

Debar Mountain



Debar Mountain is a mid-sized mountain whose trailhead is accessed at the Meacham Lake Campground and Day Use Area on Route 30 between Malone and Paul Smith's. The trail is entirely on public Forest Preserve lands, part of the Debar Mountain Wild Forest. Debar Mountain is a long hike, at just over 8 miles round trip, but offers an open rocky summit with sweeping views of the northern Adirondacks.

The Debar Mountain parking area is located in the Meacham Lake Campground; just follow the signs from Route 30. Sign in at the trailhead register that is just beyond a rusted yellow gate. The trail is marked by red trail markers. The trail initially follows an old road, and it is flat and wide, flanked by dense forest and low-lying ferns for the first 0.7 miles. After a stream crossing and a mild incline, the trail reaches a trail junction. The trail sign reads Debar Mountain 3.4 miles and directs hikers to turn left.

Protect the Adirondacks

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After the trail junction, the trail is largely a smooth dirt path, clearly worn and easy to follow. It slowly gains elevation for nearly two miles. The trail crosses many streams and wetlands, using stepping stones or small bridges. The trail is wet and muddy in a number of places.

Throughout this stretch, the trail cuts through a mid-successional forest with many large, mature yellow birch, maples, and ash, and many young beeches. At one point, a ruined rusted culvert is walked over where the trail follows an old logging road.

The first major landmark is reached at the 3-mile mark of the trail where there are a lean-to and firepit. This lean-to is fairly close to the mountaintop and is a great place to camp. An old cabin foundation with front steps still in place is passed farther along the trail.

After the old foundation, the terrain becomes increasingly more difficult. The steepest part of the trail is the final 0.5-mile ascent. Stone staircases have been constructed at several steep points, and the forest shifts to large coniferous trees, with many spruce among them. On a windy day, winds gushing across the mountain summit can be heard.

After a considerable steep stretch, the trail reaches a rocky outcrop 0.2 miles from the summit, that provides the first scenic overlook over the surrounding landscape. The view from this outcrop is dramatic, but not nearly as grand as the view from the top. This is a fine place to take a break from the ceaseless climb.

The marked trail then hooks left along the ridgetop, though don't be fooled by a herd path off to the right. Continue for a few hundred yards following the red trail markers. The trail gradually gains elevation until reaching a sheet of bedrock that sits level with the surrounding trees. The hiker can either scale the exposed bedrock or walk around it. The summit lays just beyond.

The summit of Debar Mountain offers a fantastic 180-degree view southward. Meacham Lake is sprawled out to the southwest and the two basins of Loon Lake are seen to the southeast. The valleys below are a checkerboard of low elevation boreal forests that line streams and major wetlands, mixed with northern hardwood forests that cover the rolling hills. Taylor Pond Mountain and Silver Lake Mountain stand in the distance to the south, darkened along their spines with spruce forests.

The summit is open with many rocky spots for sitting and resting. With a peak of 3,305 feet in elevation and hike of just over 4 miles each way, a considerable effort is required to climb Debar Mountain. Because of its out-of-way location, and the long, tough, but rewarding trail, Debar Mountain offers a good chance for solitude.

The return trip follows the same trail as hiked in on. Descending the steep trail just off of the mountain's summit demands agile footwork.

Help Protect the Forest Preserve and Be Prepared When You Hike: Please follow “carry in, carry out” rules for all trash and follow **Leave No Trace** principles when hiking in the public Forest Preserve and other wild areas. The 7 Leave No Trace principles are: 1) Plan ahead and prepare ; 2) Stay on hiking trails and camp at designated areas; 3) Dispose of human waste and trash properly; 4) Leave what you find; 5) Minimize campfires; 6) Respect wildlife; 7) Respect other hikers. **Educated and prepared hikers do not damage the environment or need search and rescue unless injured.**