

# Long Path/Hook Mountain Bike Path Loop to Summit of Hook Mountain

**Length:** 6.0 miles **Difficulty:** Moderate **Time:** 3.5 hours

## Directions to trailhead

Take U.S. Route 9W north to Nyack, New York. Two blocks north of its intersection with N.Y. Route 59 (Main Street), turn right onto High Avenue. Continue for one block and turn left onto North Midland Avenue. After about a mile, continue straight ahead as the main road curves to the left. Follow Midland Avenue through the village of Upper Nyack until the road ends at the entrance to the Marydell Faith and Life Center, then turn right onto Larchdale Road. At the next intersection, turn left onto Broadway and follow it into Nyack Beach State Park (a parking fee is charged on weekends; daily during the summer). Continue ahead to the parking area.

## Hike Description

From the parking area, walk back along the park access road to the park entrance. Here, to the left, you will see three white blazes on a utility pole. These blazes mark the start of the Upper Nyack Trail, which is your route for the first part of the hike. Follow the white blazes, which turn right onto Larchdale Road. As you walk down this quiet street, you will see the cliffs of Hook Mountain to your right. At the end of Larchdale, turn left onto Midland Avenue. In 300 feet, you will observe a double white blaze painted on a rock. Turn right, and follow the white trail as it winds through second-growth woodlands, with houses visible to the left, and then bears right and climbs to a junction with the aqua-blazed Long Path.

Turn right onto the Long Path, which follows the route of an old road. Built in the 1870s, this road was planned to continue to the top of Hook Mountain, but it never was completed. Route 9W, which the old road briefly parallels, is visible through the trees above on the left. Soon, the old road curves away from Route 9W, and the trail soon narrows to a footpath, with views of the river to the right. The trail then bears left and begins to climb rather steeply, then more moderately. As you get a little higher, views open up over Upper Nyack, the Hudson River and the Tappan Zee Bridge.

Just beyond, after curving to the left, the trail turns sharply right (avoid the unmarked path leading straight ahead) and climbs a steep, rocky slope, soon reaching the summit of Hook Mountain, with outstanding views over the Hudson River and the Tappan Zee Bridge. Rockland Lake may be seen to the north, with the hills of Harriman State Park beyond. On a clear day, the New York City skyline is visible to the south. You'll also notice several clumps of prickly pear cactus – the only native American cactus that grows east of the Rocky Mountains. You've climbed over 700 feet to reach this point, and you'll want to take a short break, while enjoying the view.

The trail continues straight ahead, descending from the summit and following the ridge of the mountain, with more views over the river to the east. In another 0.3 mile, at the base of a descent, a yellow-blazed trail leaves to the left. Continue ahead on the Long Path, which now begins to climb again. A short distance ahead, you'll reach several viewpoints to the right of the trail, with Nyack Beach State Park visible directly below. There is a sheer drop of several hundred feet here, so use extreme caution if you approach the cliff edge!

After continuing along the ridge for a few more minutes, the trail turns sharply left and begins a steady descent. Soon, it reaches a switchback in an old road and joins the road as the road curves to the right. This well-graded road is a welcome change of pace from the rather rugged ridgetop trail that you've been following for the last mile or so. The Long Path follows the road as it descends gently along the western side of the ridge, then levels off.

At one point, the river is again visible through the trees on the right. Just beyond, the road bears left and ascends gently. After passing an interesting wide stone wall to the left, the road - which is now partially eroded - begins a steady descent.

Soon, you'll notice a well-defined side trail that leads off to the right. Follow this trail uphill to another viewpoint, with Croton Point visible across the river. Directly below, you can see the remnants of old docks. These docks were once used to transport ice cut from Rockland Lake to New York City.

Return to the main trail and turn right. Almost immediately, the trail curves sharply to the left and descends more steeply on a switchback. The trail soon leaves the old road and continues on a footpath, passing a stone foundation to the left. After descending very steeply over rocks, the trail bears right, skirting old concrete foundations, and reaches paved Landing Hill Road.

Turn right, leaving the Long Path, and follow the paved road downhill. As you near the bottom, you'll see the dramatic cliffs of Hook Mountain to your right. Before the park was created in the early 1900s, this was the site of a quarry. Continue along the road as it passes a stone ranger cabin to the left and becomes a gravel road. A short distance beyond, you'll reach a junction with the Hook Mountain Bike Path, which joins from the left. Paint markings on a rock at the junction indicate that the distance from here to Nyack Beach State Park is 1½ miles.

Continue ahead as the road, now once again paved, descends to the river level, passing the ruins of a small stone building to the right. At the bottom, where the road changes again to gravel, there is a picnic area to the left. The road follows right along the river for the rest of the way back to Nyack Beach State Park, passing overhanging rocks and talus slopes to the right. Along the way, there are more good views of the cliffs. This beautiful, level path is a pleasant way to conclude your hike, although you may have to share the route with bikers and joggers. The path ends at the Nyack Beach State Park parking area, where the hike began.