

Below is the proposed itinerary for the trip. As is true on any adventure travel trip, plans for any specific day may be modified due to weather considerations, unforeseen circumstances, new opportunities, and group interests.

DAY 1

Transfer from Albany Airport to Big Moose Lake

Our trip begins today at the Albany, NY airport where we'll pick you up at 2PM. After loading our gear into the vans we'll drive 2.5 hours to the west central part of the Adirondack State Park. This State Park is unique: bigger than Yellowstone and Yosemite combined, it is a mix of publicly and privately owned land, and over half of it is wilderness. We'll only see a small section on our way to Big Moose Lake, just outside the town of Old Forge, NY. Big Moose Lake is big on peace and quiet and incredible Adirondack scenery. After getting settled into our comfortable cabins in the woods, we will go out to dinner, watch our first sunset over the lake, and listen for our first loon calls of the trip. (D)

DAY 2

Kayaking on Moose River, optional hike to fire tower on Bald Mountain

Wake up to the haunting call of the loon and the mist slowly rising off the lake, and then take your morning drink down by the dock and relax in a traditional Adirondack chair. We will enjoy a hearty and delicious breakfast prepared by the guides, just what we need to get ready for a day of kayaking on the Moose River. The Moose is a slow-moving flatwater river that winds through beautiful, classic Adirondack landscape. You will be surrounded by towering pine trees, low shrubs, and kingfishers darting back and forth across the river. We'll start our paddle with some instruction on the basics of kayaking to help make your trip more enjoyable. We find that even experienced kayakers often benefit from reviewing the correct way to paddle so that you use more of your core muscles and less of your arms. The Moose River is an excellent kayaking river, whether you're a first-time paddler or have years of experience. We'll be on the beautiful North Branch of the Moose River, exploring the Adirondack wilderness, and enjoying the splendid scenery as we paddle along with the gently moving current. Our paddle will be about three hours total and along the way we'll stop to enjoy a picnic lunch. Depending on our time and energy, on the way back to our cabins we can hike up to the fire tower on top of Bald Mountain. Although only 2 miles round trip, it's a steep hike and leads to stunning views of the Fulton Chain. Fire towers were originally built for the purpose of spotting new fires, a task that is now largely accomplished by aerial surveillance. Many are still open to hikers, however, and their location always assures great views. As the guides cook another delicious dinner, you can relax at our lake side cabin. (B, L, D)

DAY 3

Climb Blue Mountain, settle into Great Camp Sagamore

After another morning breakfast by the lake, we pack up our things and drive north to Blue Mountain Lake for some more hiking. Blue Mountain also has a fire tower on the summit, this one with a 360-degree view of the lakes, forests, hills and mountains - including some of the High Peaks, the area where we'll be in a couple of days. This is a 4-mile round trip hike with an elevation gain of 1550 feet, with some steep areas and a beautiful path that traverses bare rock, large roots, and wet soil. We will hike through spruce, balsam fir, paper birch, mountain ash, and maple, before coming to the clearing and the tower, where a picnic lunch will reward our efforts. We will then drive back to Raquette Lake where we will be staying at the Great Camp Sagamore. Sagamore was the private wilderness estate of the Vanderbilt family from 1901 to 1954. Like all of the Adirondack Great Camps, it was designed by William West Durant, a fascinating character in his own right. Although his success as a businessman was up and down, he was known for his ability to design wilderness estates for wealthy families that integrated luxury (for the time) with a rustic feel, a magic that is still apparent today. Tonight, we'll have dinner at Sagamore. Overnight Great Camp Sagamore (B, L, D)

DAY 4

Kayaking on Raquette Lake, tour of Sagamore

We'll spend today kayaking on Raquette Lake, the second largest lake in the Adirondacks. Our paddle will offer some shore line cruising, history of the lake, and the camps that grace it. Raquette Lake is known for having 99 miles of shoreline and after you see some of its many bays, inlets, and islands, you'll know it's true. Along the way we'll stop for a picnic lunch and to stretch our legs. Returning to the Sagamore in the afternoon, we'll have time for a tour - with 27 buildings on the National Historic Register, it is a fascinating place. We'll make sure to have some free time to enjoy the wonderful surroundings. After dinner, we'll have a campfire and relax in a traditional Adirondack Lean-to, the perfect setting for telling stories. Overnight Great Camp Sagamore (B, L, D)

DAY 5

Visit Adirondack Museum, hike Coney Mountain

After breakfast we leave Sagamore and head north. Our first stop is the Adirondack Museum, widely regarded as one of the best regional museums in the country. It showcases how humans have interacted with the mountains over the years. After spending a few hours there we'll continue to our afternoon hike, Coney Mountain. At 2.2 miles and a relatively gradual incline, this is one of those trails where you are amply rewarded for relatively little effort, including 360-degree views of Tupper Lake and the High Peaks. Tonight, we'll have dinner at a restaurant before continuing on to Keene Valley and our new home for the next three nights. Overnight at the Trails End Inn. (B, L, D)

DAY 6

Climb Cascade or Baxter Mountain (your choice), free time in Lake Placid

We've now arrived at the part of the Adirondacks with the highest peaks. You may have heard of the High Peaks Wilderness area - this is where most of the higher peaks, including New York's highest, Mt Marcy, are located. To be considered a "high peak", the summit has to be over 4,000 feet - and Cascade Mountain is one of those peaks. This is a 4.8-mile round trip hike that will take about 4.5-5 hours, gaining 1940 feet in elevation before reaching the summit at 4098. If it's a clear day the view goes on forever. We'll relax with a picnic lunch on top. If that isn't appealing, another excellent choice is Baxter Mountain, which also offers outstanding views. It's a mostly moderate, 1.2-mile hike to the first summit, beginning at a moderate grade then climbing over switchbacks with a few steep steps to the first open rock. It's an out and back hike, 2.4 miles total with 770 feet elevation gain. Whichever climb you choose, you will have some free time in Lake Placid. You can check out some of the shops on Main Street, visit the Olympic Museum and see the famous rink where the "Miracle on Ice" hockey game took place, or simply enjoy a walk around Mirror Lake. Tonight we'll have dinner in town before returning to Trails End Inn. Overnight at Trails End. (B, L, D)

DAY 7

Climb Rooster Comb Mountain, final Farewell dinner

This is our final full day in the Adirondacks and Rooster Comb Mountain is a fitting finale. A 5-mile round trip hike, it gains 1750 feet of elevation on its way to the summit at 2788 feet so we will feel quite accomplished. Like most of the mountains in the Adirondacks, the hike includes some steep sections, traverses, and a (very) few flat sections with rewarding views at the summit. Tonight, we'll have a final farewell dinner back at Trails End Inn, celebrating our accomplishments and camaraderie of the past week. Overnight at Trails End. (B, L, D)

DAY 8

Depart after 12:00 by plane or anytime after breakfast if you drove

We hope by the end of the week you have fallen in love with the Adirondacks as much as we have, and you won't be ready to leave. But unfortunately, it's time, and after breakfast we'll pack up for the 2- hour drive back to Albany. We'll have you back by 10:45 a.m. and you can plan to fly out any time after 12 p.m. (B)