

MT. WASHINGTON VALLEY  
New Hampshire



# itinerary



## WHITE MOUNTAINS TRAIL 100 MILES

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*Anything is Possible*



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## THE WHITE MOUNTAINS TRAIL

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More often than not, in the Mt Washington Valley, one wakes up to a beautiful day for a drive and there are hundreds of excursions to take. Several are so special they have been designated National Scenic Byways. And most of these very popular routes start right here in the Valley. One such excursion is The White Mountains Trail, one hundred miles of National Scenic Byway through historic villages, across covered bridges, up, down and across mountain ranges, through the 800,000-acre White Mountain National Forest and more.

To earn a National Scenic Byway Designation the route must be recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation as an All-American Road or National Scenic Byway based on one or more “archeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational and scenic qualities.” The White Mountain Trail and its adjacent northern and southern loops certainly fit the bill.

The White Mountain Trail encompasses some of New England’s most rugged mountain scenery as it travels through three historic notches and mountain passes.

It is crossed by the Appalachian Trail in four locations (Franconia Notch, Crawford Notch, Pinkham Notch and Rt 2 in Shelburne) and has over fifty historic markers posted for visitors.

- **For more information on the Appalachian Trail visit**  
[www.appalachiantrail.org/hiking/find-a-hike/interactive-map](http://www.appalachiantrail.org/hiking/find-a-hike/interactive-map)
  - **For the exact historic marker locations go to**  
[www.nh.gov/nhdhr/markers/markers\\_map.html](http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/markers/markers_map.html)
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## SO, UP FOR A DRIVE?

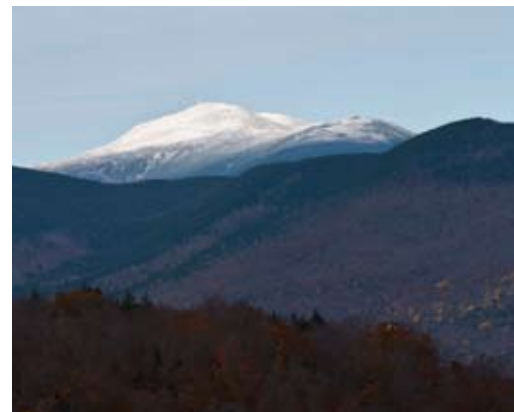
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Let's start with the basic must see – if you get nowhere else on this visit, this is the “have to” loop. It is the one locals take their friends on when they are only here for a short visit.

Most impressive...

If you are in the southern part of the Valley you will take Rt 16 south to Rt 112 west across the Kancamagus Highway. If you are north of the Valley go west on 302 into Bartlett Village, turn left onto Bear Notch Road and nine miles later you will meet up with 112 and take a right onto the Kanc.

I suggest you start in one direction and return via the other circle as both routes are different yet equally gorgeous. Bear Notch is not open in the winter though (which makes it awesome for snow shoeing and XC skiing!) The Conway to the Kanc route is all about short views, gorges and waterfalls and the Bartlett to Bear Notch route is all about wide scenic vistas of big mountains.



Both have many scenic overlooks. Pull off the road for your pics, stay safe! Also fill 'er up before you head out; there is no gas on the 34 miles Kanc Highway.

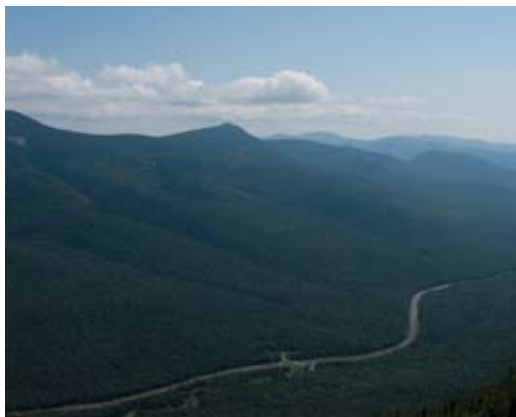
Here is a bit of knowledge you will need so you don't

get labeled as a flatlander...Kancamagus is pronounced Kank-ah-mah-gus, not Kank-a-mang-kis. That “mang” is a sure giveaway that you aren't from here.

Along the Kanc there are the most outrageous views of the Sandwich and Osceola Mountain ranges, easy hikes off the main road include Sabbaday Falls, Lower Falls and Rocky Gorge swimming holes. Longer hikes to reach better views and deeper water can also be found at [www.kancamagushighway.com/trails/index.htm](http://www.kancamagushighway.com/trails/index.htm)

At the west end of the Kanc you will come into Lincoln and then take a right to go north on route 93 also known as the Franconia Notch Parkway to Franconia Notch State Park.

Here you can spend the whole day and still not see the entire splendor. There are short hikes to scenic vistas and waterfalls such as The Basin, Flume Gorge, and Echo Lake, longer day hikes to mountain lakes and summits and AMC huts. A stop at the Flume Visitor Center helps put the history into perspective. Be sure to visit the site of the Old Man of the Mountain.



Even though our Old Man is not with NH in place, he is here in spirit and the memorial is worth the short walk. Also at the Park you can ride the aerial tram to the top of Cannon Mountain, bike the rec trail, fish and watch for hawks and falcons, which tend to frequent the notch. See if you can spot Eagle Ridge.



North of Franconia Notch you can either take Route 3 and head to Twin Mountain, or go a bit further north to Route 142 to Bethlehem. I love the back way to Bethlehem and it is a great little stop for lunch and a bit of antiquing. Then follow Route 302 east to Twin Mountain for more spectacular views and maybe a moose sighting.





From Twin Mountain stay on 302 east to Bretton Woods. Here you can experience the Cog Railway the longest cog rail in the world, visit the Mt Washington Hotel, one of only three historic grand hotels in the Whites, take a chairlift ride up to the summit at Bretton Woods and even zip line down.

Continuing on you will reach Crawford Notch, the home of the Crawford Notch Railroad Station and AMC Highland Center. Both are interesting stops for a bit of mountain mania and a snack. Crawford Notch also offers a few easy hikes so stop by the AMC Center for more information. Continuing east on 302 will bring you right back to the Valley. Clockwise or counter clockwise the White Mountain Trail is the smartest time travel in the Whites.

Want more – there are the northern and southern loops.

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North of Franconia Notch is the Sugar Hill Easton area rich in New Hampshire history. The first ski school in America was started here and the mountain farm home of NH poet Robert Frost, The Frost Place, is in Franconia. Continuing on to Littleton you will find the longest candy counter in the world at Chutters. Littleton is also rich



in history, once a stop on the Underground Railroad and the home of author Eleanor Porter, creator of Pollyanna. A 1913 statue of Pollyanna stands in the town center. For more photos, history and activities on the northern loop jump over to the Rail and Trails itinerary, which takes you through this region.



Heading towards the Lakes Region of New Hampshire, take the southern route through Ossipee, Madison, and Sandwich.

Take a look at the itinerary called Southern Comforts for more details. Take the whole day and expand your excursion to include the circumnavigation of Lake Winnepesaukee. It will take a few hours to get around the lake, maybe a whole lot longer if it is a hot summer weekend but the drive offers a different perspective on all New Hampshire has to show. One of my favorites Sunday drives is to leave the Valley south on 16. You can jump on 153 in Madison and follow the Southern Comfort itinerary back to Route 25 toward Moultonborough. A unique stop is the Castle in the Clouds – over 5200 acres of forest, a mansion museum and art gallery, 28 miles of hiking trails, gardens and waterfalls.

From Moultonborough take Rt 109 south to Melvin Village.



With a population of only 241 residents and a town with no commercial establishments, Melvin Village is quiet, serene and most picturesque. Continue on to Mirror Lake.

This route is especially nice early when you may experience fog and mist lifting off the Lake. This is the beginning of your circumnavigation of Lake Winnepesaukee. Route 109 winds through these villages, kissing the edges of the lake here and there, surrounded by cottages and bungalows. The area has a feel of 1942 to it, tiny corner bait shops and marinas and floating docks tied to trees. In Wolfeboro we come back to today.



Take a scenic walk, eat lunch at the gazebo overlooking the lake, take a boat ride, or just enjoy the town docks with an



ice cream cone and a best friend. Wolfeboro boasts as the oldest summer resort in America.

Continue south, now on route 28 to Alton and Alton Bay, the southern most point on the lake and watch the m/s Mt Washington cruise in.

As you follow route 11 up the western side of the lake you will enjoy views of the Ossipee Range, you can hike to summit of Mt Major, or relax at Ellacoya State Park.





In Laconia enjoy an evening concert Meadowbrook. Laconia is also home to the oldest national bike rally, held in June.

In Weirs Beach enjoy the rides and slides, arcades, beach and



boardwalk, special events, even a boat or train excursion.

To begin your return to the Valley, take Route 3 back to Meredith. Stay on 3 to Holderness and around Squam Lake, stop at the Squam Lake Science Center and then pick up 113 to Sandwich.

In Sandwich you are almost back to your Valley home away from home. Follow 113 back to Chocorua and jump on 16N. Here you are. Wow, what a day!



