Georgia

**Brasstown Bald**

Tennessee

**Kuwohi**

**Roan High Knob**

**Big Bald**

Main Route: the AT

Big Bald can be approached either from the North at Spivey Gap or from the South at Sams Gap. For the former, one can summit the 4000fter High Rocks and the 5000fter Little Bald, with the former having an outlook of the range and the latter having one of the prettiest spruce forests in the South (in this author’s opinion, at least). For the latter, one can expect a similar array of biospheres and outlooks. For Both, the culmination of the hike is one of the premier balds in the Appalachians, with 360 degree views stretching for miles. The southern approach is 12.7 miles and 3100ft of elevation gain, while the northern approach is 14.1 miles and 4000ft of elevation gain. If one were to combine these into a traverse, it would be 13.2 miles and 3500ft Northbound and 4000ft Southbound.

**Big Frog Mountain**

**English Mountain**

**Cross Mountain**

Route: Coal Country Rd

Cross Mountain is the highpoint of the Cumberland in Tennessee and is part of the Windrock ATV Park, which requires a permit to access any of the roads leading to the summit. By far the best one is Coal Country Rd, a road which requires high clearance and a skilled driver to ascend. With the devastation of Hurricane Helene, this road might be a full 4wd road, if not a pure ATV path, for some time, as I doubt the road is at all a high priority in reconstruction efforts. To get there, go to Briceville and drive up Slatestone Rd to the base of Coal Country Rd, marked by a large clearing. If one doesn’t have a vehicle capable or permit, the trek will be round trip 10.6 miles, and 2500ft of elevation gain, and while this is \*not\* a guarantee, if one is biking or walking without a permit, I doubt they’d get much trouble from Windrock.

North Carolina

**Attakulla**

**Huckleberry Knob**

Route: Huckleberry Knob Trail

One would expect the fourth most prominent peak in North Carolina and the eighth most prominent in the Eastern US to have several paths up with varying distance and difficulty. This is not the case for Huckleberry Knob, which has a single solitary trail that can be done in under an hour. Short yes, but also sweet, as Huckleberry Knob hosts one of the few true Appalachian Balds the caliber of Big Bald and parts of the Roan Range, offering 360 degree views of everything from the Southern Smokies to Northern Georgia, with a seemingly endless series of ridges disappearing into the haze. And if that weren’t enough, the road to access the trailhead, the Cherohala Skyway, offers several stunning outlooks along the drive up. If you’ve driven the Blue Ridge Parkway and are looking for other sky highways in the South, this one is right up your alley – and it’s far less well known than the Blue Ridge so there’s significantly less traffic! The hiking route is 1.7 miles and 330ft of elevation gain.

**Richland Balsam**

Route: Richaland Balsam Trail

The tallest mountain of the Blue Ridge Parkway outside of the Attakulla range is Richland Balsam, which towers over the Middle Prong Wilderness. Like Huckleberry, there is a single short route up to the summit, but unlike Huckleberry, the summit is quite densely wooded. Of course there is much beauty to be found in the forest, but if one is expecting an expansive set of views, they might be directed toward the Black Balsam Range to the East. Nevertheless, the trail is simple and delightful, and the drive up the Blue Ridge is quite rewarding in its own regard. This route is 1.4 miles and 380ft of elevation gain.

**Standing Indian Mountain**

**Crabtree Bald**

Route: Branch Creek to ATV path

Crabtree Bald is one of the least-well known peaks on this entire list, and offers some of the most spectacular views in the entire South. The reason it isn’t well known is because not only is there no hiking trail up the peak, but it also lies on private property. Luckily, the current caretaker is generous about granting access, but that permission must be sought after before starting this hike so that it doesn’t get taken away from others in the future. The caretaker’s house is along Indian Branch Creek off of Bald Creek Rd, and current trip reports list a phone number behind one of the signs down there that you can call as well. I won’t publish the phone number here as not do deluge the poor caretaker, but it is readily available there and probably on trip reports online. From here, one can go up a dirt road up to the open Bald along the ridge, and then take an ATV path along the Bald. Some of the best views in the Southern Appalachians are to be found here, along with many a cattle grazing the ridge. Round trip, the route is 8 miles and 2400ft of elevation gain.

**Grandfather Mountain**

**Cheoah Bald**

**Snake Mountain**

Route: Elk Knob Trailhead to Bushwhack

Large parts of Snake Mountain are on private property and are thus inaccessible to the general public without landowner permission. Luckily, there is a sliver of public land on the east side of the mountain that is part of the adjacent Elk Knob State Park. If one parks in said State Park, they can walk or bike down the road and to the sliver, which is only about 0.1 miles wide, so one must be careful while bushwhacking to make sure not to stray too far on either side – a GPS map would be helpful in this instance. The woods are generally sparce but be warned that there are many a thorny plant nearby. Once atop the ridge, there exists a faint path leading to the South Summit, although one can easily take said path to the less prominent but open North Summit. In total, this route is about 3.6 miles and 1800ft of elevation gain

Virginia

**Apple Orchard Mountain**

Recommended route: AT from BRP

From Blue Ridge Parkway, one can hop on the AT either from the North or from the South and take a relatively quick walk through the woods to the summit. Alternatively, one can park at the Apple Orchard Mountain Overlook and walk an access road up to the summit, but given how short the walk it, one would get much more out of taking the AT in this author’s opinion. At the summit, there is an open meadow with 360-degree views of the surrounding peaks and valleys. The AT from the sorth is 1.8 miles and 350ft of elevation gain, while the AT from the south is 3.5 miles and 1000ft of elevation gain.

Alternate routes:

There are two trails emanating out of North Creek Rd/FS-59 that may take one to the Sunset field trailhead on the AT: Cornelius Creek Trail and Apple Orchard Falls Trail, the latter of which takes one to a waterfall on the north side of the mountain. Additionally, one may take the AT from either direction from a farther trailhead, namely Cornelius Shelter from the South and Thunder Ridge from the north. Finally, there is always the possibility of biking most if not all of the way up the mountain by cycling up the Blue Ridge Parkway and then taking the access road to the summit. The sky is the limit!

**Mount Rogers**

Shortest route: AT from Elk Garden

From Whitetop Rd, the Elk Garden trailhead, situated in one of the largest stretches of Balds in Virgina, offers the shortest path to the summit of Mt Rogers. After passing through the meadow, one hugs a forested ridgeline until reaching the base of Rogers on the western side. However, it is from the east that the spur trail to the summit emanates, and although it may tempt some less patient hikers, the trip around the south side of the mountain brings one into a second large meadow with expansive views all the way to North Carolina. The spur trail, well signed, brings one through a high-elevation spruce forest almost the polar opposite from the expansive meadow. The summit, while offering no view, does reward one with a sense of accomplishment as one of the longest, shortest routes to a state highpoint in the east, surpassed only by Tahawus in New York and Katahdin in Maine. The route back is the same as the route to, and if one has the time afterward, it is highly recommended to hit up the other 5000fter nearby: Whitetop, which can be either driven, biked, or walked up depending on the state of the road. The effort is well worth it, as the south side of Whitetop offers an additional expansive meadow with views surpassing those even on the balds on Rogers. Nevertheless, the hike up Rogers is approximately 9 miles and 1800ft of elevation gain

Longer route: AT from Grayson Heights

Rogers may also be approached from the southeast via Grayson Heights State Park, taking the Appalachian Spur Trail to the AT, linking up with the previous route at the eastern base of the peak. Similar to the route from Elk Garden, this route traverses more bald and forested lands alike, with the additional feature of several rocky outcroppings offering 360 degree views along the way. If one has the stamina afterward, the brief hiking trial up Haw Orchard Mountain offers its own rocky outcropping at the summit with views of the entire range, as well as being the last of the three 5000ft peaks in Virginia after Rogers and Whitetop respectively. The hike up Rogers on this route is 10.6 miles and 1800ft of elevation gain.

Alternate routes:

In addition to these two basic routes, one may take several other trails to get themselves to the base of Rogers. These include taking either the AT or the Crest Trail from the Scales Trailhead at the Base of Stone Mountain, although the Pine Mountain Road to access this one requires high clearance and possibly 4wd. From the north, one may also take with the Lewis Fork Trail or the Mount Rogers Trail, although both of these are rather circuitous ways up the mountain that avoid most of the open bald meadows. Finally, if one wants a longer traversal or backpack, they may choose to traverse the whole range along the AT to the Jackie Street Trail from Highway 56 to Rocky Hollow Rd. While the longest of the options presented here, this one offers the greatest breath of what the range has to offer, and this author for one is planning on doing this backpack one of these days.

**Elliot Knob**

Recommended route: Falls Hollow Trail and Elliot Knob Forest Rd

The best way to approach Elliot Knob is from the east via Falls Hollow Trail, a well-maintained trail that passes close to at least one waterfall. Unfortunately, Falls Hollow Trail only comprised the middle third of the ascent, with the first, more gradual third being on Buffalo Branch Forest Rd and the last, steepest third being on Elliot Knob Forest Rd. This last one actually goes from 42 directly up to the summit, and if one wants to challenge themself with a bike ride all the way up and down, this would be the way to go. That being said, it is quite steep, and only the most in-shape people will be able to get to the top without walking any portions of the road, which is far less enjoyable. Nevertheless, there is a fire tower at the summit with some of the best views in Virginia, and the hike is absolutely worth one’s effort. Along Falls Hollow Trail, the route is 8.7 miles and 2400ft of elevation gain, while Elliot Knob Forest Rd is 6 miles and 2400ft of elevation gain.

Alternate routes:

Elliot Knob may be approached, with varying difficulty, from the northeast, northwest, and southwest respectively. From the Northeast, one can take Old Parkersburg Turnpike and take North Mountain Trail south toward Elliot Knob, a route that saves a bit of elevation but adds a fair amount of distance to come in at 10 miles and 2000ft of elevation gain with the added benefit of being bereft of roads. From the Northwest, one may start from FR 398 or FR 77 and take the unmaintained Cold Springs Trail, reducing both distance and elevation relative to the main route at 5.3 miles and 2000ft of elevation gain. Finally, from the southwest, one may take the longer approach of the North Mountain Trail from Ramsey Gap Rd/Rt 687, a significantly longer that one may take the first half of either on the hiking trail itself, or on the parallel forest road. The big advantage of this route is that if one wished to mountain bike, the parallel forest road is significantly shallower. That being said, this one is a long haul, coming in at just over 20 miles and 4400ft of elevation gain, so suffice to say, this would be a challenge relative to the other, shorter routes. Note that for all three of these routes, seasonal maintenance of these trails might be delayed later into the year than on the more popular Falls Hollow Trail and more important (from the Forest Service’s perspective) Elliot Knob Forest Road, so one should be prepared unmaintained tread and encroaching corridors.

**Rocky Mountain**

Route: 4wd road to summit

The spur road to the top of Rocky may be accessed from Buena Vista via route 60 and then state Rt 634/Coffeytown Rd from the west, and from Lowesville via R6 666/Woodson Rd and then Rt 827/Alhambra Rd from the east. Both of these are dirt roads doable in a sedan. From here, one can take Wiggins Spring Rd to the summit, a road that requires high clearance and possibly 4wd depending on its state of recent maintenance. The summit area is a wooded place with radio towers above, but the final summit rock itself is a fun bouldering challenge for those inclined to stand on the tallest point. This route is 3.4 miles and 900ft of elevation gain if done by foot/on bike.

**Hawksbill**

Recommended route: AT Spurs

Hawksbill, being the high point of a famous national park, has several different paths to the summit. The most direct of these start near the summit on Skyline Dr, essentially a continuation of the Blue Ridge Parkway into Shenandoah. From the West, one can go from Rock Spring Cabin and take the AT to Salamander and then Upper Hawksbill Trail to the summit. From the South, one can take the Upper Hawsbill Trail directly up to the summit. From the East, one can take the Lower Hawksbill trail from Hawksbill Gap. At the summit, a craggy outlook appears with views stretching over the Great Valley and into the Appalachian Ridges and Plateaus on the other side. On the AT trail from the west it is 3.4 miles and 750ft of elevation gain, for the Upper Hawksbill trail from the south it is 2.1 and 500ft of elevation gain, and for the Hawksbill Summit Trail from the east it is 1.6 miles and 660ft of elevation gain.

Alternate routes:

Like with Apple Orchard and Rogers, there are several trails that one can take to get to the starting points of any of these three trails. From the west, one may take the Red Gate Fire Rd from north and climb up the height of the ridge, or one accomplish a similar ascent up Rose River Fire Rd – both of these routes may either be hiked or mountain biked. From the south and east, one may take the Cedar Run Trail or the White Oak Canyon Trail to get to either the Upper or Lower Hawksbill Trails. Finally, one may simply start on the AT from Big Meadows to the South or Skyland to the North.

**Balsam Beartown Mountain**

Route: AT to Bushwhack

Balsam Beartown is best accessed as a bushwhack starting from the AT trailhead at Walker Gap. To get here, head from Goose Mill down ST Rt 623 before taking a right and following 723 to the base of Walker Gap. In previous years, the last half mile and 300ft of elevation gain were an unmaintained paved road that required high clearance but not 4wd. Unfortunately given the damage of Hurricane Helene, this route may not be improved for some time – if ever. Nevertheless, after getting to Walker Gap, one can proceed along the AT until reaching the top of Chestnut Knob, a meadow-topped mountain with expansive views toward the south and east. From here, one starts the bushwhack, and heads down toward the col between Chestnut and Balsam Beartown before proceeding up the ridge. The woods are mostly open, and will be especially so during the fall and winter months – the recommended time of year to do most/all bushwhacking in the East. Along the ridge, one may ascend the South Peak of Balsam Beartown, but it’s just as easy to go around and avoid the extra elevation gain. The final several hundred feet of the ridge is denser spruce forest, but ultimately it’s not more extensive than most of the rest of the hike. There will be limited views through the trees during the leafless season, but by and large this is a wooded summit. The way back is the way one came, and I will point out that bushwhacking is an art not a science, and the route may be optimized in many ways to cater to an individual’s preferences. That being said, the wilderness land is right up against private property, so just be sure to keep yourself safe as the highest priority. This route is just under 8 miles and 3000ft of elevation gain, depending on your precise route of bushwhacking.

**Bald Knob**

Route: Bald Knob Trail

From Mountain Lake Lodge, one can take the quick Bald Knob trail leading up to the summit, where they can be greeted by a fantastic outlook toward the west’s ridges and plateaus of the northern side of the Great Valley. Note that there is also an access road leading up, so there is also a possibility of biking to the summit. This route is 0.8 miles and 400ft of elevation gain.

**High Knob**

Route: High Knob Trail

From Josephine, one can take routes 622 and 619 up the bulk of the elevation of High Knob, followed by a brief spur on FS238 leading to the trailhead – all roads easily doable in a sedan. Although in all honestly, calling it a trailhead is a little misleading, as the fire tower at the summit is less than 0.05 miles from the parking area and can be accessed by a paved path. Nevertheless, the fire tower offers 360-degree views of the surrounding ridges and plateaus, including of the nearby Black Mountain, the highest point in Kentucky. The route is 0.1 miles and 40ft of elevation gain

West Virginia

**Spruce Knob**

Route: Paved roads to summit

Spruce Knob is special as it is not only the highest point in West Virgnia, but it is also the highest point for well over a hundred miles, as well as being the high point of the Central Appalachians. That being said, there isn’t a direct hiking route up the peak like one may expect, and indeed the most efficient way up the mountain is to take the steep but gradual-by-mountain-standards FS 112, a road that provides paved access to the peak from either the east or the west. Along the drive up there are several viewpoints as well as an observation tower at the summit with views of the endless plateaus that make up this part of the Appalachian Range. It is certainly rewarding as far as drives go.

Alternate routes:

Although there isn’t a direct route up the mountain, there are two trails that start on either side and lead up to the summit. From the east, the Huckleberry Trail starts by rapidly gaining elevation before traversing the long ridge leading to the summit, a route that is nearly 11 miles and 1300ft of elevation gain, but somehow still mostly flat at higher elevations. The other option starts from the west, and takes Lumberjack Trail to Huckleberry Trail, coming in at the same elevation gain but stretched over 16 miles. Like the Huckleberry Trail, this trail is mostly flat, but with the elevation gain happening in the middle rather than the start of the trail. Although these hiking trails do take one to the summit, they are so circuitous that I cannot call them direct routes to the summit. Nevertheless, these routes do offer one a sense of accomplishment in summiting the peak that can only be otherwise achieved by walking or biking up the paved road to the summit. And do note that one may hike as much of the Huckleberry Trail as they please from the summit without losing too much elevation.

**Reddish Knob**

Route: Reddish Knob Forest Service Road

Reddish Knob has the distinction of being the most prominent mountain I’ve ever encountered with a parking lot on the summit. Fortunately for those who like driving, the parking lot is at the end of a long series of paved roads. From Sugar Grove in West Virginia, one can take Reddish Knob Rd up to the gap, and from Briery Branch in Virginia, one can take Briery Branch Rd up the gap as well. From here, the paved forest service road winds its way up to the summit, which does have fantastic views, but is devoid of the typical mood accompanying such views due to the parking lot being directly atop the summit. All of these roads are easily doable in a sedan, and if one wishes to, they can absolutely hike or bike up the forest service road to make it a challenge

Alternate routes:

There are several trails in and around Reddish Knob that can be hiked in leu of driving to the summit, namely Little Stoney trail from the west, North River trail from the South, and California Trail, Timber Ridge Trail, and Buck Mountain Trail from the east. Any of these trails would undoubtably be more rewarding than driving the paved roads up, but one’s joy in taking them would have to come from the sense of accomplishment or spending time in the woods, as while the summit has views, I doubt it would be the highlight of the trip given that one would have to hike up to be in a parking lot. But to each their own!

New York

**Tahawus**

**Slide Mountain**

**Whiteface Mountain**

**Giant Mountain**

**Dix Mountain**

**Santanoni Peak**

**Black Mountain**

**Snowy Mountain**

**Lyon Mountain**

**Hunter Mountain**

**Algonquin Peak**

**Black Dome**

**Seward Mountain**

**Hurricane Mountain**

Massachusetts

**Mount Greylock**

Vermont

**Mozdebiwajo**

**Killington Peak**

**Equinox Mountain**

**Jay Peak**

**Dorset Mountain**

**Mount Putnam**

**Stratton Mountain**

**Mount Ascutney**

**East Mountain**

**Grass Mountain**

**Cold Hollow Mountain**

**Mont Ellen**

**Signal Mountain**

New Hampshire

**Agiocochook**

**Mount Lafayette**

**Mount Moosilauke**

Shortest Route: Gorge Brook Trail

Starting from the Moosilauke Ravine Lodge, one can cross the bridge across the Asquamchumauke River (also known as the Baker River) and start up north along the Gorge Brook Trail, which starts by running along its namesake waterway before zigzagging up the southeast ridge of the Mountain. Along the way, there are a few outlooks that offer delightful views of nearby peaks, including Mount Carr and Mount Jim, as well as several of the farther ranges in the White Mountains. At points the trail can be steep, but overall it is much shallower than many other popular trails in the White Mountains. Round trip, this route is approximately 7 miles with 2700ft of elevation gain. Note that the access road to the lodge is closed during the winter months, which adds 1 to 1.5 additional miles and 100 to 400ft of elevation gain.

Longest Route: Ridge Trail to Carriage Rd

Starting from the Mossilauke Ravine Lodge, one can start up the Asquamchumauke Ridge trail located at the end of the Access Rd, which gradually winds its way up to Mount Jim, located on the northeastern side of the rim ridge of Moosilauke. From here, the trail traverses the ridge passing Mount Blue before starting encountering the Alpine zone and then the summit of Moosilauke itself. From here, one continues along the ridge toward the South Peak before cutting down the Carriage Rd Trail and then taking the Snapper Trail back to its intersection with Gorge Brook and then the Moosilauke Lodge. And rest assured, there are many bridge and clear signs at each intersection to help guide you and make sure you don’t get lost. While there are nice lookouts along this route on Mount Jim and along Carriage Rd, its main alure is that it traverses the entire section of alpine zone on the mountain, providing stunning views of the entire White Mountain Range, along with the large swaths of mountains dotting of Southern New Hampshire and Vermont. In total, this route is approximately 11.1 miles and 2900ft of elevation gain, and as a result the trail is never particularly steep, allowing for a long but largely relaxed trek compared to many of the other peaks in the White Mountains.

Alternate Routes:

Moosilauke has three other main trails up the mountain not mentioned in the routes above: Benton trail from the northwest and Glencliff and Beaver Brook trails as part of the AT from the southwest and north respectively. In addition, there is the Tunnel Brook trail connecting Glencliff and Benton trailheads to each other, as well as the Hurricane Trail connecting Glencliff and Carriage Rd, and not mentioning the Al Merril Ski Loop that brings one to the top of a fire tower on Sayre Mountain. These trails, along with the ones mentioned previously, are frequently mixed-and-mashed into numerous different hikes for which one’s imagination and motivation are the limits. From these, two alternate routes stand out the strongest. The first is the Gorge Brook-Carriage Rd Loop, which is probably the most popular route on the mountain not only because it combines the brevity of Gorge Brook with some of the best sections of the Ridge Loop, but also because it is a very popular and enjoyable backcountry ski loop over the winter. The second is “The Moose” a hiking challenge where one hikes every foot of trail on the mountain in 24 hours, or however long it takes to do in one go. This challenge is comparable to hiking from Moosilauke to Hanover along the AT in a single day, although much less known even among the college students coming up with new and innovative ways to cause their bodies pain. Nevertheless, a more gradual moose challenge over a week or so could be a rewarding way to explore one of the finest mountains on this side of the continent.

**Carter Dome**

**Mount Cabot**

Shortest Route:

Most Strenuous Route:

**South Kinsman Mountain**

Most Direct Route: Lonesome Lake to the AT

The most direct and most popular route up South Kinsman goes from the Lonesome Lake Hut up the Appalachian trail to Kinsman Pond and then on to North and finally South Kinsman. To get to Lonesome Lake, one can either start from the popular Franconia Notch and head up the steep Lonesome Lake Trail, or one can start from the Basin and head up the Basin Cascades and then Cascade Brook trial, which although a longer trail, is less steep and, critically, is much less popular than Franconia Notch, meaning one doesn’t need to reserve parking in advance or wake up super early to get parking. Along the way, one can find precious views of not one but two alpine bodies of water in Lonesome Land Kinsman Pond notwithstanding the breathtaking views of Franconia Ridge just across the Notch. This route is 9.1 miles and 3300ft of elevation from Franconia Notch and 10.5 miles and ft of elevation from the Basin.

Alternate Route: Kinsman to Cannon

The most strenuous route along the Kinsman range is to hike to Kinsman from either the Basin or Franconia Notch, and then to traverse the ridge along the Cannonballs to Mount Cannon before closing the route to form a loop. See the previous route info for the trails leading to Kinsman Pond. From here, one can take the Kinsman Ridge trail along the several small peaks of the Cannon Balls before being deposited onto The Cannon Balls, part of New England’s Hundred Highest list, and then onto Cannon, being part of that list as well as the New Hampshire 40 4000fters list. Note that in winter months, the Kinsman Ridge Trail from Kinsman Pond to Lonesome Lake Trail is rarely packed-out, and if one decides to do this route in the winter, snowshoes are essential even more so than in the rest of the Whtie Mountains. In total, this route is 11.8 miles and 4500ft of elevation gain from Franconia Notch and 13.3 miles and 4700ft of elevation gain from

Most Strenuous Route: AT from Beaver Pond

Perhaps the longest route that people take for climbing Kinsman that isn’t part of either a full of section hike of the AT is to take it from Beaver Pond and head north. This simple-out-and-back route takes one not only to the summit of Kinsman, but also up the often-forgotten Mount Wolf along with several smaller peaks. Perhaps the main alure of taking this path is that one can avoid the swarms of people emanating from Franconia Notch, as well as meeting some thru-hikers on the AT. In total, this route is 17.7 miles and 6100ft of elevation gain, and should not be undertaken by inexperienced hikers.

**Mount Shaw**

**Mount Carrigain**

**Mount Monadnock**

**Smarts Mountain**

**Mount Kearsarge**

**Mount Osceola**

Maine

**Katahdin**

**Sugarloaf Mountain**

**Bigelow Mountain**

**Old Speck**

**White Cap Mountain**

**Couburn Mountain**

**Saddleback Mountain**

**The Traveler**

**Snow Mountain**

**Kibby Mountain**

**Baldplate Mountain**

**Baker Mountain**

**Big Moose Mountain**

**Elephant Mountain**

**Doubletop Mountain**

**Boundary Bald**