Errol NH & Great North Woods Hiking Guide

Day hikes from an Errol, New Hampshire home base

Umbagog • Dixville Notch • Milan Hill • Grafton Notch • Appalachian Trail

STAY IN ERROL

Keep one home base and choose a different hiking direction each day.

MATCH THE DAY

Pick an easy walk, waterfall, overlook or mountain summit to fit your time and ability.

HIKE BOTH STATES

Explore Northern New Hampshire and nearby Western Maine without changing lodging.

Presented by Errol Motel

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Stay in Errol. Hike in a different direction. Come back to Errol.

Why Errol Works as a Hiking Home Base

Errol sits where New Hampshire Routes 16 and 26 meet, putting several very different hiking areas within roughly a 45-minute drive. Head North for quiet wildlife-refuge trails, West for the cliffs and cascades of Dixville Notch, South for a fire-tower view at Milan Hill, or East into Western Maine for Grafton Notch and the Appalachian Trail. The advantage is variety without moving from one lodging stop to another.

This guide is built for day trips from Errol Motel. Choose a hike that fits the weather, daylight, trail conditions and your group's ability, then return to Errol at the end of the day.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Trail ideas were gathered using official park/refuge resources, the Cohos Trail Association, and AllTrails. Mileage can differ slightly among maps and apps because routes and measuring methods differ. Current signs, closures and official trail information always take precedence over this guide.

Choose Your Hike

LOOKING FOR	TRY	EFFORT	DIRECTION
Easy wildlife walk	Magalloway River Trail	Easy	North from Errol
Short hike with a big view	Roost Trail	Moderate / steep	North from Errol
Quick waterfall stop	Baby Flume / Dixville Flume	Very short	West from Errol
Classic Dixville overlook	Table Rock - Dixville Notch	Moderate, steep in places	West from Errol
Longer Dixville adventure	Dixville Notch Heritage Trail loop	Difficult / rugged	West from Errol
Big view without a big hike	Milan Hill Fire Tower	Easy / short	South from Errol
Waterfalls & gorge stops	Screw Auger Falls / Moose Cave	Easy / short	East from Errol
Classic Grafton Notch hike	Table Rock - Maine	Moderate; route choice matters	East from Errol
Short, challenging climb	Eyebrow Loop	Challenging	East from Errol
Full-day AT summit	Old Speck via Appalachian Trail	Challenging	East from Errol
Open-summit AT day	Baldpate via Appalachian Trail	Challenging	East from Errol

North from Errol — Umbagog Refuge Walks

For a quieter day, head North on Route 16 into Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge. These are not summit hikes; they are forest-and-wetland walks where wildlife, birds and the landscape are the main attraction.

Magalloway River Trail

Easy • About 1.3 miles of trail network • Wildlife viewing

The refuge's Magalloway River trail network passes through spruce-fir forest and includes an accessible route to an observation platform overlooking backwaters of the Magalloway River. It is a good choice for a first-day walk, a lower-energy outing, birding, or a morning when you want to spend more time looking than climbing. The trailhead is about 1.5 miles North of the refuge headquarters on Route 16.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

The accessible portion is shorter than the full trail network. Conditions can change with weather and seasonal maintenance; check refuge information if accessibility is important to your visit.

Roost Trail

About 1.2 miles round trip • Moderately steep • Overlook

The Roost is the local 'short hike, big payoff' option. From the Route 16 canoe-launch parking area, the trail crosses the road, follows a short section across private land, then climbs steadily through forest to a cliff-top overlook. From the viewpoint, hikers can look across the Magalloway River landscape, Umbagog country and toward the mountains of Western Maine.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

The first portion crosses private property: stay on the marked trail. The overlook is on a cliff, so use extra care. The refuge is open to hunting during legal seasons; hikers should make themselves visible during hunting season.

Other Refuge Trails

Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge also lists Bear Brook Nature Trail, Little Bear Pond Trail, Middle Mountain Pond Trail and Round Pond Trail among its hiking routes. These can be useful for visitors who want quieter alternatives, but the Magalloway River and Roost trails are the strongest first choices.

WILDLIFE COMES FIRST

Umbagog is a national wildlife refuge, not a recreation park. Stay on designated routes, give wildlife space, respect posted closures and check current refuge rules before your visit.

West from Errol — Dixville Notch

Dixville Notch is the closest concentration of dramatic mountain hiking to Errol. Route 26 passes directly through the notch, with roadside trailheads, cascades, cliffs and several ways to build anything from a quick scenic stop to a rugged half-day hike.

Baby Flume / Dixville Flume

Very short walk • Waterfall and gorge • Good add-on stop

New Hampshire State Parks places the Baby Flume, also called Dixville Flume or Flume Brook Cascade, less than one-tenth of a mile from roadside parking. The gorge and 18-foot, three-drop cascade make this an easy stop to combine with another Dixville Notch hike.

Table Rock — Dixville Notch

Short but steep • Exposed overlook • Signature Dixville view

Table Rock is the best-known overlook in Dixville Notch. The climb is relatively short, but the trail is steeper than its distance suggests. The reward is a narrow, exposed rock viewpoint high above the notch with views over Lake Gloriette and the surrounding cliffs. This is a hike where 'short' should not be confused with 'easy.'

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

The ledge has serious exposure and drop-offs. Wet rock, ice and strong wind can change the character of the hike quickly. Keep children and dogs under close control and stay back from edges.

Sanguinary Ridge & the Dixville Notch Heritage Trail

Moderate to difficult • Multiple overlooks • Longer option

For hikers who want more than Table Rock, the roughly 5.1-mile Dixville Notch Heritage Trail circuit can link Table Rock, Three Brothers/Huntington Cascade, Flume Brook and Sanguinary Ridge. This is the better choice for experienced hikers who want a fuller tour of the notch rather than one viewpoint.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Parts of the network are steep and rugged, and nearby private property must be respected. Use the current Cohos Trail information and posted signs.

TWO TABLE ROCKS

This guide includes two different hikes named Table Rock: one in Dixville Notch, New Hampshire, and another in Grafton Notch, Maine. Check the location before navigating to the trailhead.

South from Errol — Fire Tower & Forest Views

A Southbound hiking day gives you a different landscape without turning the trip into a change-of-lodging day. Milan Hill State Park is roughly a half-hour from Errol and works especially well when you want a scenic outing without committing to a major summit.

Milan Hill Fire Tower

Easy / flexible • Fire-tower panorama • Family-friendly option

Milan Hill State Park centers on a hilltop campground and historic fire tower. Visitors can climb to the observation deck immediately below the tower cabin. On a clear day, the view reaches mountain ranges in New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont and Canada. You can make this a very short tower visit or add walking on the park's trail network.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

The park is open for recreation unless closed or restricted by posting, but gates and staffing can vary in the off-season. Check current park information before depending on vehicle access to the hilltop.

Why It Belongs in This Guide

Not every hiking day needs to be a summit day. Milan Hill gives guests a high-value scenic option for a shorter day, mixed-ability group, questionable mountain weather or a day when they want to combine hiking with other North Country stops.

East from Errol — Grafton Notch

Follow Route 26 East from Errol into Western Maine and the character changes again. Grafton Notch combines roadside waterfalls and gorges with some of the most demanding mountain hiking in the region. The Northern part of the park is roughly 35–45 minutes from Errol, making it practical as a day trip from the motel rather than a reason to change lodging.

Easy Stops & Short Walks

Screw Auger Falls

Very short walk • Waterfall and gorge

A short path from the Route 26 parking area leads to Screw Auger Falls, where the Bear River drops through a narrow gorge. This is one of the best quick stops in the notch and can be paired with Moose Cave, Mother Walker Falls or a longer hike.

Moose Cave

About 1/4-mile loop • Gorge views

Moose Cave is a short loop overlooking a narrow bedrock gorge where water moves around large boulders and beneath a granite slab. It is more scenic stop than major hike, which makes it useful for families, limited-time visitors or a recovery day between harder hikes.

Mother Walker Falls

Short roadside walk • Gorge and river scenery

Mother Walker Falls is another easy Route 26 stop. The attraction is the long, narrow gorge rather than a mountain climb. Combine it with Screw Auger Falls and Moose Cave for a low-mileage Grafton Notch day.

MAKE A SCENIC DAY OF IT

The short Grafton Notch stops are close enough together that you do not need to treat each as a separate trip. Pair two or three, have a picnic, and return to Errol without committing to a full mountain day.

Grafton Notch — Appalachian Trail Day Hikes

The Route 26 trailhead in Grafton Notch gives day hikers several ways to experience the Appalachian Trail. You do not need to be a thru-hiker: Table Rock uses the AT for part of its route, the Eyebrow can be combined with the AT, and both Old Speck and Baldpate are substantial AT summit hikes.

Table Rock Loop — Maine

About 2.4 miles round trip • Moderate overall • Appalachian Trail connection

From the Route 26 trailhead, hikers follow the white-blazed Appalachian Trail briefly before choosing a route toward Table Rock. Maine's official map describes a steeper orange-blazed route through bouldery terrain and a less technical blue-blazed approach reached from the AT. The overlook sits roughly 900 feet above the starting area and looks across the notch toward Old Speck and the Eyebrow.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

The steep orange route is not appropriate for pets or young children. The Table Rock ledge has a steep, unfenced drop. Less-experienced hikers can use the official map to choose the more moderate approach.

Eyebrow Loop

About 2.2 miles round trip • 2–3 hours • Challenging

The Eyebrow climbs to a shelf-like overlook on Old Speck. The orange-blazed ascent includes very steep terrain with ladders or steel rungs; the Appalachian Trail provides the return route. Hikers who want to avoid the climbing aids can use the AT for both ascent and descent, creating a somewhat longer out-and-back.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

The steep route may not be suitable for small children, especially when wet. This is a short hike with genuine scrambling-style difficulty.

Old Speck via the Appalachian Trail

Full-day mountain hike • Challenging • Summit observation tower

Old Speck is one of the signature full-day hikes from the Route 26 trailhead. The Appalachian Trail climbs steadily through the Mahoosuc Range to the summit area, where an observation tower expands the view above the trees. Treat this as a mountain day: start early, carry enough water and layers, and leave time for a careful descent.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Trail apps report slightly different round-trip mileages depending on the exact route and summit spur. Use the current Maine park map or Appalachian Trail information for navigation rather than relying on a single mileage number in this guide.

Baldpate Mountain via the Appalachian Trail

5.8 miles round trip to West Peak • 7.6 miles to East Peak • Challenging

North of Route 26, the Appalachian Trail climbs to West Baldpate and then continues across exposed mountain terrain toward East Peak. Maine's official guide lists 5.8 miles round trip to West Peak and 7.6 miles round trip to East Peak, allowing about seven hours for the longer trip. East Peak is the bigger commitment and offers broad open views.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Exposed ledges can be hazardous when wet, icy or windy. Check the forecast for the mountain, not just Errol, and turn around if conditions deteriorate.

For Experienced Hikers

Mahoosuc Notch & Longer Backcountry Routes

The broader Mahoosuc region includes Mahoosuc Notch, the Grafton Loop Trail, Goose Eye and other demanding backcountry routes. They are excellent hiking objectives, but they do not belong in the same category as the day hikes above. The Appalachian Trail through the Mahoosucs is steep, boulder-strewn and among the trail's most challenging terrain.

For a typical motel guest looking for a day hike, Old Speck or Baldpate is already a substantial mountain day. Attempt Mahoosuc Notch, Goose Eye or a long Grafton Loop segment only if your experience, route research, weather, daylight and transportation plan support it.

DON'T LET AN APP CHOOSE THE HIKE FOR YOU

AllTrails is useful for discovering routes, recent user observations and GPS context, but user-created routes can differ from official trail descriptions. For access, closures, route legality and primary navigation, use current park/refuge maps, trail signs and managing-agency information.

North Country Hiking Safety

- Tell someone your route and expected return time before leaving Errol.
- Carry a paper map or downloaded offline map; cell service can be limited or absent.
- Bring water, food, layers, rain protection, a headlamp and basic first aid supplies even on a day hike.
- Check weather for the actual mountain or notch. Conditions at a summit can be very different from conditions in Errol.
- Wear footwear suited to wet roots, rocks, mud and steep terrain.
- Turn around when weather, daylight, trail conditions or your group's pace says you should.
- During hunting seasons, wear bright or blaze-orange clothing and consider bright gear for dogs as well.
- Respect gates, posted closures and private property. A line on a hiking app does not create public access.

Hiking With Dogs

Pet rules vary by property and sometimes by trail. New Hampshire State Parks permits pets at Dixville Notch and Milan Hill subject to park policy. Maine requires pets in Grafton Notch State Park to be leashed and attended. Some steep routes are poor choices for dogs even where pets are generally permitted. Check the current rule for the exact trail before leaving the motel.

Build a 3- or 4-Day Hiking Stay

The days are interchangeable. Choose according to weather, trail conditions and energy rather than following a fixed schedule.

DAY	DIRECTION	IDEA	WHY IT WORKS
1	North	Magalloway River + Roost	Easy start; wildlife and a short overlook
2	West	Dixville Notch	Table Rock, waterfalls or a longer heritage-trail day
3	East	Grafton Notch	Choose easy gorge stops or a Table Rock/Eyebrow hike
4	East or South	Old Speck/Baldpate OR Milan Hill	Full mountain day—or a lighter fire-tower day

Staying at Errol Motel

Errol is the home base for all hikes outlined in this guide. From the junction of Routes 16 and 26, you can choose a different hiking direction each day... Umbagog to the North, Dixville Notch to the West, Milan Hill to the South, and Grafton Notch and the Appalachian Trail to the East, then return to the same room each evening.

That works especially well when weather changes the plan. A day intended for a high summit can become a refuge walk, waterfall day or fire-tower outing without repacking the car for another lodging stop.

ERROL MOTEL	RESERVATIONS
132 Main Street Errol, New Hampshire 03579	603-482-3256 errolmotel@gmail.com errol-motel.com

Reservations are made directly by phone or email.

ONE ROOM. SEVERAL DIRECTIONS. A LOT OF HIKING.

Stay in Errol, choose the hike that fits the day, and come back to Errol Motel each evening.

Before You Leave the Motel

- Check the managing agency's current trail information and any posted closures.
- Check mountain weather, rain and wind, not just the town forecast.
- Download or carry the current trail map.
- Confirm daylight and choose a turnaround time.
- Tell someone where you are going.
- For Fall hikes, remember hunting is part of the North Country landscape and wear visible clothing.

Current Trail Resources

Use these resources for current maps, closures, rules and trail conditions. This guide intentionally avoids annual dates and temporary conditions so it can remain useful from year to year.

Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge — Hiking — Official information for Magalloway River Trail and Roost Trail.

Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge — Trails — Official refuge trail inventory.

New Hampshire State Parks — Dixville Notch — Official park access, pet and visitor information.

Cohos Trail Association — Day Hikes — Current information for the Dixville Notch Heritage Trail and other North Country hikes.

New Hampshire State Parks — Milan Hill — Official fire-tower, park and seasonal-access information.

Maine Bureau of Parks & Lands — Grafton Notch / Mahoosuc Guide — Official map, trail descriptions, park rules and safety information.

AllTrails — Useful for discovering hikes and recent user observations; verify access and official rules with the managing agency.

A Note on Distances & Difficulty

Trail mileage can vary among official maps, trail apps and GPS recordings. Where an official managing-agency distance was available, this guide preferred it. Where sources differ, the guide avoids false precision. Difficulty is also subjective: wet ledges, mud, ice, wind, heat, fatigue and a hiker's experience can turn a moderate route into a much harder outing.

A Final Note

You do not have to choose between staying near one trail system or another. That is the advantage of starting in Errol. Walk through spruce-fir forest one morning, stand above Dixville Notch the next, climb a fire tower on a lighter day, and spend another day on the Appalachian Trail in Maine. Choose the hike that fits the day and come back to Errol.