

**49 of the best hiking trails in the US to try out this fall**

Date: 10/17/18

Written By: [Theresa Christine](https://www.thisisinsider.com/author/theresa-christine)



Hiking is especially rewarding in the fall. [Yellowstone National Park/Flickr](https://www.flickr.com/photos/yellowstonenps/30798471023/)

As if [fall](https://www.thisisinsider.com/category/fall) wasn't a reason enough to celebrate, it's also the 50th anniversary of the [National Trails System](https://www.trails50.org/national-trails/) and the [National Wild & Scenic Rivers System this year.](https://www.rivers.gov/wsr50/) That means it's time to put on those hiking shoes and explore the wilderness this autumn.

From changing colors in the leaves to butterfly migrations, it's the perfect season to explore these 49 amazing hikes across the US.

1/49

For 360-degree views of the Blue Ridge Mountains, check out Spy Rock Hike.

There are beautiful views of mountain summits. [Wikimedia Commons/TheBlackpack3r](https://www.travel-experience-live.com/hiking-spy-rock-trail-virginia/)

You'll hike up the rocky outlook (which will require just a little bit of scrambling, [according to local news site C-Ville](http://www.c-ville.com/woods-15-favorite-charlottesville-area-hikes-easy-ease/#.W7wBv2hKi-4)), but you'll be rewarded with 3,980 feet of elevation and an unobstructed view of the serene landscape.

"Spy Rock, an enormous boulder that makes anyone feel on top of the world, allows for breathtaking 360-degree panoramic views of the surrounding mountain summits," [Liz Ramos wrote in The News & Advance](https://www.newsadvance.com/news/local/hidden-gem-a-hike-to-the-top-of-the-world/article_7765d2f0-604c-5e36-96de-271be2b4df16.html).

This hike is a popular one, so head there during the week for fewer crowds.

2/49

Blodgett Canyon in western Montana is sure to have some vibrant colors.

Plan to stay overnight in Blodgett Canyon. [Wikimedia](http://dagmaramach.com/explore-montana-hike-blodgett-canyon-bitterroot/)

For a truly magical experience, plan for an overnight in Blodgett Canyon, located in the Bitterroot Mountains.

"The birch and aspen are colorful right now, and later the larch (also known as Tamarack, a deciduous conifer) will turn gold and shed their needles. The trail becomes a yellow brick road to two dramatic waterfalls and a beautiful lake," [author AM Scott](https://www.amscottwrites.com/) told INSIDER.

Foot traffic lessens in the fall, so you're more likely to enjoy some solitude on the trail this time of year.

If you're more interested in a day trip, [she recommends the Blodgett Canyon Overlook Trail](https://www.amscottwrites.com/2018/10/01/fall-hiking-blodgett-canyon-overlook/), which is under 2 miles and offers an amazing view of the gorgeous canyon.

3/49

In Vermont, head to the Healdville Trail which ascends Okemo State Forest for a quintessential fall foliage hike.

You will see evergreens and panoramic views. Wikimedia

In this 3-mile hike, you'll travel along a lovely, relaxing stream, venture through hardwood glades, and eventually climb in the final mile through a forest of evergreens. If that weren't enough, you'll be rewarded with breathtaking vistas throughout.

At the end of the trail, there is a watchtower you can climb for 360-degree views of the surrounding mountain ranges.

4/49

See Tahoe like a local on the Mount Rose Trail.

This hike is in the Sierra Nevadas. [Wikimedia](https://www.alltrails.com/trail/us/washington/mount-rose-trail)

What makes this hike particularly special is that you not only get to take in the splendor of Lake Tahoe, but you'll also get views of Reno and the surrounding Sierra Nevadas. The summit is the highest peak on the North side of the lake, and it is listed as [one of Tahoe Weekly's top 20 fall adventures](https://thetahoeweekly.com/2018/10/top-20-tahoe-fall-adventures/).

You'll work for these views, with nearly 11 miles of trail and an elevation gain of 2,400 feet. The cooler weather in the fall makes it the best time to go.

5/49

Go underground at Mammoth Cave National Park.

This is the largest underground cave system in the world. [Wikimedia](https://www.nationalparks.org/explore-parks/mammoth-cave-national-park)

Just outside of [Bowling Green](http://www.visitbgky.com/), Kentucky, you'll find the longest underground cave system in the world. While there are plenty of underground adventures to be had, above ground, you'll find plenty of hiking amongst southern fall foliage.

You'll find [a plethora of trails](https://www.nps.gov/maca/planyourvisit/trails.htm) there, but the [Sal Hollow Trail](https://www.alltrails.com/trail/us/kentucky/sal-hollow-and-buffalo-creek-loop-trail) is one of the best in the park.

"The above-ground tour takes you across riverside bluffs and through stands of beech, maple, and hickory, proving once and for all that Mammoth Cave's topside features are just as attractive as its subterranean labyrinth," Maren Horjus wrote for [Gear Junkie](https://gearjunkie.com/10-best-little-known-hikes-america).

6/49

Michigan's Porcupine Mountains State Park Escarpment Trail is Insta-famous.

This five-mile hike is still difficult. [Wikimedia](http://www.mymichigantrips.com/wp/escarpment-trail-porcupine-mountains-hikes/)

Although the trail is less than 5 miles in, don't let that fool you — elevation changes make this a challenging, yet rewarding hike. You'll find multiple lookouts along the way, and you'll wander through pine and oak trees which are red in the fall.

"The trail follows a high rocky bluff that provides multiple views overlooking the Instagram favorite, [Lake of the Clouds](https://www.porcupineup.com/lake-of-the-clouds/), a gorgeous sapphire gem in the forest," [Mary Anne Potts wrote for Red Bull's blog](https://www.redbull.com/us-en/michigan-upper-peninsula-adventure-red-bull-400).

7/49

Follow the Ice Age National Scenic Trail in Wisconsin to view the site of the last Ice Age.

This hike is a 100 miles long but it can be a fun day trip. [Wikimedia](https://www.nps.gov/iatr/index.htm)

Meander through untouched wilderness, rolling farmlands, and public parks on this trail.

The hike is hundreds of miles long, but for a more comfortable day trip that's just right for fall weather check out the section near [Elkhart Lake](https://www.elkhartlake.com/things-to-do/ice-age-trail-3/). This section, [called the LaBudde Creek section](http://www.elkhartlake.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Ice-Age-Trail-LaBudde-Segment.pdf), is full of natural history.

"Glaciers advancing and retreating created these formations, and scientists explaining what happened speak knowingly in terms of 10,000 years ago when the last glacier touched northwest Wisconsin. They also acknowledge two million years past," [Christine Tibbetts wrote in the Daily Herald](https://www.dailyherald.com/entlife/20180310/8-ways-to-wind-down-in-elkhart-lake-wisconsin).

8/49

Hike around the Lubbock Lake Landmark, a 335-acre archaeological and natural history preserve in West Texas.

This is an archaeological site. [Wikimedia](http://marfapublicradio.org/blog/nature-notes/lubbock-lake-landmark-a-one-of-a-kind-archive-of-life-on-the-llano-estacado/)

This is an important archaeological site with evidence of ancient peoples, and it's especially charming in the later part of the year. Here you'll discover a few different trails, but the Yellowhorse Draw Trail will introduce you to its stunning fall landscape the best.

"The longest one follows Yellowhorse Draw, a shallow valley that follows the contours of the topography featuring the native plants, flowers, and trees," [Glen Rosales wrote in the Albuquerque Journal](https://www.abqjournal.com/843126/back-to-the-land.html).

9/49

Embark on a naturalist-guided hike at Ridges Sanctuary in Wisconsin.

This hike has an array of landscapes on a short hike. [Wikimedia](https://wisconsin-explorer.blogspot.com/2017/06/hiking-at-ridges-sanctuary-in-door.html)

Want to learn more about the flora and fauna you're passing? While you can enjoy non-guided tours in this gem, you'll get a lot out of walking with a naturalist in Wisconsin's oldest nonprofit nature preserve.

What's more, the place is also a designated State Natural Area, an Audubon Important Bird Area, and a National Natural Landmark, [according to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources](https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/naturalareas/index.asp?SNA=17). The conifer forest meets the beach, along with a variety of plants, birds, and even endangered species.

"Hikers are presented with an astonishing array of pristine landscapes within a relatively short period of time," [according to Food & Wine](https://www.foodandwine.com/travel/restaurants/best-restaurants-door-county-wisconsin).

10/49

The Vista and Devil's Oven via Orange Trail Loop is a Connecticut gem open year-round, but it's especially lovely in autumn.

This hike has great fall foliage. [Shutterstock](https://www.outdoorproject.com/adventures/connecticut/hikes/orange-vista-trail)

Located in [Devil's Hopyard State Park](https://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2716&q=325188&deepNav_GID=1650) in East Haddam, this 2.2-mile loop hike allows you to take in the surrounding scenery. You'll discover a lake, cave, and stunning waterfall.

Katie Ziskind, a [family therapist](http://wisdomwithinct.com/) in the Connecticut area, said it's a fabulous fall foliage hike. "The pumpkin-colored leaves with yellows and burgundies can be seen for miles. There's also a beautiful waterfall," she told INSIDER.

11/49

Bird-lovers will want to check out Waggoner's Gap Hawk Watch in Landisburg, Pennsylvania.

YouTube user Moto Fly Guy documented his hike. [YouTube user Moto Fly Guy documented his hike.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NoAs7hep14o)

This is an ideal trail for people who want an easier trail that will still give them the chance to marvel at nature. Not only are the views outstanding, but this is one of the largest concentration of raptors in the US, with nearly 20,000 passing through each year.

With the bird migration combined with the changing colors of the leaves, it's no wonder it was named [one of the top ten hikes in the county](https://cumberlink.com/news/local/the-top-hikes-in-cumberland-county/collection_1937561e-b069-11e8-a32f-7b75c459b9af.html#1), according to The Sentinel.

12/49

Black Rock Mountain, Georgia's highest state park, has two trails that are particularly good for leaf peeping.

This is Georgia's highest park. Wikimedia

Black Rock Mountain is The Peach State's highest state park at an altitude or 3,640 feet, so you'll have the best view for changing hues. Georgia's State Parks website even has a [site dedicated to leaf watching in the state](https://gastateparks.org/LeafWatch), and the park is one of their top ten picks for fall colors.

For a short, moderate hike, plan on doing the 2.2-mile [Tennessee Rock Trail](https://www.atlantatrails.com/hiking-trails/black-rock-mountain-state-park-tennessee-rock-trail/). If you'd rather go for an all-day challenge, the [James E. Edmonds Backcountry Trail](https://www.atlantatrails.com/hiking-trails/black-rock-mountain-james-e-edmond-trail/) clocks in at 7.2 miles.

13/49

For some serious Pacific Northwest vibes without venturing too far from the city, explore Seattle's Mount Si.

This is a very popular PNW hike. Wikimedia

Just 30 miles east of the city, you can challenge yourself on this 8-mile out-and-back trail. Approximately 100,000 people hike it each year, making it an incredibly popular PNW hike.

"Gaining 3,100 feet in a little under four miles, it falls in a kind of sweet spot for experienced and novice hikers alike: enough of a test for bragging rights, not so tough as to scare people away," [according to the Washington Trails Association](https://www.wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/mount-si).

14/49

Enjoy peak leaf season on the trail that also has Georgia's tallest waterfall.

Because of the waterfall, this is one of the most popular parks in the state. [Wikimedia](https://www.atlantatrails.com/hiking-trails/tumbling-waters-hiking-amicalola-falls/)

Hope Oldham, one of [REI](https://www.rei.com/events)'s Outdoor School senior instructors in Atlanta, told INSIDER [Amicalola Falls Trail](https://www.atlantatrails.com/hiking-trails/tumbling-waters-hiking-amicalola-falls/) is one of her favorite day hikes in the area. The water cascades down from 729 feet tall, making it one of the state's most popular state parks.

Hope warned it is strenuous and has many stairs, but if you're up for the challenge it will be worth it during the autumn months.

"It's Georgia's tallest waterfall, and the power you feel by standing at the base is truly humbling," she told INSIDER. "It's in North Georgia, so the leaves will definitely be more vibrant than in Atlanta. It's an incredibly popular trail, especially during peak leaf season."

15/49

Don't miss the Overlook Mountain Trail in the Catskills for amazing views of the Hudson Valley.

The path is well marked and fairly easy. [Wikimedia](http://www.catskillmountaineer.com/IH-overlook.html)

Close to Woodstock, New York, this is the southernmost peak of the [Catskill Escarpment](https://www.backpacker.com/stories/new-york-s-catskill-escarpment-trail).

"[Hiking Overlook Mountain](https://twotravelingtexans.com/the-best-hikes-in-the-hudson-valley/) was breathtakingly beautiful. The hike is easy and the path is well-marked. Close to the top, you will find some interesting ruins of an old hotel, and at the top of the mountain, there is a fire tower," blogger Anisa Alhilali of [Two Traveling Texans](https://twotravelingtexans.com/) told INSIDER.

She added that just beyond the fire tower is a lookout point to take in the fall foliage.

16/49

You don't even have to leave the city to experience the wonders of St. Louis' Forest Park.

This is one of America's best public parks. [JByard/ iStock](https://www.forestparkforever.org/photos/)

Right in St. Louis proper, you'll find a beloved natural space with 45,000 trees, all sure to transform into hues of gold, red, and orange in the fall. It's a perfect urban escape.

"Originally built to host the 1904 World's Fair, Forest Park endures as one of America's greatest public spaces," [according to Thrillist](https://www.thrillist.com/travel/nation/the-15-best-city-parks-in-america). "It may not be as well known as New York's Central Park, but it's 450 acres larger, coming in at about 1,400 acres of rolling-green beauty."

17/49

The Monon Trail in Indiana makes for an amazing all-ages hike.

This trail has great leaved but has an urban twist. [Wikimedia](https://www.visithamiltoncounty.com/things-to-do/monon-trail/)

Because it's paved and mostly flat, anyone can enjoy [this scenic path in Hamilton County](https://www.visithamiltoncounty.com/blog/post/a-guide-to-the-monon-trail-in-indiana/), Indiana.

The leaves turn lovely colors during the fall, but the trail offers a bit of an urban twist. Along the 20+ mile route, you'll encounter family-friendly breweries and local spots to eat and enjoy a coffee.

18/49

Experience the same view which inspired the words to "America the Beautiful" in Colorado.

This trail is best if you split it up into two days. [Wikimedia](https://www.cloudhiking.com/mountains/rockies/pikes-peak.php)

For a bit of a challenge (with an immense reward), hike the [Barr Trail](https://www.visitcos.com/directory/barr-trail-pikes-peak/) to the summit of Pikes Peak. Because it's labeled a difficult hike — one which includes 7,500 feet of elevation gain and over 12 miles to the peak — it's recommended to split the hike into two days. Overnight hikers can spend a night at [Barr Camp](http://www.barrcamp.com/accommodations.php).

Relish in views atop the 14,115-foot summit, complete with gorgeous golden colors. This is the same mountaintop which inspired Katharine Lee Bates to write the words to "America the Beautiful," [according to the Songwriters Hall of Fame](https://www.songhall.org/profile/Katharine_Lee_Bates).

19/49

Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park near Memphis, Tennessee, has more than 20 miles of trails winding through it.

This park will never get boring. [Wikimedia](https://tnstateparks.com/parks/meeman-shelby)

With over 12,000 acres, you'll never get bored in this park.

For a moderate loop hike under 4 miles, the [Woodland Trail](https://www.alltrails.com/trail/us/tennessee/woodland-trail-loop--2) is ideal. If you'd prefer something longer, the 8-mile Chickasaw Bluff Trail will allow you to take in the scenery for even longer.

The landscape is "covered with large oaks, American beech, hickory, and sweet gum," according to the park's site. "There are 10 state Champion Trees and two National Champion Trees as well as endangered and protected plants."

If biking or horseback riding is more what you're looking for, you can also find it here.

20/49

Just 30 miles outside of Washington, D.C., you'll find a weekend escape in Prince William Forest Park.

This park has camping options or historic cabins. [Wikimedia](https://www.findyourchesapeake.com/places/prince-william-forest-park)

You don't have to go far out of the city to enjoy a weekend of outdoor fun. The [South Valley Trail](https://www.nps.gov/prwi/planyourvisit/southvalleytrail.htm) runs right by the Quantico Creek, offering visitors picturesque waterfalls, tree-lined paths, and scenic bridges to explore.

Pack up your bags and tent and plan to stay at one of the many campsites along the way, or opt for a [historic cabin](https://www.nps.gov/prwi/planyourvisit/cabin-camping.htm) if you'd prefer.

21/49

Take in the beauty of North Carolina's Beech Mountains with the Emerald Outback Trail System.

There are 7 miles of the trek which makes it easy to choose the path for your experience level. [Wikimedia](http://www.waldeneffect.org/blog/Emerald_Outback__44___Beech_Mountain/)

Here, you'll encounter over [7 miles of treks](https://www.beechmtn.com/things-to-do/hiking/emerald-outback-trail) which are designed to accommodate all experience levels. Whether you're wanting a leisurely afternoon stroll to enjoy the leaves or something more intense, you'll find it there.

"At less than a three-hour drive from Charlotte, it's a prime spot for a weekend getaway once the leaves start to put on their show," [according to the local news website Charlotte Patch](https://patch.com/north-carolina/charlotte/beech-mountain-gears-fall-events).

Trails are marked with green designating beginner routes, blue signifying intermediate routes, and black indicating the trails which are more advanced. All hikes offer the chance to trek through lush forests and take in some gorgeous views at lookouts.

22/49

Turkey Mountain Trail rests on the west bank of the Arkansas River.

The loop hike is 4.4 miles and you'll see the river. [Turkey Mountain Urban Wilderness Area/Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/turkeymountain/photos/a.174775334602/10156603064899603/?type=3&theater)

This 300-acre wilderness area is shrouded in trees, but you can still enjoy the large ponds and river along the route. With an ample ascent, you can enjoy views from the summit which rises 300 feet above the Arkansas River.

[The Yellow Trail](https://www.alltrails.com/trail/us/oklahoma/turkey-mountain-via-yellow-trail) is ideal to enjoy the changing hues of the season. The loop hike is 4.4 miles and takes around three hours to complete, and it includes many overhangs to stop, rest, and take in the stunning views.

23/49

For a short yet vigorous hike, check out the Waterrock Knob Trail in North Carolina.

The summit is worth the 1.2-mile hike. [Wikimedia](https://www.nps.gov/blri/planyourvisit/waterrock-knob-mp-451-2.htm)

You'll gain 412 feet in elevation during the 1.2-mile hike, but the summit will make it all worth it. The summit is over 6,000 feet and panoramic views burst with color in the fall.

"At the top, there are several vantage points where you can see up to 50 miles out on a clear day to the Smokies and Maggie Valley below," [according to the Jackson County visitors center](https://www.discoverjacksonnc.com/outdoors/trails/waterrock-knob-trail/).

[According to Steve Monday of the Salisbury Post in North Carolina](https://www.salisburypost.com/2018/09/25/steve-monday-when-will-we-see-some-fall-color/), it's one of his favorite spots for leaf peeping, especially in October.

24/49

Dubbed "The Niagara of Pennsylvania," expect a breathtaking waterfall set amongst an array of autumn colors at Bushkill Falls.

There are a couple trails in this park. [Wikimedia](https://www.poconomountains.com/listings/bushkill-falls/2069/)

You'll find a few trails within the park which vary in difficulty. To truly take in the changing colors of fall, avid hikers will especially love the [Red Trail](https://www.alltrails.com/trail/us/pennsylvania/bushkill-falls-red-trail) to Bridal Veils Falls.

"Three spring-fed waterfalls tumble down the mountainside and create a mist that resembles a bridal veil," [according to the Pike County Courier](http://www.pikecountycourier.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20170922/NEWS01/170929988/Inn-shares-six-best-Poconos-hiking-trails).

Because it's nestled in the woods of the Poconos, you'll be treated to an array of different hues on the leaves.

25/49

City slickers can escape to Lehigh Valley for the hike in Hawk Mountain Sanctuary.

This park is accessible for fall hiking if you are living in a nearby big city. [Wikimedia](http://www.hawkmountain.org/visit/fees-amp-directions/fees-directions/page.aspx?id=229)

Situated 60 minutes north of Philadelphia and 90 minutes west of New York City, this is an accessible spot to experience some colorful fall hiking. Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania is tucked into the rolling mountains of the countryside, so it's a great way to get away from the hustle and bustle of city life.

The Hawk Mountain Sanctuary is an easy to moderate hike of 8 miles.

"Fall is peak time for the raptor migration, so visiting one of the sanctuary's lookouts often presents opportunities to see hawks, ospreys, vultures, peregrine falcons and even bald and golden eagles as they pass by the mountain," [according to The Morning Call](http://www.mcall.com/sports/outdoors/mc-spt-outdoors-autumn-hikes-20181001-story.html).

"The south lookout is only 175 yards from the sanctuary's entrance gate and is wheelchair accessible, while the north lookout, which is accessed via the mile-long Lookout Trail, offers 70-mile views on clear days," the site added.

26/49

Enjoy views of Mt. Hood and Portland while trekking the Pittock Mansion Hike.

This trail is 5 miles and moderate. [artran/ iStock](https://www.hikespeak.com/trails/pittock-mansion-hike-wildwood-trail-forest-park/)

[Seth Buchwalter](http://www.instagram.com/pnw_ocr), an outdoor enthusiast who lives in Portland, Oregon, recommended this 5-mile round-trip hike which begins just outside of the city. It's a moderate trail, and you can expect an elevation gain of 900 feet.

"It starts relatively flat, winding, down and around a beautiful creek, passing an old stone house, before kicking in the vertical gain a bit," he told INSIDER. "Nearing the top, you'll experience a few switchbacks that are intense, but still manageable for the novice hiker.

"Of course, the foliage along the path in the fall season is absolutely beautiful, even with a high number of evergreen shrubbery."

27/49

Hike some of the famed Colorado Trail in Durango.

This trail is gentle grade and is 8 miles long. Wikimedia

In Colorado's southwestern corner, you can hike [Junction Creek to Gudy's Rest](http://www.trails2000.org/trails/colorado-trail/). While there are over 300 miles of trails in the area, this is an excellent option with a relatively gentle grade and just the right length for an autumn day hike.

In total, it's 8 miles long, although there's a perfect stopping point at a wooden footbridge 5 miles in if you'd prefer something shorter. The hike offers outstanding views of [the San Juan Mountains](https://www.denverpost.com/2016/09/28/fall-photos-san-juan-mountains-colorado/).

28/49

The Lincoln Woods Trail in New Hampshire is a hike for those who want to explore the forest in the fall.

This hike is possible in a day, but it can be fun to make a weekend out of it. [Wikimedia](http://www.chasingthemap.com/hiking-the-lincoln-woods-trail-in-nh/)

While this moderate hike can be completed in a day, there are also two campsites along the path for those who want to make a weekend out of it.

"The good thing about it — or bad, depending on what you are looking for — is that the trail is flat and protected, so the conditions will be the same throughout your hike. Even though it is 9.8 miles long, the fact that it is pretty flat makes it easy for a family to do if they are willing to spend the whole day," Trevor Peschek, a hiking enthusiast who works for [Wanderu](https://www.wanderu.com/) told INSIDER.

He added that you'll encounter two beautiful waterfalls, Franconia Falls and Thirteen Falls, along the path.

29/49

Crystal Lake Trail in Mono County, California, combines views and brews.

This hike is 3 miles long and dog-friendly. [Wikimedia](https://www.summitpost.org/crystal-lake-from-lake-george/665280)

This 3-mile, dog-friendly hike gains 750 feet in elevation, and the reward is views of Lake George, Crystal Crag, and Crystal Lake. Hiking here is lovely well into November, [according to AllTrails](https://www.alltrails.com/trail/us/california/crystal-lake-trail).

Mono County has other trails, plus they offer a [Fall Color Guide](https://www.monocounty.org/things-to-do/fall-colors/) if you're intent on finding the best areas to see vibrant leaves. But Crystal Lake Trail offers something extra special: local breweries like [Black Doubt Brewing Co.](http://www.blackdoubtbrewing.com/), [Mammoth Brewing Co.](http://www.mammothbrewingco.com/), and [Shelter Distilling](http://www.shelterdistilling.com/distillery) to treat yourself afterward.

30/49

Experience some of the Appalachian Trail at Hay Rock Overlook Trail in Virginia.

This part of the Appalachian Trail is great in the fall. [Wikimedia](https://www.hikingupward.com/JNF/CarvinCoveHayRock/)

Sections of the Appalachian Trail can be enjoyed year-round, but fall is a particularly good time to hike this section in Daleville, Virginia. Imagine leaves of goldenrod, fire engine red, and burnt orange — and if that's not enough, [just check out photos from the area](https://www.visitroanokeva.com/region/blue-ridge-mountains/fall-color/fall-photos/) which highlight the beauty of this region.

The hike is moderately difficult and around 8.5 miles, so it makes for the perfect challenging day hike with breathtaking surroundings.

31/49

If you're exploring the wine country of Finger Lakes, New York, don't miss Watkins Glen State Park.

The changing leaves and 19 waterfalls make this park incredible. [Ultima\_Gaina/ iStock](http://nyfalls.com/waterfalls/watkins-glen/)

The natural beauty of this region is truly spellbinding, and if changing leaves weren't enough, you can enjoy 19 cascading waterfalls here. It's an easy to moderate hike with lots of stairs on most of the paths.

The park was selected from more than 6,000 state parks across the nation as a nominee in the [USA TODAY Readers' Choice Poll for Best State Park in the United States](http://www.10best.com/awards/travel/best-state-park/) in 2015 — and it won third place overall.

32/49

Immerse yourself for a few days on the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail.

On this trail, you can move at your pace. [Wikimedia](https://www.findyourchesapeake.com/places/laurel-highlands-hiking-trail)

If you're looking for a multi-day, beginner-friendly hike, then this one in southwestern Pennsylvania is a perfect choice. There's an overnight area every 8-10 miles, so you can move at the pace which is most comfortable for you, while still having a comfortable place to recharge.

The trail features towering trees, but some prime viewing spots include Beam Rocks, Spruce Run, and Laurel Summit.

The varied terrain makes the trail one of the most celebrated in Pennsylvania, [according to TribLIVE](https://triblive.com/lifestyles/travel/13551334-74/check-out-these-instagram-worthy-spots-in-the-laurel-highlands).

33/49

Hike the tree-lined banks of a river on the Swamp Rabbit Trail in Greenville, South Carolina.

This trail has nature and charming city feels. [Cvandyke/ Shutterstock](https://www.railstotrails.org/trailblog/2016/february/14/south-carolina-s-greenville-health-system-swamp-rabbit-trail/)

This mixed use trail runs right through downtown, so you get the best of both worlds: nature at her finest in the fall and a charming southern city.

One of the stars of the trail is an iconic beech tree with exposed roots and a canopy that towers 100 feet in the air, [according to USA Today](https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2014/03/16/greenville-american-beech-root-tree/6503721/). The trail also leads to Falls Park on the Reedy, an urban park with a suspension bridge where you can get unobstructed views of the Reedy River waterfalls.

34/49

Choose your own adventure on Mt. Beacon.

There are 200 stairs and steep switchbacks. [Wikimedia](https://www.scenichudson.org/mountbeacon)

There are numerous lookout points as you climb Mt. Beacon, so there are options on how long the hike goes. If the 200 stairs and steep switchbacks don't tire you out too much, once you've passed a clifftop you can venture even further to a rebuilt fire tower.

"The sweeping view from the top allows visitors to see just about all of Southern Dutchess County, from the City of Beacon to Fishkill, as well as across the Hudson River," [according to Poughkeepsie Journal](https://www.poughkeepsiejournal.com/story/sports/recreational/2018/04/09/hiking-trails-every-corner-dutchess-county/499132002/).

35/49

Get the adrenaline pumping on the Precipice Trail in Acadia National Park, Maine.

This trail is steep and involves iron rungs and small ledges. [Wikimedia](https://www.mainetrailfinder.com/trails/trail/acadia-national-park-precipice-loop)

Any trail with "precipice" in its name is sure to get the blood pumping. Tava Hoag, editor at [TravelPirates](https://www.travelpirates.com/), told INSIDER it's not for anyone who's afraid of heights, and that she conquered her own fear while hiking it.

"It is a very steep out and back trail where you have to use iron rungs and small ledges to get to the top of Champlain Mountain," she told INSIDER. "I did this hike during the beginning of November and there was still some gorgeous color across Acadia National Park."

Expect to take about three hours on the 1.4-mile, strenuous hike.

36/49

Hike up to Conundrum Hot Springs and enjoy naturally warm waters lined with trees.

Permits are required for this hike and 102-degree pool. [Kris Wiktor/ Shutterstock](https://www.alltrails.com/trail/us/colorado/conundrum-creek-trail-to-conundrum-hot-springs)

What could be better than hiking amongst the stunning Elk Mountains than ending your journey with a dip in a hot spring? It's quite a treat on the trail, and the aspens turning colors make it even more special.

"The views are stunning along the whole hike, but especially from the 102-degree pool," Paul Ronto, Content Director at [RunRepeat](http://runrepeat.com/) and avid outdoorsmen told INSIDER.

He also advised that permits are required, so make sure to read [how to get one](https://www.recreation.gov/permits/273336) before making the trek.

37/49

The Coal Mines Trail brings you through some charming Washington towns.

This is one of the best trails in the PNW for seeing fall colors. [Wikimedia](https://www.illawarramercury.com.au/story/4806317/your-guide-to-the-historical-erith-coal-mine-trail/)

"I love hiking in the Pacific Northwest because of all the Fall colors. My favorite hike to see the fall leaves in the Coal Mines Trail in Snoqualmie," Alex Tran, an outdoor enthusiast [and yoga instructor](http://schimiggy.com/), told INSIDER.

Near the trail is the Bavarian town of Leavenworth where there is an [annual Oktoberfest](https://www.leavenworthoktoberfest.com/), and it will also take you to the historic town of [Roslyn](http://www.ci.roslyn.wa.us/visit/).

Alex added that leaves change from red to orange to yellow into November.

38/49

Experience fall foliage with the backdrop of NYC's skyline on the Silver Mine Lake Trail.

The trail has a view of fall foliage and Manhattan. [Shutterstock](https://scenesfromthetrail.com/2017/04/16/silvermine-lake-loop-harriman-state-park/)

New Yorkers will love this one. It's a quick train or cab ride away, offering the chance to escape the hustle and bustle but not need to plan too much.

Nestled in [Harriman State Park](https://parks.ny.gov/parks/145/details.aspx) (which has over 200 miles of trails), this one takes you to the top of Black Mountain. Expect multi-colored vistas and the skyscrapers of Manhattan in the background.

39/49

The Savage Alpine Trail in Denali National Park is an unexpected fall adventure.

This Alaskan trail has fall foliage in the tundra. [Wikimedia](http://thetrekplanner.com/savage-alpine-trail-denali-national-park-alaska/)

Alaska may not be the first place that comes to mind when you think of fall hikes, but Jennifer Melroy would disagree. Jennifer is on a mission to visit all national parks and shares her journeys at [National Park Obsessed](https://nationalparkobsessed.com/things-to-know-before-visiting-denali-national-park/).

"I love hiking this trail in the fall for two reasons," she told INSIDER. "The first is the fall colors in the tundra. The aspen trees have this amazing shade of gold which contrasts with the reds and pinks of the willow trees. Also, the blueberries are ripe and found all along the trail."

It's a strenuous hike with 1,400 feet of elevation gain, and it's just over 4 miles one way.

40/49

Get a workout at the Inner Basin Trail near Flagstaff, Arizona.

This trail has noticeable elevation gain. [Oralleff/ iStock](https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/coconino/recarea/?recid=55110)

Tucked in the [Coconino National Forest](https://www.fs.usda.gov/coconino), this trail has clear markers and measures just over three miles. It's a perfect day trip option in the fall.

"It offers plenty of Aspens along the way with their colorful leaves," Shawna Newman of [Active Weekender](http://activeweekender.com/) told INSIDER. "This is a moderate trail with a noticeable elevation gain that will leave even the most experienced hiker a little winded."

"The terrain itself is not challenging and the surrounding beauty makes it the perfect trail for snapping some photos of the changing leaves," Shawna added.

41/49

Journey on the diverse Flint Hills Nature Trail in Kansas.

This is the longest and most diverse trail in Kansas. [Wikimedia](https://www.kshb.com/news/state/kansas/kansas-flint-hills-nature-trail-open-for-bikers-hikers)

From strolling by picturesque prairies to wandering through fresh farmland to leaf peeping in the forest, this hike has a bit of everything. It's also the longest and most diverse trail in Kansas, according to [The Wichita Eagle](https://www.kansas.com/news/state/article152968244.html).

While the landscape makes it a pretty easy hike to complete, you can still challenge yourself by hiking all 96 miles of it. For most, this takes about eight or nine days to complete.

42/49

Explore the Stanford Trail in Ohio's only national park.

This trail meets another, so you can continue seeing the fall colors. Wikimedia

Within [Cuyahoga Valley National Park](https://www.nps.gov/cuva/index.htm), perhaps the top trail to catch fall colors and enjoy the season is this 3.8-mile trail. If you're wanting an extra challenge, the hike meets up with the [Brandywine Gorge Trail](https://www.alltrails.com/trail/us/ohio/brandywine-gorge-trail) which offers you the option to extend your adventure.

If getting outside in autumn is a priority but you're concerned about mobility or have young ones in tow, you've still got options here.

"The Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad is an 'unsung hero' of my park because it makes the park accessible to visitors who may not be able to see it otherwise. People of all ages and walks of life love the train ride through the valley," [park ranger Rebecca Jones Macko told National Geographic](https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/intelligent-travel/2015/08/03/i-heart-my-national-park-cuyahoga-valley/).

43/49

Witness the fall monarch butterfly migration on the Eastern Lake Trail in South Walton, Florida.

You can watch the monarch butterfly migration from this trail. [WIkimedia](https://floridatrailhikes.com/ocean-to-lake/)

While this area of Florida may not turn gold in the fall for the usual reasons, you'll still experience vibrant orange hues here. Every year, [a monarch butterfly migration](https://www.nwfdailynews.com/news/20170905/return-of-butterflies) happens, making this a unique hike for the season.

While there are over 27 miles of trails in this area, this orange loop makes for a great workout with a reward. While it's a relatively challenging 11 miles, no doubt the unbeatable views of Eastern Lake are worth it.

44/49

Check out the boardwalk in Big Bog State Recreation Area for something wheelchair-accessible.

You can experience this scenic view on a boardwalk. [Wikimedia](https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/state_parks/park.html?id=sra00308#homepage)

[According to StarTribune](http://www.startribune.com/i-ve-got-a-passport-to-minnesota-s-state-parks/443324633/), this wilderness area is home to a 500-square mile bog which is the largest in the lower 48 states. The boardwalk actually takes you over it, allowing you to experience the landscape in a unique way.

Wander through a stunted tamarack and spruce forest for a mile on this trail. At the end, you'll be treated to a viewing platform, benches to sit and take it all in, and a binocular viewer.

45/49

Hike California's hidden gem, the Mt. Eddy Trail in Shasta-Trinity National Forest.

This hike will make you sweat. bfwhsm3/ Shutterstock

Expect to sweat here — this 11-mile round-trip hike has over 2,000 feet of elevation gain.

Located in Siskiyou County, the northernmost region of California, the Mt. Eddy Trail is one of the area's least traveled trails. For those who want to take in breathtaking views of Mt. Shasta framed by fall foliage, this is an excellent choice.

"Everywhere you turn, the hits just keep on coming: to the north are Shasta Valley, Lake Shastina, the Whaleback, and on the horizon, Mount McLaughlin; to the south, you can look over the spires of Castle Crags, beyond to Grey Rocks and to the right of the Upper Sacramento River Canyon, with Lassen Peak on the horizon; to the east are Boulder Lake Basin, Sawtooth Ridge and the snow-flanked Thompson Peak in the Trinity Alps Wilderness," [Tom Sienstra wrote in the San Francisco Chronicle](https://www.sfchronicle.com/sports/article/Mount-Eddy-s-reveal-moment-of-giant-Shasta-13049990.php).

"I've been to all and Mount Eddy crowns them all."

46/49

Take in the scenic views on Texas' East Trail.

This trail has beautiful fall colors. [Becky Sheridan/ Shutterstock](http://www.scenicusa.net/041410.html)

You'll find this 3-mile trail in the [Lost Maples State Natural Area](https://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/lost-maples) in Vanderpool, Texas. Marvel at the beauty of the area, complete with bigtooth maples, bald cypress, and sycamore trees which reflect against sparkling waters.

It's the best place to experience Hill Country's fall colors, [according to Travel + Leisure](https://www.travelandleisure.com/trip-ideas/texas-hill-country-fall-road-trip?xid=PS_smithsonian).

47/49

Hike New Mexico's highest peak on the Bull of the Woods trail.

This can be a day trip to over night trip. [Wikimedia](https://trailrunner.com/event/bull-of-the-woods-trail-race/)

You won't find better views in New Mexico than atop Wheeler Peak, which measures over 13,000 feet, [according to Summit Post](https://www.summitpost.org/wheeler-peak-nm/150429). During the fall months, you'll have endless views of golden aspens around you.

At 14.5 miles, you can either make this an intense day trip or break up your hike with a night camping amongst the wilderness.

48/49

Stroll along the river on the Chocolate Gulch Trail in Sun Valley, Idaho.

Fall is a great time to enjoy this trail. [Wikimedia](https://www.alltrails.com/trail/us/idaho/chocolate-gulch-trail)

Right in the Sawtooth Mountains, this 5-mile hike will take approximately a half-day to complete. The trail begins on the banks of a river, and you'll eventually climb a peak to view the waters below.

"The view from local hikes like Chocolate Gulch is pretty great this time of year, as are the sunny days, cooler temps, and quiet trails," [according to Sun Valley Tourism](https://www.sunvalley.com/blog/fall/the-secret-season).

Because fall is a slightly less busy time, you can enjoy a little more solitude on the trail.

49/49

Take in astounding views on a rock outcropping on the Whitaker Point Trail.

This spot in the Ozarks has lots of fall foliage. [Hopeless Wanderer/ Shutterstock](http://onlyinark.com/culture/top-8-fall-color-road-trips-in-arkansas/)

You'll find this 3-mile trail in the [Upper Buffalo Wilderness Area](https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/osfnf/recarea/?recid=43499) of the Ozarks, and it's especially lovely in autumn months with the changing colors.

The trail leads to Whitaker Point, also called Hawksbill Crag, which juts out about 100 feet above the forest floor. It's a highly photographed spot in Arkansas, and with good reason — you'll be able to peer out over the valley of fall foliage surrounding the Buffalo National River.