Welcome to Grandfather Mountain

The more you see, the more you'll be amazed.

Backcountry hiking at Grandfather Mountain

Access the trails inside Grandfather Mountain State Park for free from trailheads outside of Grandfather Mountain nature park. Access to the trails from the Swinging Bridge requires the purchase of a ticket to the attraction.

Enter Grandfather Mountain State Park from the Swinging Bridge:

- Hiking is included in the price of admission. To access the start of the Grandfather Trail, please park at the Hiker’s Parking Area, a quarter mile below the summit.
- Guests wishing to camp in the state park are not permitted to park in the attraction overnight.
- Please return to your vehicle at least one hour before closing time if, in an emergency, you leave your car on the mountain, please call 733-2666 (Top Shop), 733-4337 (iCentre) or 733-2669 (Nature Museum) as soon as possible to notify Grandfather Mountain staff. If you do not call, we will send out a search party.

Enter Grandfather Mountain State Park for FREE:

- Guests wishing only to hike or camp can access Grandfather Mountain State Park from one of the two off-mountain trailheads located either on the Blue Ridge Parkway or NC 105. A trail map will be available when you register.
- Plan on hiking back to your car.
- If you plan to have someone pick you up at the Swinging Bridge, the driver of the pick-up vehicle will be charged regular gate admission to come inside the travel attraction to pick you up.
- Grandfather Mountain is not able to provide rides to or from trailheads.

Keeping Grandfather Mountain Green

Your support of the nonprofit Grandfather Mountain Stewardship Foundation helps to maintain the network of trails and the rugged natural beauty of this park for future generations. Visit grandfathermountain.org to learn more or to make a donation.

CREST TRAILS

The Grandfather Trail - An upper ridge trail of astonishing variety, with spruce and fir, rock walls and pinnacles, and open spaces with views of mountains in every direction. The route follows the crest of Grandfather Mountain from the Swinging Bridge Parking Area out 2.4 miles to Calloway Peak. It was along this trail two centuries ago that noted French explorer and botanist Andre Michaux broke into song thinking "Peregrine's Flight". Shanty Spring, at 3.1 miles in, marks the beginning of a strenuous segment that makes the transition out of the hardwoods and into the Canadian fir Zone. Climbing 0.3 miles before joining the Grandfather Trail it is steep and rocky and calls for some carefulfootwork. Your reward is the view at the top.

East Side Trails

There are two points for accessing East Side trails. Most hikers use the Boone Fork Parking Area (mile 299.9 on the Blue Ridge Parkway). The alternative is the Au Sable Trail which begins 2.8 miles south of Holloway Mountain Road on 221 South. The only winter access when the Parkway is closed. From Boone Fork parking area, hikers can follow the Swinging Bridge Trail and join the Brasstown Trail at the summit of Calloway Peak (5,966 feet), the highest point on the Blue Ridge Escarpment. About halfway up, at Flat Rock View, hikers reach the junction of Cragway Trail. The upper half of the Boone Trail is rough going with views of Price Park. Just before Calloway Peak, in place ladders and cables help hikers through steep sections.

Nuwati Trail - Nu-wa-ti means "medicine" in the Cherokee language and this trail follows an old logging road 3.2 miles. It's an easy but rocky hike, ending at Storyteller's Rock and a view of the Boone Bowl. Along the way, there are stream crossings, and a stand of Bigtooth Aspens.

Cragway Trail - A steep, demanding hike with lovely vistas. Boulder and crags jut out with views of the Boone Fork.

Nuwati Trail - Nuwati is a fine loop hike. A hiking option coming down the Boone Trail when returning to cars is to follow Cragway Trail to the Nuwati.

Au Sable Trail - (National Park Service Trail) A-u-sa-b-le means "bridge" in the Cherokee language. This short, easy trail接入usher and Boone Trails, and makes a fine loop hike. A hiking option coming down the Boone Trail when returning to cars is to follow Cragway Trail to the Nuwati.

Mountain Regulations

Fire - It’s best to bring a gas backpacking stove for cooking. Campfires are permitted only on designated campsites in the state park but not on Grandfather Trail or at Hi-Balsam Shelter. If you decide to use a fire in a permitted area, keep it small, tend it at all times and only collect wood that is down on the ground. Drown fires before leaving camp. Campfires may be banned during dry periods. If you smoke, be especially careful during spring and fall dry spells. Crush cigarettes and carry out the filters.

Litter and Waste - Please carry out everything you carry in, including used bathroom tissue. For public health and courtesy reasons, bury all human waste 12" deep, 100 feet from any water resources, campsites, and trails. And thanks for picking up litter left by others.

Prohibited Materials & Activities:

No Drugs or Alcoholic Beverages
No Weapons
No Removal Of Plants, Rocks, Animals, etc.
No Rock Climbing
No Hunting or Fishing
No Mountain Bikes, Horses or Pack Animals
No GeoCaching

See www.ncparks.gov for full list of State Park Regulations
BACKCOUNTRY HIKING
Grandfather Mountain

WEST SIDE TRAILS

PROFILE TRAIL - Orange Diamond, 3.6 miles (5.8 km) in length from trailhead to Calloway Gap. Grandfather Trail jct.

The trailhead parking area is located north of the junction of 105 and 184. The lower part of the trail is an easy out-and-back stroll, upper section is gradual but fairly strenuous. Steep, strenuous, rocky trail between Shanty Spring and the Grandfather Trail at Calloway Gap.

Crest Trail

GRANDFATHER TRAIL - Blue Blazed, 2.4 miles (3.8 km)
Alpine trail that crosses entire summit ridge from trailhead at Swinging Bridge to Calloway Peak. Very strenuous, at times requiring use of cables and ladders. Upper section is a high-altitude cliff walk with spectacular rewards.

Shanty Spring

FRANKLIN TRAIL - Yellow Blazed, 0.5 mile (0.8 km)

Crest Trail

Raven’s Roost Campsite 2.8 mi (4.5 km)

BLUE RIDGE TRAIL - Red Blazed, 3.0 miles (4.8 km)
Trail begins after 0.4 miles on Tanawha Trail from Boone Fork Parking Area. An easy, but rocky, hike.

NUWATI TRAIL - Blue Circle - 1.2 miles (1.9 km)
Trail begins after 0.4 miles on Tanawha Trail from Boone Fork Parking Area. An easy, but rocky, hike.

NUWATI Spring 0.2 mi (0.3 km)

NUWATI-Cragway Trail Jct. 0.6 mi (1.0 km)

STREAMSIDE CAMPSITE 0.7 mi (1.2 km)

HERMITAGE CAMPSITE 0.8 mi (1.3 km)

STORYTELLER’S Rock Campsite 2.2 mi (3.5 km)

BOONE Bowl Campsite 2.4 mi (3.8 km)

CRAGWAY TRAIL - Orange Circle, 1.0 mi (1.6 km)

Rocky, strenuous trail that links Nuwati and Daniel Boone Scout Trails.

Top Crag 0.4 mi (0.6 km)

Flat Rock View and jct.

Daniel Boone Campsite 0.2 mi (0.3 km)

with Boone Scout Trail 2.0 mi (3.2 km)

ASUTS I TRAIL (PARK SERVICE TRAIL) - No Blaze, 0.4 mile (0.6 km)
Connecting trail from Hwy 221 at Serenity Farm to the Boone Fork Footbridge. Winter access to the East Side Trails. Easy hiking.

EAST SIDE TRAILS

DANIEL BOONE SCOUT TRAIL - White Diamond, 3.0 miles (4.8 km) from trailhead. Approx. hiking times noted.

Recommended access is from Boone Fork Parking Area on the Parkway via the Tanawha Trail. Moderately strenuous trail to Calloway Peak.

Flatrock View and Cragway jct. (2 hrs. round trip) 1.3 mi (2.1 km)

Daniel Boone Campsite 1.4 mi (2.3 km)

Briar Patch Campsite 2.2 mi (3.5 km)

Hi-Balsam Shelter 2.7 mi (4.3 km)

Raven’s Root Campsite 2.8 mi (4.5 km)

Calloway Peak (4 hrs. round trip) 3.0 mi (4.8 km)

Crest Trail

GRANDFATHER EXTENSION TRAIL - Starting at the Trails Parking Area. Red Diamond, 0.6 mile (0.96 km). This trail extends the Grandfather Trail down to the Trails Parking Area and can be used with the Bridge Trail and Grandfather Trail to make a 1.6 mile loop hike. Ends below the Vista Point of MacRae Peak.

ATTRACTION SIDE TRAILS

WOODS WALK - Grandfather Mountain Picnic Area. No Blaze (no painted trail markers), 0.4 mile (0.6 km). Allow 15 min. up, 10 min. down. Easy winding trail through a mixed hardwood forest. This trail is excellent for small children and older folks.

BRIDGE TRAIL - Starting at the Trails Parking Area. No Blaze, 0.4 mile (0.6 km). Allow 15 min. up, 10 min. down. Easy winding trail through a mixed hardwood forest. This trail is excellent for small children and older folks.

Black Rock Nature Trail - Gold Circle, 1.0 mi (1.6 km). Allow 2 hr. round trip.

Trailhead near top of mountain, on the far side of the Trails Parking Area. Gradual, moderately rocky with several interpretive signs explaining features along the route. Trail ends in a loop with views of Grandmother Mountain, Beacon Heights, and the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Grande Father Extension Trail - Starting at the Trails Parking Area. Red Diamond, 0.6 mile (0.96 km). This trail extends the Grandfather Trail down to the Trails Parking Area and can be used with the Bridge Trail and Grandfather Trail to make a 1.6 mile loop hike. Ends below the Vista Point of MacRae Peak.

GRANDFATHER EXTENSION TRAIL - Starting at the Trails Parking Area. Red Diamond, 0.6 mile (0.96 km). This trail extends the Grandfather Trail down to the Trails Parking Area and can be used with the Bridge Trail and Grandfather Trail to make a 1.6 mile loop hike. Ends below the Vista Point of MacRae Peak.

Please use good judgment in taking the following into account:

EQUIPMENT - Trails here are often steep, rocky, uneven and slippery. Hikers should wear sturdy boots and carry a day pack with food, water, first-aid supplies, car head, flashlight, cellular phone and trail map. Please do not attempt these trails wearing sandals, street shoes, flip-flops or smooth-soled footwear.

LIGHTING - Peaks, ridges, ledges and shallow overhangs are all high-risk areas for lightning strikes. Stay alert for changing weather patterns (thunderstorms can arrive suddenly in the afternoon) and stay clear of risk areas in an electrical storm.

Grandfather Mountain can host the region’s most severe weather, including electrical storms, winds over 200 mph, deep snow and sub-zero cold. Weather can change quickly. Approach this mountain with respect—hikers are dying here from falls, lightning, heart attacks and exposure. The best rule is: When bad weather strikes, leave the backcountry by trail as quickly and safely as possible.

Please do not attempt these trails wearing sandals, street shoes, flip-flops or smooth-soled footwear.

HYPOTHERMIA A cold summer rain can be as dangerous as an arctic wind storm. Carry appropriate weatherproof garments, even in summer months.

TRAIL CONDITIONS - Backcountry trails can be slick, muddy and treacherous. Upper trails in winter often glaze over with ice. Hiking under these conditions falls in the domain of well-equipped experts.

WATER - All untreated water should be purified. Grandpa, bacteria and other contaminants can not be easily detected. You can purify water by boiling it for 10 minutes, by using purification chemicals or through use of a filtering device.

WATCHING CHILDREN - Adults should lead and follow their hiking groups with young children in the middle. If the hiking party decides to split up, make plans to rejoin at a prearranged time and place to avoid confusion and the possibility of after-dark searches for lost hikers.

HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS - Hikers with breathing or heart conditions should be cautious of strenuous activity, especially at higher altitudes.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, DIAL 911.