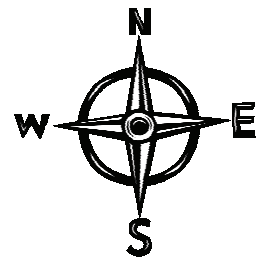


Pikes Peak- Northwest Slopes (14,110) (8)

Difficulty: Class 2
Elevation gain: 4300'
Distance: 13.25 miles
Time: 250 RP



Introduction:

One of the most famous mountains in the United States, Pikes Peak has captured the minds and hearts of many. It inspired Katherine Lee Bates to write the famous song “America the Beautiful” and is named after famous American explorer Zebulon Pike. It rises to 14,110 feet above sea level, and nearly 7,000 ft. above Colorado Springs. While there is a road all the way to the top, it is a long and potentially dangerous hike on a high mountain. Thunderstorms can blow up at anytime during the summer and the temperature can drop dramatically at any time. That being said, there is a gift shop at the top where one can buy souvenirs as well as food and water, which takes away immensely from the wilderness experience yet adds its own unique flavor. Take at least two liters of water per person as well as extra layers, even during the middle of the summer. If a storm looks imminent, get below treeline as soon as you can to avoid lightning. Devil’s Playground was so named because of the way the lightning bounces around from rock to rock. For trip reports and current conditions, go to 14ers.com for accurate, detailed information on weather and trail conditions.

Description:

From the intersection below the lodge, turn right on the fork in the road (FS 383) that leads to the Crags/Devils Playground trailhead. Park here, and walk to the right of the restroom facilities to the trail. Cross Fourmile creek and hike up a gentle, switchbacking slope. You will reach a trail intersection after hiking about .6 mile. Take the fork to the right. There is a sign that will guide you. Cross the creek again and continue up a gentle slope through the woods. Eventually you will emerge in relatively open forest. Rock formations called Butting Buffalo and Kissing Buffalo will be on your left. At 11,900 ft. you will encounter treeline. The trail continues to be well defined and its steepness increases dramatically. After climbing approximately one mile up to Sheep’s Ridge you will get your first view of the peak. Continue left on the ridge on a dirt road to Devil’s Playground parking lot. Here you will cross the road and hop over a single-cable fence. The trail continues along the ridge, mostly paralleling the road. The trail never crosses the road after this point but comes very close several times. After about 1.5 miles of mellow ridge walking, you will begin to ascend more steeply. You’ll encounter a boulder field about a half mile below the summit. There is no longer a “trail” per se but a route is well cairned up the Class 2 boulder field to the summit. Join the multitude of cars and tourists at the top and take pride in climbing what other people drove up.

Extra Credit: Little Pikes (Class 2)

Once you are beyond Devil’s Playground on the Pikes Peak trail you will see to the right of Pikes Peak a smaller peak that looks very similar to the main peak. There is no trail to the top but it is only a class 2 scramble to the top of it. It is an unranked 13,000 ft. peak but it has over 230 ft. of prominence which makes it stand out nonetheless.

