

THE BERKSHIRES 3-DAY WEEKENDS:

DAY 1

Arrival - For guest arriving by air we pickup at the Albany, NY Airport at 4:30 p.m. Arriving by car our lodging is the beautiful Red Lion Inn, Stockbridge, MA, check in is 3 p.m. (driving directions below).

Orientation meeting scheduled for approx. 6:30 p.m., follow by dinner.

HIKING DAYS:-

DAY 2

Morning three to five miles - possibilities include:

Ice Gulch and Tom Leonard Shelter - We take the Appalachian Trail through a slowly recovering tornado-ravaged forest before beginning a gentle uphill climb towards Ice Glen, a deep fissure in the bedrock festooned with ferns and trees. Beyond this point the trail becomes a bit rougher leading us up to the Tom Leonard Shelter, one of the many shelters for tired backpackers trekking the Appalachian Trail.

Bartholomew's Cobble - Boasting a diversity of habitat! A home to over 900 species of plants, Cobble is renowned for its birds, ferns and spring flowers. Here our trail winds among lichen and moss covered knobs along the languid Housatonic River, eventually climbing a hill with fine views down into the valley.

Tyringham Cobble - A rocky knob stride the Appalachian Trail. The start of our trail walks us past a beautifully preserved Shaker settlement and along the Hop Brook before climbing to Tyringham Cobble. A diversely rich forest of oak, sugar maple and white ash is interspersed with open fields complete with grazing cows. Views of one of the prettiest valleys in the Berkshires reward our effort.

Afternoon two to three miles - possibilities include:

Benedict Pond - A most popular place for lunch! A well-traveled trail rings the lake giving us ample opportunity to examine the shore for water-loving plants and animals. A short climb above the lake brings hikers to a small beaver pond and views to the south from a sunny ledge.

Ice Glen and Laura's Tower - A swinging bridge across the Housatonic River minutes from our inn provides access to: Ice Glen is a jumble of boulders and ancient trees crowding into a narrow trough in the mountains. The primeval look and the cool pockets of lingering ice make it an intriguing destination. Perched on a small mountain overlooking Stockbridge, Laura's tower has surprisingly extensive views.

Mount Everett and Guilder Pond - A gated road guides us to serenely remote Guilder Pond, another wonderful site for serving lunch. Thickets of mountain

laurel and dense hemlocks line the trail that leads around Guilder Pond. From this point the Appalachian Trail takes us to the summit of Mount Everett the highest viewpoint 2602' in southern Berkshire County. On clear days you can see New York, Connecticut, Vermont and if you are lucky, distant New Jersey.

The Appalachian Trail in Sheffield - A crossing in the Housatonic Valley near Shay's Rebellion Monument, site of the last battle of an obscure 18th century rebellion. A bridge crosses ecologically significant Hop Brook while a hardwood swamp is traversed via a boardwalk. The final stretch of trail through this fascinating valley hugs the Housatonic River.

DAY 3

Five to eight miles - possibilities include:

Bash-Bish Falls and Mount Alander - Bash-Bish Falls could possibly be the most picturesque waterfall in the Berkshires. This hike begins in New York and ends in Massachusetts, though don't be concerned, it is a short hike along a crystal clear stream to a truly remarkable falls.

Different routes get us to the top of Mount Alander. This peak on the New York border provides outstanding views of the Hudson Valley and the Catskills of New York. The more challenging option ascends steeply from Bash-Bish Falls to a bold ridge that leads over ledge and past blueberry bushes to the open summit. An easier option starts from Mount Washington State Forest and follows old woods roads across streams and past ancient charcoal pits on the way to the summit. Both hikes meet up for lunch on the peak and hike out together on the easier route.

Any of the previous day's options are possible as well.

DAY 4

Two miles - Today our half-day hike is up Monument Mountain, a unique quartzite mountain renowned as the place where Herman Melville met Nathaniel Hawthorne. Melville and MOBY DICK would never be the same. Protected for over 100 years, the forest is magnificent as are the unobstructed views.

Other possible hikes include: Flag Rock, Goose Pond, Race Brook Falls, Jug End, Bowker Woods. Either Friday or Saturday evening during our July hike we attend an outdoor concert at Tanglewood.

(Guides may change itinerary depending on weather and needs of the group)

INN & TRAVEL INFORMATION:

Red Lion Inn - www.redlioninn.com
30 Main St. PO Box 954
Stockbridge, MA 01262
Tel: (413) 298 5545
Fax: (413) 298 5130

If you are interested in additional information about the inn, we invite you to visit their web site, or call and request a brochure.

Check-In & Check-out Times: Check-in time is 3:00 p.m. Check-out time is anytime before 12:00 noon. * For dinner the Inn request no jeans or sneakers. Thanks!

If you are driving to the starting point, you will find the driving directions to the Red Lion Inn enclosed.

If you are arriving by public transportation we offer the following pick up schedule:- (Please call 2 weeks prior to your tour date to schedule pick-up)

FROM AIRPORTS:-

Albany, NY Airport - 4:30 P.M.

We can return hikers to the airport for flights from 4 p.m. on, on the last day of the trip (earlier times can sometimes be arranged).

FROM BUS:-

Bonanza Bus Lines (800) 556 3815 offers service directly to Stockbridge, MA
Greyhound Bus Lines (800) 237 8211 and others offer service to Lee, MA (6 miles from Stockbridge, MA), where a 5 - 5:30 p.m. pick-up can be arranged.

FROM TRAIN:-

Amtrak (800) 523 5700 offers service to Rensselaer, NY where a 5 - 5:30 p.m. pick-up can be arranged.

IT IS VITAL THAT YOU LET US KNOW YOUR TRAVEL PLANS (EG. FLIGHT TIMES AND NUMBERS OR BUS ARRIVAL TIMES) IN ORDER FOR US TO MEET YOU.

MAKE SURE YOU HAVE RECEIVED PICK UP CONFIRMATION BEFORE YOU LEAVE ON YOUR TRIP!

FOR ASSISTANCE PLEASE CONTACT OUR TRAVEL SERVICE: BETTER TRAVEL @ 1-800-331-6996

DIRECTIONS TO THE RED LION INN IN STOCKBRIDGE:

From New York City (2 1/3 - 3 hours)

Take the Taconic Parkway North to the Claverack exit. Follow Route 23 East into Great Barrington Mass. At stoplight turn left onto Route 7 North. Follow 7 to 6 miles into Stockbridge. The Inn is on the right at the stop sign in Stockbridge.

From Boston (2 - 2 1/2 hours)

Follow the Massachusetts Turnpike West and take Exit 2 in Lee. Take a left at the off-ramp and an immediate right onto Route 102 West into the center of Stockbridge.

From Hartford (1 1/2 - 2 hours)

Follow Route 91 North to Route 90 West (this is the Mass. Turnpike) and take Exit 2 in Lee. Left off exit to Route 102 West into the center of Stockbridge.

From Albany (1 hour)

Follow Route 90 East and take the B3 exit. Take Route 22 South approximately 1/2 mile to Route 102 East (a left turn - can be hard to see). Follow Route 102 East for about 7 miles (through West Stockbridge) to the center of Stockbridge, turning left at the stop sign. The Inn is ahead on the right.

From Long Island (3 1/2 - 4 hours)

Throgs Neck Bridge to Route 95 North to 287 West to the end of 684 North. Then pick up Route 22 North into Hillsdale. In Hillsdale, take Route 23 East into Great Barrington, Mass. where you will pick up Route 7 North to Stockbridge.

An alternate route would be to take Route 684 North to 84 West to the Taconic State Parkway and then follow the directions from New York City above.

From New Jersey (4 - 5 hours)

Take Garden State Parkway to the New York Thruway. Then take Route 84 to Taconic State Parkway. Follow directions from New York City above.