

Suggested Hikes for Quabbin Park

Quabbin Park and Reservation

100 Winsor Dam Rd, Belchertown, MA 01007 413-323-7221 QuabbinVisitor.Center@mass.gov

To help you plan your visit to DCR's Quabbin Park and Reservation, we offer the following suggested experiences that we think you might enjoy.

- **“Introductory” hikes** are short and appropriate for most users, including families with children.
- **“Signature” hikes** are recommended trail experiences. These may be longer or more difficult but highlight some of the best park features.

Download a map before you go: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/dcr-quabbin-park-access-map/download>

Things to Know Before You Go:

- **Dogs are not allowed at Quabbin Reservoir.**
- **Know time, distance, and difficulty.** The average hiker pace is estimated at 1.5 miles per hour. Most distances are round-trip. Plan conservatively, start early. Be aware of weather and sunset. Trail difficulty ratings, based on ruggedness and gradient, are *easy*, *moderate*, or *difficult*.
- **Wear weather appropriate clothing.** Layer for temperature changes. Bring sun block. Wear appropriate and sturdy footwear.
- **Park at trailheads.** Space may be limited. Be courteous to avoid blocking in others. Do not leave valuables in your car.
- **Bring a map and share your plans with someone.**
- **Bring drinking water.** Drinking water may not be available on site. Bring plenty!
- **Stay on designated trails.** Follow painted blazes and signs if available. Generally, double blazes indicate an intersection or direction change.
- **Know your pace and group size.** Keep your group together, hike only as fast as your group's slowest hiker. Limit your group size to 12 people or fewer to lessen impacts.
- **Carry-in, carry-out all trash and personal belongings.** Follow the [“Leave No Trace” outdoor ethics](#).
- **Be aware of hunting seasons.** Wear blaze orange when appropriate.
- **Do not bike on trails at Quabbin Park.** For information on where biking is allowed at Quabbin Reservoir go to: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/quabbin-reservoir-bicycle-brochure/download>.

Introductory Walk Winsor Dam

Trailhead: Begin from the Visitor Center **Lat/Long:** 42.28024602614288, -72.34786871518996

Distance: Across the Dam and back 1 mile.

Difficulty: Easy

Brief Description: A scenic road was included in the design of Winsor Dam to allow visitors unparalleled views of the Quabbin Reservoir. Now closed to vehicles, the paved road crosses the top of the dam provides an excellent opportunity to look for Bald Eagles and Common Loons and imagine the Quabbin Valley before it was flooded to provide drinking water to more than 3 million residents of the Commonwealth.

Introductory Hike

Bald Mountain Hill Loop

Trailhead: Begin just past rotary on north side

Distance: approx. 1 mile

Difficulty: Easy

Blaze Color: Orange

Brief Description: To access this trail enter Quabbin Park via the middle gate entrance located on Rt. 9 in Ware. Follow the paved road through the park and travel through the rotary towards Enfield Lookout. The trailhead is just past the rotary, on the left. The parking area is a small dirt pull-off on the left side of the road. Parking is limited in this area. Please be aware to not block the road or gate when parking your vehicle.

The trail begins on a grassy forest road which is blocked by a gate. About 200 yards along the trail the understory opens providing longer views into the forest. The trail starts a gentle climb toward a vista. If you stay on the grassy road you will come to some weathered boulders on the right. The climb becomes a little steeper. The view from this rock outcrop has been partially blocked by oaks growing on and around it but is still worth the extra steps.

From the vista, head back down the road until you reach the junction of the road you came in on and the loop section. The loop part of the trail leaves the road at the yellow arrow and goes off to the left as you head down the road.

You will pass more boulders in the woods, probably left by glaciers as they moved through this area over 10,000 years ago. You can also see bright white quartz along the ground and a healthy carpet of moss before arriving at a second vista. Continue to the right of the vista down a slope and back up into a dense patch of shrubs. The trail crosses a stonewall just before returning to the paved park road.

Signature Hike

Old Stone Trail

Trailhead: West side of road inside East Gate **Lat/Long:** 42.28268354269262, - 72.30937238239639 ; South trailhead is 0.6 miles inside the gate; North trailhead is 1.4 miles inside the gate.

Distance: 1.3 miles one-way; 2.6 miles out and back

Difficulty: moderate to challenging

Blaze Color: Purple

Brief Description: There is not a formal parking area at either trailhead. Be on the lookout for the sign at the trailhead. You can park along the side of the road, please do not block the road or any gates.

If you begin at the north trailhead, you will follow a forest road uphill for 0.2 miles. The forest road then becomes a foot path and heads south through the mixed forest for 0.8 miles. Continue following the purple blazes for another 0.3 miles as the trail heads east back to the road. This completes the one-way trip. To get back to where you began, turn around and retrace your steps on the Old Stone Trail. For an easier/shorter way back, you can simply take the paved road north.

If you begin at the south trailhead, simply reverse the above directions.

Signature Hike

East Gate Trail-Goodnough Dike loop

Trailhead: parking area at East Gate; Route 9 **Lat/Long:** 42.28268354269262, -72.30937238239639

Distance: 4.5 miles

Difficulty: moderate to challenging

Blaze Color: Black

Brief Description: Park at the East Gate located on Route 9 in Ware. The foot path begins at a gated barway and heads northeast. The trail goes across a powerline opening. Continue following the black blazes and walk along the northern corner of Pepper's Mill Pond. The trail then continues north until you come out to the paved road below Goodnough Dike. Follow the road to the right. This will bring you to the top of the Dike where you will have a spectacular view of the Quabbin Reservoir. The road hugs the reservoir for a half mile and then heads back south. You will get to a T-intersection in the road. Here you will head left, bringing you back to the East Gate trailhead below the Dike. From here, follow the trail back the way you came in to finish the hike.

Signature Hike

Tower Trail-Webster Road Loop

Trailhead: parking area located 1/3 of a mile inside the Middle Gate; right side of the road

Distance: 3.1 miles; 350 feet of elevation gain/drop

Difficulty: challenging

Blaze Color: sections of red, yellow, and green

Brief Description: From the parking area inside the middle gate, take the forest road that leads into the woods. You will pass an old, discontinued logging road on your left and then get to a second intersection. From here you will head left on another forest road (blazed red) that turns into a foot path. Head uphill and follow the path until you come to a powerline opening. Continue up the powerline opening for 1/10 of a mile until you reach the foot path that heads left back into the forest. Stay on this path until you reach Quabbin Hill and the Observation Tower. From the tower, take the paved road down to the large dirt parking lot below. Cross the lot to a trailhead to the right of a picnic table. This path is blazed yellow and will bring you downhill to Webster Road (blazed green), a wide dirt road. When you reach Webster Road, head right for about 6/10 of a mile until you get to an intersection. Here you will see a sign discouraging you from staying on the road that continues straight. Instead, Webster Road curves right, stay on that forest road. Continue this forest road to get back to where you started.