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## Category: California Hikes

Subcategory: California Hikes

### **Tip: Diverse Hiking Trails in San Diego**

San Diego is "America's Finest City," and the hiking trails in San Diego prove it! Some top choices in San Diego hiking include beach, bay, and mountain trails. Torrey Pines State Reserve in La Jolla has some of the best hiking in San Diego. You can hike down to the beach, stay up along the bluffs, or do a bit of both. It's a stunning natural preserve in the middle of a growing urban area, and it's a top choice for hiking trails in San Diego every year. The Batiquitos Lagoon in Carlsbad, north of San Diego, is a great hike for families. The trails are easy, and much of the appeal of this coastal lagoon is the great variety of birds you can see as you hike, so bring the binoculars! Balboa Park. Near downtown San Diego, Balboa Park is home to the world-famous San Diego Zoo, but trails run through some of the rugged areas of the park. If you're not up to canyon hiking, strolling through the park and a visit to the Botanical Garden make a nice walk on a sunny day. Julian and Cuyamaca backcountry hikes. Much of this area was damaged in a wildfire in 2003, but is renewing itself fairly well. There are many hikes here, from easy strolls to strenuous hikes to the top of Cuyamaca Peak. About 50 miles east of San Diego, the fall colors here are some of the best in the county. Hiking trails in San Diego run the gamut from beach to bay and beyond, and you'll find something wonderful every time you hike in San Diego!

### **Tip: Hiking Bay Area Trails**

Hiking Bay Area trails is a diverse feat. You can hike to the beach in Golden Gate National Recreation Area, or climb Mount Tamalpais right across the Golden Gate Bridge in Marin County. Just south of the Bay Area is beautiful Monterey and Big Sur, while north you'll find incredible Point Reyes and the rugged northern coast. The great thing about hiking bay area trails is there are so many, you'll never get bored, and some are just a few minutes away from downtown San Francisco. A wonderful Bay Area destination that some people miss is Muir Woods, also north of The City in Marin. Take a trip to Muir Woods and enjoy a leisurely walk through the park's towering redwood forest &ndash; it's a little bit of heaven close to the City by the Bay.

### **Tip: Los Angeles Hiking**

There's more to Los Angeles than the Sunset Strip. There is hiking in Los Angeles. In fact, Los Angeles hiking is everywhere around the county, in some places you might not expect to find open space at all. Along the coast, try Malibu Creek State Park. You'll get great views of the beaches and upscale homes below while you enjoy a hike alongside a stream or through backcountry woodland. Point Mugu State Park, north of L.A., offers coastline and interior hiking in a spectacular location. It's close enough for day hikes,

but overnight camping is a lot more fun. The Santa Monica Mountains look down over Hollywood and Los Angeles, and they offer hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding trails of all sorts. This recreation area is one of the most popular in L.A., so mid-week visits are the best. Los Angeles hiking is more popular than you think, that's why you'll find so many hiking trails in the metropolitan area!

### **Tip: Orange County Hiking**

Hiking in the O.C. is perfect for the entire family. There are beach trails, mountain trails, and everything in between, and when you're done; you can take the whole family to Disneyland! Speaking of Disneyland, the Anaheim Hills Trail gives a good introduction to the oak woods of California's backcountry. The area is loaded with horse and hiking trails, and it's easy to get to from most of Orange County. Crystal Cove State Park is right off Pacific Coast Highway (everyone calls it PCH), between Laguna Beach and Corona del Mar. The trails head away from the beach into the coastal canyons, offering great views of the O.C. coastline, and even Santa Catalina Island on a clear day! Whiting Ranch in Trabuco Canyon has a myriad of hiking trails, and camping is available, as well. Mountain bikers, hikers, and equestrians share the over 15 miles of trails in the park. If you're looking for a very unique hiking experience, try Caspers Wilderness Park in San Juan Capistrano. This wilderness park is protected, and so, hikers must be 18 years or over, and they cannot hike alone. If you want to see what California looked like before it was settled, this is the place to visit.

## Category: Hiking

Subcategory: Day Hikes

### **Tip: Hiking on Trails**

No need to reinvent the wheel when you take a hiking trip. Nearly every state park has established and maintained hiking trails. Whether you are a novice hiker or experienced, you can find a trail that suits your level of expertise. Typically, there are three levels of difficulty on hiking trails. Make sure you have the right apparel and gear for various trails. Some hikes only require lightweight boots or sandals, like merrell hiking boots, others require sturdier support and protection. Beginners can start out on an easy trail, which is usually not more than a mile or so of level ground. Intermediate trails may have rolling hills and are generally under six miles long. More advanced hikers can enjoy the challenge of longer hikes that may include rockier terrain.

### **Tip: Preventing Pronation**

If you suffer from pronation, buying the right hiking shoe can help. Before heading out on a day hike or any other kind of long walking trip, be sure to have yourself checked for

pronation. This is the tendency to rotate your foot inward, which places undue stress on the unsupported edge of your foot. Walking with a heavy backpack can make the situation worse. Prevent this by paying attention to the correct placement of your foot as you walk. Insoles are also available to guide your feet into proper position.

## Category: Hiking Apparel

Subcategory: Hiking Apparel

### **Tip: A Good Time for Hiking Shorts**

Sierra Trading Post Tip: Hiking shorts offer the most freedom of movement and comfort when you're hiking, but they don't offer much protection from the elements, so they really are best for fair weather hiking. Look for hiking shorts made of a sturdy fabric that can withstand bumps, tearing, and staining. Also look for shorts with several pockets to help carry other hiking gear. Shorts should be loose enough that you can move comfortably without constriction. If they are too tight they may chafe areas or restrict blood flow while you're hiking. For the most versatility, choose hiking pants that convert into hiking shorts, so you'll be covered for all-season hiking.

### **Tip: Hiking Clothes Should Offer Protection**

Sierra Trading Post Tip: Layering hiking clothes helps keep the body cool in summer and warm in winter, but hiking clothes should offer protection, as well. At least one layer of your clothing should offer protection, such as padding or reinforcement to protect from chafing and natural elements on the trail. Women's hiking clothes should offer additional protection in sensitive areas, as well. Carrying backpacks and other gear can chafe the skin and wear or tear clothing, which is another reason good hiking clothes have padding and reinforcement in heavy use areas. Rough terrain can be hard on hiking clothes, so make sure you invest in high quality hiking clothes that will take on tough conditions and still last for many seasons.

### **Tip: Three-layer System: The Insulation Layer**

The insulation layer is vital to your hiking apparel system. The function of this layer is to retain a protective layer of air. In general, these garments are made of polyesters that are designed to make fibers stand up, trapping air between the fibers. The most popular material used to create insulation layer garments -- such as vests and pullovers -- is fleece. Fleece can be bunted (napped to make a fluffy layer) or piled (layered to create a thicker layer).

## Category: Hiking Backpacks

## Subcategory: Hiking Backpacks

### **Tip: Expedition Packs**

If you plan to be on the trail for a day or longer, a good, sturdy overnight bag is essential. As a general rule, the size of your hiking backpack will increase as your need to carry outdoor equipment and provisions increases. Larger bags suited to this purpose are called Expedition Packs. They are designed with a broad hip belt to distribute packweight to the hips instead of the shoulders. A lumbar pad will protect the base of the spine from the added stress of a heavier backpack.

### **Tip: Hiking Your Hike Essentials**

A hiking pack is one of the most essential pieces of hiking gear to carry your essentials for the trip. There are several types of packs, including lumbar packs, fanny packs, and hip packs. These are not technically considered backpacks, but are a wise choice if your hiking excursion is a quick one. Basic packs consist of pouches and belts that cinch around your waist. The weight of the waist pack is located in the curve of your spine near your center of balance. This keeps the strain off your body.

### **Tip: Internal Frame Hiking Backpacks**

Sierra Trading Post Tip: Most hiking backpacks now are internal frame backpacks, with most of the support of the pack hidden from view. Good internal frame backpacks contain a large, comfortable hipbelt to help transfer the weight to your hipbones, and internal stays that are strong enough to help transfer weight while offering good support. These hiking backpacks are more flexible than the old-fashioned external frame packs, but they still help you carry the load easily. There should be a sheet of semi-flexible plastic across the back of the pack, (called a framesheet), which helps stiffen the pack and keeps items inside from poking you as you walk. Look for a perforated framesheet to help keep sweat from pooling on your back. Internal frame hiking backpacks are much more lightweight and flexible than older packs, so look for a high-quality internal frame backpack when you shop.

### **Tip: Lightening the Load**

If you have back problems, or you just don't want to carry all that weight, you should reconsider what you carry in your hiking backpacks. Usually, most hikers fill their hiking packs with too much stuff, period. Here are some ways to give your back a break:

- Lighten up your sleeping bag. Buy an ultra-light model that weighs in at two pounds or less.
- Don't carry a tent and poles, use a tarp instead. Don't use a tarp for a ground cloth under your tent, use a lightweight footprint designed to fit your tent.
- If you don't want to use a tarp as a tent, look for a lightweight model that weighs in at just around four pounds.
- Don't carry as many cooking utensils, you may not need them.
- Go

through your hiking checklist and see what you use and what you don't use, and lighten hiking packs that way. Hiking backpacks don't have to weigh a ton, even if you're heading out for an extended hike. Cut weight in the essentials, and you'll have a healthier, happier hike.

### **Tip: Watch Out For Injuries From Discount Hiking Backpacks**

Hiking backpacks are not all created equal. If you choose discount hiking backpacks, you may save some money, but they could end up causing serious injuries, especially if you use them for longer, extended hikes. Often, discount hiking backpacks don't fit as well as they should, and they don't adjust as much as you need. That can result in discomfort, like chafing under the arms or across the chest. Or, it could get worse. Ill-fitting hiking backpacks have caused rotator cuff and shoulder injuries in some hikers, and aggravated existing back problems. Invest in a good quality hiking backpack to ensure your first hiking adventure isn't so uncomfortable you never hit the trail again!

## Category: Hiking Boots

Subcategory: Hiking Apparel/Boots

### **Tip: Hiking Shoes vs. Hiking Boots**

Not sure if the hiking you're doing requires a boot or a shoe? Consider the length, terrain, and weight you'll be encountering on your journey. Bigger jobs require sturdier footwear. A short day hike will only require the solidity of a firm hiking shoe. Longer hikes -- and hikes over rockier and uneven terrain -- will need boots that offer more support, particularly for the ankle. Also, if you will be carrying a heavy load such as a backpack or firewood, etc., boots are probably your best bet.

### **Tip: How To Test A Boot**

Sierra Trading Post Tip: Testing your hiking boots before you buy them is an essential part of the trying-on process. Whether you're an experienced hiker and have always worn Columbia Hiking boots or you're a first-timer looking for the right fit, testing your hiking boot is essential. The first test you will need to perform when buying a hiking boot is called The Finger Test. Unlace the boot, and move your foot as far forward in the boot as you can. With a proper-fitting boot, you will be able to slip your index finger down inside the boot at the back of the ankle. It's important to have extra space in the boot to allow for the natural movement of your foot as you hike. For example, when hiking downhill, your foot will slide forward, so it's best to have some wiggle room to ensure comfort.

## Subcategory: Hiking Boots

### **Tip: Caring For Your Hiking Boots**

Sierra Trading Post Tip: When you're done hiking, you need to show a little care to your hiking boots. Men's hiking boots (and women's, too!) made of leather should be cleaned and conditioned after every hike. Leather boots should only be conditioned with an oil- or wax-based conditioner. Light hiking boots made of composite materials (fabric plus leather) should be conditioned with a silicon-based conditioner. Never dry your hiking boots near a fire or heater. The heat can crack the leather or damage the cement that holds the shoes together. Good quality men's hiking boots will last many years if you take good care of them and condition them after every use. Light hiking boots aren't meant to last as long as heavier leather boots, but with care and conditioning, you can get several seasons out of light hiking boots, as well.

### **Tip: Discount Hiking Boots May Take More Breaking In**

Sierra Trading Post Tip: If you choose your hiking boots only by price, you may find your discount hiking boots aren't such a bargain after all. Discount hiking boots may not fit as well as higher quality boots. In addition, breaking in hiking boots like these may be more difficult because they don't give the support and comfort of better fitting boots. Of course, there are high quality discount hiking boots out there. Top brands go on sale time to time during seasonal sales or when special promotions are run.

Breaking in hiking boots is really a matter of getting your feet and boots used to each other. Experts recommend breaking in hiking boots by walking at least 50 miles (not all at once!), to make sure the boots form to your feet and your feet are used to the boots. Discount hiking boots may be crafted of inferior materials that don't form to your foot or protect it adequately. Before you invest in discount hiking boots, try on several different pairs, and walk in them for more than a minute or two, just to see how they feel and how they protect your feet and ankles. After you find the right boot, spending some time breaking in your boots before you hit the trail, and your feet will be very, very happy!

### **Tip: Hiking Boot or Trekking Boots?**

Sierra Trading Post Tip: Many retailers refer to a hiking boot as trekking boots, and essentially, sturdy hiking boots are good for light mountain trekking as well. Look for a hiking boot that has a removable Gore-Tex liner that helps keep your feet dry. Trekking boots often have very lightweight but durable wraparound rubber soles so they can be used for some rock climbing, as well. When you purchase a hiking boot, look for high quality materials and options like low tops if you want a cross-over hiking boot that can double as a trail runner. The most important thing to look for in a hiking boot is fit. It's very common for one foot to be slightly larger than the other, especially if you're carrying weight. Try on your boots with a loaded backpack if you plan on hiking with a pack, and

try on a lot of different models and brands to find the fit that's best for you.

## Category: Hiking Food

Subcategory: Hiking Food

### **Tip: Creative Outdoor Cooking**

Outdoor cooking doesn't have to mean steaks, dogs, and burgers. You can cook just about anything on a camp stove or over a fire, and if you can boil water then you can enjoy boil-in-bag meals, pasta side dishes, and a variety of other convenience foods that just take boiling water to make them. You can even take along instant pudding; just add dry milk powder and water! On a large camp stove, you can create gourmet meals just like you'd create at home and gourmet outdoor cooking is becoming much more popular. On a short hiking trip of a couple of days, you can carry insulated containers with food you've prepared at home, then heat up at the camp site. Another quick outdoor cooking tip is to partially cook pasta at home, then put it in a strong plastic bag. You can finish cooking it in the bag when you're ready for dinner. Marinate meats in plastic bags as well, and then cook them when you arrive at camp. Practice outdoor cooking skills on your stove or on a grill at home before you hit the trail, so you'll know exactly what you need to do when you arrive in camp. If you're going for a shorter hike, you can carry more fresh foods and really enjoy outdoor cooking. Longer, multi-day backpacking treks usually call for more dehydrated and packaged dry foods.

### **Tip: Prepare Backpacking Food Ahead**

One way to create quick, tasty backpacking food is to prepare many of the ingredients at home before you leave for your trip. That way, you won't have to spend a lot of time prepping food in camp, and you won't have to carry as many prepping utensils, either. Here are some quick backpacking food ideas for prepping items at home before you head for the hills. Place all the dry ingredients (like spices) you need for a recipe in one plastic bag, and then you can just pop them all into the mixture without measuring, and add liquid. Put just enough dried pasta, rice, noodles, cereal, trail mix, or other ingredients for one meal in plastic bags and label them, so you know you have all the ingredients you need for each meal. Carry small containers of dehydrated onions and garlic to spice up your meals. A few dried herbs are good, too. Remove the packaging from everything you're taking, repackage it in plastic bags, and label with cooking directions, if necessary. Removing the bulk lets you carry more food. Make your own trail mix by adding your favorite fruits, nuts, seeds, and sweets. Package in individual plastic bags that your group can carry with them during the day. If they need a quick snack, they'll have one right in their pocket! Preparing food ahead of time takes the guesswork out of camp cooking, and it will make backpacking food a lot more fun for the entire group!

## Category: Hiking Gear

Subcategory: Hiking Gear

### **Tip: All The Gear You Will Need**

When hiking, you will most likely need the same amount of gear and hiking equipment for a three-day trip as you would for a ten-day trip. Weather is an unpredictable factor, however. Always prepare for the worst. Bring extra plastic ponchos, tarp, rope, and -- if you're using one -- a tent repair kit. The longer you hike, the more comfort you'll need. Consider thicker sleeping bag pads or even sunshower containers, which collect rain water and heat it with the sun's rays to give you a well-deserved shower every few days!

### **Tip: Braving the Winter Weather**

It's certainly an adventure camping or hiking in the winter weather. However, it's important to have the proper winter wear, including winter hiking pants and snowshoes. Snowshoes enable you walk over deep snow by distributing your weight over a larger area. They strap onto the bottoms of your hiking boots or shoes. Many are made with frames of hardwood or a similar material. Leather straps function to keep you from sinking into the snow.

### **Tip: Gearing Up to Hike**

If you are a beginning hiker, one of the most important questions you may have is where to get all the necessary equipment it will take to make your hiking experience a positive one. A good pair of trail shoes or running shoes are perfect for beginners. While it is certainly possible to find decent discount gear, be careful and search for reputable companies. Luckily, there are quite a few of them. These include Sierra Designs, REI, North Face, Marmot, and many more. Doing a little research before you start stocking up on gear will prove to be beneficial in the long run.

### **Tip: How to Find Used Hiking Gear**

Let's face it. Camping and hiking gear can get pretty pricey, especially if you're looking for high quality three- or four-season camping and hiking gear. You can look for used hiking gear in the classified ads or at garage sales, but you can't be assured of the quality and how that gear's been used (or abused) before. When you shop for camping and hiking gear, watch for sales of returned gear. Many big gear outlets will offer slightly "used" (read returned) equipment at a great savings to your pocketbook. If you're not sure your local hiking outlet offers used camping and hiking gear, just give them a call! If

they don't, they may have an idea for other sources, or they may offer to notify you of specials sales and discounts.

### **Tip: Make a GPS Part of Your Essential Hiking Equipment**

Do you really need a GPS when you're out on the trail? If you hike in perfect conditions, on trails you know like the back of your hand &ndash; maybe not. After all, Global Positioning Systems (GPS) can be pricey, and many hikers wouldn't consider them a necessity. However, if you're heading out to uncharted territory, or the weather is changeable, they could be your ticket to getting back home safe and sound. Several manufacturers make hand-held GPS units especially for hikers and backpackers. Some will pinpoint your exact location, so you can locate it on a topographical map (that you should always carry), and allow you to know exactly where you are at any second. Others allow you to program in your route, so you never veer off the beaten track. If you tend to explore new hiking areas all the time, a GPS is a necessary piece of hiking equipment. Get lost just once, and you'll see how handy they can be! Even if you don't invest in a GPS as part of your standard hiking equipment, don't leave home without a compass and topographical map of the area you'll be hiking. Hiking may seem like a safe sport, but you can get lost in a second. Know your trails, carry a compass or GPS, and never hike after dark or in a brand new area without maps and knowledge of how to get back to your vehicle.

## Category: Hiking Injuries

Subcategory: Hiking Injuries

### **Tip: Getting in Shape For Hiking**

No one wants to be injured during a hike. That's why pre-hike training is vital. One way to get your hips and shoulders prepared for hiking is to start carrying a backpack whenever you can, beginning 2 or 3 weeks before a hike. Over the weeks, increase the load in the back pack as well as the time you spend carrying it. Challenge yourself by making small treks on different terrains, using a hiking pole if necessary. This will get your skin used to the pressure points of the backpack and your muscles strengthened for the load.

### **Tip: Hiking Is Good For You!**

There's no question that hiking offers a great way to get regular exercise. But there are other benefits as well. Your mental health is also improved with regular hiking. Hiking is a great way to reduce everyday stress and just get away from it all for a while. You may choose to share the experience with a partner or hike alone, allowing yourself to clear your head. Depending on how you choose to approach it, hiking can be a way to relax

or a way to challenge yourself physically.

### **Tip: How to Apply a Tourniquet**

Find a strip of cloth, a belt or a piece of flat flexible material. This tourniquet should be two inches wide and long enough to wrap around the limb twice. Place the tourniquet right above the wound. Wrap it around the limb twice. Tie a half knot with the tourniquet. Place a stick or straight, firm object on top of this knot and tie a full knot over the stick or object. Slowly twist the stick to tighten the tourniquet until the bleeding stops. Secure the stick in place. Do not loosen or remove the tourniquet. Make note of when the tourniquet was applied so medical professionals will know how long it has been in place.

## Category: Hiking Poles

Subcategory: Hiking Poles

### **Tip: All-Weather Komperdell Hiking Poles**

Sierra Trading Post Tip: When you shop for Komperdell hiking poles, consider the times of year you enjoy to hike. If you're an all-season hiker, look for walking poles that can transition from warm to cool weather hiking. Perhaps the most important feature to look for in all-weather hiking is the pole's lock mechanism. If the mechanism is susceptible to freezing, you may have difficulties locking your pole during cold weather. Komperdell hiking poles offer a one-turn Duolock system that is weather resistant, so cold weather hiking isn't a problem. Komperdell hiking poles are also extremely lightweight, which makes them much easier to use on long hikes. So, when choosing walking poles, look for poles that fit the way you hike all year round.

## Category: Hiking Safety

Subcategory: Hiking Safety

### **Tip: Hiking Safety 101**

Staying safe while on your hiking excursions is simply a matter of common sense. However, there are specific guidelines that are invaluable to hikers. Many courses in hiking safety are available online or at courses offered by local hiking clubs. Many of these courses provide lesson plans for you and your hiking partners so that you can continue your education on your own. Among the topics, it's important to study how to deal with natural disasters while hiking, preventing animal attacks, and nature-specific first aid (i.e., how to use the immediate environment in a medical emergency).

**Tip: Join the Club!**

Regular hikers can avail themselves of the benefits of joining hiking clubs. These clubs, which can be found throughout the country, save you a lot of time and energy as you plan excursions. Clubs bring experienced hikers together to organize regular opportunities for hiking and other social activities that revolve around hiking. Many clubs are volunteer-based. This means that you can take advantage of the resources and pay only to participate in the group trips. Joining a hiking club is also an incredible way to get to know the area you live in.

## Category: Hiking Shoes

### Subcategory: Hiking Shoes

**Tip: Buy the Right Hiking Socks**

Don't make the mistake of buying just any old nylon or wool sock and thinking it will take the stresses of hiking. First, regular socks are probably bulkier than they need to be, and will bunch up around your foot inside your boot. You know what that means — painful blisters right in the middle of your hike! Hiking socks are created especially to fit inside your boot. Even the wool blend hiking socks are lightweight and comfortable. Even better, they are designed not to bunch up on your foot, and many of them also offer additional arch and ankle support for additional strength as you hike. Good quality hiking socks, combined with good boots that fit well, are the key to real comfort on the hiking trail.

**Tip: Gore-Tex Hiking Shoes**

Gore-Tex hiking shoes offer the comfort of lightweight hiking shoes with waterproofed outer or liners that will protect you in wet situations. Gore-tex liners keep water from seeping inside the shoe, and most of them are removable, so you can take them out when you hike in hot weather. The best thing about Gore-tex is that it's breathable, so you can have protection from the elements without enduring sweaty, uncomfortable feet any time of the year. Look for Gore-tex outers or liners in your next pair of hiking shoes, and you'll enjoy years of comfortable, safe hiking in any kind of weather conditions.

**Tip: Hiking Shoes for Lightweight Hiking**

Sierra Trading Post Tip: Many hikers are getting into lightweight backpacking, where they cut their loads to perhaps 15 pounds of gear, and hike in lightweight hiking shoes instead of traditional hiking boots. For many people, these lightweight hiking shoes are the perfect alternative to heavy, clumsy boots. However, if you're carrying a heavy pack, or walking on rough terrain, there's no substitute for a sturdy hiking boot. Not only will it

protect your ankles from injury, it gives more support to help you carry heavier loads. If you hike on maintained trails, and don't carry much with you, lightweight hiking shoes will fit the bill, and they are a little easier on the wallet, as well. Look for hiking shoes that fit your foot well, are comfortable to walk in, and offer arch support and shock adsorbing soles, and you'll be extra happy with your lightweight hiking shoes!

**Tip: Salomon Hiking Shoes &ndash; Excellent Hiking Footwear**

Sierra Trading Post Tip: Salomon hiking shoes are strong enough to stand up to rough trail use, but flexible enough to use as trail running shoes as well. Salomon hiking shoes come in men's and women's sizes, in a variety of styles and colors for any outdoor use. They are excellent cross-over hiking footwear, that can take you from day hiking to mountaineering and beyond. Salomon hiking shoes also come in Gore-tex waterproof styles that are great for hiking in any condition, and many come with breathable mesh panels that allow your feet to breathe comfortably in all kinds of weather conditions. This hiking footwear was developed for hikers who want versatility and dependability in their shoes, and for serious outdoor enthusiasts.

## Category: Hiking with Kids

Subcategory: Hiking with Kids

**Tip: Toddler Hiking Boots**

Some manufacturers make toddler hiking boots, but they are mostly for show. First, toddlers really can't hike, and they shouldn't you should carry them, because they could take a tumble on the trail and really hurt themselves. In addition, toddler hiking boots may look adorable, but they might actually be too rigid for your toddler's growing feet, and that would do them more harm than good, and could harm their feet permanently. If you must buy toddler hiking boots, make sure they fit perfectly, and your toddler only wears them for a few hours at the most. Put your toddler in a carry-pack and let them enjoy the trail that way!

## Category: Hiking with Pets

Subcategory: Hiking with Pets

**Tip: General Rules For Pets in Parks**

If you plan to hike in a national park with your pet, here are a few guidelines most parks request you adhere to. You must clean up after your pet. Pets are prohibited at many state beaches, picnic areas, and historic sites, so keep this in mind when you make

travel plans. Pets are not to be left unattended in vehicles or enclosures, mainly for their own safety. If you walk your pet in the park, keep him/her on a leash at all times.

### **Tip: Trucking With Your Dogs**

If you take a pick-up truck to your hiking destination your dog should ride with you in the cab. If this is not possible for whatever reason, purchase a dog carrier and put your dog in it when he or she travels with you. Dogs have died from falling or jumping out of the bed of a truck. Leashing them to something in the bed of the truck is not sufficient, as dogs have inadvertently hanged themselves trying to jump from the truck. Place padding the floor, ceiling and sides of the truck bed for better protection.

## Category: National Parks

Subcategory: National Parks

### **Tip: Rocky Mountain National Park Hiking Trails**

If you want a real "Rocky Mountain High," then take a hike on Rocky Mountain National Park hiking trails! With over 350 miles of trails, you're certain to find several you'd like to explore, just remember there will probably be at least some snow on high-country trails throughout much of the summer. The park breaks down their hiking trails into three categories &ndash; Lake, Waterfall, and Summit. You can find hikes of any difficulty in these categories. Some of the most popular Rocky Mountain National Park hiking trails include the Bear Lake Loop, Adams Falls, Deer Mountain, and Ouzel Falls. Remember the elevations in the park are high, and only get higher, which can stress heart or breathing problems in some people. There are some wheelchair accessible trails in the park, as well.

## Category: New England Hikes

Subcategory: New England Hikes

### **Tip: Boston Hiking Trails**

Boston hiking trails are as unique as "Bean Town" herself! They range from coastal and bay walks to country jaunts and urban retreats. Some favorite trails include: · Appleton Farms in North Shore. This is one of the oldest continuously operated farms in the country, and it's open every day. Kids will love the trails through grassland and farmland that show a real, working farm in day-to-day operation. · The Arnold Arboretum in Jamaica Plain was designed by Frederick Law Olmstead, the same man who designed New York's Central Park. There are 265 acres of plants here, and hiking trails lead you

to all points in the Arboretum. · The Belle Island Reservation in East Boston is Boston's last remaining salt marsh. There are pathways and an observation tower so you can experience some of the many animals that make the salt marsh their home. · The Middlesex Fells Reservation is another hiking destination because it has areas for hiking, rock climbing, horseback riding, and much more. Located in Northeast Boston, it's a retreat in the middle of a great urban area. · West of Boston is one of the most famous ponds in history &ndash; Walden Pond. Now it's a state recreation area with miles of hiking trails, so you can see what motivated author Henry David Thoreau to live and write there. Boston is much more than clam chowder and baked beans. There are miles and miles of hiking trails throughout the area, just waiting to be discovered.

### **Tip: Hiking in New Hampshire**

For many people, hiking in New Hampshire is all about scaling the many peaks of the White Mountains. One of the most popular hikes in the state takes hikers to the top of Mount Washington. Most trail reviews say it's not an easy hike, so only attempt it if you're in the best of shape. There are some steep areas, and the alpine area is rocky and difficult. Other hiking in New Hampshire isn't quite so demanding. For example, the Welch-Dickey Loop is only 4.5 miles long, and a short drive from Boston. You can hike to the top of either Welch or Dickey Peak, but the loop between them offers great views. It is a steep hike in places, but the views are worth it.

### **Tip: Hiking Trails in Massachusetts**

There are some great hiking trails in and around Boston, but as you spread out over the state, you'll find great hiking trails in Massachusetts, as well. Some of the best include: Mount Greylock is the highest peak in Massachusetts and a great hiking destination. You can drive to the top, but hiking one of the trails to the top is much more exhilarating. At the Mount Toby State Reservation you can turn back time and hike the Robert Frost Trail, inspiration for some of the poet's works, and you'll see why. Explore woods, ponds, and more in the reservation near Amherst. You can't hike Massachusetts without hiking the beach dunes of Cape Cod. The Cape Cod National Seashore offers a 25-mile long hike along the shore, from Provincetown to Coast Guard Beach. Take a section, or hike the whole thing over the weekend. Hiking trails in Massachusetts offer everything from woodlands to seashore, mountain peaks to poetry. You're sure to find a trail you love in Massachusetts.

### **Tip: Hiking Trails Maine &ndash; Mt. Katahdin**

If you want the premier of hiking trails Maine, hike the trail up Mount Katahdin (elev. 5,267 feet), a difficult climb of 4,000 feet. The mountain marks the terminus of the Appalachian Trail, and the beginning of the International Appalachian Trail that runs into Canada. It's a beautiful location in the wilds of Maine, a great spot for spying wildlife as well as exploring Maine's beautiful pine woods. You'll have to pay to enter Baxter State

Park, where the trailhead lies, unless you live in Maine. The park is in the Millinocket area, and offers many other hiking trails if you're not into the difficulty of reaching the top of Maine's highest peak. Try the hikes to Chimney Pond or Fowler Brook if you're looking for less strenuous trails.

## Category: Overnight Hike Trips

Subcategory: Overnight Hike Trips

### **Tip: Weekend Hiking Getaway**

Tired of the same old weekend trip? Try a two-day hiking excursion. Doing a little research on your local state park (or parks) will go a long way to finding a trail and campground that will suit your needs as a hiker. A variety of trails are available year-round, at a range of difficulties and lengths. Campgrounds are often dotted along the trail so you can even start in one location of the park and stay in another, changing your environment over the two-day stay.

## Category: Top National Hikes

Subcategory: Top National Hike

### **Tip: Hiking the Southern States**

With so many beautiful places in the country, it's hard to decide where to set out on your hike. Why not try one of the many southern states hike excursions available? Nearly every state in the southeast and southwest has incredible hiking trails in their state parks. From Mississippi's Black Creek Valley to hiking the snow-tipped mountains of Taos, New Mexico, there is something to tickle every hiking fancy. Besides, it's a great way to get up close and personal with the country!

### **Tip: Hiking the West Coast trail**

The West Coast Trail is a challenging 47-mile hike delight between Port Renfrew and Bamfield on Vancouver Island. A hike of the entire trail takes 6 to 10 days so prepare to camp out in weather that varies (there is rain, but more sun in summer months). Keep your provisions spoil-proof, as you will be on your own for food and water. Good preparation, including spare pants, hiking shoes and hiking socks, will ensure that your West Coast hike will be one of the best you've ever experienced!

### **Tip: The Top 10 Family-friendly Hikes**

The American Hiking Society voted on the nation's top ten family-friendly hikes in June of 2005. Here's a list of the top 10 trails: Boston: Lizzy's Trail; Chicago: Illinois & Michigan Canal; Cleveland: Ohio & Erie Canal Trail; New York: Long Path; Orlando: Florida Trail; Pittsburgh: Great Allegheny Passage; Portland: Horsetail & Ponytail Falls; St. Louis: KATY Trail; San Francisco area: Point Reyes; and Washington, DC: C&O Canal.

## Category: Winter Hikes

Subcategory: Winter Hikes

### **Tip: Winter Hiking 101**

If you're a fan of the cold weather, winter hikes can be a beautiful experience. Be sure, however, that you prepare properly. Even a short excursion in cold weather can be dangerous if you are not wearing the proper attire and warm hiking boots. Layering is most important, but avoid cotton clothing. When wet, cotton retains moisture and moisture can freeze once you cool down from your hike. Cover your head with a hat or balaclava to avoid losing heat. A balaclava can also double as a scarf. Bring several pairs of socks, but don't wear more than two pairs at a time. Too many layers on your feet will result in slowed circulation.

### **Tip: Winter Hiking in Vermont**

Did you know that the state of Vermont has 52 state parks? Even though many of these parks are closed for the winter, they are still open for hiking excursions and other winter fun. In fact, such winter parks as Thetford and Camel's Hump have lovely trails for hiking. If your trip involved snowmobiling as well, check out the major routes maintained by the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST). VAST trails can be found on both state forest and state park lands. Little River, Woodford, Coolidge, and Groton all have major snowmobile trails.