



White Mountain National Forest Mount Chocorua



Please consult a good trail map before you hike Mt. Chocorua. The following information is intended to provide an idea of lengths and variety of trails only. Any of the round trip options to the summit are over 7 miles and will take 6 hours or more. These hikes are recommended for strong hikers only.

Champney Falls Trail

The trail begins at the Champney Falls Parking Lot on the Kancamagus Highway (Rt. 112), 10 miles west of its junction with Route 16.

Trail distances and estimated hiking times from trailhead:

Champney Falls Loop: 1.4 miles, 55 min.
Piper Trail: 3.2 miles, 2 hrs., 35 min.
Mt. Chocorua summit 3.8 miles, 3 hours.
Elevation Gain: 2500 feet

Trail narrative: The Champney Falls Trail begins by the information board in the parking area. After crossing the footbridge over Twin Brook, the trail turns sharply to the right. Follow the gradual grade of an old logging road to Champney Brook. At 1.4 miles, a loop trail will branch off on the left to scenic Champney and Pitcher Falls. In .3 miles the loop will reconnect with the Champney Falls Trail, which becomes steeper. The first set of switchbacks is reached at 2.4 miles. At 3.0 miles the Middle Sister cutoff leads to the Middle Sister Trail. The Champney Falls Trail will reach a saddle and pass the Middle Sister Trail on the left. Soon the

Champney Falls Trail ends at the junction of the Piper Trail, which will lead you to the summit in .06 mile.

Loop hike options:

From the summit, descend via the Beeline Trail to the Bolles Trail. Turn right onto the Bolles Trail and return to the parking area where you began.

Liberty Trail

To reach the trailhead, turn on to Chocorua Lake Road off of Rt. 16, between Big and Little Chocorua Lake. Follow this dirt road and turn left onto Fowler's Mill Road. Continue on Fowler's Mill Road to Paugus Mill Road where you will see a sign on your right for the Liberty, Bolles, and Brook Trails. Please respect private property on the way to the parking area.

Trail distances and estimated hiking times from trailhead:

Junction of Hammond trail: 2.7 miles, 2 hours, 10 minutes.
Jim Liberty Cabin: 3.3 miles, 2 hours, 40 min.
Brook Trail: 3.6 miles, 3 hours
Mt. Chocorua Summit (via Brook Trail) 3.9 miles, 3 hours, 20 minutes
Elevation Gain: 2,500 feet.

Trail narrative: Leaving the NE side of the parking lot, the trail ascends at a steady, moderate grade along an old bridle path. The Durrell Brook is crossed at 1.1 miles, one third of the way to Jim Liberty

Cabin. The Hammond Trail enters to the right 2.7 miles. The Liberty Trail continues to Jim Liberty Cabin at 3.3 miles. The Liberty Trail meets the Brook Trail on a ledge at 3.6 miles. Continue on the Brook Trail another .2 miles to the summit of Mt. Chocorua. (The Beeline enters 10 yards from the Liberty and Brook Trail junction.) The summit of Mt. Chocorua is .2-mile farther via the Brook Trail

Loop Hike Options: The Liberty Trail and the Brook Trail can be combined for an excellent day hike loop.

Brook Trail

Follow directions to Liberty Trailhead above.

Trail distances and estimated hiking times from trailhead:

Claybank Crossing: 2.5 miles, 1 hour, 40 minutes.

Liberty Trail junction: 3.4 miles, 3 hours.

Mt. Chocorua summit: 3.6 miles, 3 hours, 15 minutes.

Elevation gain: 2,300 feet.

Trail Narrative: With its steep ledges the Brook Trail is more challenging than the Liberty Trail. It has excellent views on the rocky ledges near the summit of Mt. Chocorua. The trail can be hazardous in wet or icy conditions. The trail begins by following a gravel road beyond the parking lot gate. The trail leaves the gravel road on the right at .4-mile and follows south of Claybank Brook. The trail passes to the junction with the Bickford Path and continues to the first ledge at 3.0 miles near where the new Beeline relocation enters on the left. The trail climbs the steep, open ledges of the Farlow Ridge with cairns and yellow blazes to mark the way. The Liberty Trail enters from the right at 3.4 miles with the summit of Mt. Chocorua another .2 miles via the Brook Trail.

Piper Trail

The trailhead is on Route 16, 6 miles south of Conway behind Davies's General Store.

Trail distances and estimated hiking times from trailhead:

Nickerson Ledge Trail: 1.2 miles, 1 hour

Chocorua River Crossing: 1.8 miles, 1 hour, 20 minutes

Camp Penacook Spur Trail: 2.8 miles, 2 hours, 15 minutes

Mt Chocorua summit: 4.3 miles, 3 hours, 30 minutes

Elevation gain: 2,700 feet

Trail Narrative: The trail starts on a gradual grade following an old logging road. The Weetamoo Trail turns off to the left at .08 miles and the Nickerson Ledge Trail turns off to the right at 1.4 miles. The Piper Trail ascends moderately past a cleared outlook to Carter Ledge. It then becomes steeper and changes into a series of switch backs, stone steps and paving. The Camp Penacook Spur Trail at 3.1 miles branches off to the left and ascends .2 miles to the shelter. Open ledges are soon discovered giving great views to the north, east and south. The Champney Brook Trail comes in on your right at 3.9 miles and .2 miles further, the West Side Trail comes in on your right. The Piper Trail continues following yellow blazes over open ledges to the summit.

Camping

No camping is allowed anywhere on the upper part of Mt. Chocorua except at the following sites: Camp Penacook (fires allowed) and Jim Liberty Cabin (fires NOT allowed).

Jim Liberty Cabin facilities include nine bunk beds, table, a bench and an outhouse. A drinking water source is located one tenth of a mile to the northeast of the cabin. It cannot be depended on during dry times of the year. There is no longer a wood stove due to the impacts on the cabin and on the scenic and fragile environment. The use of camp stoves

is required as all fires are strictly prohibited.

Camp Penacook facilities include a three – sided shelter, tent platform, pit toilet and a nearby water source. A cooking grate and fire ring are provided for use. The shelter and the tent platform each have a capacity of six to eight people.

SAFETY

Remember the ten essentials:

Map, compass, warm clothes, extra food and water, flashlight or headlamp, matches/ firestarter, whistle, rain/wind gear, and pocket knife.

Hiker Responsibility Code: You are responsible for yourself, so be prepared.

1. **With knowledge and gear**-Become self reliant by learning about the terrain, conditions, local weather, and your equipment before you start.
2. **To leave your plans**-Tell someone where you are going, trails, when you will return, and emergency plans.
3. **To stay together**-When you start as a group, hike, and end as a group. Pace your hike to the slowest person.
4. **To turn back**-Weather changes quickly in the mountains. Fatigue and unexpected conditions can affect your hike. Know your limitations and when to postpone your hike. The mountains will be there another day.

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5. **For emergencies**-Even if you are headed out for just an hour, an injury, severe weather, or a wrong turn could become life threatening. Don't assume you will be rescued; know how to rescue yourself.
6. **To share the hiker code with others**

RECREATION PASSES

The White Mountain National Forest requires a recreation fee at most trailheads and developed recreation areas. There are self serve pay stations at these locations, while longer term passes may be obtained at Ranger Stations and local vendors.

Money raised by the recreation pass fee is used to maintain and enhance recreation opportunities across the White Mountain National Forest.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Saco Ranger District
33 Kancamagus Highway
Conway, NH 03818
(603) 447-5448
(603) 447-3121 TTY

Or visit our web page at:
www.fs.fed.us/r9/white

MOUNT CHOCORUA HISTORY

Mount Chocorua bears the name of Sokosis Chief Chocorua who lived in the early 1700's. While all of the stories agree that he met his tragic death on the mountain, they differ as to how. Some have him falling from a high rock, while others have him being shot by white men after he uttered a curse on the valley below him.

The Champney Falls Trail is named for Benjamin Champney, pioneer White Mountain Artist (1817-1907). The Falls, though fantastic to view in the spring of the year, are meager in the dry seasons.

The Bee Line Trail was an old logging road which the locals continued to use as a means to get from the Bolles Trail to the summit after the loggers left the area. The Bolles Trail was a road that ran between Tamworth and the Albany Intervale, through the valley between Chocorua and Mt. Paugus. Tradition says that the first white person who ever passed through these mountains was Mother Head, who upon learning of sickness and distress in the Intervale, put on her Native American snow shoes and all alone made her way through the forest to offer her help. The road was destroyed by a hurricane and later re-blazed as a trail by Frank Bolles. Since the hurricane, the Bolles Trail is sometimes referred to as the Lost Trail.

The Chocorua Mountain Road (now the Liberty Trail) was the shortest and most popular road to the summit of Mt. Chocorua and the Peak House. In 1892, David Knowles and Newell Forrest bought the road/path and rights to the Halfway House, a former logging camp, from Jim (Dutch) Liberty, who had improved the path from the southwest in 1887 and incorporated it with the state of New Hampshire in 1889. They replaced Liberty's Peak House—two tents surrounded by a stone wall—with a three story structure which served as a hotel, obtained a new charter from the state, and spent \$400 to improve the route.

At the Halfway House pedestrians had to pay a toll of \$.25 each (about \$30 by today's standards). Some evidence of the Halfway House may still be found. The views from the Peak House explain why it was so popular and why people were willing to pay \$13.00 per week for lodging (\$1300 at today's dollar value). In 1915, the Peak House was blown off the mountain.

A cabin was constructed on the Peak House site in 1924 by the Chocorua Mountain Club. That cabin lasted until 1932 when winds blew the roof off. The Forest Service replaced it in 1934 with an enclosed cabin (Jim Liberty Cabin) with six bunk beds and large chains to hold the roof in place.

The Hammond Trail is perhaps the oldest trail on the mountain. It is said Native Americans used this trail prior to the coming of the white men. The trail takes its name from the Hammond Farm situated at the base of the trail.

Mt. Chocorua has a vast history with many more tribal names, legends, and lore. Writings such as "Albany's Recollections" by A. Bernard Perry, "Passaconaway in the White Mountains" by Charles Edward Beals, Jr., and "Mount Chocorua, A Guide and History" by Steven D. Smith will sweep you into the past.