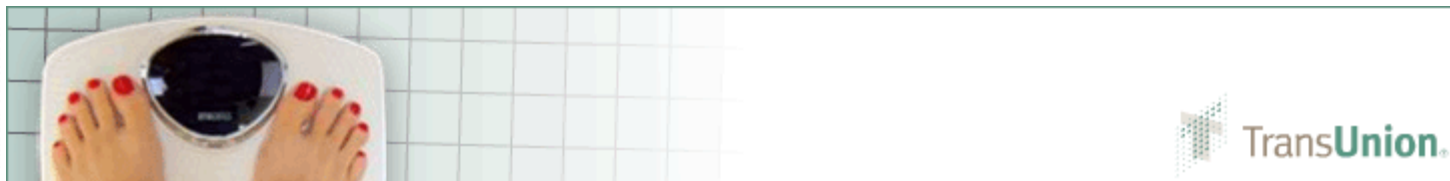


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Top 10 Hiking Trails Near Pittsburgh

By [Albrecht Powell](#), About.com Guide

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The rugged, rolling hills of Western Pennsylvania are covered with forest, the perfect setting for scenic hiking trails with picturesque views and spectacular waterfalls. From mountainous to gentle, these hiking trails provide opportunities for all levels of hiking, including short hikes, overnight trips and extended backpacking trips, all within a three-hour drive of metropolitan Pittsburgh. Grab your hiking boots and head out for a hike on one of western Pennsylvania's best hiking trails.

1. The Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail

Ranked as one of the best hiking trails in Pennsylvania - and the nation - for its accessibility, amenities and beauty, the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail meanders for 70 miles atop the Laurel Ridge between [Ohiopyle State Park](#) and Johnstown, PA. Especially beautiful in June when the Mountain Laurel and Rhododendron are in bloom, and in mid-October when fall leaves reach their colorful peak.

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history of the world's first oil boom which occurred there in 1859. The 37-mile Gerard trail winds through heavily forested areas, passing waterfalls, scenic vistas, old oil machinery, the sites of abandoned homesteads and towns, and the historic Drake Well. Five connecting loops make this trail an easy one to enjoy as a short day-hike as well.

3. The North Country Trail - Allegheny National Forest

The North Country National Scenic Trail threads its way through the landscape of seven northern states, from New York to North Dakota. A beautiful 95-mile section of the North Country Trail meanders through hardwood forests, rocks and waterfalls in the [Allegheny National Forest](#).

4. McConnells Mill Slippery Rock Gorge Trail

One of the more scenic portions of the North Country National Scenic Trail, this rugged trail winds along Slippery Rock Creek Gorge in [McConnells Mill State Park](#). It's only a 6.2 mile hike, but is rated "moderate to difficult" with rocky outcrops, rare wildflowers, stands of old growth trees, and tumbling waterfalls. Not a loop trail, so you'll need to make shuttle plans.

5. Raccoon Creek State Park Hiking Trails

Beautiful [Raccoon Creek State Park](#), located just 40 minutes from downtown Pittsburgh, offers a wide variety of hiking options to meet the needs of the casual day hiker as well as the overnight backpacker. Don't miss the 5.6 miles of hiking trails which wander through the Wildflower Reserve, especially in late-April!

6. Rachel Carson Trail

One of the best hiking trails close to Pittsburgh, the Rachel Carson Trail spans 35.7 miles between Harrison Hills County Park in northeast Allegheny County to North Park in north-central Allegheny County. The terrain is varied, including some paved roads and other areas that are quite primitive, steep and rugged. Spurs off the trail lead to the mansion at Hartwood Acres in Indiana Township and the Rachel Carson Homestead in Springdale.

7. Meadow Run Trail

If you're looking for a short, but beautiful, day hike, it is hard to beat the Meadow Run Trail in [Ohiopyle State Park](#). The scenic 3-mile loop trail leads you past mountain streams, natural water slides, cascading waterfalls and river views. Deep shaded forest and splashing water make this trail an especially fun hike in the heat of mid-summer.

8. Mount Davis Natural Area Trail

Climbing up to Mount Davis, the highest point in Pennsylvania at

3,213 feet, is made easy by a series of trails located in Forbes State Forest. A beautiful 3-mile loop trail begins at the Mt. Davis Picnic Area and leads to the top, where a firetower offers views of Pennsylvania and Maryland. Alternate loop trails can make this a longer hike - with 5-mile and 8-mile options. Wild blueberries are found in abundance along this trail in July!

9. The Warrior Trail

This beautiful hiking trail in Greene County, Pennsylvania, was originally a path used for over 5,000 years by Native Americans heading west to Flint Ridge, Ohio for supplies of flint. The entire trail runs for 67 miles from Greensboro, PA on the Monongahela River in the east to the Ohio River in West Virginia. There is access at several locations along the trail so you can opt for a long one-day hike if you wish. Several overnight shelters are also available along the trail.

10. The Baker Trail

A favorite with backpackers, the 140-mile Baker Trail traverses rolling farmland and forests from the outskirts of Pittsburgh to the Allegheny National Forest. This enjoyable hiking and backpacking trail passes through Cook Forest State Park and the Crooked Creek Lake recreation area. The Baker Trail has suffered from lack of maintenance in recent years, but now under the control of the Rachel Carson Trails Conservancy is once again becoming a beautiful journey through western Pennsylvania.