

Suggested Hikes!

Walden Pond State Reservation

This guide offers two types of suggested hike and ride routes, including

- 1) **Recommended Introductory hikes that are relatively short and appropriate for most.**
- 2) **Signature hikes that provide a recommended trail experience that may be longer or more difficult, but highlights some of the best features of the park or forest.**

Things to remember:

- **Time, distance, difficulty:** 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. Sturdy waterproof boots are recommended, trails can be wet.
- **Parking at trailheads:** Parking fees apply at Walden Pond (\$8/MA plate, \$30 non-MA plate), and the lot may be closed if there are too many visitors. Keep valuables out of sight.
- **Bring a map, and share your plans with someone.**
- **Drinking water** is usually not available. Bring plenty!
- **Stay on authorized trails:** Follow painted blazes and signs if available. Double blazes indicate an intersection or direction change.
- **Pace & group size:** keep your group together; hike only as fast as your group's slowest hiker. Limit group size to 12 people or fewer to lessen impacts.
- **Carry-in, carry-out all trash:** Leave No Trace outdoor ethics are strongly encouraged. For more information visit <http://www.lnt.org/programs/principles.php>
- **Pets are not permitted at Walden Pond.**
- **Be aware that some trails are not well marked.**
- **Hunting is not permitted at Walden**

Recommended Hike

Pond Path (one-way only, counterclockwise)

Trailhead: Begin from the Thoreau House Replica

Distance: 1.7 miles **Difficulty:** Moderate

Brief Description: *From the Thoreau House Replica near the main parking lot, cross Route 126 at the crosswalk, take the ramp down to the pond, make right onto Pond Path, proceed one way counterclockwise, keeping the pond on your left.*

Introductory Hike

Visitor Center to Goose Pond

Trailhead: Begin at the Visitor Center

Distance: 0.5 miles **Difficulty:** Easy / Moderate

Brief Description: *Walk to the back of the Visitor Center, through the parking lot, and past the solar array. Enter the woods and turn left on the Pine Hill Spur Trail. At the end of this trail, turn right onto the uneven and steeper Goose Pond Trail, a narrow spit surrounded by black huckleberry bushes to the end. You will get a panoramic view of 11-acre Goose Pond. Retrace your steps to return to the parking lot. Tick check recommended after you return to parking lot due to low lying vegetation.*

Signature Hike

Visitor Center to The Field

Trailhead: Begin at the Visitor Center

Distance: 1.5 miles **Difficulty:** Moderate

Brief Description: *From the Visitor Center near the Main Parking lot, take the ramp down to the cross walk, cross Route 126 at the crosswalk, immediately walk left on the sidewalk, cross the boat ramp's dirt road, and take the Esker Trail out to Heywood's Meadow Road (sharp left turn). Turn left onto the Pine Ridge Trail and hike to the Field, where you may see bluebirds, tree swallows, and kestrels. For an alternative return hike, walk south along the field perimeter toward Route 126, take the gorgeous Hemlock Path on your left back to Heywood's Meadow Road, turn right onto Esker Trail and take this back to top of the boat ramp.*

Signature Hike

Esker Trail to Heywood's Meadow

Trailhead: Begin from the Thoreau House Replica

Distance: 1.5 miles round trip **Difficulty:** Moderate / Difficult

Brief Description: *From the Thoreau House replica near the main parking lot, cross Route 126 at the crosswalk, walk left on the sidewalk, cross the boat ramp's dirt road, and take the Esker Trail out to Heywood's Meadow Road (sharp left turn). You can return via the more challenging Emerson Cliff Trail which includes some steep slopes and vistas.*