



Winter Hiking Tips

Plan ahead and prepare

Environment

- Darkness comes early and knowing the weather forecast is essential. Conditions can change quickly. Wind, wet, and cold = hypothermia, which can be killer even at 30–50 F (-1–10 C).
- Hike with a buddy. If you hike alone, tell someone your plans or leave a note in your car.

Equipment

- Socks, boots, hat, gloves, rain gear, gaiters, trekking poles, headlamp, water, food, compass and map, first aid kit, firestarter, and emergency bivy gear.
- Layer clothes to regulate temperature. Your inner layer should wick perspiration.
- Feet and hands get cold first; be alert for frostbite.
- Drink plenty of water. Eat high energy foods.
- Ice is everywhere, and many trails require shoe traction devices, such as crampons.

Travel on durable surfaces

- Stay on the trail. This keeps you safe and protects soils and vegetation.
- Ice (with shoe traction devices) and rock are durable.
- Acadia trails are very icy. A 4–6 inch (10–15 cm) snow cover makes hiking somewhat safer.
- Some trails are nearly impassible without shoe traction, an ice ax, or other gear. Ask about conditions. Rocks chew up shoe traction devices; crampons may need to be removed and replaced frequently.
- Every trail has an icy crux—the most difficult part—somewhere.

Dispose of waste properly

- It is difficult to dig a cathole in frozen ground under two feet of snow. Dispose of solid human waste 200 feet (61 m) from trails and water in deep snow. Use two plastic bread bags to carry out toilet paper.
- Carry out everything you carry in.

Leave what you find

- Remember, you may only collect firewood for campfires at designated campgrounds and picnic areas within the park, certain fruit, nuts, and berries, and unoccupied seashells.

Minimize campfire effects

- Build a low-impact fire only in an emergency.

Respect wildlife

- Give wildlife plenty of space. Snowy owls sometimes spend winters on Acadia’s summits. Day-active snowy owls are usually stressed for food. If you see one perched, it’s probably hunting. Keep quiet, observe it from a distance, and consider descending to avoid spooking it.

Be considerate of other visitors

- Quiet and solitude are more attainable at Acadia in winter. Everyone can find a little if you keep your group small, your voices low, and your dog on a leash.

Getting up the mountain is optional. Getting down is not. Turning around is okay.