May. Despite the length and quality of the trail, the peak sees many thousands of people summit each year. It makes for a fairly hard one day trip in the summer with an early start and late finish; most people opt for at least a partial walk in to the many camping areas nearer the peak and do it the next day.[2]

Experienced hikers: 6-7 hours to the summit. Not recommended for children or out of shape hikers.

[1] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Marcy

[2] http://www.summitpost.org/mount-marcy/150394

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Important Note: The majority of trails in our interactive web map have not been GPSed. They are close representations of the actual trails, but should not be used for precise navigation. Please use common sense when following the trails included in this website.

Please be careful when hiking. Stay on trails. Sign registers whenever possible. Always let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return.
Check weather reports and plan your hikes carefully so you'll have plenty of time to get home before dark.
Be prepared for emergencies. Someone in the party should bring along a compass and map or guide book, a pocket knife, waterproof matches and firestarter, extra high-energy food, a first aid kit, flashlight, space blanket or small tarp, nylon cord and extra protective clothing.
Wear proper clothing for unexpected changes in the weather
Please don't litter.
Stay calm. If you become lost, keep warm and stay where you are. If you feel you can find your way out, remember that following streams downhill will usually lead you closer to habitation.
Emergency calls: Cell phone coverage can range from spotty in a few areas to non-existent almost everywhere else. Do not rely on your cell phone.

Thanks for using www.adktrailmap.com, enjoy your hike!