



State Route 20 Day Hike Sampler

The following hikes are located off State Route 20 at the mileposts indicated. Included is round-trip mileage and elevation gain. Please help protect our precious wildlands by following the Leave No Trace principles including staying on trails, packing out all trash, and keeping food away from wildlife. Dogs and other pets are not allowed in North Cascades National Park; they are allowed on leash in Ross Lake National Recreation Area and on US Forest Service trails, as noted below. Parking passes are required at some trailheads, as noted below.

MP 117 - THORNTON LAKE - moderately strenuous - 10.4 miles (16.7 km) / 2,300 feet (700 m)

This trail provides views of high mountain lakes and nearby peaks. Follow the Thornton Lake Road for 5 miles (8 km) to the trail head (rough road - not recommended for low-clearance vehicles). The trail is level - and often brushy - for the first 2 miles (3.2 km) and then gains elevation through cool, old-growth forest. Stop on the ridge above Thornton Lake (4.5 miles/7.2 km) for great views or scramble up Trapper Peak, or down to the lake for a longer, more strenuous day. Leashed dogs are allowed up to the national park boundary.

MP 120 - NEWHALEM AREA TRAILS - easy - short walks to 1.8 miles (2.9 km) / little elevation

Multiple short trails located near the North Cascades Visitor Center in Newhalem. Trail features include a scenic viewpoint, the Skagit River, mature forests, a walk among giant western redcedars, and a visit to an ancient Native American archaeological site. Leashed dogs are allowed.

MP 126 - SOURDOUGH MOUNTAIN - very strenuous - 10.4 miles (16.7 km) / 5,100 feet (1,554 m)

This difficult trail ends on a high ridge with spectacular views of peaks and lakes. Turn off SR 20 at the sign for the town of Diablo. The trail begins behind the domed swimming pool. The trail switchbacks relentlessly and steeply. It can be hot and dry, so please bring plenty of water. At approximately 4 miles (6.4 km), cross Sourdough Creek (use caution in the spring, when the creek may run high, or be bridged by only a thin layer of snow). The last mile crosses beautiful flower filled fields and ends at a historic lookout (closed to the public). Leashed dogs are allowed to the National Park boundary (first 3 miles/4.8 km) - no dogs are allowed beyond this point.

MP 127 - PYRAMID LAKE TRAIL - moderate - 4.2 miles (6.8 km) / 1,500 feet (455 m)

Near milepost 127, park on the north side of the highway. The trailhead is west of the parking area on the south side of the road. This hike passes through lodgepole pine forest, then moist clear, hemlock and fir forest to a tiny mountain lake with a unique community of plants growing on floating logs. Leashed dogs are allowed.

MP 128 - DIABLO LAKE TRAIL - moderate - 7.6 miles (12.2 km) / 400 feet (120 m)

Look for signs along SR 20 to the road that crosses the top of Diablo Dam. Cross the dam and follow access road to parking by the trailhead. The trail rises and falls for 3.8 miles (6.1 km), then crosses Diablo Lake on a high bridge. Retrace your path, or time your hike for a ride back on the Diablo Lake Ferry (be at the ferry dock below Ross Dam a few minutes before 9 am or 3:30 pm). Road access and ferry service may be limited during times of heightened security - check at the Visitor Center for current status. Leashed dogs are allowed.

MP 130 - THUNDER KNOB TRAIL - easy - 3.6 miles (5.8 km) / 425 feet (130 m)

The trailhead is on the north side of SR 20 at Colonial Creek Campground. This trail switchbacks gently to a knob above Diablo Lake with views of surrounding peaks. Leashed dogs are allowed.

MP 130 - THUNDER CREEK TRAIL/4th OF JULY PASS TRAIL - moderate - 10 miles (16.1 km) / 2,300 feet (700 m)

The trailhead is located at the south end of Colonial Creek Campground. Thunder Creek is a beautiful old-growth forest hike alongside a glacial creek. The trail crosses Thunder Creek on a suspension bridge at approximately 2 miles (3.2 km), then goes for another 38 miles (61 km). For mountain and glacier views, turn off onto the 4th of July Pass Trail 0.1 miles (0.16 km) beyond the bridge. Leashed dogs are allowed along the first 7 miles (11.2 km) of Thunder Creek Trail and okay to 4th of July Pass.

MP 134 - ROSS DAM TRAIL - moderate - 1.5 miles (2.4 km) / 500 feet (150 m)

A short trail through a nice forest to the edge of Ross Lake and the top of Ross Dam. The trail crosses Happy Creek and drops down from SR 20 to the impressive Ross Dam. Leashed dogs are allowed.

MP 134.5 - HAPPY CREEK FOREST WALK - easy - 0.3 miles (0.5 km) / level boardwalk

This short, self-guided, wheelchair-accessible nature trail winds through a creek-side forest setting. Accessible restrooms are at the trailhead. Follow the spur trail for 3/4 of a mile to reach a waterfall. Leashed dogs are allowed.

MP 138 - HAPPY PANTHER TRAIL - moderate - 10 miles (16.1 km) / 400 feet (120 m)

The trailhead is located at the East Bank Trailhead. This trail follows Ruby Arm of Ross Lake back to the edge of Ross Lake near the dam. The trail ends 0.1 mile (0.16 km) east of the bottom of the Ross Dam Trail access road. This forested trail crosses beautiful creeks as it cuts across the steep bank of Ruby Arm. Leashed dogs are allowed.

MP 138 - EAST BANK TRAIL - easy - variable distance and elevation

This forested trail crosses Ruby Creek and heads west towards Ross Lake (note: at this point you can also hike east out of the park towards Canyon Creek Trail for another forested walk). After 2.8 miles, the Ruby Arm Trail joins the East Bank Trail, which heads north 28 miles (45 km) to Canada. Take the left most trail junction, where a 0.5 mile (0.8 km) walk takes you past Hidden Hand Camp to a resting site above Ross Lake. Leashed dogs are allowed.

MP 151 - EASY PASS TRAIL (USFS / NPS) - strenuous - 7.4 miles (11.9 km) / 3,000 feet (914 m)

A beautiful hike to a pass with expansive views of Fisher Basin, surrounding peaks and wildflowers, when in season. The trail crosses Granite Creek, then winds upwards for approximately 2 miles (3.2 km), before opening into a basin. The trail then heads steadily upwards to Easy Pass. During spring, the hike may require an ice axe and the trail may be lost in lingering snowfields. No dogs are allowed beyond the National Park boundary, including Easy Pass. A Northwest Forest Pass is required to park at the trailhead.

MP 157 - RAINY PASS AREA TRAILS (USFS / NPS) A Northwest Forest Pass is required for all Rainy Pass trails.

RAINY LAKE - easy - 2 miles (3.2 km) / level: A wheelchair accessible paved trail to a mountain lake. Leashed dogs are allowed.

LAKE ANN - easy- 4 miles (6.4 km) / 200 feet (61 m): A short trail to a lovely mountain lake. Leashed dogs are allowed.

MAPLE PASS LOOP - moderately strenuous - 7.5 miles (12 km) / 2185 feet (665 m): The loop hike begins on the Lake Ann Trail and ends on the Rainy Lake Trail. This is a challenging hike to Maple Pass through forest and subalpine meadows with great views. Leashed dogs are allowed on the loop trail, but not allowed over the pass and into the National Park.

PCT NORTH / CUTTHROAT PASS (USFS) - moderately strenuous - 10 miles (16.1 km) / 2,000 feet (610 m): The parking area is located on the north side of the highway. Hike along the Pacific Crest Trail through beautiful Cutthroat Pass and sweeping mountain views. Leashed dogs are allowed.

MP 159 - PCT SOUTH / BRIDGE CREEK (USFS / NPS) - moderate - 7 miles (11.3 km) / 900 feet (274 m)

The parking area is located on the north side of the highway at approximately 2 miles (3.2 km) east of Rainy Pass. The trail drops gently, following Bridge Creek through forested slopes and crosses some avalanche paths with mountain views. At approximately 1.6 miles (2.6 km) the trail enters the National Park and at 2.8 miles (4.5 km), comes to a trail junction. Go left approximately 100 feet (30.5 m) for a pleasant bridge crossing of the creek. Return via the more adventurous Stiletto-Side Trail, or retrace your path. In the National Park, leashed dogs are allowed **only** on the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT). A Northwest Forest Pass is required to park at the trailhead.

MP 161 - BLUE LAKE TRAIL (USFS) - moderate - 4.4 miles (7.1 km) / 1,050 feet (320 m)

This trail climbs through subalpine forest and meadows to a deep, blue mountain lake. Views of Liberty Bell, Early Winter Spires, and other peaks. This is a prime larch hike in the fall. Leashed dogs are allowed. A Northwest Forest Pass is required to park at the trailhead.

MP 167 - CUTTHROAT LAKE TRAIL (USFS) - easy - 3 miles (4.8 km) / 410 feet (125 m)

This trail goes at a gentle grade to jewel-like Cutthroat Lake. From here you can continue another 4 miles (6.4 km) and 1,800 feet (549 m) of elevation to Cutthroat Pass, where it joins the PCT. Leashed dogs are allowed. A Northwest Forest Pass is required to park at the trailhead.
