



Vermont

WELCOME TO VERMONT!

Vermont, also known as the Green Mountain State, is revered for its dense forest, where the unbroken canopy shades most of the trail and ferns are as high as your waistline. Vermont is enchanting with its lush, green forest paths, but may test your patience as you trek through muddy sections during the wet season. The Appalachian Trail travels through this state for roughly 150 miles, with elevations diving as low as 400 feet and climbing more than 4,000 feet. Vermont is also well loved for its maple syrup, cheddar cheese, and Ben and Jerry's ice cream! So be sure to hit up a roadside farm stand before or after you hit the trail.

Every Vermonter is a mountaineer ...

—James P. Taylor

At 3,748 feet elevation, Glastenbury Mountain is one of Vermont's tallest peaks. Atop the mountain is a lookout tower reaching far above the tree line and providing jaw-dropping views. The tower was initially constructed in 1927 and renovated in 2005. In the 1800s, a thriving community once inhabited this allegedly haunted piece of wilderness. Now it's a ghost town, with abandoned buildings the earth is reclaiming. According to local lore, the area of Glastenbury is home to paranormal activity, Bigfoot sightings, a disappearing community, and other mysterious happenings.

DID YOU KNOW?

Once you cross the Massachusetts-Vermont border, you are hiking not only one long-distance trail but two! The Appalachian Trail and the Long Trail run concurrently for roughly 100 miles northbound.



Glastenbury Mountain lookout tower,
Mile 1624.3 northbound; 2013 thru-hike

Jarred Douglas atop Glastenbury
Mountain lookout tower, Mile
1624.3 northbound; 2013 thru-hike

Hiking the Appalachian Trail was the first time I've separated myself from the secular world extensively, even though I was mingling with one of the most interesting "societies" out there. Being on the Trail allowed me to be present and see more of everything rather than going through the motions of life. Understanding the environment, resourcefulness, accepting my flaws, and embracing others is the template behind the deeper meaning of my six-and-a-half-month trek. It was the greatest experience, in every sense of the word, of my 35 years of existence.

—Jarred Douglas

22

STRATTON MOUNTAIN

KELLY STAND ROAD TO STRATTON MOUNTAIN

This hike will take you to the top of Stratton Mountain, southern Vermont's highest peak. From the 3,936-foot summit, you can enjoy outstanding, far-reaching views of the White Mountains, the Adirondacks, the Berkshires, and the Green Mountain Range. Stratton is also known as the cradle of the Appalachian and Long Trails. History buffs will love experiencing the mountain that inspired James P. Taylor, founder of the Long Trail, and Benton MacKaye, founder of the AT, to create long-distance trails so many people enjoy every day.

DISTANCE: 7.6 miles out and back

DIFFICULTY: Moderate due to elevation gain

TRAILHEAD GPS: 43.0611 / -72.9678

NEARBY TOWN: Stratton, Vermont

HIGHLIGHTS: Incredible 360-degree views, fire tower, AT history



Stratton Mountain lookout tower, Mile 1640.3 northbound; 2021

TIPS

- Camping at the summit is not permitted.
- The Appalachian Trail shares this section with the Long Trail.

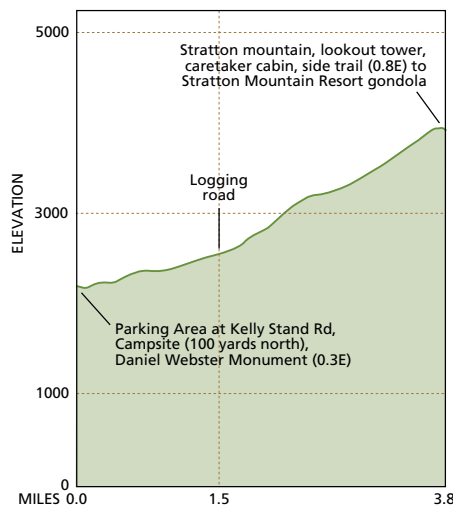
MILEAGE MARKERS (SOUTH TO NORTH)

SECTION	MILES FROM SPRINGER MOUNTAIN	LANDMARK	ELEVATION (IN FEET)
0.0	1636.5	Parking area at Kelly Stand Road; campsite (100 yards north), Daniel Webster Monument (0.3 mile east)	2,230
1.5	1638.0	Logging road	2,584
3.8	1640.3	Stratton Mountain; lookout tower, caretaker cabin, side trail (0.8 mile east) to Stratton Mountain Resort gondola	3,936

THE HIKE

Begin hiking northbound from the parking area at Kelly Stand Road. The trail gently ascends as you trek through the mixed hardwood and softwood forest. After crossing an old logging road, begin a steeper climb up the mountain. The AT follows the ridgeline and levels out for a bit before the last final push. Finally, the white blazes lead through a series of switchbacks before reaching the top of Stratton Mountain. Climb the fire tower for breathtaking views of the majestic Green Mountain Range, and say hello to the caretaker if you are there in summer or fall. A side trail about 1 mile long leads to a gondola that carries people up and down to Stratton Mountain Resort, a popular skiing destination.

Once you finish exploring, retrace your steps on the AT to return to the parking area.

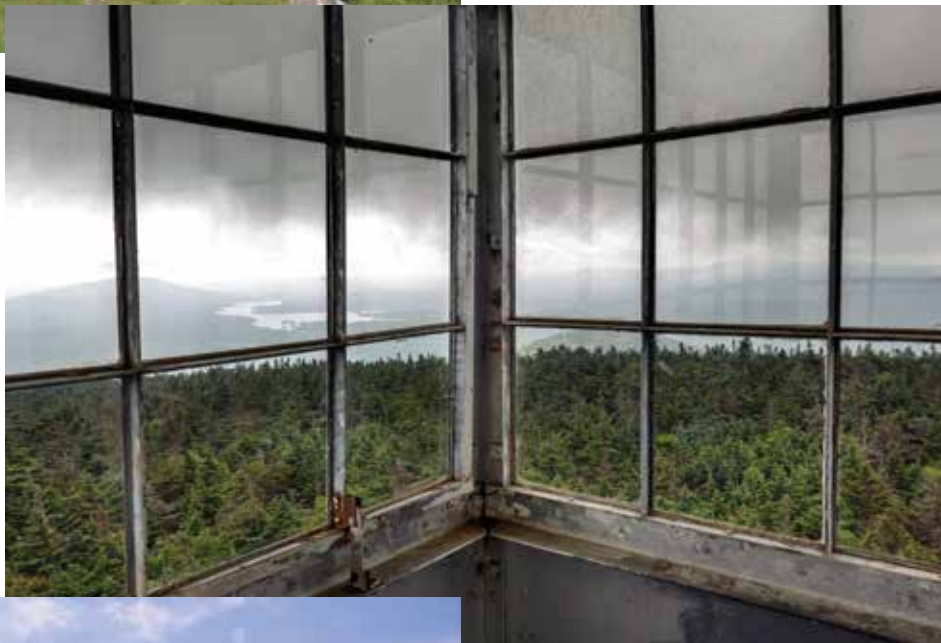




Stratton Mountain lookout tower,
Mile 1640.3 northbound; 2021



Stratton Mountain lookout tower,
Mile 1640.3 northbound; 2021



Stratton Pond, Mile 1643.5
northbound; 2013 thru-hike

23

CLARENDON GORGE TO BROMLEY MOUNTAIN

VT 103 TO VT 11 & 30 NEAR MANCHESTER CENTER

This backpacking trip traverses the majestic Green Mountains for nearly 33 miles. Starting with a suspension bridge that towers above beautiful swimming holes, this hike then crosses several streams and rustic wooden footbridges to an interesting display of stone cairns before finishing off with spectacular views atop Bromley Mountain.

DISTANCE: 32.4 miles one way

DIFFICULTY: Moderate due to elevation gain

TRAILHEAD GPS: 43.5214 / -72.9258

NEAREST TOWN: North Clarendon, Vermont; Manchester Center, Vermont

HIGHLIGHTS: Swimming holes, suspension bridge, lake, incredible views

TIPS

- This section of the AT is shared by the Long Trail.
- Camping at the summit of Bromley Mountain is not permitted.
- If you're hiking here in the summer, you can stop by the Manchester Farmers Market, held every Thursday in Adams Park, downtown Manchester.



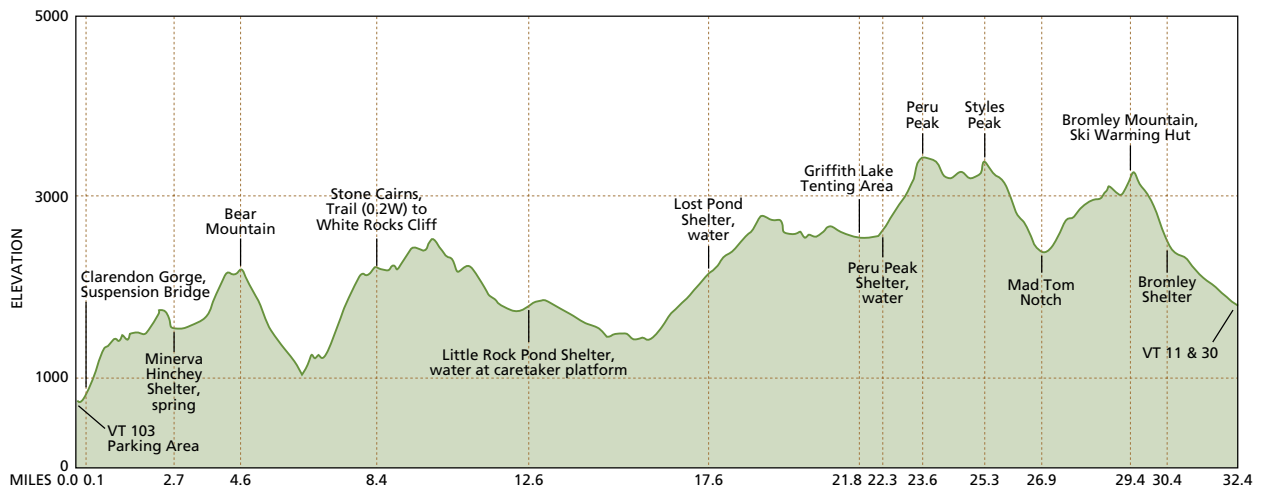
Clarendon Gorge suspension bridge, Mile 1686.3 northbound; 2021

MILEAGE MARKERS (NORTH TO SOUTH)

SECTION	MILES FROM SPRINGER MOUNTAIN	LANDMARK	ELEVATION (IN FEET)
0.0	1686.4	VT 103 parking area	860
0.1	1686.3	Clarendon Gorge; suspension bridge	808
2.7	1683.7	Minerva Hinchey Shelter; spring	1,611
3.3	1683.1	Footbridge, stream	1,648
4.6	1681.8	Bear Mountain	2,228
6.3	1680.1	VT 140; footbridge, stream	1,105
7.1	1679.3	Bully Brook, Keewaydin Trail to the west	1,424
7.8	1678.6	Greenwall Shelter (0.2 mile east); spring	2,095
8.4	1678.0	Stone cairns; trail (0.2 mile west) to White Rocks Cliff	2,276
11.6	1674.8	Footbridge, stream	1,938
12.6	1673.8	Little Rock Pond Shelter; water at caretaker platform	1,835
12.7	1673.7	Homer Stone Brook Trail to the west	1,854
14.8	1671.6	Danby-Landgrove Road; parking	1,517
17.1	1669.3	Spring	1,956
17.6	1668.8	Lost Pond Shelter; water	2,192
19.7	1666.7	Baker Peak Trail to the west	2,642
21.8	1664.6	Griffith Lake tenting area	2,600
22.3	1664.1	Peru Peak Shelter; water	2,597
23.6	1662.8	Peru Peak	3,429
25.3	1661.1	Styles Peak	3,394
26.9	1659.5	Mad Tom Notch	2,446
29.4	1657.0	Bromley Mountain; skier warming hut	3,260
30.4	1656.0	Bromley Shelter	2,535
32.4	1654.0	VT 11 & 30	1,840

THE HIKE

From the parking area on VT 103, find the trailhead and make your way south. Soon you will cross the 30-foot suspension bridge that hangs directly above Clarendon Gorge. This area is a popular swimming hole and may be crowded during warmer months. After the bridge, the trail climbs steadily, crossing several streams and passing beautiful cascades. As you hike past Minerva Hinchey Shelter, the course begins to



climb Bear Mountain. Once you descend from the 2,228-foot peak, you will cross Sugar Hill Road just pass VT 140. From this point, Greenwall Shelter is about 1.5 miles away—an excellent spot to camp for the night. Get water at Bully Brook before the shelter, as the spring at Greenwall tends to run dry. Next, hike roughly 0.5 mile to enjoy a creative display of stone cairns surrounding the trail sign for White Rocks Cliff; a 0.2-mile blue-blazed spur trail leads to a view.

From the cairns, continue trekking south toward Bromley Mountain. You will pass four shelters within the next 10 miles as the trail gently dips and then climbs again through the forest. On the way up to Peru Peak is a peaceful area to camp next to Griffith Lake, roughly 7.5 miles from Bromley Mountain. From Griffith Lake, traverse over Peru Peak and Styles Peak, and then descends to Mad Tom Notch at 2,446-feet. From the notch, climb 2.5 miles up to Bromley.

Once you reach the 3,260-foot peak, savor the views and enjoy some food. Take refuge in the skier warming hut if it's cool and windy. You can camp here for the night and enjoy watching the sunset from the summit. Or continue onward to Bromley Shelter, about 0.5 mile farther. Once you reach the shelter, the trail begins to descend gradually. After you cross a footbridge, the parking area is less than 1 mile away and where you will end this hike.

Take a ride into downtown Manchester Center for a delicious post-hike meal. This town is bursting with local eateries and shops, including a well-stocked outfitters. Book-lovers, don't miss the family-owned Northshire Bookstore, housed in a multilevel building that might as well be literature heaven.

DID YOU KNOW?

Killington Mountain, located in central Vermont, is the first time the AT reaches above 4,000 feet in elevation since Tennessee.



View from Clarendon Gorge suspension bridge, Mile 1686.3 northbound; 2021



View from Clarendon Gorge suspension bridge, Mile 1686.3 northbound; 2021



Cairn garden at White Rock Cliff Trail, Mile 1678.0 northbound; 2013 thru-hike



Peru Peak Shelter, Mile 1664.1 northbound; 2013 thru-hike



Northbound directional sign at Peru Peak Shelter, Mile 1664.1 northbound; 2013 thru-hike



Bromley Mountain summit, Mile 1664.1 northbound; 2013 thru-hike



Poem on Maine Junction Sign, Northern intersection, Mile 1664.1 northbound; 2013 thru-hike



Waterfall in Vermont; 2013 thru-hike

TALES FROM THE TRAIL: JUST GO

By Nick Browne (“Brownie,” Georgia–Maine, 2013)

My trip on the Trail taught me this—just go for it.

I didn’t grow up dreaming of hiking the AT. Nor did I plan for years before leaving. I didn’t discover it until Bari, a battle buddy of mine, casually brought it up one night. He said, “Dude, I just watched a documentary on this backpacking trip in the United States called the Appalachian Trail; it’s 2,000 miles, and people do the whole thing. We should do it!”

I replied, “No way. That’s impossible, right . . . ? Maybe pro athletes or something, but no normal person is hiking 2,000 miles. That’s insanity.”

He turned the documentary on, and we decided right then we’d do it when we got out of the military. I’m not sure if he ever did any more research. But I did. It took about 3 hours for me to figure out that we should leave in late March.

Day 0 went like this: We showed up at what we thought was the Springer Mountain trailhead. Unfortunately, it’s snowing, and I’m wearing shorts and a T-shirt. Note to self: *It snows in Georgia.*

We start arguing once we hit the waterfall . . . there is NOT a waterfall in the guide I’m using. It should only be a few miles to the summit of Springer. I think they dropped us off at the wrong trailhead. It turns out there are several trails to Springer. We added 13 miles to keep up with our original planned campsite.

It’s almost dark when we finally arrive. There’s no room to pitch our tents. There must be forty people camping here.

Bari packed the cutting board and kitchen knife; I had the potatoes and canned chili—neither of us brought a camp stove. “We’ll just cook on an open fire, right?” Unfortunately, the snow made it difficult to start a fire. So we ate cold chili in silence—suffocated by doubt.

I summited Katahdin on September 19 with a stove and a lesson that informs my life to this day. Just go for it. Dive in. You don’t need permission. You don’t need to read another book or buy better gear. Preparation is overrated. And the answers are always in the process. All you have to do is go.

CREATURE FEATURE: GREAT BLUE HERON

The great blue heron can be seen hanging out in calm, slow-moving rivers and near the shores of lakes along the Appalachian Trail. They are easy to spot, towering out of the water, often motionless, as they wait for dinner to get within reach. These spectacular birds make their home as far north as Canada and return south during the winter. With a wingspan of 70 inches, the great blue heron appears majestic in flight.



Great blue heron PHOTO BY JEN TOLEDO

FEATURED SHELTER: STRATTON POND SHELTER

Stratton Pond Shelter is located at the base of Stratton Mountain and a short walk from beautiful Stratton Pond. Built in 1999, it has a sleeping capacity of twenty people. There is an overnight fee to stay here.



Stratton Pond Shelter PHOTO BY SARAH JONES DECKER

TRAILBLAZER SPOTLIGHT: JAMES P. TAYLOR

James P. Taylor is the founder of the Green Mountain Club and father of the Long Trail. An avid hiker, Taylor became frustrated with the lack of trails in Vermont's Green Mountains and was inspired to create a "long trail." Interestingly enough, he conceived his idea at Stratton Mountain—the same place Benton MacKaye envisioned the AT in 1900.

The Long Trail extends 272 miles along the spine of the Green Mountains and shares roughly 100 miles with the AT. Built between 1910 and 1930, it was America's first long-distance trail and the first linear trail, predating the Appalachian Trail. The builders of the AT adopted techniques from Taylor, such as using paint to mark the trails. There is no doubt that Taylor's vision was part of the inspiration behind the AT, as well as other trails that followed.



James P. Taylor

FUNGI FEATURE: OYSTER MUSHROOM

Oyster mushrooms are commonly seen growing in hardwood forests on trees and stumps along the Appalachian Trail. They have a light brown to white cap with whitish-yellow gills and arise from a stub-like stalk. Their illustrious oyster-like shape gives them their name.



Oyster mushroom