

Ocean View from High Mountain (Wayne, NJ)

Overview

This loop hike climbs to the summit of the highest mountain in view of the ocean on the east coast (south of Maine), with outstanding views.

Details Time: 2.5 hours Difficulty: Moderate Length: 4 miles

Driving Directions

Take Route 208 west to the second Goffle Road exit (towards Hawthorne/Paterson) and turn right at the end of the ramp. At the next light, just beyond the intersection with Goffle Hill Road, turn right onto North Watchung Drive. At a "stop" sign at the top of the hill, turn sharply right onto Rea Avenue, which becomes North Haledon Avenue and then Linda Vista Avenue. At a T-intersection with Terrace Avenue, turn right, then bear left to continue on Linda Vista Avenue, which leads into William Paterson University (Entry 6). At the next "stop" sign, turn right and continue for 0.4 mile to a small parking area on the right, with a sign "High Mountain Park."

Description

From the kiosk near the entrance to the parking lot, follow a gravel path across an open area that heads northeast, parallel to College Road. At the edge of the woods, you will notice a double red blaze, which marks the start of the Red Trail. Follow the red blazes into the woods. After passing a huge boulder on the left, the Red Trail turns left onto a footpath. It soon reaches a T-intersection, where it again turns left, this time onto an eroded woods road.

In another half a mile, you'll reach a high point on the trail where a triple-yellow blaze on a small rock marks the start of the Yellow Trail. Turn right onto the Yellow Trail, which descends to cross a small stream in a wet area. It then curves north, passing just west of the low ridge known as Mt. Cecchino. Three-quarters of a mile along the yellow trail, you will cross a small stream. From here, the trail begins a steady climb to the summit of High Mountain. Near the top, the trail bears left, bypassing an eroded section of the road, but it soon rejoins the road.

Just before arriving at the summit, you'll reach a panoramic east-facing viewpoint. On the horizon, beyond the suburban sprawl of northeastern New Jersey, you can see the New York City skyline, the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge and even a corner of the Atlantic Ocean. Continue up to the summit, which resembles a grassy southern bald, with a few large exposures of basaltic bedrock. From the summit, both the New York City skyline to the east and the ridge of the Watchung Mountains to the south are visible.

Head northwest across the broad summit, following the yellow blazes on rocks, and continue downhill on the Yellow Trail. Be sure to follow the yellow blazes, as several paths and woods roads lead down the mountain. The Yellow Trail crosses a secondary summit, levels off, and then descends steeply on an eroded woods road.

Near the base of the descent, be alert for a sharp left turn where the yellow blazes leave the woods road and enter the woods on a footpath. This section of the trail is a refreshing change from the worn woods roads that you have been following. Continue along the Yellow Trail, which descends to a stream, parallels it, and then crosses it. About 250 feet beyond the stream crossing, you'll reach a woods road.

The Yellow Trail turns right here, but you should turn left onto the road, which is the route of the Red Trail. Head south on this trail, passing through an area which is often wet. After a woods road branches off to the left, the trail becomes drier.

Further down the road, the trail passes several clusters of cedar trees, and it descends over slabs of exposed basalt. After about a mile on the Red Trail, the White Trail begins to the right, but stay on the Red Trail. Then, in another 500 feet, you'll reach the junction with the Yellow Trail that you encountered earlier in the hike. Continue ahead on the Red Trail (now retracing your steps) and follow it back to the parking lot where the hike began.