BOOTS ON THE GROUND: BLAZE YOUR OWN PATH

Uncover the secrets hidden within Vermont’s lush forests, hidden lakes, and wooded streams. We’re hot on the trail to help you get to know Vermont from a different perspective with this diverse selection of the most stunning hikes in the Waterbury area. All hiking distances and times listed below are calculated based on a round trip.

Fit an easy hike into a day of boating, shopping, or time on the beach; take the kids or elders down the trail or break in a new pair of boots. A moderate hike is a good day’s work; a difficult hike will challenge most and requires careful planning. For hiking advice, packing lists, an extensive array of guidebooks, maps, and supplies, drop in to the Green Mountain Club Visitors Center any time of year or visit them online. Vermont’s hiking hub is headquartered on Route 100, the Green Mountain Byway.

When the weather turns chilly, hiking in Vermont is a different story. Please note that while some of these trails are excellent for winter snowshoeing, limited parking and rural back roads are serious considerations, limiting trail access when the snow banks pile up. Identify your best bet for a safe and exhilarating journey with a guidebook such as Winter Hiking in Vermont, published by the Green Mountain Club.

Mount Mansfield Summit from the Top of the Automobile Toll Road
Distance: 2.8 miles
Difficulty: Easy
Estimated hiking time: 2 hours round trip
Want to summit Vermont’s highest peak without putting in a day’s work? Head up the Mountain Road in Stowe and drive the four-mile Toll Road (open in summer only) to the top of Mount Mansfield. From the summit, you may enjoy panoramic, tri-state views of the Green Mountains, New York’s Adirondacks, Lake Champlain, and even Mount Washington in New Hampshire. The Long Trail traverses the summit, which is covered with alpine tundra. Some spot the elongated profile of a man in Vermont’s highest peak, including a chin, forehead, and Adam’s apple. Take a stroll across the ridgeline to the Chin, which at 4,393 feet, marks Vermont’s highest point.

Peninsula Nature Trail: Waterbury Center State Park
Distance: 0.5 mile
Difficulty: Easy
Estimated hiking time: 30 minutes round trip
This meandering trail beside the shores of the park’s peninsula is ideal for young hikers, with ends of the trail located on either side of the boat launch. Follow the path beside the Waterbury Reservoir while on-trail signs tell the story of legacy apple orchards, flora, fauna, and the geology along the trail. The park is perfect for families, featuring fishing platforms, a beach, grills, and restroom facilities.
Mill Trail to Bingham Falls: Mount Mansfield State Forest
Distance: 1.6 miles
Difficulty: Easy, but be aware of steep bluffs near the waterfall
Estimated hiking time: 30 minutes round trip
This is the small trail with a big payoff, great for families or to visit with guests. With just a short, gradual hike into the woods, you’ll be rewarded by towering waterfalls that cascade into clear pools. Cool off in the thundering water’s mist; take a dip in the calm pools below on a hot day. The rocks can be slippery - sturdy footwear is recommended.

Stevenson Brook Trail: Little River State Park
Distance: 4.8 miles, with additional distances within the trail network
Difficulty: Easy to Moderate
Estimated hiking time: 3-4 hours round trip
The Stevenson Brook Trail goes into Little River State Park, from which several trails may be accessed. Once the site of a thriving settlement, stay on Stevenson Brook or wander through a network of trails, where you’ll spot the evidence of hillside homesteads, sugarhouses, barns, sawmills, and a cemetery, their legacy depicted in foundations, clearings, and stone.

Dalley Loop Trail: Little River State Park
Distance: 2.8
Difficulty: Moderate to Difficult
Estimated hiking time: 1-2 hours round trip
This hike is named for Civil War Veteran Dan Dalley, who survived 16 battles and escaped capture once. He bought the land along the Dalley Loop in 1875, living upon Ricker Mountain’s rocky hillside on a 68-acre subsistence farm (the farm foundations are located on the Stevenson Brook Trail). The Dalley trail meanders gently up a logging access road, levels out, and then head's steeply downhill.

Mount Hunger: Waterbury Trail
Distance: 4.4
Difficulty: Moderate to Difficult
Estimated hiking time: 3-4 hours round trip
Approach Central Vermont’s Mount Hunger from the west on the Waterbury Trail. Cool off in the waterfall before you leave the woodland. Gain elevation with every step on the steady ascent; get ready for an exhilarating rock scramble near the peak and earn a 360-degree view of Groton State Forest, Mount Mansfield (Vermont’s highest peak), and Waterbury Reservoir.

Stowe Pinnacle Trail
Distance: 3.6
Difficulty: Moderate
Estimated hiking time: 2-3 hours round trip
Aptly dubbed a pinnacle, this trail leads to a panoramic crest overlooking several Green Mountain ranges including the high peaks of Mount Mansfield and Camel’s Hump, which is also known as the “crouching lion.” On the way, see if you can spot the rock sculpture or the teepee near the trail, an expression of hikers’ spirit and their appreciation for the mountain’s natural environment. Break out of the woods near the bald top and as you take in the views; trace the Stowe Mountain Road down to the white steeple, an icon of Stowe Village.

Camel’s Hump: Monroe Trail
Distance: 6.8 miles
Difficulty: Moderate to Difficult
Estimated hiking time: 4-6 hours round trip
Known for its distinctive hooked silhouette, Vermont’s third highest peak offers breathtaking views of fold upon fold of Green Mountain ranges and Northern New York’s Adirondacks. Untouched by towers or other infrastructure, Camel’s Hump is one of only three Vermont mountains on which you will find alpine tundra that is similar to growth from 1,000 miles to the north. The Monroe Trail winds up the eastern flank of the mountain. Look for the cemetery in which Will Monroe is buried, and a plaque dedicated to the crew of a B-24 Liberator bomber which crashed there in mountain fog in 1944.
Mount Mansfield Ridge: Sunset Ridge Trail, Underhill State Park
Distance: 6.5 miles
Difficulty: Difficult
Estimated hiking time: 4-6 hours round trip
Underhill State Park lies on the western slope of Mount Mansfield, Vermont’s highest peak at just under 4,300 feet. Of the Park’s four side trails the Sunset Ridge Trail from the CCC Road is the most popular point of access to Vermont’s Long Trail, which traverses the summit. Once on top, follow the Long Trail North to “The Chin” of Mount Mansfield, Vermont’s highest point.

Long Trail South to the Chin: Mount Mansfield State Forest
Distance: 4.6
Difficulty: Difficult
Estimated hiking time: 4-6 hours round trip
This section of the Long Trail approaches Mount Mansfield from the northern part of the Waterbury region, in Smugglers’ Notch. The trail heads south through the forest, with a steep ascent near the Green Mountain Club’s Taft Lodge, one of the oldest and largest shelters in the Long Trail system. It follows through Eagle Pass and leads to the ascent of “The Chin,” the highest point on Mount Mansfield as well as the highest in Vermont.