

Objectives for Today:

Leave you with more confidence to....

- Find great hikes and fun and compatible hiking companions!
- Be prepared for a life of success on the trail!
- Stay safe!
- Be a good trail citizen!

Choosing a Hike

I'm new here...
....how do I find "good" hikes near me?

I'm new to hiking....
....what makes some trails better than others?
....how can I tell which would be best for me?



Choosing a Hike

Consider the season and current conditions!

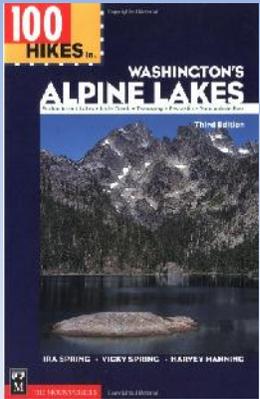
Seashore, low elevation forest and river walks are often accessible year round.



Snow can linger into late June or later above 5000 feet and on north or shady exposures. Avalanche danger can be high after snowstorms.

How do I find suitable hikes for the season when I want to go?

Wildflowers, berries, fall foliage all have their best seasons in different parts of the region!



HIKING SEASON AND TRAIL DIFFICULTY

TO USE THIS TABLE, MATCH THE HIKING SEASON AND TRAIL DIFFICULTY TO THE HIKING AREA. THE HIKING AREA IS LISTED IN THE FIRST COLUMN. THE HIKING SEASON IS LISTED IN THE SECOND COLUMN. THE TRAIL DIFFICULTY IS LISTED IN THE THIRD COLUMN. THE HIKING AREA IS LISTED IN THE FIRST COLUMN. THE HIKING SEASON IS LISTED IN THE SECOND COLUMN. THE TRAIL DIFFICULTY IS LISTED IN THE THIRD COLUMN.

HIKING AREA	HIKING SEASON	TRAIL DIFFICULTY	HIKING AREA	HIKING SEASON	TRAIL DIFFICULTY
1. Lake Umbagog	1. Early Spring	1. Easy	11. Mt. Rainier	11. Early Spring	11. Easy
2. Lake Umbagog	2. Late Spring	2. Moderate	12. Mt. Rainier	12. Early Spring	12. Easy
3. Lake Umbagog	3. Early Summer	3. Moderate	13. Mt. Rainier	13. Early Spring	13. Easy
4. Lake Umbagog	4. Late Spring	4. Moderate	14. Mt. Rainier	14. Early Spring	14. Easy
5. Lake Umbagog	5. Early Summer	5. Moderate	15. Mt. Rainier	15. Early Spring	15. Easy
6. Lake Umbagog	6. Late Spring	6. Moderate	16. Mt. Rainier	16. Early Spring	16. Easy
7. Lake Umbagog	7. Early Summer	7. Moderate	17. Mt. Rainier	17. Early Spring	17. Easy
8. Lake Umbagog	8. Late Spring	8. Moderate	18. Mt. Rainier	18. Early Spring	18. Easy
9. Lake Umbagog	9. Early Summer	9. Moderate	19. Mt. Rainier	19. Early Spring	19. Easy
10. Lake Umbagog	10. Late Spring	10. Moderate	20. Mt. Rainier	20. Early Spring	20. Easy

Washington Trails Association – www.wta.org



[Hike finder map](#)

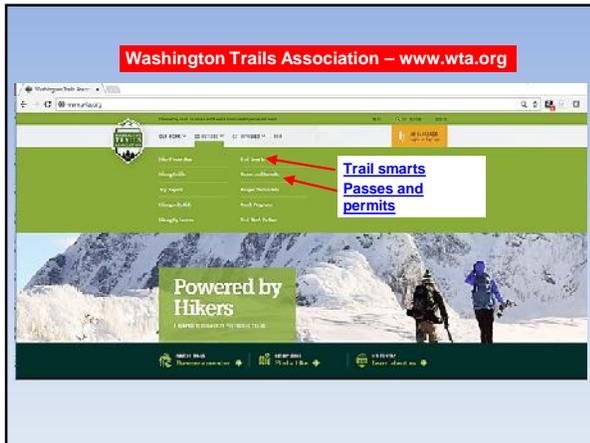
[Hiking guide](#)

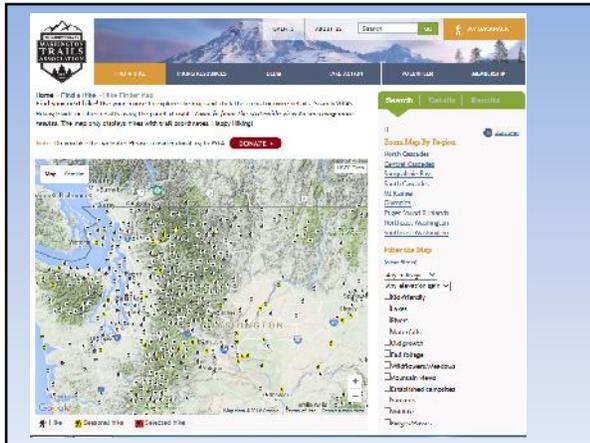
[Trip reports](#)

[Hiking with Kids](#)

[Hiking by season](#)

Powered by Hikers



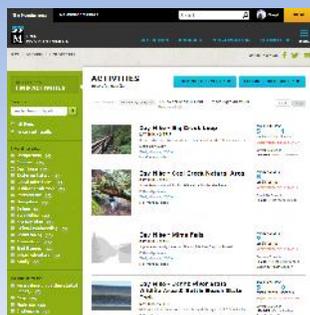


How can I find hiking companions?

- **Mountaineers:** Trained leaders, strong emphasis on skills, safety, reliability
 - ➔ Much of the pre-trip planning and safety checks are done for you
 - ➔ More confidence that leaders and other participants have the skills to complete the trip
 - ➔ Some of your membership dues go to advocacy for trails, access and wildland protection, youth
 - ➔ A bit more structure, lead time, expectations to be prepared and follow some safety rules.

Mountaineers Activities –

www.mountaineers.org => Activities => Day Hiking



Group outings led by a Mountaineers volunteer leader

- MANY different types of activities
- Wide range of destinations and levels of difficulty – 14 hikes offered over the next 2 weeks
- Free with your membership
- Non-members can do two activities as a guest
- More technical and hazardous activities like climbing or sea kayaking require pre-requisite courses and experience to join

10

Choosing a hike

Consider the difficulty of a hike vs. your current fitness level and experience

Difficulty - The Mountaineers rating system	
Easy (E)	Up to 8 mi. RT with <1,200 ft elevation gain
Moderate	Up to 12 mi. RT or 1,200 – 2,500 ft elevation gain
Strenuous (S)	Up to 14 mi. RT or 2,500 – 3,500 ft elevation gain
Very Strenuous (VS)	Over 14 miles RT or over 3,500 ft elevation gain

Hiking requires good balance and uses different muscles than the gym, bicycling or running.

Get in shape with easy hikes before tackling longer, steeper trips.

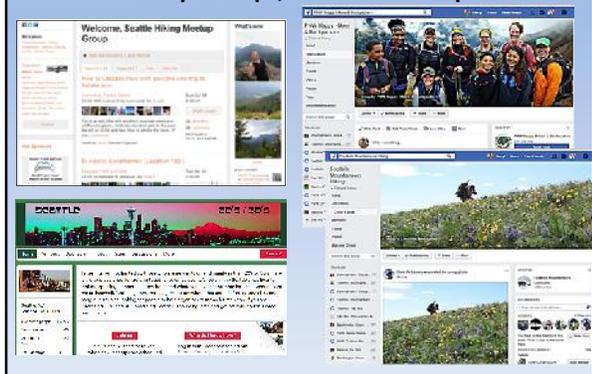
Be realistic! Choose a hike that is within your abilities, then build up.

How can I find hiking companions?

- **Meetups, Facebook groups, Friends:** Easy to find, flexible, spur-of-the-moment
 → But could be tradeoffs in safety, frustration!

* Consider what you know about the trail, the group, the pace and difficulty of the trip and the leader before joining.

Finding Group Hikes (and hiking companions) - Meetup Groups, Facebook Groups



Be a Good Group Member

- Sign up only for hikes you're capable of doing at the group's planned pace.
- Be reliable – signing up is a commitment!
 - If you must cancel, give your leader as much advance notice as possible.
 - CALL IF YOU CAN'T COME!!!
- BE ON TIME at the meeting place
- Be safe - watch out for your fellow group members
- Carpool when you can, and reimburse your driver



Preparation => safety, comfort, more fun!

- ★ Check the conditions before you go, and change your plan for safety if needed!
- ★ Be prepared with the gear, food and water you'll need to complete your hike and handle unexpected emergencies!
- ★ Develop a few important skills!
- ★ Anticipate & be ready for hazards!



Staying Hydrated

- Drink before you're thirsty! General guideline: drink 2-3 liters over a 6-8 hour hike! Plain water or electrolyte drinks are best.
- Have water handy without having to remove your pack!
 - Hydration bladder
 - Water bottle



Footwear

Trails in the PNW mountains are often very rocky, uneven, slippery.

Best to choose footwear with:

- A thick, grippy sole.
- Good ankle support – somewhat rigid for stability.
- Protection for your toes.
- A good fit = secure in the heel, plenty of room around the toes. (a full size larger than your normal shoes!)
- The lightest weight that offers the protection you need for the conditions.
- **Waterproof?** (optional and can be more sweaty in warm weather, but often a good idea in our region!).

Footwear



Options:

- **“Backpacking boots”** – stiff steel shank, high to mid-top, thick grippy sole, leather toe-cap, partial or full leather uppers
- Excellent support and stability, protect your foot, usually waterproof - but relatively heavy and hot (and expensive!)
- **Buy these if:**
 - You are likely to be strapping crampons or snowshoes onto your boots
 - If you will be kicking steps in snow
 - If you will be hopping boulder-to-boulder on very rugged terrain or using your boot as a platform for climbing rocks
 - You likely don't need these if you are day-hiking well graded trails in summer!

24

Footwear



Options (continued):

- **'Light Hikers'** – mid or low top, thick grippy sole, protective toe-cap
- Lighter, cooler, more flexible, but less durable, less stable. May or may not have waterproof membrane.
- **Buy these if:**
 - You'll be spending most of your time on trails but want to be flexible for moderately rugged terrain without buying multiple boots
 - You want a little more stability and durability than trail runners

25

Footwear



Options (continued):

- **Trail runners** – low top, lightweight, more modest toe cap, grippy but thinner and more flexible sole, often lots of cushioning
- Very light, breathable, comfortable - but less durable, less stable than hiking shoes or boots. Can get with or without waterproof membrane.
- **Buy these if:**
 - You know that you'll be doing most of your hiking on well graded trails and not in snow or with crampons
 - You'll be carrying a fairly light pack (<30 lbs)
 - Have experience on extended hikes with a less rugged/stable shoe

26

Footwear

NOT recommended:



27

Socks

Hot feet, wet feet and friction against skin all contribute to blisters and other problems!! Sock choices address these issues.

Options:

- Thin synthetic thin liner sock + outer thicker wool or synthetic sock
- Single pair of thin 'light hiking' socks - keep feet cooler
- Single pair of thick socks for more cushioning.
- **Experiment to find your best combination!**
- Merino wool/"Smartwool" are ideal – wick moisture away from skin, don't absorb odors. Don't wear cotton!

28

Clothing Strategies for Hikers

Dress in layers – remove or add layers through the hike to regulate your body temperature and moisture while moving and at rest!

- **Base layer** – Worn next to your skin - must wick moisture away from your body, dry quickly, and insulate even if wet.
 - "Dri-weave", light synthetics are great - merino wool/"smartwool" is wonderful! NO COTTON!
- **Mid layer** – Warm layer(s) for periods of inactivity. Shed before you get sweaty! Micro-fleece, down/synthetic 'puffy', merino wool.
 - Multiple, thinner mid-layers provide more flexibility than one thick one.
 - Down loses insulating power when wet
- **Outer layer** - Windproof and waterproof – breathable fabrics, pit and leg zips to let heat and moisture out !!

Other gear to consider....

- Topographic map of your route, and a compass to help you orient the map to the ground and head the right direction
- Sun protection: hat, sunglasses, sunscreen

And, in case of an emergency:

- First aid supplies
- Source of light (headlamp)
- Source of heat (fire starter)
- Emergency shelter
- Extra food, warm clothing

Why Carry the Ten Essentials?

- * Stay safe and well even if conditions change
- * Get back safely to the trailhead after dark, or even spend a night out, if you had to because of being lost or injured

These items, with insulation, food and water, are often referred to as **'The Ten Essentials'**.

30



Carrying your gear: *Pack options*



- **Capacity:** 25L should be plenty in summer, 35-40L in winter (unless you're carrying climbing gear)
- **Critical considerations:**
 - Access to water
 - Pockets for snacks, sunscreen, camera, sunglasses
 - Comfort: shoulder straps, waist belt, adjustments
 - Fit: choose the right pack length for your torso length

Gearing up without breaking the bank....

- Gear swaps, Second Ascent, used gear websites, Ebay, Facebook
 - Bearfoot's Hiking Gear Flea Market, Backpacking Gear Flea Market for Women
- Online bargain gear sites
 - Steep & Cheap, Massdrop, Active Junky
 - Backcountry.com, Sierra Trading Post, CampMor
- Walmart and Costco off-brands
- REI garage sales and member sales, REI outlet
 - *Their return policy is very valuable for boots & packs*
- Mountaineers members get sporty deals at certain stores and gear websites

Trail Hazards:

The most common causes of hiker emergencies and deaths are:

- *Getting lost → stuck outdoors without the right gear → hypothermia, dehydration*
- *Sprain or break → stuck outdoors without the right gear → hypothermia, dehydration*
- *Take on a hike that is beyond your capabilities, or underestimate how long it will take → too late in the day to get back → stuck outdoors without the right gear → hypothermia, dehydration*

Trail Hazards:

A few things to watch out for on your first trips:

- *Be realistic about the trails you take on, and leave plenty of time to get back before dark!*
- *Hypothermia: Bring enough clothing for an emergency overnight! Shed layers before your clothes get soaked with sweat! Stay warm and dry, stay hydrated, fuel up often*
- *Dehydration: Drink lots of water! Carry extra for emergencies! Shed clothing before you are overheated!*
- *Avoid slips and falls with the right footwear and poles!*
- *Avoid getting lost by carrying map and compass and knowing how to use them!*
- *In winter and early spring: avoid avalanche terrain (30° open snow slopes, moderate or higher avvy forecast)*

Trail Hazards: Avoid slips and falls!



Wear good sturdy footwear!



Be in the present and watch your step! Don't multi-task!

Trail Hazards: Avoid getting lost!

➔ Learn some basic navigation skills to *Stay Found!*

- Learn what the lines and symbols mean on a topographic map
- Get the topo map for your planned hike – review it pre-trip and regularly as you go along to keep track of where you are
- Learn how to use your watch, compass, altimeter with the map – more info about where you are
- DON'T RELY ON GPS ALONE. Batteries and satellite links can fail.



Check out our many navigation classes at www.mountaineers.org/COURSES and *Navigation*

37

Trail Hazards: Wildlife

The chance of being injured by a wild animal on a hike in much of the PNW is extremely low.

Still....

- Don't approach or feed wild animals!
- If potentially dangerous wildlife is known to be in an area, make noise if you can't see ahead!
- Keep camps clean, store food properly

And....just in case:

- Tell someone at home where you're going and when they should act if you don't get back on time
- If you're going outside of cell range, bring a means to communicate with search and rescue! SPOT tracker, Personal Locator Beacon
- Learn some basic wilderness first aid (the Mountaineers offer a range of classes at www.mountaineers.org=>Courses=>First Aid.

39

**Be a Responsible and Courteous Trail User!
Leave No Trace!**

- Stay on the existing trail – DON'T CUT SWITCHBACKS! (Causes erosion!)
- Don't approach or feed wildlife.
- Keep pets and kids under control – follow leash laws for dogs. DON'T LEAVE DOGGIE POO BAGS ALONG THE TRAIL!!
- Respect the peace and quiet of other hikers....play your music with headphones (and don't buzz them with your drone!).
- Carry out all of your trash!
- Bury ANY toilet paper at least 4-6" deep (bring a plastic trowel) or carry a zip loc to bring your paper out.
- Be VERY careful with fire! Don't burn toilet paper or trash!

Get out and learn on the trail!

- Many hikes all over the region from easy to challenging are available for registration on the Mountaineers website – free to members and guests!

→ Choose one that matches your fitness and skill level, and **GO!!!**

→ We can help you pick a good one! Call or email us!

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